



## INVESTIGATING ON JOB HOPPING BEHAVIOR AMONG RESTAURANT EMPLOYEES IN MALAYSIA



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### ABSTRACT

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Job hopping behavior among employees has existed ever since the inception of the industry. Today, in well-developed restaurant industry, job hopping is viewed as a typical practice among employees. When many options of job vacancy became available, an employee left an organization that cannot match with his expectations and move to another organization. However, this job hopping behavior was considered as normal behavior. As employees are considered a major capital for any organization, the relationship on job-hopping behavior with employees need to be investigated. The researcher sheds light on this situation from the manager's point of view. This research aims to identify the reasons of job hopping behavior among employees. This research employed qualitative approach by using face-to-face interview. The data was gathered through semi-structured interview and a total of 10 restaurant managers from casual dining restaurants were voluntarily participated and interviewed in this research. Based on the interview data, it revealed six reasons that associated with employees' job hopping which include financial and benefit, career growth, job security, social influences, working environment and low passion for jobs. Findings of this research hoped will help the restaurant owner and human resource division to highlight factors that lead to job hopping behavior. Additionally, findings of this study also expected to provide a better understanding to formulate effective measures and ultimately minimize job hopping from occur in the restaurants.

**Contribution/ Originality:** This study contributes to the existing literature by investigating reasons of job hopping behavior among employees at casual dining restaurants in Malaysia.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Restaurant industry in Malaysia is one of sector that offer many job opportunities to Malaysian's job seekers. In Malaysia's Foodservice Annual Report 2017 stated that Malaysia has a wide variety of dining establishments, including full service restaurants, fast food restaurants, cafes, food stalls, food courts, eat-in bakeries, and pubs and bars to Wahab (2017). Casual dining restaurant also one of the restaurants that are mushrooming and continuous growing in Malaysia. Casual dining restaurant is a moderate-upscale dining that people can experienced great atmosphere by relaxing and enjoys the variety of food items provided with reasonable price. Usually, the main attraction to dine in at casual dining are based on themes in menu, service, and décor and offers full service to the diners (Nasyira, Othman, & Ghazali, 2014).

The continuous growth of restaurants has also influenced increasing of job opportunities to Malaysian. It is indirectly attract more people to quit their current job and fill in the other position available in the industry. Job hopping among the employees in the restaurant industry directly increased turnover rate (Ghazali, Jules, & Othman, 2018). Job-hopping phenomenon is a behaviour that give bad impact towards the organizations progression. Job hopping is when a person who are like changing their job every year persistently and they leave or quit not because of uncontrollable factor such as layoff or company closure (Pranaya, 2014). There is a group of employees that frequent changing of job from one place to another place without any rational reason and they are known as job hoppers (Goh, 2012). A job hopper is someone who prefer to works in short period of time in one position than remain stay in one organization for many years.

In today's human resources world, hiring, preserving and maintaining human capital is priority. Increasing expectations of higher salaries and benefits, job pattern, job security, importance of their role and decision-making attitudes are often bring employees to look in the wider perspective of hopping from one place to another place. Job hopping behaviour give a challenging pressure for management to retain their best talent and a report indicated that 83% of employees in Malaysian prefer higher salary as their main reason for job hop (Human Resources Online, 2018). Besides that, apart from salary being the key factor for job hop, at the same time the job hoppers (29%) making a career switch due to lack of growth opportunities in their current industry (Human Resources Online, 2018).

When an individual decides to become a job-hopper, many parties make the rapid assumption that the action is all about the money (Goh, 2012; Hellman, 1997; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Some research has revealed that job hopping behaviour is an individual strategy to achieve his vision of life, to meet the two basic needs in term of self-fulfilment and needs to share. By having knowledge, competency, and involvement from previous work makes job-hopper can be easily accepted in a variety of organization and job hoppers have chance to increase his marketability. The more often they change their job and was supported by previous company, their marketability will be increasingly and more valuable for other company. A job hopper has his own objective to be achieved and career success is one of his main objectives. Perception employees on various problems will have impact on employees' decision on job hopping has indicated that delay in salary payment, failure in payment of salary and benefit, unfriendly working conditions and payment less than industry norms are the most pressing problems followed by working time management are the most influencing problems that will determine employees' decision on job hopping. Therefore, this study aims to investigate on the job-hopping behaviour among employees in casual dining restaurants. This study will help restaurant's operator to identify the reasons that cause restaurants' employees to change their job and improve the human resource strategic in order to retain them and reduce high turnover.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Defining Job-Hopping

Job hops commonly define employees who are moving from their current job to another job in their whole career (Ghazali. et al., 2018). According to Pranaya (2014) job hopping is defined as a pattern of switching companies for every year with their own willingness instead of the result from a layoff or company closure. Ghiselli (1974) identified that employees had possess natural internal impulse to move from one job to another without apparent or rational motive, regardless of having better alternative job offers or not (Dharmawansha & Thennakoon 2016). The author further explained that this concept as hobo syndrome and state it as "...the periodic itch to move from a job in one place to some other job in some other place" (p.81). Hobo syndrome may occur to the employees in different industry. The length of working in an organization, for instant, a few months or a year is depending on the strength and periodicity of employees' itch, this means by the stronger the itch is, the shorter the period of time they working in the organization (Becton, Carr, & Judge, 2011). Job hoppers are normally recognized as people who cannot remain in an organization for a long time, unstable, spending very limited time in an

organization and also do not interested for their current jobs. Job hopping is the irresponsible movement of jobs. According to [Khatri, Fern, and Budhwar \(2001\)](#) the definition of job hopping behavior differ from one country to another. [Dhanapal, Hwa, Manickam, Vashu, and Alwie \(2013\)](#) stated that job hopping has been classified into two parts, and the first part is employees change their current job as they are having fun to do so as well as a desire to try new things. Meanwhile, for the second part is the employees had possessed social influences or turnover culture. Turnover culture brings a meaning of mutual value among colleagues in the organization and those peers are trying to challenge each other to leave the job or organization and seek for another job ([Feng & Angeline, 2010](#)).

## *2.2. Reason for Job Hopping*

The reasons for job hopping would be broaden in term of wide choices of jobs, organization culture, career advancement, perfect job fit, gaining more skills or opportunities as well as work-life balance ([Ghazali. et al., 2018](#)). Besides that, [Branham \(2005\)](#) in his book , “ The Seven Hidden Reasons Employees Leave” has delineated the following reasons of job hopping;1) the job or work place not living up to expectations, 2) mismatch between job and person, 3) too little coaching or feedback, 4) too few growth and advancement opportunities, 5) feeling not valued and unrecognized including pay, 6) stress from overwork and work life imbalance, 7) loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders. Furthermore, the other previous researchers also have indicated several reasons for the employees to job hop and due to many of them, all the factors have been classified into three groups which are personal, social and organizational ([Dharmawansha & Thennakoon 2016](#)).

High salary and good jobs expectation are important for an individual who are frequently changing jobs ([Ramkumar et al., 2016](#)). While some authors or researchers described the reasons for job hopping is related as they job hop for career growth. According ([Naresh & Rathnam, 2015](#)) also revealed that employee moving from one job to another job usually is for receive a quick financial gain or having career advancement. In addition to that, the authors found that money is not the main reason for highly educated employees to job hop but they tend to job hop as the availability of great option in the job market. [Pranaya \(2014\)](#) suggested that the employees who want to get a substantial raise and title upgrade would prefer for job hopping as those reasons were strong enough for them to switch their current job to another. It would be better to search for a new job that could pay more and provide a good title for them as an employee instead of trying to convince their current company for giving a raise and promotion. In addition to that, the author revealed that the reason behind job hopping among the employees was for expanding their network tenfold. The employees tend to meet more people that would be their networks. For instances, they would meet up with new leaders, managers, partners, influencers as well as co-workers. The author also stated that the employees have a potential for getting in the door at the next job would not be depending on the list of position they already had from the past but it was more to their own networks who could recommend them for a better position. Thus, having a network was more likely beneficial to the employees to advance their career. Furthermore, social factor which mainly related to co-workers is being the reason for the employees to job hop. According to ([Scivicque, 2017](#)) who discovered that employees tend to job hop as they are making reactive decisions for experiencing dissatisfaction at the workplace; for instances, having a bad week, an annoying client as well as an irritating co-worker. All dissatisfactions initiated them to make a quick presumption that the situations are not fit to them. These conditions put the employees to suffer from “green grass syndrome,” where they start to trust that anything would be better instead of their current situation. Thus, they discover themselves filled with anxiety and a sense of urgency and make them ready to move to another workplace. These employees are not proactively looking for a better opportunity but they are simply reacting to their current situations.

In addition, [Hartman and Yrle \(1996\)](#) identified that lack of training, lack of career opportunity and challenging work prepared by organization, leadership problems are the reasons that lead the employees to change their job. [Mitchell, Holtom, and Lee \(2001\)](#) indicated that unfair treatment for a co-worker, being passed over for promotion as well as being requested to do work against one’s beliefs also the reasons for the employees to switch their job.

Another reason that lead towards job hopping was non-existence of loyalty among the employers or company which never put their employees at the first place.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out qualitatively through semi-structured interviews. In fact, the qualitative research is suitable when the research objectives was to understand experiences, opinions, attitudes, values and processes (Rowley, 2012). Therefore, qualitative research chosen for this research to investigate the reasons of job-hopping behavior among employees in casual dining restaurant. In this research, qualitative interview is selected and this method need to be conducted face-to-face interview with informants, instead of telephone interviews and focus group. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main data collection tool in this research. The target population for this research was the restaurant operators and a total of 10 managers from different casual dining restaurant in IOI City Mall, Putrajaya were interviewed voluntarily. Casual dining restaurants operated at the IOI City Mall shopping complex was chosen because IOI City Mall is the largest mall in Southern Klang Valley and is easily accessible via major highways and public transport (IOIcity Mall Website, 2018). Interview were conducted in English and no problem arose during the interview process. Each session took approximately 30 to 45 minutes and responses were documented by audio-recorded. Due to the objectives of this research, the recordings were transcribe and analyzed manually.

### 4. RESULTS

#### 4.1. Demographic Profile

There were a total of ten informants who had shared their thoughts and experiences regarding the job-hopping behavior. Among the informants, six of them were males and four were females. All of them were restaurant managers from casual dining restaurants. There were eight Malays, one Indian and one foreign manager participated in this research.

#### 4.2. Reasons on Job Hopping Behavior

The result of interview data showed that there are six factors that influenced job-hopping behavior among restaurant's employees. First, the financial and benefits needs followed by career growth, job security, social influence, working environment and lastly low of passion for job. Job hoppers perception on work usually interpreted as they work to get income, working as responsibility or obligation for their commitments, work to get comfortability and convenience life, work to build new relationship and also work to achieve goals in life. Findings in this research indicated that the first reason an employee job hop was due to financial and benefits needs. For financial needs, the main reason is the pay or salary. They tend to leave their current job if they get offer from other organization with higher salary. Three informants agreed that high salary is one of the reasons employees quit their job. The following excerpts are the feedbacks from managers on financial and benefits dimension.

*"Actually, mostly they are working here or any other restaurant to get the money, right? So, in my opinion, most of them will change their job when they get offered from other company with high salary..." (Informant 2)*

*"...Because many people work just for salary. If they find another job that can offer them with high salary they maybe change their job immediately." (Informant 6)*

*"...Mostly, they quit because of salary offered from other company is higher than their current job." (Informant 7)*

Additionally, some of the informants said that employees also had withdrawal intention from their current job due to dissatisfaction with low salary and they found work that they contributed did not worth it or gave any value. They felt that they were burdened by the employer but received low salary. Low pay and poor welfare are the major reason of employee's dissatisfaction. They felt their pay and income earned was not enough for their life expenses.

They need to find better job opportunity with higher salary. Therefore, when the opportunity is available, definitely employee will consider and for them it is the best time to build a better standard of living. The informant stated:

*“This is a busy outlet, but then the staff only received the same salary throughout the year. There is no increment in salary...” (Informant 2)*

*“Sometimes the staff do not satisfy with their salary and they faced some misunderstanding with other staff...Most of the issue is about salary...” (Informant 3)*

*“...It is difficult for an employee or staff to stay working in this restaurant for long a time. The reasons are...then maybe because of the salary does not worth with their work.” (Informant 7)*

Based on the interview data, it found that employees did not consider pay/salary only but also demand for other benefits. Employees thought that high salary must followed by better offer of other benefits. The higher position of a job, the higher employee’s expectations for the other benefits. Informant 5 agreed that employees need more benefits to remain stay at their current job as show below:

*“...Employees who like to job hop usually they demand for more benefits. So, the company need to offer them with more benefits such as salary increment, bonus, and also promotion...” (Informant 5)*

Nevertheless, basic pay or salary is the motivational tool to attract employees while the benefits offered help to make employees stay in an organization. Thus, the result of this research showed that financial needs which is “money” and non-financial needs which is others benefits combination is the main reason employees job hop in casual dining restaurant.

The second reason that makes employees quit from an organization was the career growth. Employees in casual dining restaurant want to develop their career with other organization and they are very careful about their career advancement. The employee’s expectation towards changes with different jobs frequently are they thought that they will develop the skills, get many experiences that are valued in current job market and at the same time they can build their career successfully. Two informants have the same opinions and though about this:

*“...Some employees think that by doing job hop, they can get many experiences from different company and yes, maybe sometimes people think it is one of the advantages for them to get better positions when they work at other company...” (Informant 10).*

*“...For employees who like to job hop, to me, it is to build their career and they can get for better position if they have a lot of working experience.” (Informant 3).*

Job security is the third reason that influenced employees change their job to another employer. Higher job security will influence employee to remain at their current job; a job with a high level of job security is such that a person with the job would have a low possibility of becoming job hopper. The informants stated that job security is one crucial reason that can change the employee’s decision toward their job. Although employee work with a good employer, the job hopper prefer to secure their job first with current organization. This statement is agreed by informant 9 where she said that:

*“...One of the reasons why the staff always job hop is because they feel do not secure with their job...” (Informant 9)*

Besides that, the other reason of job-hopping caused by social influences or turnover culture. [Abelson \(1993\)](#) defined social influence as “the shared cognition by organizational members that influence their decisions regarding job movement. Turnover culture makes hopping from one job to the other an acceptable behavior. If an employee has not changed his or her job for a long time, he or she feels increasing pressure to do so because of social influences/turnover culture.” In this study, the results showed that the manager of casual dining have the same opinion and said that this situation frequently occur in food service industry in Malaysia where the employees were influenced by their friends to find another job and quit from their current job.

*“In my opinions, usually they leave their job because they are following their friends. Mostly in culinary or restaurant, the staff will come in a group. So, if one of them get better offered from another company they tend to invite the others*

*friend to join with them. That's why you can see in some restaurant or hotel, if one disappears or quit the others also do the same thing...*" (Informant 9)

In addition, if an employee has misunderstanding or peer pressure with co-workers, it would influence them to find another job. This is because sometimes they cannot work in a team and tolerate with each other. As mentioned by informant 3 in this study where he said that:

*"Actually, this issue occurs when the staff... and do not comfortable with other staff in a team..."* (Informant 3)

Some of the participants also said that work environment is the other reason that have relationship with employees' intention to hop their job. This study found that stress/pressure, unfriendly supervisor or manager, work overload and long working hours are the reason for job hopping. Sometimes job stress and unpleasant working conditions lead to high employee turnover. Informant 4 and 7 agreed that most of employees in restaurant industry have very tough time to confront with stress or pressure. As they said that:

*"Usually, they will feel stress during weekends because we have many customers to handle. Sometimes, we do not have enough staff on that day so the staff need to rush and do everything..."* (Informant 4)

*"Hmmm, we always confront with stress everyday especially for F&B staff. They need to serve and fulfil with customer's request. They also need to handle the restaurant at the same time and the stress level would be high for each of the staff here."* (Informant 7)

Other than stress or pressure at working place, employees may leave or quit from their job because of unfriendly manager or supervisor. The manager who spare some times to listen to their employees may have high possibility to retain them in an organization for a long term. Informant 6 have mentioned that unfriendly manager is one of the reasons of job hopping.

*"...Usually, employees want to work in happy environment, so they want managers to treat them well. Mostly the reason of the employee quit is because the manager is unfriendly and too strict."* (Informant 6)

The result also found that work overload and long working hours are reasons for job hopping among the employees in casual dining restaurant.

*"As restaurant staff, actually the task that they need to perform is quite tough because they need to take order, clear the table and also serve the customers. So, they also need be strong mentally and physically..."* (Informant 1)

*"...It is difficult for an employee or staff to stay working in this restaurant for a long time..."* (Informant 7)

*"...Sometimes for some staff that still new in this restaurant industry, they could not stand to work for a long time..."* (Informant 3)

In order to fill the job vacancy, informant 3 stated that employees sometimes work in restaurant with low of passion and low interest to do the job. Money was one of main reason for them to work. The informant also mentioned that an employee sometimes work in an organization because was difficult to find a job in the other place.

*"In my opinions, job hoppers are the individuals that does not have their career goals and they only think that the job that they have now whether for their future or not..."* (Informant 3)

*"Like I just said just now, most of them prefer working in restaurant as their last choice because they have difficulties to get another job..."* (Informant 3)

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has fulfilled its objective on exploring reasons on job hopping behavior among employees of casual dining restaurants. This research disclosed six reasons associated with job hopping behavior which include financial and benefit needs, career growth, job security, social influence, working environment and lastly low passion for job. Employee or job-hopper has different pattern of working behavior with others individual. Based on interview data gathered in this research, at the beginning of a career, lack of financial and benefits became the major reasons that influenced job hoppers to move from one organization to another organization. One of the

examples was when demands of living cost increased, employees tend to move and find a better income to fulfil families' needs. Generally, it is well accepted that salary or better offer influenced employee's decision to job hop due to increase of cost of living (Ghazali & Mokhtar, 2020). In addition, the managers in this research also mentioned that salary and other benefits are the basic motivators for job hopping behaviour (Human Resources Online, 2018). Finding of this research parallel with study done by Zainol, Abdullah, Rozali, Bahari, and Kamal (2020) which stated salary factor formed the major intent for job mobility crisis in the restaurant industry.

This research also discovered employee's career growth as reason to job hop. Previous study implied that job hopping was the strategy that employees use to keep themselves having competitiveness and values in the job market and to develop their skills through working in different companies (Bansal, 2014). Employee would job hop not necessarily due to monetary reason, but of the job opportunities available in the market (Feng & Angeline, 2010). This is similar with findings of the Hartman and Yrle (1996) who also indicated that voluntary turnover occurred when employee quit from a job only for career advancement. Additionally, the result of this research also showed that job security is the reason employee job hop from their current job to another. Managers in this research also stated that insecurity for a job will make employee have higher intention to hop to another job.

Employees also need a good working environment at their workplace. Findings in this research found that working environment can be divided into unfriendly supervisor, high workload, stress/pressure and long working hours. In the present job world, most people are looking for alternative to improve their skills and competencies, to become at that stage they need support from a representative of organization that fulfil their wish. A supervisor act as representative that must ensure the satisfaction of the employees in an organization (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015). Failing to do so by supervisor or manager, results in dissatisfaction and exit of employees. An organization need to create an environment where employees could give their full commitment in an organization for a long term. Besides that, finding of this research was consistent with previous study done by Krishnan and Sethuramasubbiah (2012) stated that workload or stress occurred when there were not enough right people and overload of work and too much stress causes disaffection, making the employees leave the job.

The analysis of data and its findings enabled the researcher to address that social influence was one of reasons for employee's job hopping. Social influence also known as turnover culture. The job-hopping links to a turnover culture, which can be described as a work-groups" or individuals" normative belief of finding turnover behaviour appropriate and accepting it as a norm (Philip, 2017).

According to Saleem, Noor, Jalil, and Saleem (2016) explained it as switching job "just because others are doing the same". The managers from this research stated that when organization employed a job in a group or team, they actually have high tendency to follow each other. If one of them quit the job, the rest will doing the same action. Besides that, the reason of job hopping was because an employee has a conflict with workmate that may lead into job dissatisfaction and decided to quit from the organization. According to Higgins and Thomas (2001) mentioned that individual's decision to change career frequently influenced by context or social factors.

Overall, this research revealed that an employee decision on changing a job influenced by these six reasons explained above. Findings of this research hopes shed light on job hopping behavior among employees in casual dining restaurants. This research shared the reality of what the restaurant operators facing now on employee's job hopping behavior.

Findings of this research came out with managerial implication which to provide strategic measures in managing job hopping behavior for the well-being of organizations and its employees. This research can be considered as useful piece of paper as it plays the roles as a reference for the restaurant operators to formulate a better compensation package, good salary scheme, good career advancement path and attractive working environment. Formulation on effective strategies on minimizing employees' intention to job hop is very crucial among employees at workplace.

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