



The Economic Impact Of Job Hopping: A Scoping Review Of Labor Mobility

Dampak Ekonomi dari Perpindahan Pekerjaan: Tinjauan Komprehensif tentang Mobilitas Tenaga Kerja

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Abstract

This systematic literature review investigates the evolution of job-hopping behavior within the global labor market during the transformative period of 2015 to 2025. Following PRISMA-ScR guidelines and using Scopus with Watase software, 18 high-quality studies were synthesized to identify multilevel determinants and economic consequences. Findings reveal that mobility is no longer merely an individual psychological choice but a rational response to structural market disequilibrium, wage inflation, and technological shifts. While interorganizational moves can enhance functional diversity and long-term employability, they simultaneously impose significant friction costs on firms through recruitment expenses and productivity losses. Geographically, emerging economies like Vietnam and India exhibit distinct mobility drivers compared to mature markets. The study concludes that optimizing talent allocation requires integrated policy interventions, including improved labor market information and strategic human capital management. These results provide frameworks for policymakers and managers to balance market flexibility with organizational stability in increasingly volatile global labor market landscapes.

Abstrak

Tinjauan literatur sistematis ini menyelidiki evolusi perilaku berpindah-pindah pekerjaan di pasar tenaga kerja global selama periode transformasi 2015 hingga 2025. Mengikuti pedoman PRISMA-ScR dan menggunakan Scopus dengan perangkat lunak Watase, 18 studi berkualitas tinggi disintesis untuk mengidentifikasi penentu multilevel dan konsekuensi ekonomi. Temuan menunjukkan mobilitas bukan sekadar pilihan psikologis individu, tetapi respons rasional terhadap ketidakseimbangan pasar struktural, inflasi upah, dan pergeseran teknologi. Meskipun perpindahan antar organisasi dapat meningkatkan keragaman fungsional dan kemampuan kerja jangka panjang, hal itu secara bersamaan menimbulkan biaya gesekan yang signifikan bagi perusahaan melalui biaya perekrutan dan kerugian produktivitas. Secara geografis, negara-negara berkembang seperti Vietnam dan India menunjukkan pendorong mobilitas yang berbeda dibandingkan dengan pasar yang sudah mapan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa optimalisasi alokasi talenta membutuhkan intervensi kebijakan terintegrasi, termasuk peningkatan informasi pasar tenaga kerja dan manajemen modal manusia strategis. Hasil ini memberikan kerangka kerja bagi pembuat kebijakan dan manajer untuk menyeimbangkan fleksibilitas pasar dengan stabilitas organisasi dalam lanskap pasar tenaga kerja yang semakin bergejolak.



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A. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Labor mobility is now seen as going beyond individual migration decisions, but rather as an accumulation of strategic choices that collectively shape the character of the global labor market. This phenomenon has created what is known as a high-velocity labor market, where industries are able to respond nimbly to market fluctuations by adjusting the size and skill set of their workforce.¹ However, this reality presents a stark contrast across economic contexts. On the one hand, the technology sector in the United States has normalized constant mobility as a mechanism to maintain industrial flexibility. On the other hand, in the Malaysian small and medium-sized enterprise sector, similar behavior is still viewed negatively as it contradicts the values of loyalty and long-term stability valued by employers.² This contrast underscores the importance of labor mobility as a macro phenomenon that triggers economic tensions at various levels, from industrial efficiency to organizational resilience.

This economic tension stems from the misalignment between the need for flexibility in industrial systems and the demands for stability at the organizational level. While industries benefit from a dynamic talent flow, many organizations independently seek to stabilize their workforces through commitment norms to reduce turnover costs.³ Furthermore, structural barriers often serve as drivers of persistent mobility, such as disparities in promotion opportunities for certain groups of workers. For example, Asian professionals in the technology industry often find their career trajectories stalled in managerial positions despite their superior technical competencies, prompting them to seek opportunities outside their organization.⁴ This situation suggests that the decision to change jobs is not solely driven by personal desires but is often a rational response to the market's failure to provide equitable and inclusive opportunity structures.

Current studies of labor mobility indicate that job-hopping behavior is the result of a complex interaction between individual aspirations, organizational anchors, and market

¹ Tongyu Wu, "Constantly on the Move Chinese Engineers' Job-Hopping Strategies in Information Technology Work," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 32, no. 3 (September 1, 2021): 360–81, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10353046211041365>.

² Jia Fang Siew, Siew Chin Wong, and Chui Seong Lim, "Should I Go or Should I Stay: Job Hopping in Malaysia Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Service Sectors," *European Journal of Training and Development* 47, no. 1–2 (September 22, 2021): 105–22, <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-05-2021-0054>.

³ Siew, Wong, and Lim.

⁴ Wu, "Constantly on the Move Chinese Engineers' Job-Hopping Strategies in Information Technology Work."

structures. At the individual level, mobility is seen as a manifestation of an independent and proactive career orientation. Workers with high self-direction tend to engage in voluntary turnover not simply as an escape from poor working conditions, but as an active strategy to maximize career capital and seek better value alignment with a new organization.⁵ This dynamic is driven by two primary motives: the advancement motive, which seeks higher economic opportunities, and the escape motive, which is often triggered by emotional exhaustion and dissatisfaction with the current work environment.⁶

From an organizational perspective, the stability of human capital depends heavily on the strength of normative commitment and the degree of fit between the individual and the organization (person-organization fit). The literature suggests that when employees perceive their personal values as aligned with the company culture, a sense of loyalty emerges, which serves as an anchor to suppress turnover intentions.⁷ However, this relationship is not universal and is often influenced by the local cultural context. In regions with collectivistic and hierarchical social structures, the social costs of leaving an organization are often perceived as very high, leading individuals to remain despite low levels of work engagement.⁸ This situation illustrates that the decision to stay or move involves a rational calculation that considers both the economic sacrifices and the social impact on the individual.

On a broader market scale, inter-organizational mobility does not automatically increase an employee's bargaining power. Crucial findings indicate that the labor market, particularly at the executive level, places different values on the types of experiences that mobility provides. Moves that generate functional diversity tend to increase candidate attractiveness, but high turnover rates without clear competency enhancements are perceived as a negative signal by employers.⁹ Furthermore, institutional mechanisms

⁵ Wu.

⁶ Kelly Steenackers and Marie-Anne Guerry, "Determinants of Job-Hopping: An Empirical Study in Belgium," *International Journal of Manpower* 37, no. 3 (June 6, 2016): 494–510, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-09-2014-0184>.

⁷ Siew, Wong, and Lim, "Should I Go or Should I Stay: Job Hopping in Malaysia Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Service Sectors."

⁸ Sharjeel Saleem and Beenish Qamar, "An Investigation of the Antecedents of Turnover Intentions and Job Hopping Behavior: An Empirical Study of Universities in Pakistan," *South Asian Journal of Business Studies* 6, no. 2 (June 5, 2017): 161–76, <https://doi.org/10.1108/SAJBS-05-2016-0046>.

⁹ Shinjae Won and Matthew Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes," *Strategic Management Journal* 44, no. 10 (October 1, 2023): 2341–76, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3502>.

such as patent enforcement contribute to friction in the labor market. Strict intellectual property enforcement retains most high-performing workers, but the brightest talent often chooses to move on to pursue innovation elsewhere.¹⁰ Methodologically, rigorous measurement of these determinants is crucial to ensure that retention policies are truly effective in maintaining the efficiency of human capital allocation at the industry level.¹¹

The inconsistencies in findings in the current literature reflect theoretical ambivalence regarding the economic value of voluntary labor mobility. On the one hand, the human capital perspective views inter-organizational movement as an adaptive strategy for individuals to build skills and increase bargaining power in increasingly flexible markets.¹² However, on the other hand, market signaling theory often interprets high turnover frequency as an indicator of risk, which in some contexts actually leads to wage penalties and career stigma.¹³ This theoretical tension is further complicated by the influence of institutional factors, such as intellectual property protection regulations and differences in industry structure, which significantly alter how markets reward or constrain talent mobility.¹⁴ Without a clear integration of individual motives with incentive structures at the market and organizational levels, the literature remains fragmented in explaining whether this phenomenon represents an efficient labor allocation mechanism or simply a form of withdrawal from unsatisfying work environments.¹⁵

A scoping review is considered the most appropriate method for addressing literature fragmentation and providing a systematic conceptual mapping of labor market dynamics. Based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines,¹⁶ this approach is

¹⁰ Martin Ganco, Rosemarie H Ziedonis, and Rajshree Agarwal, "More Stars Stay, but the Brightest Ones Still Leave: Job Hopping in the Shadow of Patent Enforcement," *Strategic Management Journal* 36, no. 5 (May 1, 2015): 659–85, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2239>.

¹¹ Hoang-Phu Nguyen and Hoai-Nam Le, "Determinants of Job-Hopping Behavior: The Case of Information Technology Sector," *International Journal of Law and Management* 64, no. 3 (March 8, 2022): 308–20, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLMA-06-2020-0178>.

¹² Christopher J Lake, Scott Highhouse, and Alison G Shrift, "Validation of the Job-Hopping Motives Scale," *Journal of Career Assessment* 26, no. 3 (August 1, 2018): 531–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072717722765>.

¹³ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes."

¹⁴ Ganco, Ziedonis, and Agarwal, "More Stars Stay, but the Brightest Ones Still Leave: Job Hopping in the Shadow of Patent Enforcement."

¹⁵ Nguyen and Le, "Determinants of Job-Hopping Behavior: The Case of Information Technology Sector."

¹⁶ Andrea C Tricco et al., "PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and Explanation," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 169, no. 7 (October 2018): 467–73, <https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-0850>.

highly effective in research fields with a wide diversity of definitions, methodologies, and findings, making meta-analytic synthesis impractical. Given that studies on labor mobility are currently scattered across countries, industrial sectors, and methodological approaches, systematic mapping is crucial for explaining how the determinants and impacts of such mobility are comprehensively understood. By integrating qualitative, quantitative, and archival data, this method can provide a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of modern job migration from an economic perspective.

2. Research Questions

Based on the previously outlined synthesis of phenomena and theoretical imperatives, this study attempts to systematically integrate the determinants of individual behavior with the framework of labor market economics. This review aims to bridge the microorganizational perspective with macroeconomic dynamics to provide a comprehensive understanding of modern labor mobility within the context of efficient talent allocation. Specifically, this scoping review aims to answer the following research questions:

- a. What are the determinants at the micro level (individual and organizational) and market contextual factors of labor mobility behavior (job hopping)?
- b. How is the relationship between mobility behavior and human capital accumulation and labor market dynamics explained in the literature?
- c. What are the economic consequences of identified labor mobility, and what research gaps urgently need further exploration?
- d. What are the economic and managerial policy implications that can be formulated to optimize talent allocation and minimize the costs of inefficiencies in the labor market?

3. Research Methods

This scoping review was conducted in strict adherence to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines.¹⁷ This approach was chosen because research on labor mobility is multidisciplinary and characterized by a diversity of resolutions and broad theoretical perspectives. Therefore, a systematic conceptualization is needed to identify the determinants, mechanisms, and economic consequences of this phenomenon, rather than a mere effectiveness-based synthesis.

¹⁷ Tricco et al.

The literature search was conducted exclusively through the Scopus database. The decision to use this single database was based on Scopus's position as one of the most comprehensive global indexes covering highly reputable journals in the fields of labor economics, talent management, and labor market dynamics. Focusing on Scopus ensures that the reviewed articles have undergone a rigorous peer-review process, thus providing an accurate picture of economic policy developments and market behavior in the targeted study area. The keywords used in the search included “job hopping”, “frequent career changes”, and “inter-organizational mobility”, with a publication time limit between 2015 and 2025 to capture the dynamics of the volatile labor market.

The study screening and selection process began with the PRISMA framework, utilizing the data processing features in Watase UAKE to ensure a systematic review. Of the 75 initial records obtained, 32 studies were excluded initially due to not meeting the year range criteria, being outside the journal ranking (Tiers Q1-Q4), and having inappropriate abstracts. This phase resulted in 43 records, which were then subjected to further substantive review. Given that this study was conducted by a single author, the validity of the selection was ensured through a rigorous intra-rater reliability procedure. The author re-reviewed the 43 records after a one-month interval to minimize cognitive bias and ensure consistency in decision-making. During this critical reflection process, 19 studies were excluded due to irrelevance to the research objectives, leaving 24 articles for full-text evaluation. In the final stage, six studies were excluded due to access constraints, resulting in a final sample of 18 articles.

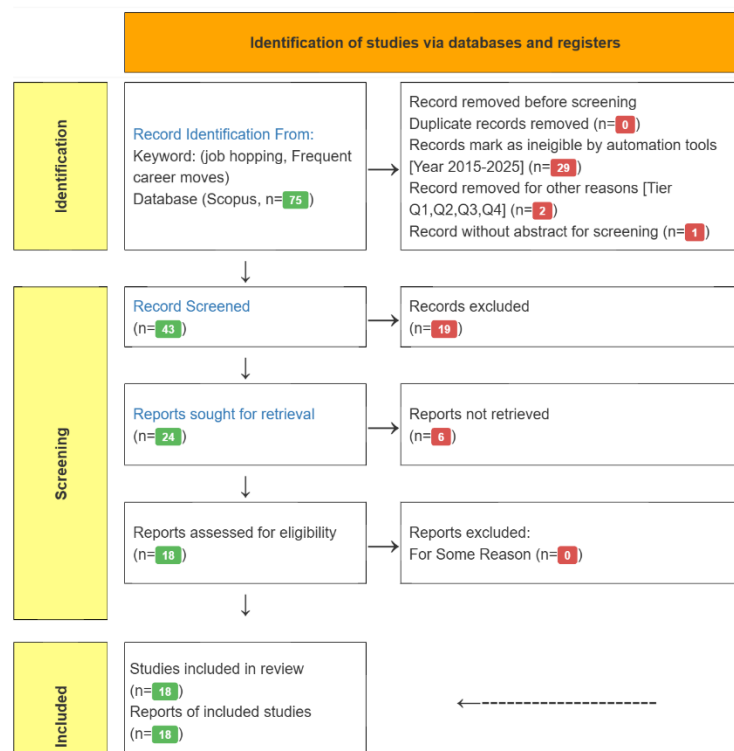


Figure 1. Prisma Flow Diagram from Watase UAKE Tools

The collected data were analyzed using a thematic deductive-inductive approach to ensure analytical rigor. Watase UAKE once again plays a crucial role in this phase as a tool for validating findings through research profiling and systematic knowledge summarization.⁴ This approach allows authors to screen and map articles to facilitate the writing of SLR manuscripts, while simultaneously verifying the findings with existing labor economics theory. Through transparent procedures supported by this research collaboration tool, the research is expected to identify methodological inconsistencies and implement adaptive policies for the global labor market.

B. ANALYSIS

1. Temporal Distribution of Publications

The significant acceleration in publications in the 2021–2025 period reflects the scientific community's response to the fundamental transformation in global labor market dynamics post-COVID-19. The Great Resignation phenomenon and labor market tightening, particularly in the information technology sector, characterized by a high-velocity labor market, have shifted the research focus from merely micro-demographic determinants to an analysis of structural issues related to the efficiency of talent allocation at the macro level¹⁸. This surge in research in the contemporary period confirms the growing awareness of systemic friction costs triggered by Generation Z's shifting career orientations and structural market incentives in developing economies.¹⁹ Thus, this growing trend in the literature demonstrates that job-hopping is now being analyzed as a crucial variable in maintaining wage stability, human capital accumulation, and long-term economic resilience amidst an increasingly volatile market landscape.

¹⁸ Wu, "Constantly on the Move Chinese Engineers' Job-Hopping Strategies in Information Technology Work."

¹⁹ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes."

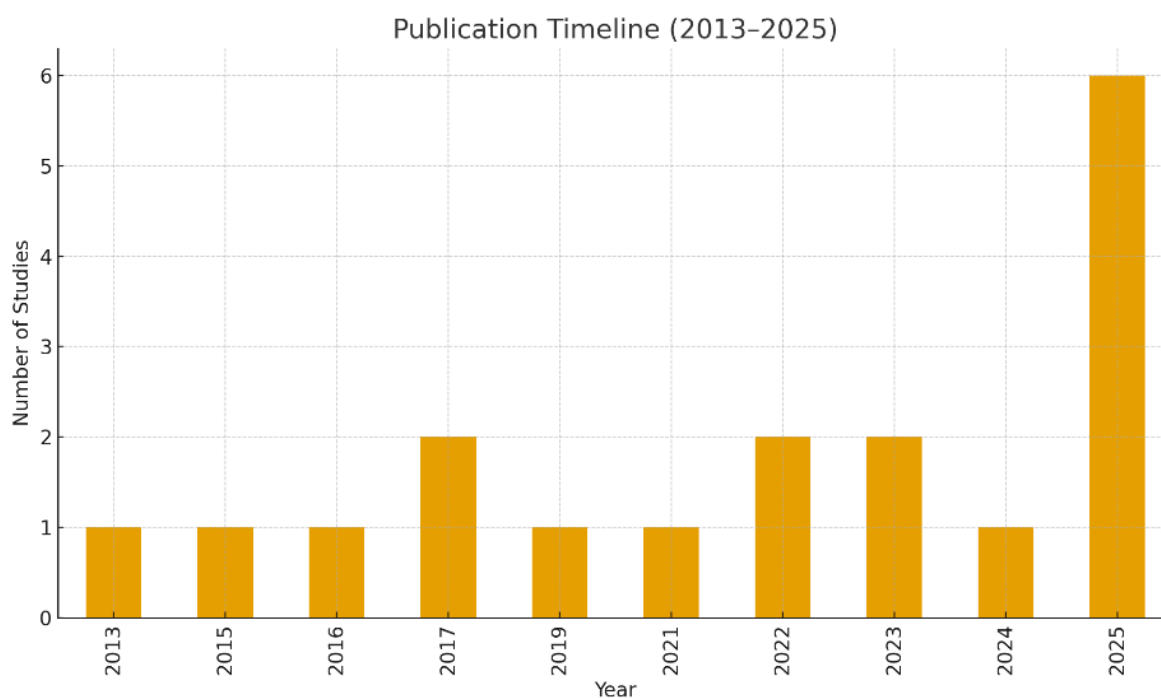


Figure 2. Publication Timeline

2. Geographical and Sectoral Distribution

The research distribution map shows a strong concentration in regions with contrasting labor market dynamics, reflecting how local economic structures shape mobility patterns. In the United States, research focuses on high-velocity labor market ecosystems where inter-organizational mobility has become normalized as part of technical market efficiency. Studies in this region reveal that enforcement policies such as patents actually create distortions in talent allocation, with the most productive knowledge workers tending to leave overly litigious firms in search of efficiencies elsewhere.²⁰ Furthermore, longitudinal data from the United States demonstrates the risk of adverse selection, where early career job changes are correlated with lower wages due to information asymmetry between workers and employers.²¹

A different context is found in Vietnam, which represents a developing economy with a rapidly growing technology sector. In this region, job hopping is fueled by structural incentives in the form of extreme sectoral wage inflation, where each job change offers a 15 to 20 percent increase in earnings, far exceeding the annual internal

²⁰ Ganco, Ziedonis, and Agarwal, "More Stars Stay, but the Brightest Ones Still Leave: Job Hopping in the Shadow of Patent Enforcement."

²¹ Xiaodong Fan and Jed DeVaro, "Job Hopping and Adverse Selection in the Labor Market," *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 36, no. 1 (March 1, 2020): 84–138, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jleo/ewz021>.

wage increase of around 10 percent.²² This makes labor mobility in Vietnam not merely an individual career choice, but a rational response to the imbalanced market compensation architecture. Meanwhile, in India, the research focus has shifted to the generational transition dimension in Industry 5.0. The tightening of the labor market in India is heavily influenced by the behavior of the young workforce, who experience social alienation in the workplace, thus creating large friction costs for companies in the form of repeated recruitment and training expenses without achieving human capital stability.²³ Overall, these three regions are the focus of the study because they are the intersection where labor market inefficiencies have the greatest impact on national economic competitiveness.

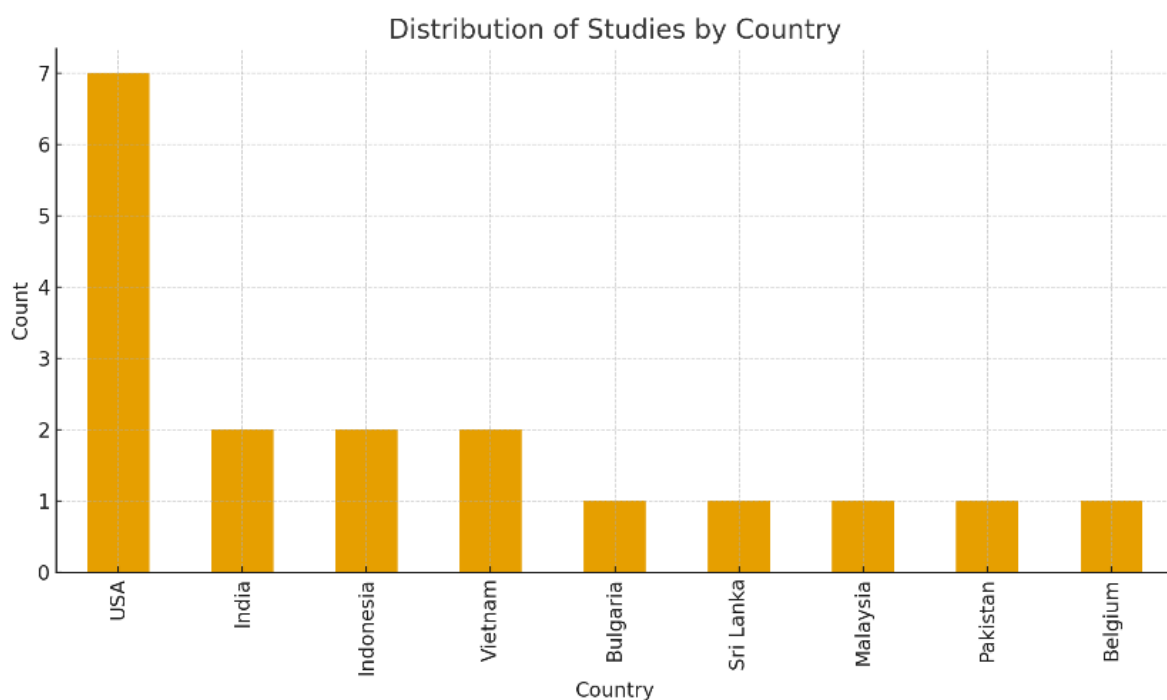


Figure 3. Distribution of Studies by Country

3. Summary of Study Characteristics

The characteristics of the 18 included studies are presented in Table 1. The table summarizes key information regarding country and sector context, research design and sample size, conceptual focus, and key findings relevant to the phenomenon of job hopping. Overall, the studies cover a diverse range of worker groups, including Generation Y and Z employees in the service and technology sectors, migrant workers,

²² Nguyen and Le, "Determinants of Job-Hopping Behavior: The Case of Information Technology Sector."

²³ Pawan Kumar Chand, Urvashi Tandon, and Neha Mishra, "Get Cold Feet: Job Hopping a Conundrum in the Stable Employment of Gen Z Employees at Industry 5.0," *Kybernetes* 55, no. 2 (December 2, 2024): 1037–58, <https://doi.org/10.1108/K-04-2024-0943>.

lecturers, workers at various career stages from entry level to executive, and the general workforce population analyzed using national-scale panel data.

Table 1. Characteristics of Included Studies

No	Author (Year)	Country / Context	Design	Sample	Main Focus	Key Findings
1	Samariya & Saxena (2025)	India; service sector	Cross-sectional (SEM)	344 employees	Relationships among OJE, AC, OCB, and job hopping	OJE is associated with lower job hopping; AC acts as a mediator, while OCB functions as a moderator
2	Apriliani et al. (2025)	Indonesia; multi-industry	Systematic review	17 studies	Antecedents of job hopping	Sociodemographic, personal, and organizational factors are most prominent
3	Rahmania et al. (2025)	Indonesia; services & manufacturing	Cross-sectional (SEM)	232 employees	Role of OC, EE, and motives in job hopping	OC and EE are linked to higher job hopping; motives moderate these relationships
4	Tran et al. (2025)	Vietnam; Gen Z	Cross-sectional (SEM)	237 employees	POS, JS, and EE through AC in job hopping	AC reduces job hopping, whereas EE weakens affective commitment
5	Baruch et al. (2025)	Bulgaria; national labor market	Longitudinal (big data)	~3 million workers	Career mobility and wage outcomes	Career boundary crossings are associated with higher wages and wage growth
6	Pathirana et al. (2025)	Sri Lanka; Gen Z	Cross-sectional (SEM)	387 employees	Work values and POS in job-hopping intention	Extrinsic work values are more influential; POS strengthens job-hopping intention
7	Chand et al. (2024)	India; IT sector	Cross-sectional (SEM)	533 employees	Novice behaviour, social alienation, and job hopping	Social alienation partially mediates the relationship between novice behaviour and job hopping
8	Won Bidwell & (2023)	United States; executives	Archival career data	Executive candidates	Mobility history and job offer likelihood	High mobility sends ambivalent signals in executive labor markets
9	Wu (2023)	United States; IT sector	Ethnography and interviews	113 engineers	Job hopping as a career strategy	Job hopping is used as a strategy to resist and navigate workplace discrimination
10	Nguyen & Le (2022)	Vietnam; IT sector	Cross-sectional (SEM)	214 employees	JS, EE, and NC through motives	The escape motive emerges as the strongest driver; normative commitment shows a dual role
11	Siew et al. (2023)	Malaysia; SME services	Cross-sectional (SEM)	203 employees	PO-fit and self-directedness in job hopping	PO-fit reduces job hopping, whereas self-directedness increases it
12	Fan, X., & DeVaro, J. (2020)	United States; general workforce	Longitudinal	4,188 workers	Job hopping and wage outcomes	Job hopping is associated with wage penalties, particularly in early career stages
13	Savinar (2022)	United States; H-1B migrants	Qualitative interviews	40 migrant workers	Mobility under immigration constraints	Job hopping serves as an adaptive strategy under legal constraints
14	Saleem & Qamar (2017)	Pakistan; higher education	SEM	250 academics	Job satisfaction, commitment, and job hopping	Commitment reduces job hopping, while turnover intention plays a dominant role.
15	Lake et al. (2017)	United States; multi-sector	Scale development	1,749 respondents	Job-hopping motives	Escape and advancement motives represent two distinct constructs
16	Steenackers & Guerry (2016)	Belgium; public & private sectors	Survey regression	266 employees	Demographic factors and job-hopping frequency	Age and gender are associated with job-hopping frequency
17	Gao et al. (2015)	United States; executives	Archival panel data	510 mobility events	Executive mobility and compensation	Job hopping is followed by increases in executive compensation
18	Ganco et al. (2014)	United States; semiconductor industry	Archival inventor data	Industry inventors	IP protection and labor mobility	Stronger IP protection is associated with lower job hopping

Source: Data analysis by the author (2025)

C. DISCUSSION

1. Micro-Determinants and Contextual Factors of Labor Mobility

Individual factors influencing job-hopping behavior are multidimensional and significantly influenced by demographic characteristics, psychological conditions, and career value orientations. The literature indicates a negative relationship between age and mobility frequency, with younger workers having a higher tendency to move as part of early career exploration.²⁴ Psychological dimensions such as job satisfaction and engagement serve as primary inhibitors through the mediation of affective commitment. Specifically, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) acts as a critical moderator that strengthens the positive effect of job embeddedness on affective commitment, thereby indirectly suppressing job-hopping intentions, particularly within high-pressure service sectors.²⁵ This shift in orientation is even more evident across the generational dimension, where Generation Y emphasizes the alignment of individual and organizational values, while Generation Z is more driven by extrinsic work values and feelings of social alienation in the workplace, reinforced by novice behavior or professional immaturity.²⁶

At the organizational level, mobility decisions are influenced by institutional mechanisms and the quality of the company's internal culture. An organization's reputation for enforcing intellectual property rights through patent litigation has proven to be an effective yet paradoxical retention tool. While these litigious policies generally reduce annual mobility by 11.3 percent, these institutional pressures often fail to retain the most competent talent whose market value exceeds the legal threshold.²⁷ Beyond institutional aspects, Rahmania et al. emphasize that retention effectiveness depends heavily on organizational process dimensions, particularly through the provision of transparent career paths and active employee participation in decision-making.²⁸ This positive organizational culture serves as a crucial resource that strengthens employee

²⁴ Steenackers and Guerry, "Determinants of Job-Hopping: An Empirical Study in Belgium."

²⁵ Tanisha Samariya and Shabnam Saxena, "On-the-Job Embeddedness and Job Hopping: A Moderated Mediation Model of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and Affective Commitment in the Service Sector of India," *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, July 23, 2025, 23220937251355696, <https://doi.org/10.1177/23220937251355697>.

²⁶ Chand, Tandon, and Mishra, "Get Cold Feet: Job Hopping a Conundrum in the Stable Employment of Gen Z Employees at Industry 5.0."

²⁷ Ganco, Ziedonis, and Agarwal, "More Stars Stay, but the Brightest Ones Still Leave: Job Hopping in the Shadow of Patent Enforcement."

²⁸ Tia Rahmania, Anizar Rahayu, and Mulia Saria Dewi, "Decoding Job-Hopping Behavior: The Role of Organizational Culture, Emotional Exhaustion, and Dual Motives in Career Transitions," *Acta Psychologica* 260 (2025): 105745, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105745>.

engagement, especially if the organization demonstrates a genuine interest in employees' needs and ongoing professional development.

Market contextual factors act as catalysts that reinforce micro-determinants through the dynamics of labor supply and demand. When the market tightens with high demand for talent, employees have greater bargaining power and flexibility to seek positions that offer better financial benefits. This situation is exacerbated by sectoral wage inflation, as documented by Nguyen and Le, where disparities in wage increases across firms create powerful structural incentives for rational mobility behavior.²⁹ Furthermore, the legal architecture and institutional configuration of certain markets also trigger job segmentation that forces mobility. For example, the outsourcing system in the H-1B visa program in the United States creates a market that limits access to quality jobs, trapping workers in inferior working conditions with transparently low wages that force them to constantly move to achieve higher career aspirations.³⁰

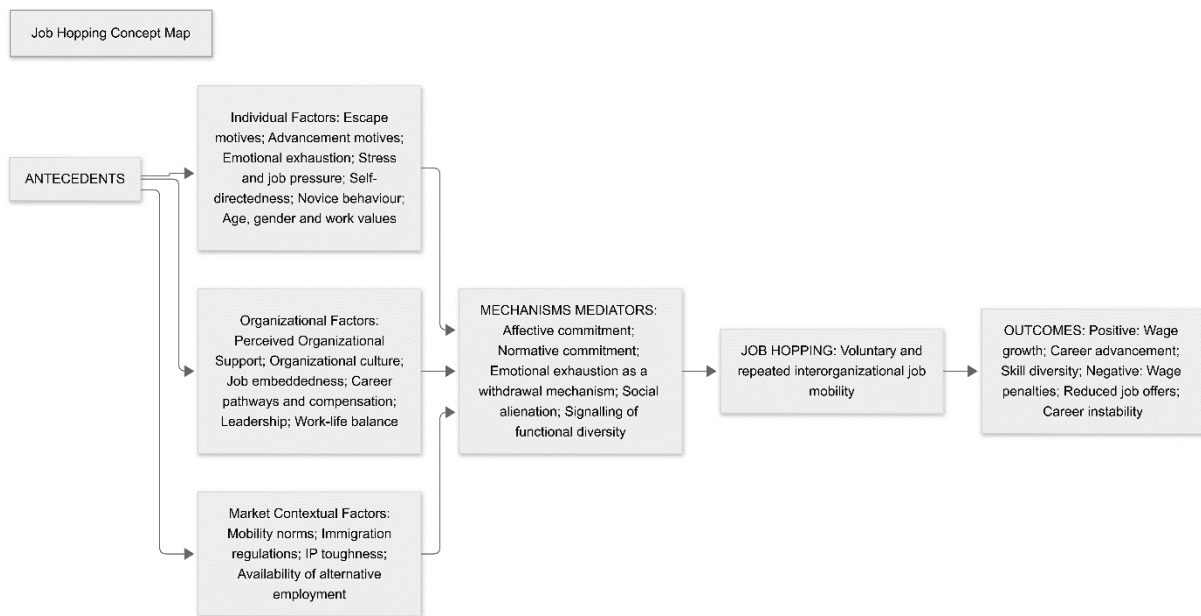


Figure 4. Conceptual Variable Map of Job Hopping

2. Human Capital Accumulation and External Labor Market Dynamics

External labor market dynamics have become an important framework for understanding the relationship between job-hopping behavior and human capital accumulation. In highly dynamic market contexts such as the information technology

²⁹ Nguyen and Le, "Determinants of Job-Hopping Behavior: The Case of Information Technology Sector."

³⁰ Robin L Savinar, "Job Hopping & Hunkering down: How H-1B Migrant Workers Survive the U.S. Labour Market," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48, no. 3 (February 17, 2022): 811-29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1610366>.

sector in the United States, the labor market can function as a talent pool mechanism that accelerates human capital accumulation through exposure across roles and projects (a high-velocity labor market).³¹ Furthermore, structural factors such as organizational size, sector, and organizational dynamics also shape mobility opportunities, so mobility is not solely viewed as an individual choice but as a response to the labor market architecture and organizational context³². This combination of external market dynamics and institutional determinants highlights how human capital accumulation is directly linked to mobility patterns, particularly in innovation ecosystems that rely heavily on talent flows.

From a positive perspective, external job mobility can enhance the accumulation of General Human Capital (GH) through the accumulation of cross-functional experience, networks, and broad adaptability. Empirical evidence suggests that moves that bring about functional variation tend to increase the skill diversity and competitiveness of candidates in high-stakes selection processes, which in turn improves overall employability.³³ When alternative opportunities are clearly perceived, mobility becomes a mechanism for learning and career renewal that encourages workers to continuously improve their competencies, making the benefits of human capital (GH) more tangible for both individuals and organizations.³⁴ In aggregate, stronger GH capacity through mobility also contributes to the dynamics of industrial innovation because the transfer of knowledge and best practices between organizations can accelerate the accumulation of human capital at the industry level.³⁵

However, the downside of market contextual factors also needs to be considered. Adverse selection and knowledge loss are real risks when mobility occurs in a context of asymmetric information and uncertainty about workers' initial performance. An initial job mismatch or a lack of long-term ties can weigh down the overall quality of human capital accumulation and impact short-term productivity, particularly for recent

³¹ Wu, "Constantly on the Move Chinese Engineers' Job-Hopping Strategies in Information Technology Work."

³² Steenackers and Guerry, "Determinants of Job-Hopping: An Empirical Study in Belgium."

³³ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes."

³⁴ Saleem and Qamar, "An Investigation of the Antecedents of Turnover Intentions and Job Hopping Behavior: An Empirical Study of Universities in Pakistan."

³⁵ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes"; Saleem and Qamar, "An Investigation of the Antecedents of Turnover Intentions and Job Hopping Behavior: An Empirical Study of Universities in Pakistan."

graduates who are vulnerable to initial learning frictions.³⁶ Furthermore, intense mobility can impose costs on teams and disrupt performance during transitions, making human capital allocation less efficient if moves are made too frequently or too quickly without effective onboarding mechanisms.³⁷ These findings emphasize that contextual markets influence the weight of GH benefits derived from mobility and highlight the risk of losing firm-specific skills when shifts occur at the system level.

Implicitly, the distinction between General Human Capital (GH) and Firm-Specific Human Capital (FSHC) is evident in mobility patterns observed across contexts. In some highly competitive labor market contexts, cross-firm mobility tends to enhance GH through skill expansion and broad networks, as demonstrated by increased functional diversity in executive candidates with a history of moving companies,³⁸ while investments in FSHC tend to retain talent within a given organization and may pose a risk of losing skilled talent if market pressures force exits despite strong FSHC. The Gen Z phenomenon in India and Southeast Asia, which exhibits more flexible career orientations and responsiveness to organizational support, highlights how external work value preferences can modulate the balance between GH and FSHC in modern markets.³⁹ Overall, labor market dynamics reflect that human capital accumulation is the result of the interaction between external mobility opportunities (which drive GH) and the need to develop firm-unique knowledge (FSHC), with demographic and industry contexts acting as determinants of the benefit and cost curves of such mobility.

3. Economic Consequences and Avenues for Future Research

The impact of job mobility on the labor market displays a contrasting dynamic between individual benefits and organizational costs. From an income perspective, strategic employer changes have been shown to generate significant wage growth in both the short and long term.⁴⁰ However, from a managerial perspective, uncontrolled job

³⁶ Fan and DeVaro, "Job Hopping and Adverse Selection in the Labor Market."

³⁷ Ganco, Ziedonis, and Agarwal, "More Stars Stay, but the Brightest Ones Still Leave: Job Hopping in the Shadow of Patent Enforcement."

³⁸ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes."

³⁹ Chand, Tandon, and Mishra, "Get Cold Feet: Job Hopping a Conundrum in the Stable Employment of Gen Z Employees at Industry 5.0"; K. P T P Pathirana, Ananda K L Jayawardana, and A. W M M Atapattu, "Job-Hopping Intention of Generation Z Professionals: Impact of Work Values and Perceived Organizational Support," *Millennial Asia*, September 29, 2025, 09763996251365345, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09763996251365345>.

⁴⁰ Yehuda Baruch et al., "Careers and Labor-Market Stability vs. Dynamisms: Using Big-Data to Optimize Career Trajectories for Better Outcomes," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 163 (2025): 104180, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2025.104180>.

mobility actually triggers talent depreciation due to the loss of firm-specific knowledge that is difficult to replace immediately.⁴¹ At the market level, this behavior is often interpreted through the lens of signaling theory, where individuals with a history of frequent job moves face the risk of employability penalties due to information asymmetries that make employers skeptical of candidate reliability.⁴² Furthermore, in segmented markets, job mobility is often not a discretionary career strategy, but rather a consequence of structural exploitation within contracting or outsourcing systems that limit access to quality jobs.⁴³

A synthesis of the current literature reveals several critical gaps that need to be addressed in future research. There is an urgent need to expand the geographic scope of research to test the universality of these findings across economic systems with different income classifications.⁴⁴ Furthermore, future literature should begin investigating hidden economic costs, such as the impact of mobility on workers' mental health and the phenomenon of "quiet quitting," which have been overlooked by traditional friction-cost analyses.⁴⁵ From a methodological perspective, the use of longitudinal designs is urgently needed to map stronger causal relationships and explore the mediating role of broader dimensions of organizational commitment, such as normative and continuance commitment.⁴⁶

Efforts to deepen our understanding of career transitions also require the integration of qualitative methods to explore the deeper reasons behind voluntary and involuntary turnover.⁴⁷ It is also crucial for future researchers to investigate how the institutional configuration and legal architecture of the labor market influence long-term social integration for specific groups of workers.⁴⁸ Finally, exploring additional moderating variables such as generational differences and macroeconomic volatility is

⁴¹ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes."

⁴² Fan and DeVaro, "Job Hopping and Adverse Selection in the Labor Market."

⁴³ Savinar, "Job Hopping & Hunkering down: How H-1B Migrant Workers Survive the U.S. Labour Market."

⁴⁴ Rahman, Rahayu, and Dewi, "Decoding Job-Hopping Behavior: The Role of Organizational Culture, Emotional Exhaustion, and Dual Motives in Career Transitions."

⁴⁵ Thanh-Tuyen Tran, Thai-Thanh Nguyen, and Nhu-Ty Nguyen, "Determinants Influencing Job-Hopping Behavior and Turnover Intention: An Investigation among Gen Z in the Marketing Field," *Asia Pacific Management Review* 30, no. 2 (2025): 100358, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2025.100358>.

⁴⁶ Tran, Nguyen, and Nguyen.

⁴⁷ Baruch et al., "Careers and Labor-Market Stability vs. Dynamisms: Using Big-Data to Optimize Career Trajectories for Better Outcomes."

⁴⁸ Savinar, "Job Hopping & Hunkering down: How H-1B Migrant Workers Survive the U.S. Labour Market."

key to understanding the evolution of mobility behavior in a dynamic global landscape.⁴⁹ Through this more diverse approach, economic and managerial policies can be formulated more precisely to balance the need for worker flexibility with the stability of organizational productivity.

4. Managerial and Macroeconomic Policy Implications

Managerial implications at the micro level call for organizations to shift from a reactive retention model to a talent management strategy based on employee motivational segmentation. Human resource practitioners are advised to use assessment instruments such as the Job-Hopping Motives Scale to differentiate between employees with advancement motives focused on growth, versus escape motives driven by impulsivity due to stress or the work environment.⁵⁰ For advancement-oriented groups, organizations should provide structured career paths with transparent promotions and formal mentorship programs to convey their proactivity internally.⁵¹ Conversely, for employees who tend to engage in mobility as refugees, managers need to intervene through holistic well-being improvements, flexible work options, and supportive transformational leadership to mitigate premature exit.⁵² Selection policies should also be more discerning in disseminating candidates' mobility histories, recognizing that functional diversity from interorganizational moves can be a learning asset if managed through reward systems and equitable feedback.⁵³

At the macroeconomic policy level, governments and industry authorities need to establish regulations that balance labor demand with the protection of human capital investment. Policies such as enforcing non-compete agreements and protecting intellectual property have been shown to influence worker incentives to relocate, but overly rigid regulations risk hindering the flow of top talent, the driving force of national innovation.⁵⁴ Therefore, more targeted industrial policies are needed, including sector-

⁴⁹ Rahmania, Rahayu, and Dewi, "Decoding Job-Hopping Behavior: The Role of Organizational Culture, Emotional Exhaustion, and Dual Motives in Career Transitions."

⁵⁰ Lake, Highhouse, and Shrift, "Validation of the Job-Hopping Motives Scale."

⁵¹ Arimbi Apriliani et al., "Driver Factors of Job Hopping among Corporate Employees: A Systematic Literature Review," *Acta Psychologica* 260 (2025): 105658, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105658>.

⁵² Apriliani et al.

⁵³ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes."

⁵⁴ Huasheng Gao, Juan Luo, and Tilan Tang, "Effects of Managerial Labor Market on Executive Compensation: Evidence from Job-Hopping," *Journal of Accounting and Economics* 59, no. 2 (2015): 203-20, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacceco.2015.02.001>.

specific wage incentives to stabilize highly volatile markets and the provision of skills development (upskilling) facilities to ensure workforce mobility results in increased aggregate innovative capacity.⁵⁵ National interventions should also target strengthening career support for young workers through training programs aligned with market needs, thereby minimizing friction costs through more efficient onboarding processes across sectors.⁵⁶

Overall, integration between firm-level welfare incentives and national regulatory frameworks is key to minimizing the inefficiency costs arising from information mismatches and frictions. Economic policy should be driven by investments in labor market information infrastructure that enhances signals regarding cultural fit and career growth pathways, significantly reducing search costs and the risk of misallocation of human capital during the transition period.⁵⁷ Furthermore, public authorities need to formulate intellectual property rights policies that not only protect innovation but also avoid excessive barriers to skilled labor mobility to maintain dynamic efficiency at the industry level⁵⁸. As a complementary measure, managerial strategies should shift to strengthening structured internal mobility to build functional diversity, ultimately serving as an effective substitute for costly external recruitment⁵⁹. By mapping policies that adapt to sectoral characteristics, the balance between the need for individual flexibility and the stability of organizational productivity can be maintained without ignoring broader macroeconomic implications.⁶⁰

D. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the contemporary labor mobility phenomenon is a manifestation of market disequilibrium triggered by the convergence of generational career aspirations and post-pandemic economic volatility. The efficiency of talent allocation at a macro level can be optimized if organizations are willing to establish retention strategies through the development of internal career paths that combine

⁵⁵ Nguyen and Le, "Determinants of Job-Hopping Behavior: The Case of Information Technology Sector."

⁵⁶ Siew, Wong, and Lim, "Should I Go or Should I Stay: Job Hopping in Malaysia Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Service Sectors."

⁵⁷ Siew, Wong, and Lim.

⁵⁸ Ganco, Ziedonis, and Agarwal, "More Stars Stay, but the Brightest Ones Still Leave: Job Hopping in the Shadow of Patent Enforcement."

⁵⁹ Won and Bidwell, "Finding the Right Path to the Top: How Past Interorganizational Moves Impact Executive Selection Outcomes."

⁶⁰ Baruch et al., "Careers and Labor-Market Stability vs. Dynamisms: Using Big-Data to Optimize Career Trajectories for Better Outcomes."

functional diversity and humanistic work flexibility. Strategically, public authorities need to intervene through standardization of labor market information infrastructure and the formulation of sectoral wage regulations to minimize frictional costs that erode national productivity. Finally, strengthening the balance between intellectual property rights protection and freedom of talent mobility is key to maintaining economic resilience and encouraging sustainable innovation growth amidst an increasingly volatile global market landscape.

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