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RETAIL EMPLOYEES' JOB HOPPING: THE ROLES OF EXHAUSTION, SATISFACTION, AND SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT: Retail employee mobility is increasing in emerging labor markets. This study advances turnover theory by integrating perceived organizational support, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction within a single structural model to explain job hopping intention rather than general turnover intention. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data from 458 retail employees in South Sulawesi were analyzed with SEM in Jamovi. The findings reveal that emotional exhaustion significantly increases job hopping intention, while job satisfaction reduces it, whereas perceived organizational support shows no direct effect. These results indicate that psychological strain and affective evaluation of work are more decisive than formal support mechanisms in shaping mobility decisions. Managerially, retail firms should prioritize emotional well-being, workload balance, and job satisfaction to reduce excessive employee mobility and sustain workforce stability.

Keywords*:* Emotional Exhaustion; Job Hopping Intention; Job Satisfaction; Perceived Organizational Support; Retail Employees

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are the primary asset in achieving a company's competitive advantage. Well-managed HR can drive innovation, efficiency, and sustainable growth. Effective HR management directly impacts productivity, retention, and organizational stability (Giauque et al., 2013). Therefore, companies are required not only to focus on achieving performance targets but also to pay attention to the psychological and emotional well-being of their employees. HR management is not merely a functional necessity but also a strategic factor that significantly influences overall organizational performance and culture.

In the retail industry, HR management faces more complex challenges than in other sectors. A dynamic work environment, high operational pace, and increasing customer expectations create continuous pressure on employees. They are expected to remain friendly and responsive despite experiencing physical and emotional fatigue. If this condition is not properly managed, the risk of burnout increases and eventually triggers the intention to change jobs (Lim & Moon, 2023). The nature of retail work demands resilience and adaptability, but without adequate support systems, such pressures can lead to high employee turnover. Today, many employees change jobs within a relatively short period. This phenomenon of frequent job-switching is commonly referred to as job hopping (Yuen, 2016).

The high rate of job hopping among retail employees has been a persistent issue for years. A survey by Retail Systems Research (2019) reported that 65% of retail companies experience high employee turnover, particularly among front-line staff such as cashiers and sales associates. This situation has continued in subsequent years. Retail Systems Research (2022) survey found that 42% of retail employees expressed intentions to leave their jobs within the next six months. Retail employees occupy boundary-spanning roles because they often serve as representatives of the store and play a crucial part in shaping its image. From the customer's perspective, they are responsible for service quality and internal communication regarding customer needs (Chung et al., 2012). This dual role places them under substantial pressure on one hand, they must meet customer expectations, while on the other, they must comply with company operational standards. Due to this boundary-spanning involvement, research identifies retail employees as a group highly susceptible to emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. High job demands, coupled with ongoing expectations to deliver excellent service, can create an imbalance between work demands and available personal or organizational resources. This imbalance can decrease job satisfaction and trigger intentions to leave, known as job hopping, as a form of escape from emotionally draining conditions. For companies, it not only results in the loss of human capital but also generates additional costs associated with recruitment, training, and workplace adaptation (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). As the labor market becomes more dynamic and competitive, understanding the psychological factors driving job hopping behavior is essential for organizational sustainability.

One of the most frequently associated factors with job hopping intention is job satisfaction. Employees who perceive that their work no longer provides comfort, recognition, or meaningful value tend to seek new opportunities (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). In the fast-paced and demanding retail environment, job satisfaction becomes a critical variable influencing employee loyalty to the company. Low job satisfaction, when combined with other factors, can increase the likelihood that employees will consider leaving their current jobs for better opportunities elsewhere.

In addition to job satisfaction, perceived organizational support (POS) plays a significant role in determining whether employees stay or leave. POS reflects employees' perceptions of how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Sharma et al., 2023). Interestingly, in certain situations, high POS may even foster a sense of confidence among employees to pursue better career opportunities outside the organization. Although POS generally functions as a protective factor, it can simultaneously instill a sense of empowerment that influences employees' decisions to explore alternative career paths.

Emotional exhaustion, one of the core dimensions of burnout, also significantly contributes to job hopping intention. Employees experiencing this condition often feel overwhelmed, emotionally detached, and disconnected from their work (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Over time, this leads to psychological disengagement and the desire to leave as a form of escape. If left unaddressed, emotional exhaustion can diminish motivation and overall job satisfaction, thereby increasing employees' inclination to quit.

Although the four variables perceived organizational support, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and job hopping intention have been examined separately or partially in various organizational contexts, few studies have specifically explored the interrelationships among these variables within a single structural model for retail employees. In fact, the characteristics of retail work possess unique complexities that distinguish it from other industries, such as customer service pressure, flexible working hours, and fast-paced operations. These distinctive challenges make the retail sector an ideal context for exploring the dynamics among these variables and their collective impact on job hopping intention. We suggest that an analytical approach capable of capturing both direct and indirect relationships is required with SEM allows researchers to examine complex models and evaluate multiple relationships among variables at once, making it the most suitable analytical tool for this study (Hair et al., 2019). This study contributes to academic literature in organizational behavior and industrial-organizational psychology by offering new perspectives on the factors influencing job hopping intention and retention within the retail context.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Job Hopping

Yuen (2016) stated that conceptually, job hopping can be equated with voluntary turnover, a condition in which employees voluntarily choose to leave a company within a relatively short period. However, not all types of voluntary turnover can be considered job hopping, as job hopping specifically refers to employees who frequently move between companies within a short time, even shortly after joining. In defining job hoppingPranaya (2014) provided a more specific explanation of its position within turnover intention, stating that job hopping is a form of voluntary turnover in which an employee chooses to change workplaces frequently within one to two years based on their own will and decision, rather than as a result of company policy. In line with this, Gerhart (1990) defined voluntary turnover as a process in which employees voluntarily decide to leave the organization where they work. Gerhart emphasized that this decision is based on the employee's personal desire rather than being caused by termination or downsizing initiated by the company. Job hopping itself can be understood as the act of changing jobs within a one- to two-year period, either due to personal motivation or external factors such as company closure (Kafeel & Alvi, 2015).

Lake et al. (2017) identified two primary motives behind job hopping, namely career advancement and escape motives. The career advancement motive reflects employees' desire to change jobs for career progression, particularly when the current organization does not provide promotion or self-development opportunities. Meanwhile, the escape motive describes employees' drive to leave unfavorable work environments, characterized by impulsiveness and uncertainty. Mobley (1977) added that some employees leave their jobs quickly and impulsively without careful consideration. These two motives highlight distinct reasons underlying job hopping behavior among employees.

Furthermore, job hopping has a significant impact on organizations. One of the main consequences is the increase in recruitment and training costs, as every departing employee must be replaced through a new search, hiring, and training process. This process not only consumes time but also strains the company's budget, which could otherwise be allocated for more productive purposes. According to Transaction Cost Theory, first introduced by Coase (1937) and later developed by Williamson (1985), employee turnover generates high transaction costs, including search, training, and adaptation expenses for new hires. In addition, job hopping can reduce team effectiveness because new employees need time to adapt to the company's culture and procedures, which may lower overall team productivity.

Beyond the aspects of cost and productivity, job hopping also leads to the loss of valuable knowledge and specific expertise possessed by employees. The Organizational Knowledge Theory proposed by Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) emphasizes that both tacit knowledge (which is difficult to document) and explicit knowledge (which can be documented) are vital organizational assets. When employees leave, they take with them internal process knowledge, client relationships, and business strategies that are not easily replaced, potentially causing stagnation in innovation and a decline in service or product quality. Moreover, high employee job hopping

rates can lower the morale of remaining workers, create instability in the work environment, and increase stress levels. Such uncertainty can ultimately reduce employee engagement and commitment to the company's long-term goals, thereby hindering organizational growth and success.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is a concept first introduced by Eisenberger et al. (1986) defined as employees' global belief regarding the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. The impact of POS on employees is highly significant in influencing performance. A high level of POS can enhance feelings of appreciation and recognition, which in turn fosters loyalty and motivation to contribute more to the organization (Ahmad et al., 2020). Recent studies indicate that POS can strengthen the positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment while reducing stress levels and the intention to leave the organization (Khan et al., 2022). Employees who feel supported by their organization tend to have higher work engagement and are less likely to experience burnout or emotional exhaustion (Sumardi et al., 2021). Thus, organizations that focus on enhancing POS can improve overall performance while reducing employee turnover rates.

POS also represents a form of social exchange that develops through employees' experiences of fairness, supportive working conditions, and recognition provided by the organization (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). When employees perceive such support, they tend to develop a moral obligation to reciprocate through commitment and positive behaviors toward the organization. Eisenberger et al. (1986)emphasized that this mutually beneficial reciprocal relationship between employees and organizations is rooted in the norm of reciprocity, whereby employees who feel treated well are more likely to respond with loyalty and dedication to their work. Ultimately, such support strengthens employees' desire to remain within the organization and contribute to achieving its goals. Organizations that invest in employee well-being and satisfaction typically do so with the expectation of receiving loyalty and emotional attachment in return. POS plays an important role in enhancing job satisfaction, as employees who feel valued and supported are generally more satisfied with their jobs. Eisenberger et al. (1986) demonstrated that POS is positively related to job satisfaction, where feelings of appreciation motivate employees to make greater contributions.

Beyond job satisfaction, POS also enhances organizational commitment and psychological well-being. Meyer & Allen (1991) affective commitment theory emphasizes that organizational support can strengthen employees' emotional attachment to the company, whileRhoades & Eisenberger (2002)found that POS is positively associated with organizational commitment. Furthermore, research by Baran et al. (2012) revealed that POS is positively correlated with psychological well-being, indicating that employees who feel supported tend to experience lower stress levels and better mental health. Therefore, POS has broad impacts on job satisfaction, loyalty, and employee well-being, making it essential for organizations to continuously enhance the support they provide.

Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is a condition in which individuals feel emotionally drained due to excessive job demands (Maslach et al., 2001). This condition occurs when a person experiences prolonged physical and emotional fatigue. Emotional exhaustion shares significant similarities with stress responses often discussed in occupational stress research, such as fatigue, work-related depression, psychosomatic complaints, and anxiety levels (Cropanzano et al., 2003). Emotional Exhaustion is defined as an overwhelming sense of emotional depletion and the exhaustion of emotional resources, typically beginning with general symptoms such as anxiety before work, which then develops into feelings of helplessness in coping with work demands. The imbalance between work and the self can cause emotional strain that eventually depletes emotional resources (Arens & Morin, 2016).

Furthermore, emotional exhaustion is also understood as persistent physical and emotional fatigue resulting from professional, personal, or prolonged stress in the workplace. This condition reflects a state of overload and depletion of emotional energy caused by work (Hao et al., 2015).

The exhaustion is characterized by simultaneous physical, mental, and emotional fatigue. Complex and confusing situations can serve as sources of stress for individuals or groups, as can job demands that exceed an individual's capacity or require deep analytical effort (Ducharme et al., 2008).

As found by Feng & Angeline (2010), teachers experiencing high levels of emotional exhaustion and low job satisfaction are more likely to engage in job hopping. Emotional exhaustion often arises from prolonged work stress and a lack of support in the work environment. Under conditions of low job satisfaction, teachers feel that their emotional and professional needs are unmet, leading to a decline in commitment to their institutions. Thus, the combination of emotional exhaustion and low job satisfaction serves as a major driver of teachers' intentions to leave their jobs.

Employees experiencing emotional exhaustion tend to feel incapable of coping with work demands, which eventually triggers turnover intentions. Majeed et al. (2023) state that there is a positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and job hopping, where higher levels of emotional exhaustion increase the likelihood of employees considering or engaging in job transitions. Emotional exhaustion may arise as a response to high job demands, lack of social support, and imbalance between effort and reward Bakker & Demerouti (2017). This condition causes employees to feel pressured, lose motivation, and experience performance decline (Maslach et al., 2001). Consequently, the relationship between job satisfaction and job hopping intention becomes further aggravated, as employees who are dissatisfied and emotionally exhausted are more likely to seek alternative employment.

Job Satisfaction

Spector (2022) stated that job satisfaction refers to the development of employees' feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction toward their work. Job satisfaction represents a positive affect toward one's job and is described as a stable evaluation of how well the job fulfills an employee's needs, desires, or expectations. According to Faroque et al. (2020), job satisfaction is a collection of an individual's feelings toward their work both positive and negative emotion that reflect the extent to which a person likes their job. These cognitive and affective reactions vary depending on individual perceptions, and job satisfaction can be considered a psychological feeling about one's work. Job satisfaction is a work-related affective state that tends to result from the cognitive evaluation of various aspects of an individual's job, as well as the individual's affective response to their overall work experience Pepe et al. (2019).

Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, employee job satisfaction can be understood through motivator and hygiene factors. Employees' positive feelings toward their work are considered essential for job satisfaction. Enjoyment of work and good performance are attributed to motivator factors, while dissatisfaction arises from hygiene factors. Motivator factors drive individuals to fulfill higher-level needs, whereas hygiene factors relate to the fulfillment of lower level needs in the workplace. Both factors contribute to determining the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction experienced by employees (Gibson et al., 2012).

According to Churchill et al. (1976) job satisfaction consists of seven key dimensions that collectively influence how employees evaluate their work experience. The first dimension, overall job, refers to the extent to which individuals feel satisfied with their job as a whole, including its nature, challenges, responsibilities, and opportunities to utilize their skills. The co-workers dimension reflects the quality of relationships with colleagues, characterized by support, collaboration, friendship, and interaction in sharing ideas and feedback.

The third dimension, supervision, evaluates the quality of supervision from leaders, in terms of fairness, competence, and support particularly whether supervisors provide useful direction and feedback. The policy dimension relates to satisfaction with organizational policies, including the availability of resources, training, equipment, and support that directly affect employee performance. Pay refers to how employees perceive their compensation salary, bonuses, and other benefits and whether these rewards are commensurate with their workload and contributions. The promotion dimension concerns opportunities for career development, promotion prospects, and fairness in the promotion process, ideally based on performance. Finally, the customers dimension focuses on employees' experiences when interacting with

customers, including the quality of relationships, customer satisfaction, and opportunities to deliver better service.

Research shows that job satisfaction is positively related to productivity (Judge et al., 2001), employee retention (Hom & Griffeth, 1995) and psychological well-being (Faragher et al., 2005). Employees who are satisfied with their work tend to be more motivated, less likely to engage in job hopping, and possess better mental health. This makes job satisfaction a key factor in maintaining individual performance while reducing job hopping intention. Moreover, job satisfaction enhances affective and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), fosters Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Organ & Ryan, 1995), and is associated with creativity and innovation (Amabile et al., 1996; Hackman & Oldham, 1974). High job satisfaction is also correlated with better work–life balance, which can reduce burnout and improve overall life satisfaction (Haar et al., 2014). Thus, job satisfaction has a broad impact on productivity, loyalty, well-being, innovation, and work–life balance, making it an essential aspect for organizations to prioritize.

H1: Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Emotional Exhaustion, and Job Satisfaction simultaneously influence Job Hopping Intention among retail employees.

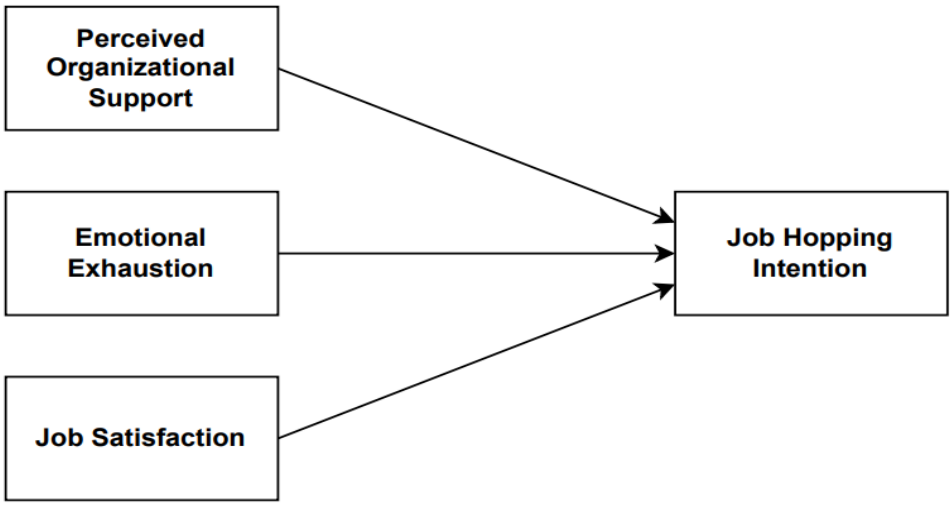


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

Before conducting Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, an important preliminary step is to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure that each construct in the research model meets adequate validity and reliability criteria. CFA aims to confirm the factor structure based on theory and previous research findings, as well as to assess the extent to which the indicators accurately represent the latent constructs (Baharum et al., 2023). The CFA model evaluation is conducted using several model fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The use of multiple indices provides a more comprehensive picture of the model fit between empirical data and the theoretical model (Sathyanarayana & Mohanasundaram, 2024).

According to general guidelines, CFI and TLI values of ≥ 0.95 indicate a very good level of model fit, while RMSEA values of ≤ 0.06 and SRMR values of ≤ 0.08 suggest that the model has a low level of approximation error McNeish & Wolf (2023). This test aims to ensure that the latent structure truly represents the observed data and that the relationships among indicators and constructs are consistent. The validation process through CFA also ensures that the measurement model has good convergent and discriminant validity before testing the causal relationships among constructs through SEM. This is in line with the perspective of Goretzko et

al. (2024), who emphasize that measurement reliability and validity are the main prerequisites for valid interpretation in structural models. In addition, the study by Taasoobshirazi & Wang (2016) shows that indices such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR have good sensitivity to sample size and model complexity, thus they are recommended to be used together. Therefore, conducting CFA prior to SEM is a crucial methodological step to ensure that the research model has strong empirical and theoretical fit. A model that meets the fit criteria through CFA can then proceed to the SEM analysis stage to test the causal relationships among latent variables with a high level of reliability.

Population and Sample

Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique with the iinclusion criteria, i.e., Retail company employees; Working in the South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. According to Crocker & Algina (2008) the minimum sample size for quantitative research should be at least 200 respondents or five to ten times the number of items in the research instrument. Based on this guideline, the minimum number of participants required for this study was 200. The researcher successfully recruited 458 employees who were willing to participate, consisting of 231 males and 227 females. Data collection was conducted by disseminating digital posters via social media and the researcher's personal network.

Research Instruments

The research instruments consisted of four scales translated and adapted into Indonesian by the researcher. Job satisfaction was measured using the shortened version of the Industrial Sales Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Churchill et al. (1976), comprising seven items. Perceived organizational support was assessed using the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), consisting of sixteen items. Emotional exhaustion was measured through the Emotional Exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), comprising nine items. Job hopping intention was assessed using the Job Hopping Intention Scale (JHI) developed by Yuen (2016), consisting of four items:

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

As an initial step in measuring the quality of the developed model, testing the model fit using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is crucial. In this section, the researcher will present the CFA results and provide an analysis of the values that indicate whether the proposed model is statistically acceptable. A CFA model is considered to have a good fit if the values of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and TuckerLewis Index (TLI) are close to 0.90 or higher; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is below 0.06 or lower, with a nonsignificant probability value and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) close to 0.08 or lower (Kline, 2023). Table 1 presents the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for the full model, which tested all research constructs. In this table, the model was evaluated based on four goodness-of-fit indicators, namely TLI (Tucker–Lewis Index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation).

Table 1. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Model	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Full Model CFA	0.913	0.921	0.051	0.052

The analysis results show that the full model obtained a TLI value of 0.913, a CFI value of 0.921, an SRMR value of 0.051, and an RMSEA value of 0.052. The TLI and CFI values above 0.90 indicate that the model has a good level of fit with the data. In addition, the SRMR value of

0.051 is well below the 0.08 threshold, indicating that the difference between the model covariance matrix and the data is very small. The RMSEA value of 0.052 is also below the 0.06 criterion, suggesting that the model has a low and acceptable approximation error.

Overall, these results indicate that the full CFA model has a good fit and is suitable for further analysis stages, such as testing the structural model, in accordance with CFA model evaluation standards (Kline, 2023).

Reliability Analysis

This study employed Composite Reliability (CR) to assess construct reliability because this method is considered more appropriate and representative within the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. Unlike Cronbach's Alpha, which assumes that all indicators have equal weights or contributions to the construct, CR takes into account the actual factor loadings of each indicator, thereby producing a more precise reliability estimate that more accurately reflects the strength of the relationship between indicators and the latent construct (Bacon et al., 1995).

Furthermore, CR is known to be more statistically stable and not influenced by the number of indicators within a construct, making it a more accurate and consistent measure for ensuring the level of internal consistency of the measurement model. Thus, the use of CR in this study provides a stronger basis for evaluating construct reliability compared to traditional reliability methods such as Cronbach's Alpha (Haji-Othman & Yusuff, 2022).

Table 2 presents the results of the Composite Reliability (CR) analysis, indicating that all constructs in the research model demonstrate a very good level of reliability. According to general guidelines, CR values above 0.70 indicate adequate internal consistency, while values exceeding 0.80 reflect high and stable reliability (Hair et al., 2019). As shown, the constructs Job Hopping Intention (CR = 0.891) and Perceived Organizational Support (CR = 0.890) have almost identical reliability values, both falling into the highly reliable category. This indicates that the indicators within each construct consistently represent the latent variable being measured. The construct Emotional Exhaustion (CR = 0.918) shows the highest reliability value among the four constructs, suggesting that the relationships between its indicators and the latent construct are very strong, with relatively low measurement error. This finding demonstrates that the scale used to measure emotional exhaustion possesses excellent stability and accuracy.

Table 2. Results of Composite Reliability

Model	CR
Job Hopping Intention	0.891
Perceived Organizational Support	0.890
Emotional Exhaustion	0.918
Job Satisfaction	0.826

The Job Satisfaction (CR = 0.826) also exhibits strong reliability, although slightly lower than the other constructs. Nonetheless, this value remains above the 0.80 threshold, indicating that all indicators within the job satisfaction construct consistently measure the intended concept. Overall, these findings indicate that all constructs in the study meet the Composite Reliability criteria, thereby confirming that the instruments used have a high level of reliability and are suitable for subsequent analysis stages, such as testing the causal relationships among constructs through SEM as in Table 3.

Table 3. Fit Indices Table

Model	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Perceived Organizational Support, Emotional Exhaustion, Job Satisfaction, and Job Hopping Intention	0.933	0.970	0.086	0.047

This model shows a very good overall fit. Although some indicator values are slightly lower than the ideal standards, such as SRMR, the other values, especially RMSEA, CFI, and TLI, indicate that this model fits the data very well. The Scaled model can be accepted as an appropriate model for this study. Table 4 shows the parameter estimates for the relationship between Job Hopping Intention and its predictors: Perceived Organizational Support, Emotional Exhaustion, and Job Satisfaction.

Table. 4 Parameter Estimates

Dependent	Predictor	Estimate	SE	(β)	*p*-value
Job Hopping Intention	Perceived Organizational Support	0.888	0.0786	0.114	0.105
	Emotional Exhaustion	0.333	0.1539	0.673	<0.001
	Job Satisfaction	0.210	0.1293	0.177	0.031

DISCUSSION

Job hopping in retail reflects a calculated psychological response rather than impulsive mobility. This study situates perceived organizational support (POS), emotional exhaustion (EE), and job satisfaction (JS) within a unified explanatory system to understand job hopping intention (JHI). Although POS did not exert a direct effect on JHI, this finding refines rather than contradicts theory. In fluid labor markets, external opportunities and career prospects can overshadow internal perceptions of support (Duong & Ho, 2024). Similar nonsignificant effects were reported by Herianto and Yanuar (2021), while Albalawi et al. (2019) demonstrate that POS often operates indirectly through mediators such as organizational commitment. Rooted in social exchange theory, POS emerges from fairness, recognition, and organizational care (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018), reinforcing reciprocity norms that theoretically sustain loyalty (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Yet contrasting findings from Fitriya and Kustini (2023), Mufidah and Wicaksono (2024), and Aulia et al. (2025) confirm that its influence varies across sectors and generations. In retail, where employment is often transitional, support alone may not anchor employees unless it translates into deeper psychological attachment.

Emotional exhaustion, by contrast, surfaced as the most potent predictor of job hopping intention. EE functions as a psychological depletion signal, prompting employees to withdraw from environments that threaten emotional stability (Majeed et al., 2023; Nursanti & Salsabila Dhiya, 2025). Retail employees perform boundary-spanning roles that intensify exposure to customer pressure, and organizational stressors such as workload imbalance and limited autonomy amplify exhaustion (Qin et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Evidence from Tran et al. (2025) and Nguyen and Le (2022) indicates that adaptive job design and supportive climates can buffer this effect; however, persistent strain erodes commitment and engagement. Emotional exhaustion is strongly linked to reduced job satisfaction and organizational attachment (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Panari et al., 2019), and mediates the impact of stressors on commitment (Omer & Ahmed, 2016). Within this framework, job hopping emerges as a rational coping mechanism aimed at restoring psychological equilibrium.

Job satisfaction operates as the principal stabilizing force in this system. Consistent with Chen et al. (2023), higher JS significantly reduces JHI by strengthening affective attachment and perceived value alignment. Satisfaction enhances psychological well-being and commitment (Zhang et al., 2023), particularly when supported by autonomy and meaningful career progression. Organizational practices such as recognition, development opportunities, and work–life balance further consolidate loyalty (Hur, 2025). Because job stress weakens satisfaction and intensifies turnover tendencies (Lin et al., 2024), strengthening JS mitigates both direct and indirect mobility pressures, a mechanism reinforced by Şahin et al. (2025). Integratively, POS shapes the organizational climate, EE disrupts emotional balance, and JS consolidates attachment. Effective retention strategies in retail must therefore manage emotional workload, cultivate meaningful satisfaction, and transform perceived support into tangible experiences that anchor employees within the organization (Callista & Fajrianthi, 2021; Naini & Riyanto, 2023).

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDY

This study confirms that job hopping intention among retail employees is primarily a psychological outcome shaped by emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction rather than by perceived organizational support alone. Emotional exhaustion emerged as the strongest predictor, indicating that sustained emotional strain pushes employees to reassess their attachment and seek alternatives. Job satisfaction functioned as a protective factor, reducing mobility intentions by strengthening affective attachment to work. In contrast, perceived organizational support did not directly suppress job hopping intention, suggesting that support perceptions must translate into reduced strain and enhanced satisfaction to become retention-relevant. These findings reposition retention strategy away from symbolic support toward concrete emotional workload management and meaningful work experience design. Practically, retail managers should prioritize burnout prevention through balanced scheduling, fair task allocation, structured recovery time, and accessible psychological support. Simultaneously, job enrichment, recognition systems, and career development pathways are necessary to cultivate durable satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Several limitations warrant caution. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference and captures perceptions at a single point in time, while the focus on one regional retail context limits broader generalizability. Self-reported measures may also introduce common method bias. Future research should incorporate longitudinal designs to observe how exhaustion and satisfaction evolve and shape mobility decisions over time. Examining mediating and moderating variables such as leadership style, work–life balance, employment status, or organizational culture would clarify the mechanisms linking support, strain, and turnover-related intentions. Comparative and cross-industry studies, as well as more diverse samples, would strengthen theoretical robustness and extend applicability across different labor market conditions.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical research standards. Prior to data collection, all respondents were informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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