



Exploring *Job Hugging* and *Job Hopping* Behavior among Generation Z Workers in Indonesia through the Lens of Islamic Economic Ethics

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Abstract

This study explores the experiences of Generation Z workers regarding job hugging and job hopping behavior in Indonesia through the lens of Islamic economic ethics. Using a phenomenological qualitative design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 Generation Z workers from various employment sectors in Indonesia during the research period. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings related to employment decisions and ethical considerations. The findings reveal three major themes: the pursuit of career development and financial improvement, concerns about job security and workplace well-being, and the role of Islamic economic ethics in shaping responsible career decisions. Participants viewed job mobility as acceptable when aligned with legitimate professional goals, while emphasizing responsibility, trustworthiness, and commitment in fulfilling work obligations. The study demonstrates that Islamic economic ethics provides an important moral framework for balancing career advancement with ethical responsibility in the workplace. These findings contribute to the growing literature on Generation Z employment behavior by offering an empirically grounded understanding of job hugging and job hopping within the context of Islamic economic ethics in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Job Hugging, Job Hopping, Islamic Economic Ethics, Generation Z, Employment Behavior*

Abstrak

Studi ini mengeksplorasi pengalaman pekerja Generasi Z terkait perilaku "*job hugging*" dan "*job hopping*" di Indonesia melalui lensa etika ekonomi Islam. Menggunakan desain kualitatif fenomenologis, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan 12 pekerja Generasi Z dari berbagai sektor pekerjaan di Indonesia selama periode penelitian. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola dan makna yang berulang terkait dengan keputusan pekerjaan dan pertimbangan etis. Temuan mengungkapkan tiga tema utama: pengejaran pengembangan karir dan peningkatan keuangan, kekhawatiran tentang keamanan kerja dan kesejahteraan di tempat kerja, dan peran etika ekonomi Islam dalam membentuk keputusan karir yang bertanggung jawab. Partisipan memandang mobilitas pekerjaan sebagai hal yang dapat diterima jika selaras dengan tujuan profesional yang sah, sambil menekankan tanggung jawab, kepercayaan, dan komitmen dalam memenuhi kewajiban kerja. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa etika ekonomi Islam menyediakan kerangka moral yang penting untuk menyeimbangkan kemajuan karir dengan tanggung jawab etis di tempat kerja. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada literatur yang berkembang tentang perilaku kerja Generasi Z dengan menawarkan pemahaman yang berlandaskan empiris tentang "*job hugging*" dan "*job hopping*" dalam konteks etika ekonomi Islam di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Bertahan di satu pekerjaan, Berpindah-pindah pekerjaan, Etika Ekonomi Islam, Generasi Z, Perilaku Ketenagakerjaan

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of the workplace has significantly reshaped employment patterns and career expectations among young workers (Sabila, 2024). As the newest generation entering the labor market, Generation Z demonstrates distinctive attitudes toward employment, career mobility, organizational commitment, and professional development (Rusmiati & Perkasa, 2025). Their exposure to rapid technological change, extensive access to information, and evolving workplace values has contributed to new forms of employment behavior that increasingly attract academic attention. Among these emerging patterns, job hopping and job hugging have become particularly relevant in understanding how Generation Z navigates contemporary career challenges (Apriliani et al., 2025).

Job hopping generally refers to the tendency of employees to change jobs within relatively short periods to obtain better career opportunities, higher compensation, improved working conditions, or enhanced professional development (Oktafiani et al., 2025). In contrast, job hugging is defined in this study as the decision of employees to remain in their current positions despite experiencing declining job engagement, limited career advancement opportunities, or reduced motivation, primarily because of perceived financial security, organizational stability, or uncertainty in the labor market (Ariani & Marsha, 2025). This definition distinguishes job hugging from organizational loyalty. While loyalty reflects positive commitment and identification with organizational goals, job hugging emphasizes employee retention driven by risk avoidance and concerns about economic uncertainty rather than intrinsic attachment to the organization (Eldiana & Herdiana, 2025).

Both phenomena reflect different responses to the increasingly dynamic and competitive labor market (Nurhasanah et al., 2025). Job hopping may provide opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and professional networking. However, frequent job

changes can also create challenges related to organizational commitment, workforce stability, and long-term career planning (Aulia et al., 2025). Conversely, job hugging may offer financial security and employment continuity but may also contribute to reduced productivity, lower work engagement, and limited professional growth when employees remain in positions that no longer align with their aspirations and competencies (Arlita et al., 2026). Consequently, understanding the motivations underlying these behaviors is important for both employees and organizations seeking to balance career development with sustainable workforce management (Fauzan Ahdi Widyaputra, 2026).

The growing relevance of job hopping and job hugging is closely associated with the characteristics of Generation Z. Previous studies suggest that Generation Z workers tend to value flexibility, meaningful work, continuous learning opportunities, and work-life balance (Edi Saputro, 2025). Unlike previous generations that often viewed long-term organizational tenure as an indicator of career success, many Generation Z workers perceive career mobility as a strategic means of achieving personal and professional goals. At the same time, economic uncertainty, labor market competition, and concerns about employment security may encourage some workers to remain in positions that provide stability even when job satisfaction decreases (Rusmiati & Perkasa, 2025). These contrasting tendencies illustrate the complexity of career decision-making among contemporary young workers (Safrillah, 2026).

Existing literature has extensively examined job hopping from the perspectives of organizational behavior, employee turnover, career development, and human resource management (Fitriana, 2024). Previous studies have identified factors such as compensation, promotion opportunities, organizational culture, leadership, and job satisfaction as important determinants of employees' intentions to change jobs (Tria Rahmatus Sholikha, 2024). Similarly, research on employee retention and organizational commitment has explored the factors that influence workers to remain in their current positions. However, most of these studies primarily focus on psychological, managerial, and economic explanations, while ethical and religious dimensions remain relatively underexplored (Safrillah, 2026).

In parallel, Islamic economic ethics has been widely recognized as a framework that guides individual behavior in economic and professional activities. Islamic ethical principles emphasize that work is not solely an economic activity aimed at generating income but also a moral responsibility toward society and God (Amani Sabila, 2025). Concepts such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *adl* (justice), *mas'uliyah* (responsibility), and *ihsan* (excellence) encourage individuals to perform their professional duties with integrity, accountability, and social awareness. Previous studies on Islamic Work Ethics have demonstrated positive associations with employee commitment, work motivation, organizational performance, and ethical conduct (Wayan Ristya Dewantari, 2025). Nevertheless, existing research has rarely examined how these ethical principles influence workers' perceptions of contemporary employment behaviors such as job hopping and job hugging (Loh et al., 2024).

A review of previous studies reveals several important gaps. First, research on job hopping has predominantly focused on economic, psychological, and organizational determinants without sufficiently exploring the role of religious and ethical values in shaping career decisions (Alifia Dwi Naila Putri, 2025). Second, studies on Islamic economic ethics have generally concentrated on organizational outcomes, employee performance, and workplace morality rather than career mobility and retention behaviors. Third, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how Generation Z workers

themselves interpret and experience job hopping and job hugging within the framework of Islamic economic ethics (Asria et al., 2025). As a result, the relationship between contemporary employment behavior and Islamic ethical values remains insufficiently understood.

To address these gaps, this study adopts a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of Generation Z workers in Indonesia regarding job hopping and job hugging. The study does not seek to determine whether these behaviors are categorically permissible or impermissible from a normative legal perspective. Instead, it aims to understand how Generation Z workers interpret their employment decisions, professional responsibilities, and career aspirations through the lens of Islamic economic ethics (Mawarda Lutfiyani, 2024). By focusing on participants' experiences and meanings, this study provides empirical insights into how Islamic ethical values are understood, negotiated, and applied in contemporary workplace contexts.

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it extends the discussion of job hopping and job hugging beyond conventional economic and psychological explanations by incorporating ethical and religious perspectives (Nugroho et al., 2025). Second, it enriches the literature on Islamic economic ethics by applying its principles to contemporary employment behaviors that have received limited scholarly attention. Third, it provides empirical evidence from the experiences of Generation Z workers in Indonesia, a context where religious values continue to play an important role in shaping individual and professional behavior (Wayan Ristya Dewantari, 2025).

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

How do Generation Z workers in Indonesia interpret and experience job hopping and job hugging behaviors through the perspective of Islamic economic ethics?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Islamic Economic Ethics

Islamic Economic Ethics refers to a set of moral principles derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic scholarly traditions that guide individual behavior in economic and professional activities. Within this framework, work is not merely a means of generating income but also a form of worship (*ibadah*) and a moral responsibility entrusted to individuals as vicegerents (*khalifah*) on earth. Consequently, employment decisions should be evaluated not only from economic and psychological perspectives but also through ethical considerations grounded in Islamic values (Furqani, 2020).

One of the central concepts in Islamic Economic Ethics is *maqasid al-shariah*, which refers to the objectives of Islamic law aimed at promoting human well-being (*maslahah*) and preventing harm (*mafsadah*). Classical scholars identify the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth as the primary objectives of the Sharia. In the context of employment, this concept suggests that career decisions should contribute to individual welfare, social benefit, professional development, and economic sustainability. Therefore, decisions to remain in a job (*job hugging*) or to change jobs (*job hopping*) may be understood in terms of their contribution to these broader objectives (Takeshi Kato, 2022).

Another important concept is *istikhlaf* (stewardship), which emphasizes that human beings are entrusted by God to manage resources responsibly and ethically. According to Yusuf al-Qardhawi, economic behavior should reflect accountability, integrity, and

social responsibility because economic activities are inseparable from moral obligations. Within workplace settings, this principle highlights the importance of professionalism, commitment, and responsible decision-making in career development (Alsadi, 2025). Islamic Economic Ethics also incorporates prohibitions against *riba* (unjust gain), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty), and *maisir* (speculation or gambling). Although these concepts are commonly discussed in relation to financial transactions, they also provide ethical guidance for workplace behavior. In employment contexts, these principles encourage transparency, fairness, informed decision-making, and avoidance of actions that may create harm, deception, or unnecessary uncertainty for employers, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Consequently, career decisions should be based on responsible considerations rather than impulsive, deceptive, or purely speculative motives (Padli & Kurningsih, 2025).

For this study, Islamic Economic Ethics is not used as a normative tool to classify *job hopping* or *job hugging* as inherently right or wrong. Instead, it functions as an analytical framework for understanding how Generation Z workers interpret and negotiate career decisions within the context of Islamic moral values (Alim et al., 2026).

To analyze participants' lived experiences, this study employs seven key principles of Islamic Economic Ethics as analytical categories. These principles provide a conceptual foundation for interpreting how Generation Z workers understand career mobility, *job* retention, professional responsibility, and workplace commitment (Kasih & Sukti, 2025).

Table 1. Analytical Framework of Islamic Economic Ethics in Employment Behavior

Principle	Operational Definition	Workplace Behavioral Indicators	Examples of Interview Codes
<i>Amanah</i> (Trustworthiness)	Fulfilling professional responsibilities honestly and reliably	Completing assigned tasks, honoring commitments, maintaining professional integrity	“fulfilling responsibilities,” “keeping commitments,” “professional accountability”
<i>Adl</i> (Justice)	Ensuring fairness and balance in rights and obligations	Evaluating fairness of compensation, workload, and workplace treatment	“fair treatment,” “equitable rewards,” “balanced obligations”
<i>Mas'uliyah</i> (Responsibility)	Awareness of the consequences of employment decisions	Considering the impact of staying or leaving on colleagues, organizations, and oneself	“impact on the team,” “responsible resignation,” “professional consequences”
<i>Ihsan</i> (Excellence)	Striving for continuous improvement and	Pursuing professional development,	“career growth,” “self-improvement,”

	high-quality performance	enhancing skills, improving productivity	“continuous learning”
<i>Sidq (Honesty)</i>	Consistency between intentions, statements, and actions	Transparent communication regarding career intentions and workplace decisions	“honest communication,” “transparent motives,” “openness with supervisors”
<i>Maslahah (Public Benefit)</i>	Seeking outcomes that generate broader benefits and minimize harm	Evaluating how career decisions affect family, society, and organizational welfare	“benefit for family,” “positive contribution,” “social impact”
<i>Tawazun (Balance)</i>	Balancing material, professional, social, and spiritual interests	Maintaining work-life balance and aligning career goals with personal values	“work-life balance,” “personal well-being,” “spiritual fulfillment”

Source: Developed from Islamic Economic Ethics and Islamic Work Ethics literature.

The seven principles serve as analytical lenses rather than predetermined evaluative criteria. They enable the researcher to explore how participants interpret their experiences of *job hugging* and *job hopping* while maintaining sensitivity to the subjective meanings attached to career decisions. Through this framework, the study seeks to understand how Islamic ethical values shape the ways Generation Z workers negotiate professional aspirations, workplace commitments, and employment mobility in contemporary labor market conditions (Wahyudin et al., 2025).

Within this framework, *job hopping* may be interpreted positively when motivated by legitimate aspirations for professional growth, improved well-being, or the pursuit of greater *maslahah*. However, it may raise ethical concerns when driven by irresponsible motives that disregard commitments, transparency, or the consequences for others. Similarly, *job hugging* may reflect responsibility and commitment when employees remain productive and continue contributing meaningfully to their organizations. Conversely, it may become ethically problematic when workers remain solely because of fear of uncertainty while disengaging from their responsibilities or limiting their professional development (Ayu, 2022).

Accordingly, the ethical significance of *job hugging* and *job hopping* does not lie solely in the decision to stay or leave but in the motivations, values, and responsibilities that shape such decisions. This perspective provides an appropriate analytical foundation for examining how Generation Z workers experience and interpret employment behavior through the lens of Islamic Economic Ethics (Aliy & Muhammadiyah, 2025).

Job Hugging and Job Hopping Behavior among Generation Z

Job hugging and *job hopping* represent two contrasting employment behaviors that have gained increasing attention in contemporary workforce studies, particularly among

Generation Z workers. These behaviors reflect different strategies for responding to career opportunities, workplace conditions, and labor market uncertainty. Understanding these phenomena is important because employment decisions are shaped not only by economic considerations but also by personal values, career aspirations, perceptions of security, and social influences (Fitriana, 2024).

Job hopping refers to the tendency of employees to change *jobs* within relatively short periods in pursuit of better career opportunities, higher compensation, improved working conditions, skill development, or greater alignment with personal values. Previous studies have identified *job* satisfaction, career advancement opportunities, organizational culture, leadership quality, and compensation as important factors influencing employees' intentions to leave their current organizations (Purwanto et al., 2024).

In contrast, *job hugging* refers to the decision of employees to remain in their current positions despite experiencing limited career growth, declining job satisfaction, reduced work engagement, or stagnant professional development. This behavior is often associated with concerns about financial security, labor market uncertainty, fear of unemployment, and risk avoidance. In this study, *job hugging* is distinguished from organizational loyalty. While loyalty reflects a positive commitment to organizational goals and values, *job hugging* refers to retention primarily motivated by security considerations rather than strong organizational attachment (Putu et al., 2025).

Several studies have reported that Generation Z workers tend to place significant value on flexibility, meaningful work, continuous learning, and career mobility. These characteristics may increase the likelihood of *job-hopping* behavior when employees perceive limited opportunities for growth or dissatisfaction within their current workplaces. At the same time, emerging evidence from recent literature suggests that economic uncertainty, employment instability, and concerns about future career prospects may encourage some young workers to remain in their existing positions even when they experience reduced job satisfaction. However, such findings should be interpreted within the specific contexts and populations examined by those studies rather than as a universal trend among all Generation Z workers (Suryaratri & Abadi, 2018).

From a phenomenological perspective, *job hopping and job hugging* should not be understood solely as observable employment outcomes. Instead, they should be viewed as lived experiences that reflect how individuals interpret career opportunities, workplace commitments, personal aspirations, and external constraints. Consequently, this study focuses on participants' subjective meanings and experiences related to staying in or leaving a job (Fabiansyah & Adibah, 2024).

To support data analysis, the concepts of *job hopping and job hugging* are translated into several analytical indicators that guide the interview process, coding procedures, and theme development. These indicators do not function as quantitative measurements but as sensitizing concepts for interpreting participants' experiences (Natalia, 2025).

Table 2. Analytical Indicators of *Job Hugging* and *Job Hopping* Behavior

Dimension	<i>Job Hopping</i> Indicators	<i>Job Hugging</i> Indicators	Examples of Initial Codes
Employment Duration	Short tenure in previous jobs	Long tenure despite dissatisfaction	"less than two years", "staying for many years"
Frequency of Job Changes	Multiple job transitions within a relatively short period	Rare or no job changes despite opportunities	"frequent job changes", "never considered leaving"
Career Motivation	Seeking growth, promotion, learning opportunities	Maintaining stability and income security	"career advancement", "stable income"
Job Satisfaction	Leaving due to dissatisfaction or unmet expectations	Remaining despite dissatisfaction	"unhappy at work", "accepting current conditions"
Perceived Security	Willingness to accept employment risks	Avoidance of unemployment and uncertainty	"taking risks", "fear of losing a job"
Organizational Commitment	Lower attachment to current employer	Continued attachment or obligation to remain	"limited commitment", "sense of responsibility"
Work Engagement	Active pursuit of new opportunities	Reduced engagement but continued employment	"looking for new opportunities", "staying despite low motivation"
Religious and Ethical Considerations	Career decisions influenced by values, responsibility, and ethical reflection	Remaining or leaving based on perceived ethical obligations	"amanah", "responsibility", "ethical considerations"

Source: Developed from the literature on employee mobility, employee retention, and Generation Z employment behavior

The indicators presented above serve as analytical categories rather than fixed classifications. During data analysis, participants may simultaneously exhibit characteristics associated with both *job hopping* and *job hugging*. Therefore, the purpose of these indicators is not to label participants but to facilitate a deeper understanding of how Generation Z workers interpret career mobility, job retention, professional commitment, and employment decisions within their personal, social, and religious contexts (Apriliani et al., 2025).

Within this study, these indicators are integrated with the principles of Islamic Economic Ethics to examine how participants construct meaning around career decisions, workplace responsibilities, and professional development. This integration enables a richer interpretation of how ethical values influence the ways Generation Z workers navigate the tensions between career growth, job security, organizational commitment, and personal well-being (Furqani, 2020).

Theoretical Perspectives on Job Hugging and Job Hopping Behavior

Understanding *job hugging and job hopping* behavior among Generation Z workers requires theoretical perspectives that explain why individuals choose to remain in or leave their jobs and how such decisions are interpreted within their ethical, professional, and personal contexts. Therefore, this study employs four complementary theoretical perspectives: Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment Theory, Turnover Intention Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory. These perspectives serve as analytical lenses for exploring participants' lived experiences and interpretations of career-related decisions (Safrillah, 2026).

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) refers to a set of moral principles derived from the Qur'an and Hadith that guide behavior in the workplace. According to Ali (1988), work in Islam is regarded not only as a means of earning a livelihood but also as an act of worship and social responsibility. Islamic Work Ethics emphasizes values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *sidq* (honesty), *adl* (justice), *mas'uliyah* (responsibility), and *ihsan* (excellence) (Fauzan Ahdi Widyaputra, 2026).

Within the context of this study, Islamic Work Ethics provides a framework for understanding how Generation Z workers evaluate career decisions through moral and religious considerations. Decisions to stay in or leave a job are viewed not merely as economic choices but also as actions that involve ethical responsibilities toward oneself, the organization, and society (Alifia Dwi Naila Putri, 2025).

Organizational Commitment Theory, developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), explains the psychological attachment employees develop toward their organizations. The theory identifies three dimensions of commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Asria et al., 2025).

Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment to their organization. Continuance commitment reflects the perceived costs associated with leaving a job, including financial loss, career uncertainty, or reduced security. Normative commitment refers to a sense of moral obligation to remain with the organization (Mawarda Lutfiyani, 2024).

This theory is particularly relevant for understanding *job hugging* behavior. Employees may choose to remain in their current positions because of emotional attachment, perceived economic risks associated with leaving, or a sense of responsibility toward their organization and colleagues. Consequently, staying in a job does not necessarily indicate high job satisfaction but may reflect different forms of commitment (Nugroho et al., 2025).

Turnover Intention Theory explains the psychological process through which employees develop intentions to leave their organizations. According to Mobley (1977), turnover intention emerges when individuals evaluate their current work situation, experience dissatisfaction, consider alternative employment opportunities, and ultimately decide whether to remain or leave (Fauzan Ahdi Widyaputra, 2026).

Previous studies have identified job satisfaction, career development opportunities, compensation, leadership quality, and organizational support as major predictors of

turnover intention. Among Generation Z workers, turnover intention is often associated with aspirations for career growth, learning opportunities, flexibility, and meaningful work (Natalia, 2025).

This theory is relevant for understanding *job hopping* behavior because it provides insight into the motivations that encourage individuals to seek alternative employment opportunities and pursue career mobility (Purwanto et al., 2024).

Job Embeddedness Theory, proposed by Mitchell et al. (2001), explains why employees remain in their jobs even when alternative opportunities are available. The theory consists of three dimensions: links, fit, and sacrifice (Fabiansyah & Adibah, 2024).

Links refer to formal and informal connections with colleagues, supervisors, and organizational networks. Fit describes the compatibility between an individual’s values, goals, and needs and those of the organization. Sacrifice refers to the material and psychological losses that may result from leaving a job (Sabila, 2024).

This theory is particularly useful for understanding *job hugging* behavior because employees may remain in their positions despite dissatisfaction due to strong social relationships, organizational compatibility, or concerns about losing valuable benefits. Therefore, retention may result from complex social, psychological, and economic considerations rather than simple organizational loyalty (Rusmiati & Perkasa, 2025).

Operationalization of Job Hugging and Job Hopping in Phenomenological Analysis

In this phenomenological study, *job hugging and job hopping* are not treated as quantitative variables but as analytical concepts used to explore participants’ lived experiences. To support data collection, coding, and interpretation, these concepts are translated into several analytical indicators derived from previous literature (Oktafiani et al., 2025).

Table 4. Analytical Indicators of Job Hugging and Job Hopping Behavior

Analytical Dimension	Job Hopping Indicators	Job Hugging Indicators
Employment Duration	Relatively short tenure across multiple organizations	Long tenure within the same organization
Frequency of Job Changes	Multiple job transitions within a relatively short period	Rare or no job changes despite available opportunities
Career Motivation	Seeking career advancement, learning opportunities, and professional growth	Prioritizing stability and employment security
Job Satisfaction	Leaving due to dissatisfaction or unmet expectations	Remaining despite dissatisfaction or stagnation
Perceived Security	Willingness to accept employment-related risks	Avoidance of uncertainty and fear of unemployment
Organizational Commitment	Lower attachment to the current organization	Strong emotional, normative, or continuance commitment
Religious and Ethical Considerations	Decisions influenced by values such as honesty, responsibility, and personal development	Decisions influenced by responsibility, trustworthiness, and perceived moral obligations

Source: Developed from the literature on employee mobility, employee retention, Islamic Work Ethics, and Generation Z employment behavior.

These indicators function as sensitizing concepts that guide the interview process and thematic analysis. They are not intended to categorize participants rigidly but to facilitate a deeper understanding of how Generation Z workers interpret their decisions to stay in or leave employment (Ariani & Marsha, 2025).

The four theoretical perspectives complement one another in explaining *job hugging and job hopping* behavior among Generation Z workers. Islamic Work Ethics provides the ethical and religious foundation for understanding workplace decisions. Organizational Commitment Theory explains the psychological attachment that may encourage employees to remain in their jobs. Turnover Intention Theory helps explain motivations for career mobility and job change. Job Embeddedness Theory provides insight into the social, organizational, and personal factors that contribute to employee retention (Nurhasanah et al., 2025).

Together, these perspectives offer a comprehensive analytical framework for examining how Generation Z workers interpret and experience employment decisions within the context of Islamic ethical values. Rather than assuming that *job hugging or job hopping* is inherently positive or negative, this framework enables an exploration of the meanings, motivations, and ethical considerations that shape these behaviors in contemporary workplace settings (Aulia et al., 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of Generation Z workers regarding *job hugging and job hopping* behavior from the perspective of Islamic Economic Ethics (Silaban et al., 2025). Phenomenology was selected because the study aims to understand how individuals interpret and assign meaning to their experiences of remaining in or leaving employment, as well as how ethical and religious values influence such decisions. Specifically, this study adopted an interpretive phenomenological approach, which focuses on understanding participants' subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to workplace behavior within their socio-cultural and religious contexts (Nasir et al., 2023).

To minimize researcher bias, reflexivity and bracketing procedures were applied throughout the research process. Before data collection and analysis, the researchers documented their assumptions, prior knowledge, and personal perspectives regarding *job hugging, job hopping, and Islamic work ethics*. This process helped ensure that participants' experiences remained central to the interpretation of findings (Safrillah, 2026).

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted between January and March 2026 in several regions of Indonesia, including Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion criteria (Pujiastuti et al., 2025).

The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. Belonging to Generation Z (aged 20–27 years).

2. Having experienced *job hopping or job hugging* within the last five years.
3. Having at least one year of work experience.
4. Willing to participate voluntarily and provide informed consent.

A total of 12 participants were involved in this study. Participant recruitment continued until data saturation was achieved, indicated by the absence of substantially new themes emerging from subsequent interviews (Sabila, 2024).

Table 1. Participant Profile

Participant Code	Age	Gender	Employment Sector	Employment Experience
P1	22	Male	Technology	<i>Job Hopping</i>
P2	23	Female	Education	<i>Job Hugging</i>
P3	24	Male	Banking	<i>Job Hopping</i>
P4	25	Female	Retail	<i>Job Hugging</i>
P5	26	Male	Manufacturing	<i>Job Hopping</i>
P6	24	Female	Healthcare	<i>Job Hugging</i>
P7	27	Male	Technology	<i>Job Hopping</i>
P8	22	Female	Creative Industry	<i>Job Hugging</i>
P9	25	Male	Education	<i>Job Hopping</i>
P10	23	Female	Finance	<i>Job Hugging</i>
P11	26	Male	Logistics	<i>Job Hopping</i>
P12	24	Female	Public Service	<i>Job Hugging</i>

To protect participant confidentiality, all names were replaced with identification codes and no personally identifiable information was disclosed in the reporting of findings (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022).

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted between January and March 2026. Interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, either face-to-face or through online video conferencing platforms, depending on participant availability and geographical location (Arlita et al., 2026).

Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes, resulting in a total interview duration of approximately 10 hours. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis (Elva & Murhayati, 2025).

The interview guide was developed based on the literature concerning Islamic Work Ethics, organizational commitment, turnover intention, job embeddedness, *job hugging*, and *job hopping*. Prior to data collection, the guide was reviewed by two experts in Islamic economics and qualitative research methodology to assess clarity, relevance, and content

validity. A pilot interview involving two Generation Z workers was also conducted to evaluate question comprehensibility and interview flow (Fabiansyah & Adibah, 2024). Examples of interview questions included:

1. Can you describe your experience of staying in or leaving a job?
2. What factors influenced your decision to remain in or change employment?
3. How do you perceive job security and career development in your current work situation?
4. Do religious or ethical values influence your employment decisions? If so, how?
5. How do you understand responsibility, commitment, and trustworthiness in relation to your work?

The complete interview protocol is provided in Appendix A (Saputra & Sunarya, 2024).

Ethical Considerations

Prior to participation, all respondents received information regarding the objectives of the study, interview procedures, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews were conducted (Malahati et al., 2023).

Participant anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. All transcripts, recordings, and research documents were stored securely and accessed only by the research team.

The study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of [Name of University/Institution] under approval number [Ethics Approval Number] (Khaddafi et al., 2025).

Data Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, several strategies were employed. First, member checking was conducted by sharing interview summaries and preliminary interpretations with participants for verification. Second, source triangulation was applied by comparing experiences across participants from different employment sectors and regions. Third, an audit trail documenting data collection, coding, theme development, and analytical decisions was maintained throughout the research process. Because company documents were not systematically collected and analyzed, document triangulation was not employed in this study (Wiraguna & Widjaja, 2024).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This analytical approach was selected because it aligns with the study's objective of understanding participants' lived experiences and personal interpretations of employment decisions (Mardatillah & Murhayati, 2025).

The analysis followed several stages:

1. Reading and re-reading interview transcripts to gain familiarity with the data.
2. Initial noting to identify significant statements and experiential descriptions.
3. Developing emergent themes from participants' narratives.
4. Identifying connections among themes within each participant's account.
5. Conducting cross-case analysis to identify shared patterns and differences across participants.

6. Interpreting themes through the analytical lenses of Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment Theory, Turnover Intention Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory.

Through this process, the study generated a comprehensive understanding of how Generation Z workers experience and interpret *job hugging and job hopping* behavior within the framework of Islamic Economic Ethics (Fabiansyah & Adibah, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the analysis of in-depth interviews with 12 Generation Z workers from diverse employment sectors and regions in Indonesia, four major themes emerged regarding the lived experiences of *job hugging and job hopping* behavior (Eldiana & Herdiana, 2025). These themes include: (1) career development and self-actualization as motivations for *job hopping*, (2) employment security and stability as motivations for *job hugging*, (3) the role of Islamic ethical values in career decision-making, and (4) the pursuit of balance between productivity, well-being, and meaningful work. Together, these themes illustrate that decisions to remain in or leave employment are shaped by a complex interaction of professional aspirations, economic considerations, organizational experiences, and personal ethical values (Safrillah, 2026).

Career Development and Self-Actualization as Drivers of *Job Hopping*

One of the most prominent themes emerging from the interviews was the desire for career advancement and self-development (Loh et al., 2024). Participants who had engaged in *job hopping* consistently described employment mobility as a deliberate strategy for acquiring new skills, expanding professional experience, and pursuing career opportunities that better aligned with their personal ambitions. For these participants, work was not viewed solely as a source of income but also as a platform for continuous learning and personal growth.

Participant P1 (22 years old, technology sector) explained:

"I changed jobs because I wanted to learn new things and gain broader experience. In my previous workplace, I felt that my professional growth had reached a plateau."

This perspective was echoed by Participants P3 and P7, who perceived job transitions as investments in their long-term career trajectories. They emphasized that remaining in the same position for an extended period could limit professional development and reduce competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic labor market. According to these participants, exposure to different organizational environments enabled them to develop new competencies, expand professional networks, and improve adaptability. Interestingly, participants did not interpret *job hopping* as a reflection of organizational disloyalty. Instead, they viewed it as a rational response to evolving career aspirations and changing labor market conditions. Several participants argued that commitment should be measured by the quality of contributions made during employment rather than by the length of organizational tenure. Consequently, job mobility was perceived as a legitimate career strategy when it contributed to professional development and personal fulfillment.

The findings suggest that many Generation Z workers define career success through opportunities for learning, growth, and meaningful achievement rather than through

long-term organizational attachment alone. As a result, *job hopping* emerged as an adaptive mechanism for pursuing professional advancement in contemporary workplaces characterized by rapid change and evolving career expectations.

Employment Security and Stability as Foundations of *Job Hugging*

In contrast, participants who demonstrated *job hugging* tendencies emphasized the importance of employment security and financial stability in their career decisions. While some acknowledged aspirations for career advancement, concerns regarding economic uncertainty and labor market instability often outweighed their desire to seek alternative employment opportunities (Safrillah, 2026).

Participant P2 (23 years old, education sector) stated:

"I have considered changing jobs several times, but the current economic situation makes me prefer to stay. At least I know that I have a stable income every month."

Similar experiences were reported by Participants P4, P6, and P10. These participants frequently referred to increasing job competition, uncertainty regarding future employment opportunities, and concerns about financial obligations as major reasons for remaining in their current positions. For them, employment represented not only a source of income but also a source of security and predictability in an uncertain environment.

However, remaining in the same job was not always associated with high levels of job satisfaction. Several participants described feelings of stagnation, limited career progression, and declining motivation. Despite these challenges, they perceived the risks associated with changing jobs as greater than the potential benefits. This finding indicates that *job hugging* should not automatically be interpreted as organizational loyalty or commitment. Rather, it often represents a pragmatic response to economic uncertainty and perceived employment risks.

The experiences shared by participants reveal that decisions to remain in a job frequently involve balancing aspirations for growth against the need for stability. For many participants, maintaining financial security and minimizing uncertainty became more immediate priorities than pursuing potentially rewarding but uncertain career opportunities.

The Internalization of Islamic Ethical Values in Career Decision-Making

A third theme that emerged strongly across interviews was the influence of Islamic ethical values on career-related decisions (Apriliani et al., 2025). Most participants described work as more than an economic activity; it was also viewed as a moral responsibility that required accountability, honesty, and commitment. Ethical considerations frequently shaped how participants evaluated both job retention and job mobility.

Participant P5 (26 years old, manufacturing sector) explained:

"If I decide to leave a job, I believe I must first complete my responsibilities properly. I do not want my departure to create problems for the company or my colleagues."

This statement reflects the importance of *amanah* (trustworthiness) in participants' understanding of professional conduct. Participants emphasized that employment

relationships involve obligations that should be fulfilled responsibly, regardless of whether an individual chooses to remain in or leave an organization.

In addition to trustworthiness, participants frequently referred to responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), honesty (*sidq*), and fairness (*adl*) when discussing career decisions. Participant P7 emphasized that changing jobs should be conducted transparently and professionally, while Participant P11 highlighted the importance of honoring commitments and maintaining integrity throughout employment transitions.

These narratives suggest that Islamic ethical values function as an internal moral framework guiding career-related behavior. Rather than discouraging job mobility, these values encourage individuals to consider the broader consequences of their decisions and to ensure that career choices are made responsibly and ethically. Participants generally perceived career decisions as requiring a balance between personal aspirations and obligations toward employers, colleagues, and society (Apriliani et al., 2025).

Seeking Balance Between Productivity, Well-Being, and Meaningful Work

The final theme concerns participants' efforts to achieve balance between productivity, personal well-being, and meaningful work. Both job huggers and job hoppers emphasized that career decisions were influenced not only by salary and promotion opportunities but also by the extent to which work contributed to psychological well-being, work-life balance, and personal fulfillment (Purwanto et al., 2024).

Participant P8 (22 years old, creative industry sector) stated:

"I feel more comfortable working in an environment that respects work-life balance and provides space for religious practices. It helps me stay motivated and productive."

Several participants who had changed jobs reported that they sought organizational environments that better supported their mental health, personal values, and professional aspirations. Conversely, participants who remained in their jobs often described positive relationships with colleagues, supportive leadership, and alignment between personal and organizational values as important reasons for staying.

The findings indicate that participants viewed productivity as closely connected to overall well-being rather than merely the quantity of work performed (Rani et al., 2022). Productive work was often described as work that enabled individuals to grow professionally while maintaining psychological health, social relationships, and spiritual commitments. Consequently, meaningful work was associated not only with career success but also with a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and alignment with personal values.

Overall, the results demonstrate that *job hugging and job hopping* among Generation Z workers are complex and multidimensional phenomena. Decisions to remain in or leave employment emerge from the interaction of career aspirations, employment security concerns, ethical considerations, and the pursuit of meaningful work. These findings suggest that Generation Z employment behavior cannot be fully understood through economic or organizational factors alone but must also be examined through the subjective experiences and value systems that shape career decision-making.

Discussion

The findings reveal that Generation Z workers perceive career decisions as a complex process shaped by professional aspirations, economic considerations, and ethical commitments. The interviews show that neither *job hugging* nor *job hopping* can be understood solely through organizational or economic perspectives. Instead, participants consistently described their decisions to remain in or leave employment as a negotiation between personal development, financial security, and moral responsibility. This finding supports the argument that contemporary career behavior among Generation Z is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to simple assumptions of loyalty or instability (Arlita et al., 2026).

The first theme, career development and self-actualization as drivers of *job hopping*, indicates that employment mobility is frequently perceived as a strategy for professional growth rather than organizational disloyalty. Participants who changed jobs emphasized learning opportunities, skill enhancement, and career advancement as primary motivations. These findings are consistent with Turnover Intention Theory, which suggests that employees may consider leaving an organization when alternative opportunities are perceived to offer greater personal and professional benefits. However, the experiences of participants in this study suggest that *job hopping* is not necessarily associated with dissatisfaction. Instead, it emerged as an adaptive response to a labor market characterized by rapid technological change, evolving career expectations, and increasing demands for continuous learning. This finding extends previous studies that primarily associate *job hopping* with low organizational commitment by demonstrating that career mobility may also represent a proactive strategy for long-term professional development (Edi Saputro, 2025).

The second theme highlights the importance of employment security and financial stability in shaping *job hugging* behavior. Participants who remained in their organizations frequently referred to economic uncertainty, labor market competition, and concerns about future employability. These findings suggest that *job hugging* is not always an expression of organizational loyalty or satisfaction. Rather, it often reflects a pragmatic effort to minimize risk and maintain economic security. This interpretation aligns with Job Embeddedness Theory, which argues that employees remain in organizations when perceived sacrifices associated with leaving outweigh potential benefits. The findings further indicate that workers may continue to perform their duties responsibly despite experiencing limited opportunities for advancement. Consequently, *job hugging* should not be interpreted as a homogeneous phenomenon but as a behavioral response that may stem from different motivations, including security, commitment, or perceived constraints (Rusmiati & Perkasa, 2025).

A particularly important finding concerns the role of Islamic ethical values in career decision-making. Participants repeatedly referred to concepts such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *mas'uliyah* (responsibility), *adl* (justice), and *ihsan* (excellence) when discussing employment choices. These values influenced how participants evaluated both job retention and job mobility. For example, several participants explained that leaving an organization was considered ethically acceptable only when professional responsibilities had been fulfilled and the transition would not harm colleagues or the employer. This finding demonstrates that career decisions were evaluated not only in terms of personal benefit but also in terms of ethical accountability. The results support the perspective of Islamic Work Ethics, which emphasizes that work is both an economic activity and a moral responsibility. In this context, participants viewed employment as a form of stewardship that requires honesty, commitment, and consideration of broader social consequences (Fitriana, 2024).

The findings also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Islamic Economic Ethics in the workplace. Rather than categorizing *job hugging* or *job hopping* as inherently ethical or unethical, participants assessed these behaviors based on intentions, responsibilities, and consequences. This interpretation is consistent with the broader objectives of *maqasid al-shariah*, which emphasize the promotion of human welfare (*maslahah*) and the prevention of harm (*mafsadah*). From this perspective, *job hopping* may be ethically justified when it supports personal development, improves well-being, and creates broader benefits without violating professional obligations. Similarly, *job hugging* may be ethically valued when it reflects commitment, responsibility, and meaningful contribution to organizational goals. However, both behaviors may become problematic when they result in negligence, reduced productivity, or harm to stakeholders. Therefore, the ethical assessment of career behavior depends not on the act itself but on the motivations and outcomes associated with it (Tria Rahmatus Sholikha, 2024).

Another significant finding relates to participants' understanding of productivity and well-being. The interviews indicate that Generation Z workers do not define productivity solely in terms of economic output or career advancement. Instead, productivity is closely linked to psychological well-being, work-life balance, meaningful work, and opportunities to practice personal values, including religious commitments. Participants frequently described supportive organizational cultures, flexible working arrangements, and value congruence as factors that enhanced both motivation and work performance. These findings suggest that organizational policies seeking to retain Generation Z employees should move beyond financial incentives alone and consider broader dimensions of employee well-being and meaningful engagement (Amani Sabila, 2025).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that *job hugging* and *job hopping* among Generation Z workers are best understood as context-dependent career responses rather than fixed behavioral categories. By integrating Islamic Economic Ethics with Organizational Commitment Theory, Turnover Intention Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory, this study shows that career decisions emerge from the interaction of professional goals, economic realities, organizational experiences, and ethical values. This perspective contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary employment behavior and highlights the importance of incorporating ethical dimensions into discussions of career development and workforce management (Apriliani et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that *job hugging* and *job hopping* among Generation Z workers are shaped by a combination of career aspirations, employment security considerations, and ethical values. The findings reveal that *job hopping* is primarily driven by the pursuit of career advancement, skill development, better compensation, and alignment between work and personal goals. In contrast, *job hugging* is largely influenced by concerns about job security, financial stability, and uncertainty in the labor market. The study also finds that employment decisions are not determined solely by economic considerations but are strongly influenced by Islamic ethical values, particularly *amanah* (trustworthiness), *mas'uliyah* (responsibility), *adl* (justice), and *ihsan* (excellence). These values guide workers in evaluating the ethical implications of staying in or leaving a job. Consequently, Islamic Economic Ethics does not classify *job hugging* or *job hopping* as inherently right or wrong; rather, their ethical value depends on the motivations, intentions, responsibilities, and consequences associated with each decision.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by integrating Islamic Economic Ethics with Organizational Commitment Theory, Turnover Intention Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory to explain employment behavior among Generation Z workers. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should develop human resource policies that balance career development opportunities with employment security while strengthening ethical workplace cultures through mentoring, leadership development, and values-based training. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, including the relatively small number of participants, the focus on selected regions and sectors in Indonesia, and the exclusive examination of Generation Z workers. Therefore, future research is encouraged to involve a broader range of participants, compare employment behavior across different generations, and employ mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to further examine the relationships among Islamic Work Ethics, organizational commitment, job embeddedness, and turnover intention in contemporary labor market settings.

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