

## Predicting Escape and Advancement Job-Hopping Motives Among Generation Z BPO Employees Using Multiple Regression and Artificial Neural Networks

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the predictors of escape and advancement motives for job-hopping among Generation Z employees within the Philippine business process outsourcing (BPO) sector. Employing a cross-sectional predictive design, data were gathered from a purposive sample of 250 BPO employees (M age = 24.47 years; SD = 2.02) in the National Capital Region. Key constructs included work engagement, measured by vigor, dedication, and absorption, and organizational commitment, assessed through affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. Analyses used multiple regression and multilayer perceptron artificial neural networks (ANNs) to determine relationships among these variables. The escape model revealed significant predictors  $F(9, 240) = 10.09, p < 0.001$ , adjusted  $r^2 = .247$ ), highlighting continuance commitment, absorption, and gender as influence factors. Similarly, the advancement model demonstrated significance,  $F(9,240) = 9.61, p < .001$ , adjusted  $r^2 = .238$ , with continuance commitment and vigor emerging as key predictors. In the ANN analysis, continuance commitment had a strong influence on both job-hopping motives, while vigor was a crucial secondary predictor of advancement-oriented. These findings emphasize the necessity for practitioners to differentiate between withdrawal-oriented and career-oriented job-hopping motives, suggesting that continuance commitment reflects a strategic evaluation of personal and organizational costs and benefits across both pathways. Results are interpreted as predictive correlations rather than causal connections. This study has implications for human resources management.*

**Keywords:** Job hopping motives; Generation Z; BPO employees; work engagement; organizational commitment; artificial neural networks

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### Introduction

The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector has evolved from a focus on cost reduction to a strategic approach aimed at enhancing service quality and operational efficiency (Lacity et al., 2011; Namasivayam, 2004). In the Philippines, BPO is crucial for economic growth, employing approximately 1.82 million workers and generating USD 38 billion in revenue in 2024 (IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines, 2025; Reuters, 2024). However, the industry faces challenges from automation, generative AI, and evolving skill requirements, affecting workforce stability – especially for Generation Z employees, who make up a

significant share of the entry-level workforce.

Generation Z, typically born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, entered the job market with distinct expectations. They prioritize career growth, flexibility, meaningful work, and mental well-being, while showing little patience for rigid hierarchies and unclear career advancement pathways (Jayatissa, 2023; Maioli, 2016; Schroth, 2019; Nugroho et al., 2025; Wajdi et al., 2024). In the demanding BPO environment, these expectations may lead them to prefer short-term work arrangements over long-term commitments. For many, job hopping is seen as a strategic choice to find

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better opportunities or maintain their well-being (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022).

Job hopping refers to repeated voluntary employment transitions within relatively short intervals, typically one to two years or less (Lake et al., 2018). Contemporary scholarship distinguishes two motivational pathways: escape motives, which reflect the avoidance of stressful or misaligned conditions; and advancement motives, which reflect the pursuit of improved compensation, flexibility, status, or career progression (Devi et al., 2023; Lake et al., 2018). This distinction is particularly salient in service-intensive sectors such as BPO, where mobility may stem either from strain and psychological risk or from opportunity-seeking within competitive labor markets.

Although labor market dynamics influence turnover behavior, internal psychological states remain central determinants of mobility decisions. Work engagement, conceptualized as a positive and fulfilling state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, represents employees' energetic investment in their roles (Bakker, 2011). Empirical findings generally indicate that higher engagement is associated with reduced turnover intention and a lower propensity to job-hop (Sianturi & Prabawani, 2020). Engagement may function as a psychological anchor, strengthening the perceived value of remaining in the organization when work is experienced as meaningful and developmental. Conversely, diminished engagement may heighten perceptions of misfit and unmet expectations, thereby activating mobility as a corrective response.

Organizational commitment similarly serves as a stabilizing mechanism. The three-component model distinguishes affective

commitment (emotional attachment), normative commitment (sense of obligation), and continuance commitment (perceived cost of leaving) (Somers, 1995). Meta-analytic evidence demonstrates a consistent negative relationship between commitment, particularly affective commitment, and turnover intention (Güzeller & Çeliker, 2019). However, emerging research among younger cohorts suggests that commitment may not uniformly constrain mobility; even emotionally attached employees may pursue external opportunities when growth prospects appear superior (Dewi & Ekowati, 2025). These findings underscore the importance of examining commitment dimensions independently when modeling job-hopping motives.

Demographic factors such as age, gender, income, education, and employment history further shape mobility decisions by influencing perceived constraints and opportunities. While these variables rarely function as primary drivers, they may confound or moderate psychological predictors. Controlling for demographic characteristics enhances inferential clarity regarding the unique contributions of engagement and commitment among Gen Z employees (Ganguli & Padhy, 2023).

Persistent attrition continues to challenge BPO organizations, generating recruitment expenditures, productivity disruptions, knowledge loss, and service quality risks (Budhwar et al., 2009). Yet job hopping remains multifaceted, simultaneously reflecting organizational instability and individual career optimization. Addressing this complexity requires models that differentiate motivational pathways and capture potential linear and nonlinear interactions among psychological predictors. The present study contributes to the literature

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in three ways. First, it conceptualizes job hopping as two distinct motivational pathways, escape and advancement, rather than a single behavioral outcome. Second, it integrates work engagement and the multidimensional framework of organizational commitment to examine how energetic investment and attachment patterns relate to job-hopping motives within a high-turnover BPO context. Third, it employs multiple regression and artificial neural networks (ANN) (De Pauli et al., 2021) to model linear, nonlinear, and interactive effects, thereby offering a predictive approach suited to complex behavioral phenomena.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate and model the factors that predict job-hopping motives, particularly escape and advancement motives, among Generation Z employees in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. The analysis integrates dimensions of work engagement, including vigor, dedication, and absorption, organizational commitment components, namely affective, continuance, and normative commitment, and selected demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and prior job-hopping experience. These variables are examined using Multiple Regression to assess potential linear relationships and a Multilayer Perceptron (MLP) artificial neural network to capture complex, potentially nonlinear relationships (Perceptron, 2021).

The study intends to determine which psychological and demographic factors exert the strongest influence on job-hopping motives. By applying a predictive modeling approach, it aims to produce empirical insights that may guide the development of targeted retention programs, organizational improvement efforts, and data-informed

human resource policies within the BPO sector.

### ***Research Questions:***

1. What are the levels of escape motives, advancement motives, vigor, dedication, absorption, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment among Generation Z BPO employees?
2. To what extent do age, gender, monthly income, vigor, dedication, absorption, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment predict escape-oriented job-hopping motives?
3. To what extent do age, gender, monthly income, vigor, dedication, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment predict advancement-oriented job-hopping motives?
4. What is the relative importance of profile, work engagement, and organizational commitment in the ANN prediction of escape-oriented job-hopping motives?
5. What is the relative importance of profile, work engagement, and organizational commitment in the ANN prediction of advancement-oriented job-hopping motives?
6. To what extent do the multiple regression and ANN models converge or differ in identifying the principal predictors of escape and advancement motives?

### ***Methodology***

This study adopted a quantitative -predictive design. Escape and advancement motives were modeled separately. Simultaneous multiple regression was used to estimate the unique linear contribution of each predictor, while multilayer perceptron artificial neural networks were used to examine the relative importance of predictors within nonlinear

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models. The analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS version 21.

### Respondents and Sampling

Consented participants were 250 Generation Z employees working in BPO organizations in the National Capital Region (NCR), Philippines, see Table 1. Their mean age was 24.47 years ( $SD = 2.02$ ), and their mean monthly income was ₱31,144.00 ( $SD = ₱6,894.74$ ). Most participants were female (76.4%), single (65.2%), college graduates (80.8%) assigned to on-site work (73.6%), working rotating shifts (87.2%) and regularly employed (60%). The sample also reflected substantial recent job movement: 71.6% reported having worked for three BPO employers during the preceding three years,

and 75.2% reported leaving a BPO employer twice during the preceding two years.

Purposive non-probability sampling was used because a centralized cross-company employee roster was unavailable, and organizational access was restricted. Eligible respondents were 20 to 29 years of age, currently employed in a BPO organization in NCR, assigned to a frontline or support role, employed in their current organization for at least six months, and had prior work experience. Respondents working outside the NCR or without prior work experience. Respondents working outside the NCR or without prior work experience were excluded. The final sample yielded approximately 27.8 cases per predictor in the regression models.

Table 1. *Profile of the Respondents*

|                        | N = 250               | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender                 | Female                | 191       | 76.4    |
|                        | Male                  | 59        | 23.6    |
| Marital status         | Single                | 163       | 65.2    |
|                        | married               | 87        | 34.8    |
| Educational attainment | College Graduate      | 202       | 80.8    |
|                        | College undergraduate | 21        | 8.4     |
|                        | Postgraduate          | 27        | 10.8    |
| Monthly income         | P25000 and below      | 27        | 10.8    |
|                        | P25001 to 30000       | 144       | 57.6    |
|                        | P30001 to 35000       | 22        | 8.8     |
|                        | P35001 to 40000       | 37        | 14.8    |
|                        | P40001 to 45000       | 15        | 6       |
|                        | P45001 and above      | 5         | 2       |
| Work arrangement       | hybrid                | 66        | 26.4    |
|                        | on-site               | 184       | 73.6    |

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|                                                             |              |     |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----|------|
| Shift work type                                             | night shift  | 32  | 12.8 |
|                                                             | rotating     | 218 | 87.2 |
|                                                             |              |     |      |
| status of employment                                        | Fixed-term   | 7   | 2.8  |
|                                                             | Probationary | 56  | 22.4 |
|                                                             | Project      | 37  | 14.8 |
|                                                             | Regular      | 150 | 60   |
|                                                             |              |     |      |
| number of BPO employer in the past 3 years                  | 2            | 52  | 20.8 |
|                                                             | 3            | 179 | 71.6 |
|                                                             | 4            | 19  | 7.6  |
|                                                             |              |     |      |
| number of times left in the BPO company in the past 2 years | 2 times      | 188 | 75.2 |
|                                                             | 3 times      | 60  | 24   |
|                                                             | 4 times      | 2   | 0.8  |

### Research instruments

The BPO employees self-reported their demographic information such as age, gender, monthly income, educational attainment, marital status, work arrangement, shift work type, status of employment, and number of BPO employers in the last 3 years.

**Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-17 (UWES-17).** Is comprised of 17-item (Cronbach  $\alpha = .79$ ) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006). The instrument contains six vigor items, five dedication items and six absorption items. Items are answered on a seven-point frequency scale from 0 (never) to 6 (always). Summed scores can range from 0 to 36 for vigor, 0 to 30 for dedication, and 0 to 36 for absorption. Higher scores indicate more frequent experiences of the corresponding engagement dimension. Example items, “at my work, I feel bursting with energy”, “at my job, I feel strong and vigorous”, and “I am immersed in my work.”

### Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS).

It is composed of an 18-item measure based on the three-component framework of Allen and Meyer (1990). The instrument evaluates affective, continuance, and normative commitment, with six items assigned to each dimension. Items were reverse-scored before sub-scale totals were computed. Each subscale had a possible score range of 6 to 30, with higher scores indicating stronger commitment of the corresponding type. The OCS is scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Example items, “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization,” “It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to,” and “I do not feel any obligation to remain with my obligation.”

**Job Hopping Motive Scale (JHMS).** Is comprised of 8-item (Cronbach  $\alpha = .87$ ) (Lake et al., 2018). Four items assess escape-oriented reasons for changing jobs, and four assess advancement-oriented reasons.

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Responses were recorded from a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of corresponding motives. Example items, “Becoming disinterested in a job is a good reason to move from job to job as often as desired,” “Even if someone has changed job several times, they should take a new job if it involves moving to a better position,” and “It is desirable to periodically move from job to job, looking for the job that best improves one’s lifestyle”.

### Data gathering procedures

Data were gathered using an online survey. Prospective study-respondents received information about the study purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to discontinue without penalty. Respondents indicated informed consent before accessing the questionnaire. The survey link was circulated through professional networks, online employee communities, and contacts within BPO organizations. Respondents were screened for eligibility, completeness, impossible values, and inconsistent response patterns. All 250 retained cases had complete composite scores for the variables used in the regression and ANN analysis.

### Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages summarized profile characteristics, while means, standard deviations, score ranges, skewness, and kurtosis summarized the continuous study variables. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk were statistically significant for all continuous variables. However, skewness ranged from -0.743 to 0.388, and kurtosis ranged from -0.313 to 1.316, indicating mild to moderate rather than severe departures from normality. The original composite scores were retained because multiple regression requires

approximately normal residuals rather than normally distributed raw predictors, and ANN does not require normal distribution.

Two simultaneous multiple regression analyses using the enter method were conducted. In each model, age, gender, monthly income, vigor, dedication, absorption, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment were entered together. Escape motives were the dependent variable in the first model, and advancement motives were the dependent variable in the second. Model interpretation used  $R$ ,  $R^2$ , adjusted  $R^2$ , the omnibus  $F$ -test, unstandardized and standardized coefficients,  $t$ -tests, and squared partial correlations. Statistical significance was evaluated at  $\alpha = .05$  and SPSS values displayed as .000 were reported as  $p < .001$ .

Regression assumptions were examined before interpretation. Durbin-Watson values were 2.124 for the escape model and 2.292 for the advancement model, indicating no substantial residual autocorrelation. For the escape model, the residual histogram was approximately bell-shaped, the  $p$ - $p$  plot followed the expected diagonal reasonably closely, and the residual-versus-predicted scatter plot showed no pronounced curve or funnel. Standardized residuals ranged from -2.896 to 2.889 for escape motives and from -2.866 to 2.647 for advanced motives. Tolerance values ranged from .361 to .969, and VIF values ranged from 1.032 to 2.768. Although these values did not indicate severe multicollinearity, age and income showed substantial overlap and were interpreted with caution. Maximum Cook’s distance was .069 and .092, indicating no extremely influential case. The maximum Mahalanobis distance was 30.836, and the maximum centered leverage was 0.124, indicating at least one unusual predictor profile; all valid cases were

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retained because the influence remained limited.

Separate multilayer perceptron ANN models were then estimated for escape and advancement motives (Zou et al., 2008; Perceptron, 2021; Taud & Mas, 2017; Han et al., 2018; Yang & Wang, 2020). Gender was entered as a categorical factor, while age, income, vigor, dedication, absorption, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment were standardized covariates. Each model contained one hidden layer with a hyperbolic tangent activation function, one standardized continuous output with an identity activation function, and a sum-of-squares error (Alaloul & Qureshi, 2020). SPSS selected six hidden units for the escape network and five for the advancement network. The escape sample was randomly divided into 169 training and 81 testing cases; the advancement errors were used to assess predictive performance. Independent-variable importance and normalized importance ranked the contribution of each predictor. Importance values were interpreted as relative and nondirectional, while regression coefficients were used to interpret linear direction and statistical significance.

## Results

### *Preliminary and Descriptive Results*

Complete composite data was available for all 250 respondents. No cases were excluded

from the analyses. Descriptive statistics and reliability estimates for the study variables are presented in Table 2. We observed that advancement-oriented motives ( $M = 13.09$ ;  $SD = 3.54$ ) had a higher mean score than escape-oriented motives ( $M = 11.38$ ;  $SD = 3.65$ ), although no inferential comparison between the two constructs was conducted because they represent theoretically distinct dimensions.

Among the work engagement dimensions, vigor obtained the highest mean ( $M = 21.78$ ;  $SD = 3.84$ ), followed by dedication ( $M = 21.46$ ;  $SD = 4.28$ ), whereas absorption had the lowest mean ( $M = 15.62$ ;  $SD = 5.15$ ).

Organizational commitment dimensions showed relatively comparable mean scores, with affective commitment ( $M = 20.51$ ;  $SD = 3.71$ ), normative commitment ( $M = 19.78$ ;  $SD = 4.16$ ), and continuance commitment ( $M = 19.40$ ;  $SD = 4.21$ ).

The internal consistency of the study measures ranged from acceptable to good (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .70$  to  $.84$ ), indicating satisfactory reliability for subsequent analyses. Skewness values ranged from  $-0.74$  to  $0.39$ , and kurtosis values from  $-0.31$  to  $1.32$ , indicating no substantial departures from normality. Although the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were statistically significant, the observed skewness and kurtosis values indicated only mild deviations from normality, supporting the use of multiple regression analyses.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

| Variable               | Cronbach $\alpha$ | Min-Max | M     | SD   | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------|------|----------|----------|
| 1. Escape motives      | .79               | 4-20    | 11.38 | 3.65 | 0.03     | -0.31    |
| 2. Advancement motives | .84               | 4-20    | 13.09 | 3.54 | -0.2     | 0.1      |

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|                           |     |      |       |      |       |       |
|---------------------------|-----|------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 3. Vigor                  | .75 | 6-30 | 21.78 | 3.84 | -0.25 | 0.53  |
| 4. Dedication             | .84 | 5-30 | 21.46 | 4.28 | -0.74 | 1.32  |
| 5. Absorption             | .81 | 6-30 | 15.62 | 5.15 | 0.33  | 0.05  |
| 6. Affective commitment   | .70 | 6-30 | 20.51 | 3.71 | 0.39  | -0.09 |
| 7. Continuance commitment | .78 | 6-30 | 19.40 | 4.21 | -0.04 | 1.28  |
| 8. Normative commitment   | .75 | 6-30 | 19.78 | 4.16 | 0.09  | 0.53  |

Note.  $N = 250$ . The information provided from SPSS output reported observed minimum and maximum. All measurements provided acceptable to good reliability.

The regression model significantly predicted escape-oriented job-hopping motives,  $F(9, 240) = 10.09$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining 27.4% of the variance ( $R^2 = .274$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .247$ ) see Table 3

#### *Predictors of Escape-Oriented Job-Hopping Motives*

Table 3. *Predicting Escape Motives*

| Predictors        | F-value | Adjusted $r^2$ | Unstand. Beta | SE   | Stand. Beta | t-value |
|-------------------|---------|----------------|---------------|------|-------------|---------|
| (Constant)        |         |                | 6.82          | 3.56 |             | 1.92    |
| 1. Age            | 10.09** | .247           | -0.06         | 0.17 | -0.03       | -0.34   |
| 2. Gender         |         |                | -1.12         | 0.48 | -0.13       | -2.35*  |
| 3. Monthly Income |         |                | 0.00          | 0.00 | 0.06        | 0.62    |
| 4. Vigor          |         |                | 0.00          | 0.07 | 0.00        | 0.04    |
| 5. Dedication     |         |                | -0.03         | 0.05 | -0.03       | -0.51   |
| 6. Absorption     |         |                | 0.17          | 0.05 | 0.23        | 3.66**  |
| 7. Affective      |         |                | -0.09         | 0.07 | -0.09       | -1.34   |
| 8. Continuance    |         |                | 0.25          | 0.06 | 0.29        | 4.43**  |
| 9. Normative      |         |                | 0.09          | 0.07 | 0.11        | 1.40    |

Note.  $N = 250$ . \* indicate significance, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Among the nine predictors, continuance commitment emerged as the strongest positive predictor of escape motives ( $B = .25$ ,  $\beta = .29$ ,  $t = 4.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Employees reported higher continuance commitment and stronger escape-oriented job hopping

motives after controlling for all other variables. Absorption was likewise a significant positive predictor ( $B = .17$ ,  $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 3.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , indicating that employees who reported greater immersion in their work tended to report stronger

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escape-oriented motives. Gender also significantly predicted escape motives. Because gender was coded as 1 = male and 2 = female, the negative regression coefficient indicates that male employees reported significantly higher escape-oriented job-

hopping motives than female employees, after controlling for the remaining predictors.

In contrast, age, monthly income, vigor, dedication, affective and normative commitment did not significantly predict escape-oriented job-hopping motives.

#### *Predictors of Advancement-Oriented Job-Hopping Motives*

Table 4. Predictors of advancement motives

| Predictors        | F-value | Adjusted $r^2$ | Unstand. Beta | SE   | Stand. Beta | t-value |
|-------------------|---------|----------------|---------------|------|-------------|---------|
| (Constant)        |         |                | 9.41          | 3.47 |             | 2.71    |
| 1. Age            | 9.61**  | .238           | -.25          | .16  | -.14        | -1.57   |
| 2. Gender         |         |                | -.88          | .46  | -.10        | -1.89   |
| 3. Monthly Income |         |                | .00           | .00  | .09         | .94     |
| 4. Vigor          |         |                | .13           | .06  | .15         | 2.07*   |
| 5. Dedication     |         |                | -.04          | .05  | -.05        | -.78    |
| 6. Absorption     |         |                | .06           | .04  | .08         | 1.31    |
| 7. Affective      |         |                | .00           | .06  | .00         | .02     |
| 8. Continuance    |         |                | .33           | .06  | .40         | 5.99**  |
| 9. Normative      |         |                | .03           | .06  | .04         | .63     |

Note.  $N = 250$ . \* indicate significance, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The regression model predicting advancement-oriented job-hopping motives was also statistically significant,  $F(9, 240) = 9.64$ ,  $p < .001$ , accounting for 26.6% of the variance ( $R^2 = .266$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .238$ ) see Table 4.

Continuance commitment was the strongest predictor of advancement motives ( $B = .33$ ,  $\beta = .40$ ,  $t = 5.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Employees with higher continuance commitment tended to report stronger advancement-oriented job-hopping motives. Vigor also significantly predicted advancement motives ( $B = .13$ ,  $\beta =$

.15,  $t = 2.07$ ,  $p = .05$ ), indicating that employees who experienced greater energy and resilience at work were more likely to endorse advancement-related reasons for changing jobs.

We notice that none of the remaining variables significantly predicted advancement motives after controlling for the other predictors, including age, gender, monthly income, dedication, absorption, affective commitment, and normative commitment.

#### *ANN Prediction of Escape Motives*

Table 5. Performance of the ANN Model Predicting Escape-Oriented Job-Hopping Motives

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| Phase    | n   | Sum of squares error | Relative error |
|----------|-----|----------------------|----------------|
| Training | 169 | 67.943               | .809           |
| Testing  | 81  | 25.079               | .713           |

A multilayer perceptron (MLP) artificial neural network was developed to predict escape-oriented job-hopping motives see Table 5. The model randomly allocated 169 participants (67.6%) to the training sample and 81 participants (32.4%) to the testing sample. During the training, the network

produced a sum-of-squares error of 67.943 and a relative error of .809. For testing the sample, the sum-of-squares error decreased to 25.079, with a relative error of .713, indicating moderate predictive performance when applied to previously unseen observations.

Table 6. Independent-Variable Importance in the ANN Model Predicting Escape Motives

| Predictor              | Importance | Normalized importance (%) |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Continuance commitment | 0.262      | 100                       |
| Affective commitment   | 0.205      | 78.4                      |
| Normative commitment   | 0.123      | 47                        |
| Absorption             | 0.099      | 37.9                      |
| Gender                 | 0.08       | 30.6                      |
| Vigor                  | 0.074      | 28.3                      |
| Monthly income         | 0.056      | 21.5                      |
| Dedication             | 0.055      | 20.9                      |
| Age                    | 0.045      | 17.3                      |

The normalized importance values identified continuance commitment as the highest influential predictor (100%), followed by affective commitment (78.4%), normative commitment (47%), absorption (37.9%), gender (30.6%), vigor (28.3%), monthly income (21.5%), dedication (20.9%), and age

(17.3%) see Table 6. We take note that ANN variable importance reflects relative contribution within a nonlinear prediction model; these rankings should not be interpreted as measures of statistical significance or directional effects.

**Figure 1.** Multilayer perceptron model predicting escape motives using demographic characteristics, work engagement, and organizational commitment. The network contains one hidden layer with six neurons. Gray lines indicate positive weights, while blue lines indicate negative weights.

*ANN prediction of Advancement-Oriented Job-Hopping Motives*

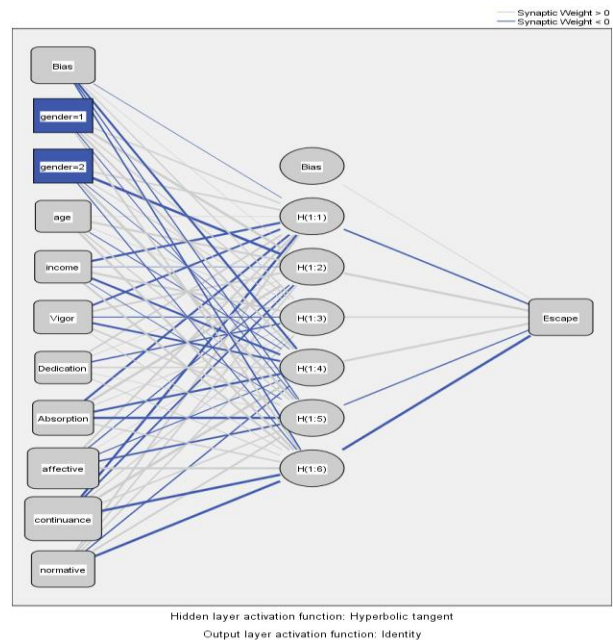


Table 7. Performance of the ANN Model Predicting Advancement Job-Hopping Motives

| Phase    | n   | Sum of squares error | Relative error |
|----------|-----|----------------------|----------------|
| Training | 174 | 69.621               | .805           |
| Testing  | 76  | 25.017               | .724           |

A separate MLP model was estimated for advancement-oriented job-hopping motives, see Table 7. The network randomly assigned 174 participants (69.6%) to the training sample and 76 participants (30.4%) to the testing sample. The training phase produced

a sum-of-squares error of 69.621 and a relative error of .805, whereas the testing phase produced a sum-of-squares error of 25.017 and a relative error of .724, indicating comparable predictive performance across training and testing samples.

Table 8. Independent-Variable Importance in the ANN Model Predicting Advancement Motives

| Predictor              | Importance | Normalized importance (%) |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Continuance commitment | 0.384      | 100                       |
| Vigor                  | 0.125      | 32.5                      |
| Absorption             | 0.102      | 26.6                      |
| Dedication             | 0.094      | 24.5                      |
| Normative commitment   | 0.072      | 18.6                      |

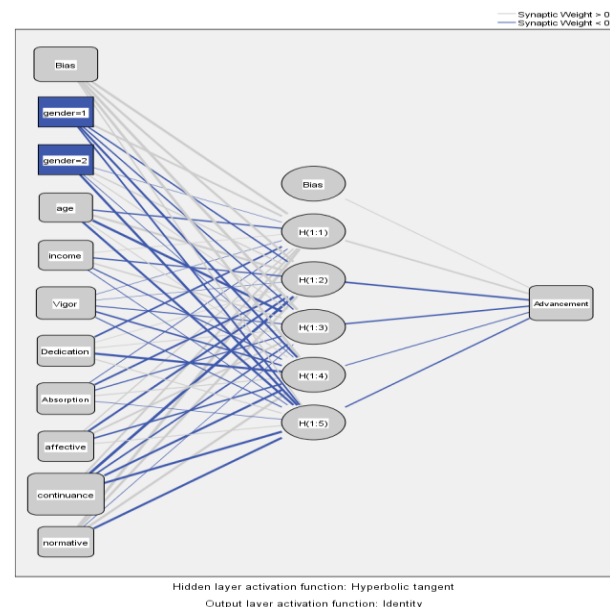
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|                      |       |      |
|----------------------|-------|------|
| Affective commitment | 0.071 | 18.5 |
| Gender               | 0.062 | 16.2 |
| Monthly income       | 0.053 | 13.9 |
| Age                  | 0.037 | 9.7  |

The normalized importance analysis showed that continuance commitment was the most influential predictor (100%) see Table 8. The remaining predictors were ranked as follows; vigor (32.5%), absorption (26.6%), dedication (24.5%), normative commitment (18.6%), affective commitment (18.5%),

gender (16.2%), monthly income (13.9%), and age (9.7%). These rankings indicate the relative contribution of each predictor to the ANN model but do not provide information regarding the direction or statistical significance of their relationship with advancement motives.

**Figure 2.** Multilayer perceptron model predicting motives for advancement using demographic characteristics, work engagement, and organizational commitment. The network contains one hidden layer with six neurons. Grey lines indicate positive weights, while blue lines indicate negative weights.



### Cross-Model Comparison

Table 9. Comparison of Regression and ANN Findings

| Outcome             | Significant regression predictors             | Leading ANN predictors                        |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Escape motives      | Continuance commitment, absorption and gender | Continuance, affective, normative, absorption |
| Advancement motives | Continuance commitment, vigor                 | Continuance, vigor, absorption, dedication    |

*Note.* ANN rankings are relative and nondirectional. “Leading” identifies the highest-ranked variables and does not imply statistical significance.

The regression and ANN analyses demonstrated substantial convergence regarding the principal predictors of job-hopping motives. Across both analytical

approaches, continuance commitment consistently emerged as the strongest predictor of both escape-oriented and advancement-oriented job-hopping motives.

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For escape motives, regression identified continuance commitment, absorption, and gender as statistical predictors, whereas an ANN additionally highlighted affective and normative commitment as influential nonlinear contributors. For advancement motives, both regression and ANN identified continuance commitment and vigor among the most important predictors, although ANN also assigned relatively greater importance to absorption and dedication. Overall, the findings suggest that continuance commitment represents the most stable predictor across linear and nonlinear predictive models.

## Discussion

### *Overview of the Findings*

The study examined the psychological and demographic predictors of escape- and advancement-oriented job-hopping motives among Generation Z employees in the Philippine BPO industry, using both linear and nonlinear predictive approaches. Both multiple regression models were statistically significant, explaining approximately one-quarter of the variance in escape (27.4%) and advancement (26.6%) job-hopping motives. Although these effect sizes indicate that additional determinants remain unexplained, they demonstrate that work engagement and organizational commitment contribute meaningfully to understanding job-hopping motives among Generation Z employees.

Across both regression and ANN analyses, continuance commitment consistently emerged as the strongest predictor of both escape-oriented and advancement-oriented motives. However, the two motivational pathways were distinguished by different secondary predictors. Escape motives were additionally associated with absorption and gender, whereas advancement motives were uniquely associated with vigor. These

findings support the conceptual distinction proposed by Lake et al. (2018), suggesting that escape and advancement motives represent related yet psychologically distinct forms of voluntary job mobility.

### *Continuance Commitment as the Strongest Predictor of Both Job-Hopping Motives*

The most notable findings of the present study are that continuance commitment was the strongest predictor across all regression and ANN models. Contrary to the traditional assumption that organizational commitment uniformly reduces employee turnover, the present findings indicate that employees who reported stronger continuance commitment also reported stronger escape-oriented and advancement-oriented job-hopping motives.

According to Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model, continuance commitment reflects employees' perception of the costs associated with leaving an organization. This cost may include financial security, accumulated benefits, tenure, professional networks, or limited employment alternatives. Importantly, continuance commitment does not necessarily represent emotional attachment to the organization. Instead, it reflects the perceived necessity of remaining employed because leaving may be costly.

The present findings suggest that among Generation Z employees, higher continuance commitment may coexist with stronger intentions to seek alternative employment. Employees may remain in their organizations because of economic necessity while simultaneously evaluating external opportunities that offer greater career advancement or improved working conditions. Thus, continuance commitment appears to reflect a cognitive cost-benefit

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evaluation rather than genuine organizational attachment.

This interpretation is consistent with previous literature indicating that continuance commitment differs conceptually and behaviorally from affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Somers, 1995; Guzeller et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022). Rather than functioning as a protective factor against job mobility, continuance commitment may represent employees who remain organizationally constrained while actively contemplating future career moves.

The convergence of regression and ANN findings further strengthens our claim that, regardless of whether relationships were modeled as linear or nonlinear, continuance commitment consistently demonstrated the highest predictive importance, suggesting it is a robust predictor of job-hopping motives among Generation Z BPO employees.

#### *Escape-Oriented Job-Hopping Motives*

Among the work engagement dimensions, absorption significantly predicted escape-oriented job-hopping motives. Employees who reported becoming deeply immersed in their work also reported stronger escape motives after controlling for organizational commitment and demographic variables.

At first glance, this finding appears inconsistent with previous studies describing work engagement as a protective factor against turnover intentions (Bakker, 2011; Christian et al., 2011). However, absorption represents intense concentration and psychological immersion in work rather than positive emotional attachment. Within highly demanding BPO environments characterized by repetitive customer interactions, strict performance monitoring, rotating schedules, and emotional labor, employees may become

highly absorbed while simultaneously experiencing psychological fatigue and diminished opportunities for recovery.

Consequently, deep work immersion may coexist with increasing desires to escape unfavorable working conditions. The present findings, therefore, should not be interpreted as indicating that absorption is detrimental. Rather, they suggest that in demanding service environments, sustained immersion without adequate recovery resources may coincide with stronger withdrawal-oriented motives for job-hopping.

Future studies should investigate whether burnout, emotional exhaustion, recovery experiences, or job demands mediate the relationship between absorption and escape-oriented job-hopping motives.

#### *Gender Differences in Escape Motives*

Gender also emerged as a statistically significant predictor of escape-oriented job-hopping motives. Because gender was coded as 1 = male and 2 = female, the negative regression coefficient indicates that male employees reported significantly higher escape-oriented job-hopping motives than female employees, after controlling for the remaining predictors.

These findings should be interpreted cautiously. The present study was not designed to explain gender differences, and the sample consisted predominantly of female employees (76.4%), which may have influenced the stability of the regression coefficient. Moreover, gender likely serves as a proxy for broader contextual factors rather than an inherent characteristic of job-hopping behavior.

Male employees may differ in occupational roles, work schedules, career expectations,

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financial responsibilities, or perceptions of external employment opportunities. Because these variables were not directly measured, no definitive explanation can be drawn from the present findings. Future research should examine whether work-family demands, career adaptability, perceived employability, organizational support, or occupational characteristics account for the observed gender difference.

Notably, gender did not significantly predict advancement-oriented job-hopping motives, suggesting that demographic differences were more closely associated with withdrawal-oriented mobility than with proactive career advancement.

#### *Advancement-Oriented Job-Hopping Motives*

Unlike escape-oriented motives, advancement-oriented job-hopping motives were uniquely predicted by vigor. Employees reporting higher levels of vigor were more likely to endorse advancement-oriented reasons for changing employers.

Vigor reflects high levels of energy, persistence, and resilience while performing work tasks (Bakker, 2011). Rather than dissatisfaction, vigorous employees may possess greater confidence, motivation, and psychological resources to pursue better career opportunities, higher compensation, professional growth, or more challenging positions.

The convergence between regression and ANN analyses strengthens this interpretation, as vigor ranked second only to continuance commitment in the ANN importance analysis. These findings suggest that advancement-oriented job hopping represents proactive career behavior rather

than withdrawal from undesirable work conditions.

For organizations, this finding highlights an important retention challenge. High-performing, highly engaged employees with greater psychological energy may also be more confident about pursuing external opportunities if internal career development pathways are perceived as limited.

Organizations may therefore reduce advancement-related turnover by providing transparent promotion systems, structured career development programs, mentoring opportunities, succession planning, and internal mobility initiatives.

#### *Integration of Multiple Regression and Artificial Neural Network Findings*

One important contribution of the present study lies in the use of complementary predictive methodologies. Multiple regression identified statistically significant predictors and estimated the direction and magnitude of their unique linear relationships with job-hopping motives. In contrast, the ANN model identified the relative contribution of predictors within nonlinear prediction models.

The two approaches produced substantial convergence. Continuance commitment consistently emerged as the strongest predictor across both analytical techniques, whereas absorption and vigor remained prominent predictors within their respective motivational pathways.

We also observed some differences. For example, affective commitment and normative commitment received relatively high importance rankings in the ANN predicting escape motives despite not reaching statistical significance in the

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regression analysis. This discrepancy should not be interpreted as contradictory. Rather, it reflects the methodological differences between the two approaches. Regression estimates independent linear effects after controlling for shared variance among predictors, whereas ANN importance values capture the overall contribution of predictors within complex nonlinear networks.

Accordingly, the ANN findings suggest that affective and normative commitment may contribute to nonlinear or interaction effects that are not fully represented in conventional regression models. Future studies should employ more advanced explainable artificial intelligence techniques, such as SHAP values or partial dependence plots, to examine these complex relationships.

#### *Theoretical Implications*

The present study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it provides empirical support for conceptualizing job hopping as comprising two distinct motivational pathways rather than a single behavioral outcome. Escape-oriented motives appear more closely associated with withdrawal from unfavorable work experiences, whereas advancement-oriented motives reflect proactive career development.

Second, the findings extend organizational commitment theory by demonstrating that continuance commitment may simultaneously coexist with strong intentions to seek alternative employment. This suggests that remaining with an organization does not necessarily indicate psychological attachment, particularly among younger employees whose career decisions may be guided by continuous evaluations of future opportunities.

Third, the study demonstrates the value of integrating traditional statistical techniques with machine learning approaches when examining complex organizational behavior. The convergence between regression and ANN findings increases confidence in the robustness of continuance commitment as the primary predictor of job-hopping motives while illustrating the potential value of nonlinear modeling for organizational psychology research.

#### *Practical Implications*

The findings have several implications for human resource management within the Philippine BPO industry. The organization should recognize that employees who remain due to perceived financial or occupational constraints may still be actively considering external employment opportunities. Consequently, retention strategies should extend beyond financial incentives and address employees' psychological attachment, career advancement, and organizational support.

Furthermore, organizations should closely monitor highly vigorous employees, who may represent valuable talent with strong advancement aspirations. Providing meaningful development opportunities, internal promotions, mentoring, and career planning initiatives may reduce the likelihood that these employees seek external job mobility for advancement.

Lastly, interventions aimed at reducing escape-oriented job hopping should prioritize improving working conditions, workload management, employee well-being, and recovery opportunities, particularly for employees who experience sustained work immersion within demanding service environments.

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### Conclusions, limitations, and future research

This study demonstrated that both work engagement and organizational commitment contribute to understanding job-hopping motives among Generation Z BPO employees. Across both multiple regression and artificial neural network analyses, continuance commitment consistently emerged as the strongest predictor of both escape-oriented and advancement-oriented job-hopping motives, highlighting the importance of employees' perceived costs of leaving in shaping mobility decisions. Escape-oriented motives were additionally associated with absorption and male gender, whereas vigor uniquely predicted advancement-oriented motives.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the predictive-correlational design precludes conclusions regarding causality or temporal relationships. Second, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be susceptible to common method and social desirability biases. Third, purposive sampling and the predominance of female respondents limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations and occupational settings. Finally, the regression models explained approximately one-quarter of the variance in job-hopping motives, suggesting that other relevant psychological, organizational, and labor market factors were not captured in the present study.

Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine whether job-hopping motives predict subsequent turnover behavior. Researchers are also encouraged to investigate additional predictors, including burnout, emotional labor, perceived organizational support, psychological

contract fulfillment, career adaptability, perceived employability, leadership, organizational justice, or work-life balance.

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