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Research Article

**A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON THE HOBO SYNDROME IN  
VARIOUS SECTORS SUCH AS HEALTHCARE, BANKING AND  
DEVELOPMENT SECTOR AT NON-MANAGEMENT, MIDDLE  
MANAGEMENT AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEVEL****<sup>1</sup>Dr. Umer Farooq, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Mubashar Alam, <sup>3</sup>Inam ur Rehman**<sup>1</sup>BHU Sharian, Jehlam Valley, AJK.<sup>2</sup>DHQ Hospital Jehlam Valley, AJK<sup>3</sup>UHS Lahore**Abstract:**

**Background:** Individuals who keep on changing their jobs are impelled due to dispositional wanderlust commonly known as Hobo syndrome. Key objective of the study at hand was to identify the concept of Hobo syndrome and then its comparative analysis in three realms i.e. health, banking and development.

**Material & Methods:** The size of sample was 228 in this comparative study. Measures employed in the study were various key aspects i.e. openness to experience scale, perceived alternative employment opportunities, job hopping measure, demographic data sheet, number of past quits and intention to search for alternative job. Post Hoc and one-way ANOVA were correlation used to examine the hypotheses.

**Results:** Study was conducted on total 228 individuals. Every sector was allocated 76 individuals. After results, it was confirmed that there is a presence of positive relationship between perceived alternative employment opportunities and Hobo syndrome. It also validated the relationship between Hobo syndrome and openness to experience. On Hobo syndrome, banking sector employees showed greater mean score when they were compared with health and development sector. When mean differences on Hobo syndrome was compared in connection with workers of various levels of management, results were remarkable. As per these results, high mean score was displayed on Hobo syndrome by non-management employees when they were compared to senior and middle management employees.

**Conclusion:** In Pakistan, Hobo syndrome is rampant amongst various employees related to non-management sector especially. The same is true in case of senior and middle management but it is of lesser nature as compared to non-management workers. Banking sector employees have more inclination to Hobo syndrome in comparison to the employees of health and development sectors.

**Key Words:** Job hopping, Openness to Experience, Hobo Syndrome, Perceived Alternative Employment Opportunities.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

In the year 1974, Ghiselli first ever coined the term "Hobo syndrome". According to him, it is a sporadic itch to shift a job from one place to another for another job. He asserted that such itchiness arises from innate forces [1]. This particular syndrome is temperamental wanderlust which compels some people to switch their jobs every now and then [2,3].

Both Hobo syndrome and Job-Hopping (a term used in literature) go hand in hand as far as their concept is concerned. The term Job-Hopping can further be explained in two ways. At first, it is linked with the intention that people like switching their jobs due to their longings in experiencing novel things. Second part of job-hopping deals with social influences in which people tend to change their jobs because others are involved in turnover culture and they are just imitating them [4]. Both the terms (Job-Hopping and Hobo syndrome) will be dealt synonymously in the current study.

This study will endeavour to illustrate and comprehend hobo syndrome and its association with other variables. The term "Hobo syndrome" has been incidentally brought by some researchers which mean "to switch a job" or "to hop" [5,6].

Since they can be a potential reason of job hopping, Perceived employment alternatives are very significant. External factors like financial securities, characteristics of organization and interpersonal conflicts and characteristics of organization are responsible for Job-hopping behaviour.

Perceived alternative employment opportunities occur when employees perceive the availability of jobs in their surroundings [8]. It may happen when employees of one organization deem that other employers can alleviate their problems and thus resolve their issues [9]. Perceived alternative is linked positively to job turnover attitudes [10 – 12]. Owing to more labour market alternatives, some employees may show job hopping behaviours. This is especially true in case of highly educated employees or in favourable labour markets [13].

As trend of switching job is on the rise due to multiple factors. Another potential cause is openness to experience. It entails those personality characteristics which compel an individual to go for novelty and a variety of opportunities [14]. Predictive of turnover has been absolutely displayed by this very trait [15, 16]. People who are eager to taste new experiences have experiential inquisitiveness, craze for learning and higher intellectual levels [17].

The study at hand is meant to describe and comprehend Hobo syndrome. It is further meant to explore its connection with various other variables so that we can plug the literature gap on this topic. The current study will also highlight its importance in terms of distinction among three industries i.e. banking, health and development. It will be benefited by both targeted and other industries to reinvigorate their employees hiring policies and thus saving their precious manpower loss. It is expected to boost the relationships between employees and organizations.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS:**

Hypotheses which were tested include, openness to experience and its positive connection with Hobo syndrome, perceived alternative employment opportunities and their positive connection with Hobo syndrome, difference in Hobo syndrome in three sectors i.e. health, banking and development, obvious difference of Hobo syndrome in senior managerial, middle managerial and non-managerial employees.

The research employed purposive sampling. The samples consisting of 228 were collected from the employees of three sectors i.e. health (n = 76), banking (n = 76) and development (n = 76). Selected organization were from the cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Hospitals, non-governmental organizations and banks were among the selected organizations. Age ranged from 25 to 50 years.

Instruments which were used for this study includes, perceived alternative employment opportunities, openness to experience scale, demographic data sheet and job-hopping measure. Development of socio-demographic data sheet was carried out for current study. It encompasses various variables e.g. age, gender, organization, number of years working in the current organization, job title, occupation, pay, position/management level and education. Six items scale (by Khatri, Fern, Budhwar in 2001) was used to measure perceived alternative employment opportunities. Every item showed positive score with the exception of item 4 which was reverse-coded.

Five-point Likert scale was used to record the responses of items i.e. strongly disagree to strongly agree. For measuring Hobo syndrome, Job Hopping Measure (by Khatri, Budhwar & Fern in 1999-18) was utilised. It contained 3 items having seven-point Likert scale format. Response ranges were from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The Scale developed (by Woo, Chernyshenko, Longley, Zhang, Chiu & Stark in 2013-14) was utilised as a scale of Openness to Experience. It

contained fifty-four items. It is manufactured on four points i.e. strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3) and strongly agree (4).

228 people from health, banking, and development sector organizations were handed over questionnaires. Participants were volunteers and their consent were acquired before administering the questionnaires. They were briefed about the objective of the research. They were made fully conversant with the questionnaire to record their responses accordingly. At first, they were told to fill the demographic details i.e. age, gender, organization, number of years working in the current organization, job title, occupation, pay, grade, position/ management level, education, marital status etc. They were informed to fill other related instruments details. Their confidentiality

was made ensured. In order to ensure the equality and differences of all the selected variables amongst different kinds of industrial sectors, one-way ANOVA was utilised.

### RESULTS:

Results displayed that banking sector employees showed high mean score in comparison to health and development employees. Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison test was utilised to determine F value leading to differences in groups. Results of this procedure indicated a considerable difference at the level of 0.05 between health and banking sector employees. Banking sector employees scored higher on Hobo syndrome thus proving the fact that banking employees have higher tendency of hobo syndrome as compared to health and development employees.

**Table – I: Demographic features**

Variable		Development Sector	Banking Sector	Health Sector	Total
Age	Average age	34	27	32	34
Gender	Male	41	38	30	109
	Female	35	38	46	119
Married / Unmarried	Single	33	25	37	95
	Married	43	51	39	133
Education	Matric	2	4	17	23
	Intermediate	5	20	23	48
	Masters	51	46	26	123
	MPhil	18	6	10	34
Level of Management	Non-Manager	17	24	40	81
	Middle Manager	41	36	21	98
	Senior Manager	18	16	15	49
Salaries	15000 - 25000	0	11	26	37
	26000 - 35000	17	12	14	43
	36000 - 45000	21	18	9	48
	46000 - 55000	14	13	12	39
	66000 - 75000	11	15	4	30
	76000 – 100000 plus	13	7	11	31
Total Service	1 to 3	22	31	34	87
	3 to 6	30	19	24	73
	7 to 10	24	26	18	68

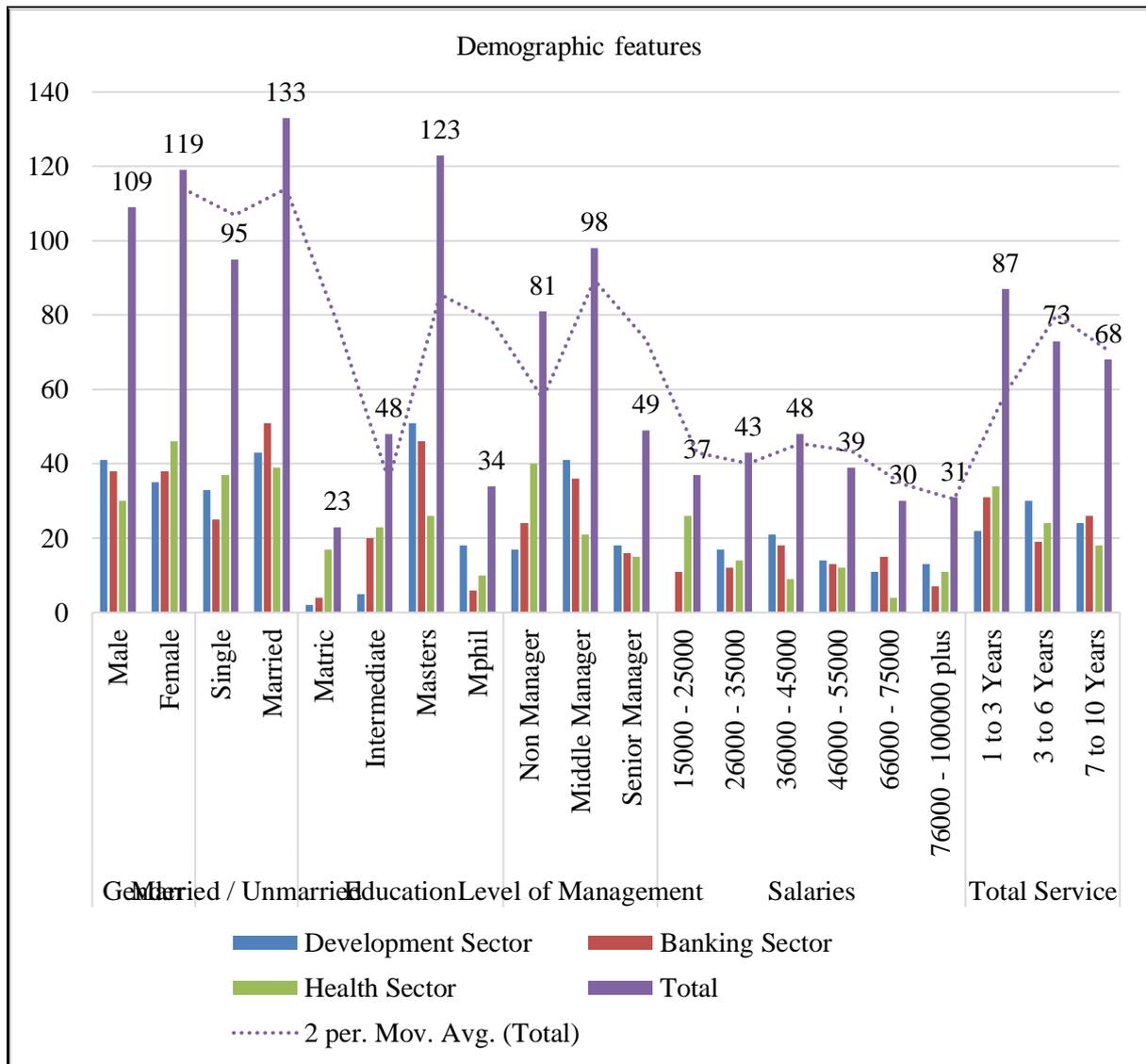


Table – II: Analysis of the reliability

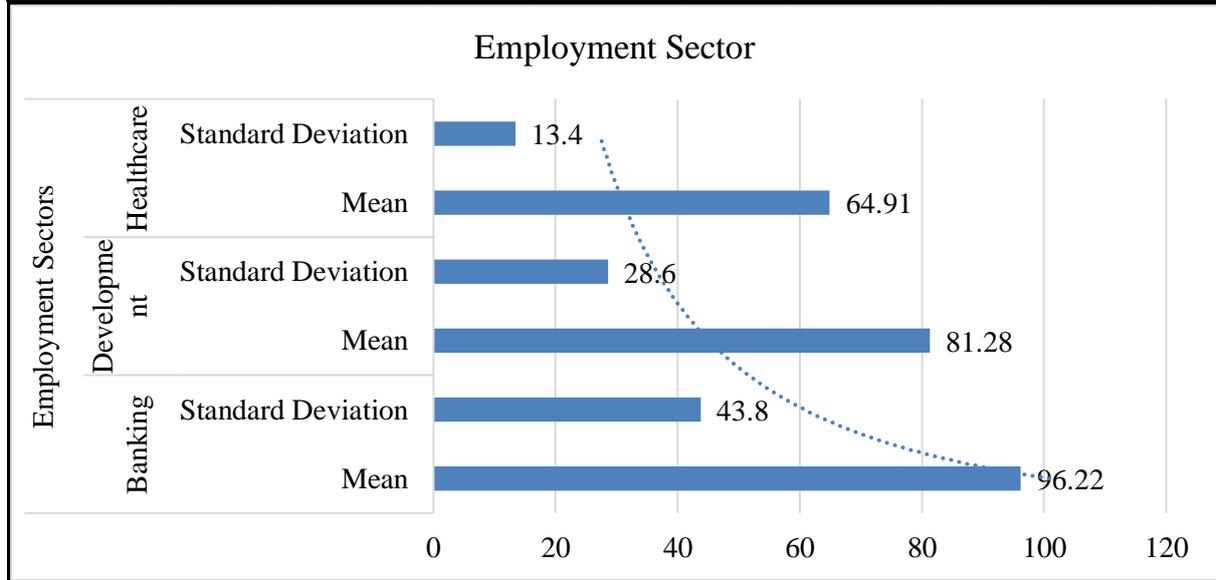
Scale	Frequency of Terms	Cronbach Alpha
Perceived opportunities of an alternative employment	6	0.91
Hobo Syndrome	3	0.82
Experience Openness	54	0.86

Table – III: Correlation of the Pearson’s Product

Scale	Hobo Syndrome	
	r	Sig.
Perceived opportunities of an alternative employment	0.374	0.019
Experience Openness	0.29	0

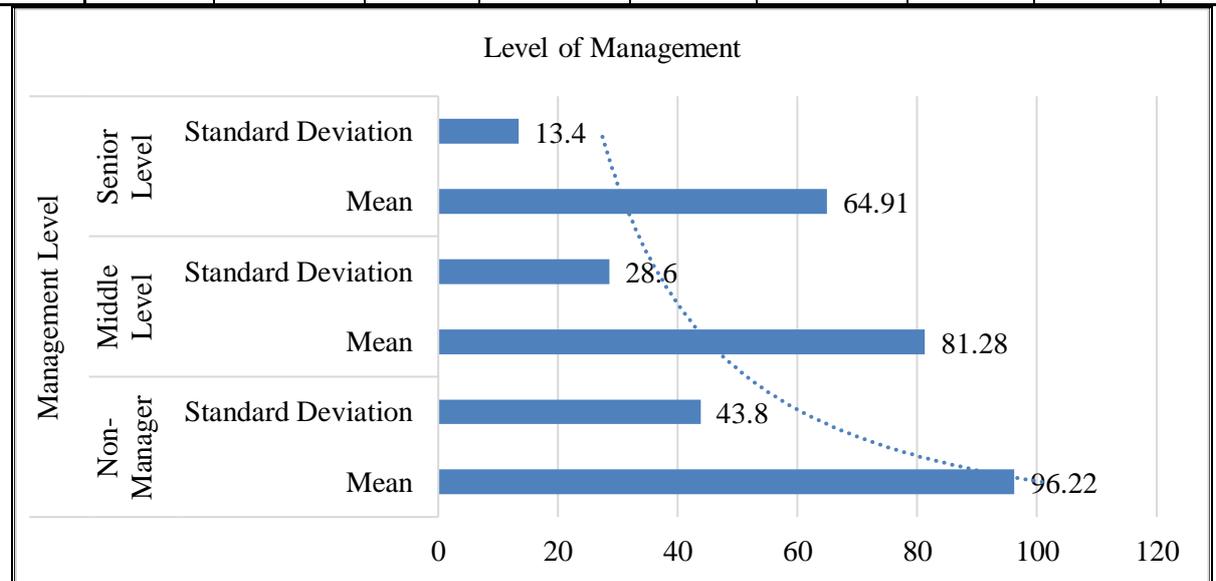
**Table – IV: Hobo Syndrome difference among employees of various sectors**

Scale	Sector of Employment						F	p	Post hoc
	Banking		Development		Healthcare				
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation			
<b>Hobo Syndrome</b>	96.22	43.8	81.28	28.6	64.91	13.4	4.45	0.043	1 > 2 > 3



**Table – V: Hobo Syndrome variation among various levels of management**

Scale	Management Level						F	p	Post hoc
	Non-Manager		Middle Level		Senior Level				
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation			
<b>Hobo Syndrome</b>	96.22	43.8	81.28	28.6	64.91	13.4	4.45	0.043	1 > 2 > 3



Non-management employees demonstrated a high mean score on Hobo syndrome when they were compared with senior and middle management employees. Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison test was utilised to determine F value leading to differences in groups. This procedure concluded that a considerable difference was noted at the level of 0.05 amongst employees working at diverse management levels. Since employees from non-management realm displayed score comparatively higher, therefore it is concluded that these employees have greater tendencies of hobo syndrome.

### DISCUSSION:

In the corporate world, burning issues such as resignation, Job-hopping, turnover and Hobo syndrome etc., have been of prime concerns for researchers and business-related sectors. In the previous era, it has been observed that people were frustrated to get a job after their completion of education. They were not habitual to switch their jobs and thus, stuck to their jobs until their retirement.

However, developments in career philosophies and changing life styles have changed a lot today. People are more concerned in their career progression, pay satisfaction and accepting new challenges. Employees are expected to switch the jobs else they should be stagnant. It is generally a thumb rule that no one would like to stick to one organization otherwise he or she will be considered incapable of being recruited anywhere else.

Identification of such problems and their significant relationships with organizations and Hobo syndrome are the main objective of this study. Job hopping in Pakistan is the result of social and economic changes which induce employees to seek new jobs for better income and social status. Having ample opportunities owing to labour demand, health, banking and development sectors allow switching of jobs and paving way to hobo syndrome. Turnover trends and less devotion to organization are caused because of competition and high demand of employees in banking sector. On account of such behaviours on the part of the employees, these organizations are being affected in terms of quality services, productivity and profitability. Hence, it is paramount to recruit the efficient and loyal employees for such sectors.

The selected three industries are fastest developing industries in Pakistan. In addition to local organizations, there are various organizations that provide reasonable monetary packages other than salaries. This study reveals that employees from banking sector exhibit more hobo syndrome than other sectors i.e. health and development sectors.

The reason for this trend can be due to ample opportunities provided by bank department.

After results, it was confirmed that there is a presence of positive relationship between perceived alternative employment opportunities and Hobo syndrome. The same results were derived from other conducted researches. In a study however, a weak relationship was found in turnover trend and perceived alternative employment opportunities [4].

Openness to experience which is a personality trait is linked to hobo syndrome positively. It may be attributed to be dispositional justification of the hobo syndrome [20]. It was confirmed that there is a presence of positive relationship between hobo syndromes and openness to experience. These results were the same in case of other researches. Exhibition of hobo syndrome was found in the people of high levels of openness to experience [17, 21]. Enthusiastic and productive members are prone to change their jobs more frequently [22]. Hoboness is likely to be found in the people who are open to new experiences and opportunities in life which ultimately become a stark reason in switching the jobs.

It is pertinent to mention here that most of the variables of current research were having varying significance among different industrial sectors. Development and banking sector were having more influence of Hobo syndrome. Sample which was consisting of middle managerial staff includes development sector (41) and Banking (36). Conversely, non-managerial staff (40) was selected from health sector. The ratio of senior managerial staff was similar in all the sectors. Senior managerial cadre experienced less hobo syndrome than middle managerial and non-managerial employees. This study proved that non-managerial employees have greater inclination to switch the job as compared to managerial employees [4].

Nonetheless, much elaborated research is required for deeper understanding of interaction of individuals' dispositional features and various other factors in connection with hobo syndrome. That research should aim for tracing out the connection of hobo syndrome with other personality traits like conscientiousness and impulsivity etc. It is thus proved that Hobo syndrome is a phenomenon experienced by Pakistani employees. Non-managerial employees have greater tendency to switch the job as compared to managerial employees. Banking sector employees have more inclination to Hobo syndrome in comparison to the employees of health and development sectors.

**CONCLUSION:**

In Pakistan, Hobo syndrome is rampant amongst various employees related to non-management sector especially. The same is true in case of senior and middle management but it is of lesser nature as compared to non-management workers. Banking sector employees have more inclination to Hobo syndrome in comparison to the employees of health and development sectors.

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