

Job Hopping and Career Advancement Among Accounting Professionals in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine the influence of job hopping on career advancement among accounting professionals in Nigeria. It focused on assessing whether frequent job changes enhanced or hindered professional growth in terms of promotions, earnings, and skill acquisition. A survey was conducted with 200 professionals working in accounting firms in Nigeria. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that only motivation for mobility ($t = 2.743$, $p < 0.01$) had a significant influence on career advancement, while frequency of job change ($t = 0.531$, $p > 0.05$) and average tenure ($t = 0.627$, $p > 0.05$) did not. However, the joint influence of job hopping variables on career advancement was significant ($F = 5.842$, $p < 0.01$). This indicated that the three components, when combined, significantly predicted career advancement. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.412$) showed that job hopping explained 41.2% of the variation in career advancement. The study concluded that job hopping has a significant overall influence on career advancement among accounting professionals in Nigeria.

Keywords: Job Hopping, Career, Accounting.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Job mobility has become an increasingly relevant subject in the modern labour market, particularly in professional fields such as accounting. Understanding the relationship between job hopping and career advancement is essential, as it has significant implications for employee retention, productivity, and organisational development. In the accounting profession, where experience and credibility are closely tied to stability, the rise in frequent job transitions presents both opportunities and challenges. For organisations and professionals alike, assessing whether job hopping promotes or hinders career growth is critical for aligning human resource strategies with industry realities.

In the Nigerian context, accounting professionals have begun to display increased job mobility, influenced by factors such as poor remuneration, lack of professional development, and limited upward mobility. According to Igbadumhe, Adeniji, and Omotayo (2020), job hopping is now common among professionals, largely driven by the search for better compensation and working conditions. This trend has also been reinforced by the expanding number of accounting firms and institutions offering competitive offers to experienced personnel. Despite this shift, accounting remains a profession

where consistency and long-term credibility are prized, especially in client-facing roles.

The main problem is that job hopping is often perceived as a sign of professional instability, particularly within accounting firms that value trust and institutional memory. However, in a dynamic job market, this perception may be outdated. Career advancement now depends not only on tenure but also on skill acquisition, exposure, and adaptability—traits that job hopping might promote. Yet, empirical evidence exploring how job hopping influences career trajectories among Nigerian accountants remains limited.

There exists a research gap in understanding how frequent job changes among accounting professionals in Nigeria affect their career progression in measurable terms such as promotions, income growth, skill enhancement, and leadership opportunities. Most literature has focused on the education or public sector, with less attention paid to accounting firms where organisational structure, billing models, and professional standards impose unique dynamics. Olakojo, Onanuga, and Onanuga (2021) highlighted job transitions between formal and informal sectors but did not evaluate how these shifts impact professional careers in specific fields like accounting.

Empirical studies in other contexts have shown mixed outcomes. While frequent job changes may lead to faster salary growth and broader experiences (Friday et al., 2020), they may also result in stalled promotions due to lack of continuity and firm-specific knowledge. This dual perspective calls for a nuanced examination of job hopping's actual influence on professional advancement.

In Nigeria, factors such as low retention rates, poor reward systems, and underdeveloped talent pipelines further complicate the relationship between mobility and advancement in accounting. Ebigide, Adomi, and Umukoro (2024) found that workload had limited influence on advancement among librarians, but highlighted other critical factors like ambition and support systems—insights that may similarly apply in accounting contexts.

This study aimed to examine the influence of job hopping on career advancement among accounting professionals in Nigeria. It focused on assessing whether frequent job changes enhanced or hindered professional growth in terms of promotions, earnings, and skill acquisition. The paper aimed to provide evidence-based recommendations for HR practices in accounting firms and contribute to broader discussions on workforce development in professional services.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job hopping refers to the frequent, voluntary transition from one job to another within a short span, often pursued for better pay, learning opportunities, or career progression. Among Nigerian accounting professionals, this behaviour has become more pronounced due to the rising demand for skilled accountants and dissatisfaction with organisational conditions. The three key elements used to measure job hopping in this study include frequency of job change (number of roles held within a defined period), average tenure per organisation (duration spent in each job), and the motivation behind mobility (such as compensation or career stagnation). These elements reflect not just movement but the rationale and patterns influencing that movement. According to Friday, Adeniji, and Omotayo (2020), poor remuneration was a significant predictor of job-hopping intent among professionals in Nigeria, underlining the role of reward dissatisfaction as a mobility motivator.

Career advancement, in contrast, involves a deliberate upward movement in one's profession marked by role elevation, salary increase, skill acquisition, and expanded responsibilities. Professionals typically achieve this by pursuing qualifications, engaging in developmental roles, or leveraging mentorship. In the accounting sector, where technical knowledge and regulatory compliance are crucial, advancement is also tied to exposure and firm reputation. For many accountants, job hopping is seen as a strategy to accelerate growth by gaining varied experiences across firms. Olakojo, Onanuga, and Onanuga (2021) observed that transitions between formal and informal sectors, including financial services, improved job satisfaction and welfare,

suggesting that sectoral mobility could indeed support upward progression.

However, this relationship between job hopping and career advancement remains controversial. While frequent job changes may broaden experience and increase earning potential, they may also harm professional image or stall promotions due to lack of tenure. Siyanbola (2024) found that repeated exits in SMEs were particularly common among professionals like accountants, driven by poor conditions and lack of stability. Yet, this pattern also raised concerns over firm performance and retention, suggesting that excessive hopping without strategic purpose could be counterproductive. From this perspective, career advancement may depend more on quality and timing of transitions than frequency alone.

Empirical evidence offers support and criticism for job hopping. Friday, Adeniji, and Omotayo (2020) found that remuneration strongly predicts job-hopping intention, indicating that professionals are more likely to switch employers when compensation expectations are unmet. Their study linked this to lower teaching engagement in academia, suggesting negative consequences for organisational performance. Conversely, Olakojo, Onanuga, and Onanuga (2021) reported that job mobility between sectors improved productivity and welfare among early-career professionals, supporting the notion that career advancement may benefit from diverse experience. However, Ebigide, Adomi, and Umukoro (2024) observed that workload had minimal influence on career progression, shifting attention toward personal ambition and supportive systems as more critical factors than job transitions.

Additionally, the study by Hassan and Ojochenemi (2024) on ICT's role in accounting advancement suggested that skill relevance may outweigh tenure in determining professional growth. This view aligns with the argument by Adani, Okoli, and Nwosu (2022) that professional development and institutional support significantly influence career satisfaction. These contrasting findings point to a nuanced relationship—job hopping can support advancement when it aligns with continuous learning and performance but may undermine growth if driven by frustration alone.

In summary, job hopping among accounting professionals in Nigeria is shaped by individual aspirations, organisational support, and market dynamics. While it may serve as a tool for career progression under the right conditions, excessive mobility without strategic intent could limit long-term gains.

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Area of Study*

The study was conducted in Lagos State, Nigeria, a key commercial hub with a high concentration of accounting firms. Lagos was chosen due to its large population of accounting professionals, dynamic labour market, and the presence of both indigenous and multinational accounting

firms, providing a suitable setting to investigate the relationship between job hopping and career advancement.

➤ Research Design

This research adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of job hopping on career advancement. The design was appropriate because it enabled the collection of data from a large group of respondents at a single point in time and allowed the assessment of relationships among the study variables (Devi, Vasudevan, Sagadavan, & Shiney, 2023).

➤ Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study population comprised accounting professionals employed across public and private accounting firms in Lagos. A total of 200 respondents were selected using purposive sampling to target individuals with at least two years of experience and who had worked in more than one firm. This ensured that the data reflected the perspectives of those with relevant exposure to job transitions in the field (Friday, Adeniji, & Omotayo, 2020).

➤ Research Instrument

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was developed and used to collect primary data. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographic information, independent variable (job hopping), and dependent variable (career advancement). Items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (Olakojo, Onanuga, & Onanuga, 2021).

➤ Validity of Research Instrument

The instrument’s validity was assessed through expert reviews and pilot testing. A pilot study involving 20 accounting professionals confirmed the clarity and relevance of items. Construct and content validity were ensured by aligning the questions with prior validated research frameworks, and a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.82 confirmed internal consistency (Akinwale & George, 2020).

➤ Measurement of Variables

The independent variable—job hopping—was measured using three elements identified in the literature: frequency of job change, average tenure per job, and motivation for mobility. Frequency assessed the number of

firms worked with in the last five years. Tenure measured duration at each firm, and motivation examined the drivers behind job changes (Nguyen, 2021). The dependent variable—career advancement—was measured by perceived improvements in position, salary, responsibilities, and skill development.

• The Study’s Model was Structured as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon.$$

Where

Y = career advancement,

X₁ = frequency of job change,

X₂ = tenure per job,

X₃ = mobility motivation.

➤ Data Analysis Method

Data collected were analysed using SPSS Version 26. Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, standard deviation) summarised the data, while multiple regression analysis tested the influence of job hopping components on career advancement. The model’s significance was determined at a 0.05 level.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. The data showed that the largest group (28.5%) were aged 26-35, followed by 26.2% in the 36-45 age group. The smallest percentage was recorded in the younger age bracket (18-25). A significant 69% of the respondents were male, while 31% were female. 60.6% of respondents were B.Sc degree holders, 29.1% were M.Sc degree holders, and 10.3% had Ph.D. Most respondents (64.6%) earned between ₦100,000 and ₦500,000 monthly while 18.8% earned less than ₦100,000 monthly, and 16.6% earned above ₦500,000. 12.6% of respondents had changed their job once, 24.6% twice, 55.4% more than twice, and 7.4% had never changed their job before.

Table 1 Respondents’ Profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	18 - 25	22	12.5
	26 - 35	50	28.5
	36 - 45	46	26.2
	46 - 55	26	14.7
	56 - 65	31	18.1
Gender	Female	121	69
	Male	54	31
Educational Level	B.Sc/ND	106	60.6
	M.Sc	51	29.1
	Ph.D	18	10.3
Monthly Earnings	Below N100,000	33	18.8
	Between N100,000 and N500,000	113	64.6

	Above N500,000	29	16.6
How many times have you changed your job?	Once	22	12.6
	Twice	43	24.6
	More than twice	97	55.4
	Never	13	7.4

Field Survey (2025)

The analysis in Table 1 showed that 57.1% agreed they had changed jobs multiple times in five years; 57.2% agreed they actively explore new job opportunities; 57.2% agreed they spend less than two years per firm; 54.3% preferred short-term roles; 65.7% had switched jobs for better opportunities; and 65.7% had left due to limited growth.

These results indicated that most respondents exhibited job-hopping tendencies, particularly driven by career advancement motives. The overall high mean scores ranging from 3.46 to 3.8 further confirmed a strong presence of job-hopping behaviour among accounting professionals.

Table 2 Independent Variable - Job Hopping

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Frequency of job change							
I have changed jobs multiple times in the past five years.	55 (31.4%)	45 (25.7%)	35 (20.0%)	25 (14.3%)	15 (8.6%)	3.55	1.38
I often explore new job opportunities even when employed.	60 (34.3%)	40 (22.9%)	30 (17.1%)	25 (14.3%)	20 (11.4%)		
Tenure per job							
I rarely spend more than two years in one accounting firm.	50 (28.6%)	50 (28.6%)	30 (17.1%)	25 (14.3%)	20 (11.4%)	3.46	1.33
I prefer short-term roles that offer faster growth opportunities.	45 (25.7%)	50 (28.6%)	35 (20.0%)	25 (14.3%)	20 (11.4%)		
Mobility Motivation							
I have switched jobs to gain better career opportunities.	70 (40.0%)	45 (25.7%)	30 (17.1%)	20 (11.4%)	10 (5.7%)	3.8	1.22
I have left jobs due to limited learning or promotion chances.	65 (37.1%)	50 (28.6%)	30 (17.1%)	20 (11.4%)	10 (5.7%)		

Author's Computation (2025)

The analysis in Table 2 showed that 67.5% agreed their career progressed faster due to job changes; 67.4% agreed their income improved through mobility; 68.6% agreed job switching helped develop relevant skills; 65.7% earned faster promotions by changing firms; 69.7% experienced increased professional exposure; and 71.4% believed strategic job

changes enhance long-term career growth. These results indicated that most respondents perceived job hopping as beneficial to their career advancement. The consistently high mean score of from 3.87 confirmed a strong positive relationship between job hopping and career advancement among accounting professionals.

Table 3 Dependent Variable - Career Advancement

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean	Standard Deviation
My career has progressed faster because of my job changes.	68 (38.9%)	50 (28.6%)	30 (17.1%)	20 (11.4%)	7 (4.0%)		

Changing jobs has improved my income significantly.	70 (40.0%)	48 (27.4%)	25 (14.3%)	22 (12.6%)	10 (5.7%)	3.87	1.21
Job switching has helped me develop more relevant skills.	75 (42.9%)	45 (25.7%)	25 (14.3%)	20 (11.4%)	10 (5.7%)		
I have earned promotions faster because I moved between firms.	60 (34.3%)	55 (31.4%)	30 (17.1%)	20 (11.4%)	10 (5.7%)		
My professional exposure has increased through job mobility.	72 (41.1%)	50 (28.6%)	25 (14.3%)	18 (10.3%)	10 (5.7%)		
I believe changing jobs strategically enhances long-term career growth.	80 (45.7%)	45 (25.7%)	25 (14.3%)	15 (8.6%)	10 (5.7%)		

Author's Computation (2025)

A multiple regression analysis was run to test hypothesis one. The analysis in Table 3 shows the regression results of the influence of job hopping, measured by frequency of job change (FREQ), average tenure per job (TEN), and motivation for mobility (MOT), on career advancement. The results showed that individual components of job hopping were positively related to career advancement, suggesting that advancement increases as job hopping behaviours intensify. However, only motivation for mobility ($t = 2.743$, $p < 0.01$) had a significant influence on career advancement, while frequency of job change ($t = 0.531$, $p > 0.05$) and average tenure ($t = 0.627$, $p > 0.05$) did not. This implies that the reasons behind the job movement had more influence on

professional growth than how often or how long employees stayed in a role. Thus, firms must recognise and support employee motivations for development.

Moreover, the joint influence of job hopping variables on career advancement was significant ($F = 5.842$, $p < 0.01$). This indicated that the three components, when combined, significantly predicted career advancement. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.412$) showed that job hopping explained 41.2% of the variation in career advancement. These results confirmed a significant overall influence of job hopping on career advancement among accounting professionals. Thus, hypothesis one was rejected.

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Job Hopping on Career Advancement

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.652a	0.412	0.343	3223.24739
a Predictors: (Constant), FREQ, TEN, MOT				

ANOVAa						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	202972227.7	3	67657409.22	5.842	.004b
	Residual	286852211.7	172	11032777.37		
	Total	489824439.4	175			
a Dependent Variable: career advancement						
b Predictors: (Constant), FREQ, TEN, MOT						

Model	Independent variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	2880.023	2361.41		1.224	0.234
	FREQ	76.887	222.159	0.08	0.531	0.632
	TEN	103.81	149.749	0.152	0.627	0.494
	MOT	368.82	137.442	0.497	2.743	0.013
a Dependent Variable: career advancement						

Author's Computation (2025)

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that job hopping had a significant influence on career advancement, with motivation for mobility being the most impactful factor. This aligns with the findings of Olakojo, Onanuga, and Onanuga (2021), who noted that transitions between jobs improved welfare and productivity, especially in professional sectors. This supports the idea from Social Exchange Theory that employees seek better returns for their contributions. However, Igbadumhe, Adeniji, and Omotayo (2020) argued that job hopping, driven mainly by remuneration dissatisfaction, reduced institutional engagement, implying possible negative effects on long-term growth. This contrast suggests that not all job switches yield positive career outcomes unless driven by development-focused reasons.

Moreover, the study's finding that frequency and tenure had weaker effects on advancement reflects the conclusions by Ebide, Adomi, and Umukoro (2024), who found that career growth was more influenced by ambition and support systems than workload or time spent. Yet, Siyanbola (2024) cautioned that repeated exits without stability affect organisational performance, indicating that context matters. This insight shows that motivation behind mobility is more predictive of advancement than mobility itself.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings showed that job hopping significantly influenced career advancement among accounting professionals in Nigeria, with motivation for mobility playing a stronger role than frequency of job changes or tenure. This suggests that the reasons behind switching jobs—such as pursuit of better opportunities—contributed more meaningfully to career growth than how often or how long individuals stayed in roles. Based on this, accounting firms should understand employees' career motivations and design retention strategies that support development. Organisations should offer clear advancement paths, learning opportunities, and fair compensation to reduce unnecessary turnover while enabling purposeful mobility that benefits both staff and employers.

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