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QUICK TO QUIT? AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF JOB-HOPPERS TO EXPLAIN THEIR HIRING CHANCES

Axana Dalle
Senne Jaques
Stijn Baert

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GHENT UNIVERSITY

Department of Economics

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
Campus Tweekerken, St.-Pietersplein 5, 9000 Ghent - BELGIUM

Quick to quit? An experimental study on employers' perceptions of job-hoppers to explain their hiring chances

Axana Dalle,[i] Senne Jaques,[ii] and Stijn Baert[iii]

Abstract

Although job-hopping has become more prevalent, its implications for recruitment appear to be less favourable. Drawing on a scenario experiment with professional recruiters, this study examines the threshold at which job-hopping is penalised, the underlying perceptual mechanisms, and the factors that moderate these effects. The results indicate that substantial negative effects emerge from three prior employers within a five-year period and intensify as the number of prior employers increases. Moreover, contrary to expectations of potential benefits, job-hopping elicits exclusively negative perceptions across four theoretically derived clusters: work attitudes (perseverance, responsibility, motivation, and accuracy), career dynamics (loyalty, bore-out risk, and adaptability), human capital (past performance, in-depth experience, and willingness to learn), and social capital (team spirit, interpersonal problems, and communicative skills). Among these, the hiring penalty is most strongly associated with negative perceptions of perseverance, in-depth experience and interpersonal conflicts.

Keywords: Job-hopping, Hiring chances, Signalling; Scenario experiment
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[i] Ghent University and Research Foundation Flanders (Fellowship Fundamental Research 1I6422N). ORCID: 0000-0001-7905-9280.

[ii] Ghent University. ORCID: 0009-0001-8520-5659.

[iii] Ghent University, University of Antwerp, Université catholique de Louvain and Institute of Labour Economics. ORCID: 0000-0002-1660-5165.

1 Introduction

In recent decades, frequent job changing has increased worldwide and resulted in increasingly unstable careers in terms of job count and tenure (Bussolo et al., 2023; Chudzikowski, 2012; St-Denis & Hollister, 2023, 2024). For example, in the United States, workers born between 1980 and 1984 held an average of seven jobs during the first ten years of their careers, often with tenures of less than one year, whereas those born between 1957 and 1964 averaged only 3.5 jobs over the same period, many of which lasted more than five years (Baum, 2022). Similar trends emerge in Europe (Bussolo et al., 2024), with figures from the United Kingdom and Germany showing an increase in jobs with less than five years of tenure between 1984 and 2014 (St-Denis & Hollister, 2023) and data from the Netherlands indicating that 60% of those who switched jobs in 2023 had held their prior job for less than two years (CBS, 2023). In Belgium, within our experimental context, workers who changed jobs in 2024 had an average job tenure of 3.1 years, increasing from 1.6 years among workers in their twenties to 5 years among those in their fifties (Partena, 2024).

These figures indicate a phenomenon known as job-hopping. Across various definitions, job-hopping is generally understood as holding multiple consecutive jobs over a short timeframe, each with a different employer (Ivanovic & Ivancevic, 2018; Pandey, 2019). Furthermore, some authors describe job-hoppers as workers who voluntarily change employers (Steenackers & Guerry, 2016), do not create a particular bond with their employer or workplace (Bills, 1990) and experience a periodic urge to change workplaces, a pattern also referred to as the hobo-syndrome (Ghiselli, 1974; Kerckhofs et al., 2022; Woo, 2011). Beyond this qualitative notion of job-hopping, several authors conceptualise it in quantitative terms, typically defining it as changing employers every one to two years (Gao et al., 2015; Pranaya, 2014; Tetteh et al., 2021).

Although this phenomenon is becoming more prevalent, its implications for recruitment outcomes remain a relatively recent and underexplored area of research (Imdorf et al., 2019; Qin et al., 2026; Steenackers & Guerry, 2016). While the limited literature suggests that job-hoppers may face disadvantages in terms of hiring chances (Section 2.1), several aspects are still insufficiently understood. First, it remains unclear after how many prior employers negative recruitment effects might emerge, as existing research largely focuses on comparisons between (moderate) job-hoppers and non-job-hoppers, considering only two or three levels of prior employers or leaving this number unspecified (Section 2.1). Second, insights into the underlying mechanisms are confined to non-experimental designs or settings outside a hiring context (Section 2.2), making it more difficult to draw strong causal conclusions about the relationship between job-hopping and employer perceptions during recruitment. Third, only a limited set of moderators has been examined (Section 2.3), often yielding inconsistent findings,

leaving uncertainty as to which factors play a role in the recruitment of job-hoppers. In particular, previous studies on job-hoppers' hiring chances restrict their scope to early career stages by examining only the first five to eight years of work experience after graduation, meaning that the effects of job-hopping at later career stages remain unclear (Cohn et al., 2021; Hollister et al., 2025; Shi, 2024).

To address these gaps, we aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of job-hoppers' recruitment chances. To this end, we set up a scenario experiment among professional recruiters, in which they assess five candidate profiles that vary in their number of prior employers (ranging from one to six over the past five years), alongside other moderating characteristics such as their gender and age. These evaluations include two recruitment outcomes and sixteen potential underlying perceptions, each relating to one of the following four domains informed by theoretical and prior empirical work (Section 2.2): work attitudes, career dynamics, human capital, and social capital.

By doing so, our study contributes to the job-hopping literature in three ways. First, it advances understanding of how different levels of job-hopping are evaluated during recruitment — especially the threshold at which it might become detrimental — by examining a substantially broader range of prior employers than previous studies. Second, it contributes to theory by providing the first causal evidence on how job-hopping influences employers' perceptions in a hiring context — and how these perceptions are associated with recruitment outcomes — by empirically testing potential explanations derived from three dominant theoretical frameworks: statistical discrimination, human capital and social capital. Third, it extends existing research by investigating heterogeneity in employers' evaluations of job-hoppers across career stages and other candidate, recruiter, and job characteristics.

2 Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1 Hiring chances

In the introduction, we briefly noted that the limited existing literature suggests that job-hoppers face lower recruitment chances compared to candidates with more stable employment histories, which forms our first hypothesis (**H1**). This hypothesis is grounded in evidence from both experimental and non-experimental research.

Specifically, three prior experimental studies consistently point to a negative hiring effect for candidates with the highest mobility across different employers during their early career. First, Shi's (2024) scenario experiment demonstrates that having five jobs within five years reduces hiring chances compared to having only three jobs. With respect to horizontal job changes, the field experiment by Cohn et al. (2021) shows that candidates with one employer in the past eight years are more likely to receive a callback after applying for a new job than

those with four employers. Regarding vertical job changes, the correspondence test by Hollister et al. (2025) reveals that candidates with four prior employers across an eight-year period receive the lowest callback rates in comparison to candidates with one or two previous employers.

In addition, we also identified notable findings in non-experimental research. First, Bills' (1990) interviews with managers and employers indicate that job-hopping is considered negatively in selection decisions, as they express limited confidence in job-hopping candidates and perceive job-hopping behaviour as a dangerous signal. Second, Imdorf et al. (2019) conducted a survey with professional recruiters in four European countries, revealing that a majority was hesitant to hire job-hoppers, with the proportion of recruiters willing to hire them ranging from only 20% in Norway to 50% in Greece. These figures reveal substantial cross-national variation, which the authors attribute to differences in unemployment rates. Concretely, employers in countries with high unemployment are more likely to penalise job-hoppers — even more than the unemployed — as they attach less weight to unemployment as a screening criterion and place greater emphasis on other aspects of work history.

2.2 Explanatory perceptions

According to Spence's (1973) signalling theory, unequal treatment in recruitment decisions can be attributed to uncertainty regarding candidates' true quality. In response, employers rely on the information available in resumes as signals that provide insight into otherwise unobservable characteristics (Rivera, 2020). Hence, the relationship between job-hopping and hiring chances may be understood in terms of the signals that employers infer from resumes listing multiple previous employers. As discussed in detail in the subsections below, these signals can shape employers' perceptions of candidates' quality through three mechanisms: group-based averages of productivity (statistical discrimination theory), individual-level indicators of accumulated skills (human capital theory), and individual-level indicators of social networks (social capital theory).

2.2.1 Perceptions concerning group productivity

The statistical discrimination theory (Arrow, 1973; Phelps, 1972) posits that employers may rely on group-based stereotypes regarding average productivity when evaluating candidates. Therefore, job candidates are classified into a favourable group (i.e. non-job-hoppers) and an unfavourable group (i.e. job-hoppers) based on generalised productivity perceptions. This categorisation is then used to guide selection decisions, as individuals associated with the favourable group are perceived as statistically more likely to be high-quality candidates.

Since group productivity is a broad concept, we classified eight corresponding perceptions into two subclusters (i.e. work attitudes and career dynamics) to provide a clearer conceptual

framing of these perceptions. With respect to work attitudes, employers may suspect that job-hoppers are less motivated workers (Imdorf et al., 2023; Riekhoff, 2022), a perception that aligns with findings indicating that job-hoppers themselves often cite a lack of motivation as a reason for changing jobs (Rivers, 2018). In addition, employers may perceive job-hoppers as being less accurate and having a lower sense of responsibility and perseverance (Cohn et al., 2021; Ghiselli, 1974; Imdorf et al., 2023). Regarding career dynamics, job-hoppers may be perceived as less loyal candidates who are more prone to premature departure from the organization (Bills, 1990; Cohn et al., 2021; Fan & DeVaro, 2020; Imdorf et al., 2023; Munasinghe & Sigman, 2004). They could also be associated with a higher risk of bore-out, as high turnover may serve as a response to it (Abubakar et al., 2022; Poirier et al., 2021). Furthermore, job-hoppers may be perceived as being less adaptable to new work environments (Fan & DeVaro, 2015; Won & Bidwell, 2023) and having high expectations towards their jobs (Imdorf et al., 2023).

Taken together, we identify exclusively negative perceptions in employers' assessments of job-hoppers' group-level productivity. Consequently, we formulate a second and third hypothesis corresponding to the two subclusters: job-hopping signals adverse work attitudes (**H2**) and job-hopping signals adverse career dynamics (**H3**).

2.2.2 Perceptions concerning human capital

For the third cluster of perceptions, we rely on Becker's (1962) theory of human capital. This theory argues that candidates with higher levels of human capital (i.e. knowledge and skills) are more valuable to employers and therefore have a higher likelihood of success in recruitment decisions (Rivera, 2020; Serneels, 2008). Overall, human capital is primarily developed through training or education (Becker, 1992), but it can also be enhanced through work experience (Jung & Magrabi, 1991). Accordingly, the shorter and more extensive work histories of non-job-hoppers and job-hoppers respectively may signal different levels of knowledge and skills, which may in turn influence hireability (Jedwab et al., 2023).

The existing literature suggests that both positive and negative perceptions may arise regarding the human capital of job-hoppers. On the one hand, job-hoppers may be perceived as having a higher willingness to learn and having more varied experience (i.e. general human capital), given their higher number of previous jobs and workplaces (Cohn et al., 2021; Qin et al., 2026). On the other hand, job-hoppers are often seen as having weaker past performance and lower specialisation (i.e. specific human capital), as frequent job changes tend to broaden rather than deepen skills and knowledge (Fan & DeVaro, 2020; Qin et al., 2026; Won & Bidwell, 2023).

Hence, we formulate the following hypotheses, each reflecting an alternative direction: job-hopping signals high human capital (**H4A**) and job-hopping signals low human capital (**H4B**).

2.2.3 Perceptions concerning social capital

Regarding the fourth cluster of perceptions, we draw on social capital theory, which refers to the social networks and trust that develop between individuals through human interaction (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995). Such social capital is valuable for employers because it facilitates the achievement of objectives that would not be attainable without such networks. As workers' social capital is developed through interaction in the workplace, it may be perceived differently in the case of job-hoppers, as they have been exposed to multiple workplaces and interpersonal interactions.

Similarly to human capital theory, both positive and negative perceptions may arise regarding the social capital of job-hoppers. Specifically, recruiters may expect job-hoppers to possess larger social and professional networks (Cohn et al., 2021; Qin et al., 2026) and to be strong communicators due to their exposure to diverse workplaces (Qin et al., 2026). In contrast, recruiters may associate job-hopping with lower levels of team spirit (Cohn et al., 2021; Imdorf et al., 2023) and a higher likelihood of interpersonal problems in the workplace (Imdorf et al., 2023).

As a result, we formulate the following two contradictory hypotheses: job-hopping signals high social capital (**H5A**) and job-hopping signals low social capital (**H5B**).

2.3 Moderators

Prior research suggests that the relationship between job-hopping and hiring chances is moderated by characteristics pertaining to the candidate, the recruiter, and the job itself. In the following subsections, we elaborate on the specific characteristics at each level.

2.3.1 Moderators at the candidate level

We start with four moderators at the candidate level: their gender, age, frequency of job-hopping, and motivation for the current job change.

First, the candidate's gender may affect the negative effect of job-hopping on hiring chances. Specifically, Qin et al. (2026) demonstrate that the time required to secure a new job is shorter for male than for female job-hoppers, which suggests that women experience more adverse effects of job-hopping when seeking new employment. Keith & McWilliams (1995) explain this by arguing that job changes by men may be perceived as a strategic pursuit of career advancement, whereas similar behaviour by women may be interpreted as an indication

of a weaker attachment to the labour market. However, Hollister et al. (2025) find no difference in callback rates between male and female job-hoppers in their field experiment.

Second, the negative effect of job-hopping on hiring chances may also be moderated by the candidate's age, although the direction of this moderation remains unclear. On the one hand, it has been argued that the labour market outcomes of younger candidates are less adversely affected by job-hopping, as it may reflect a strategy to search for a connection with a certain workplace (Fan & DeVaro, 2020; Shi, 2024). However, no empirical evidence for this relationship has been found in the context of hiring outcomes (Shi, 2024). On the other hand, Cohn et al. (2021) suggest that older candidates may be less negatively affected by job-hopping, as it is considered more common for them to have accumulated experience across multiple positions and workplaces.

Third, for candidates who change jobs at a moderate frequency, the effect on hiring chances may initially be positive, as staying with the same employer for too long may incur a penalty in recruitment (Hollister et al., 2025; Won & Bidwell, 2023). Specifically, Hollister et al. (2025) indicate that applicants receive higher callback rates when engaging in job-hopping at a moderate frequency (i.e. two employers over eight years) compared with both a lower frequency (i.e. one employer over eight years) and a higher frequency (i.e. four employers over eight years). However, beyond a certain threshold, this effect is likely to reverse and become negative. In this respect, Qin et al. (2026) suggest that the optimal point of job-hopping is 0.84 job changes per year for non-managerial employees and 0.89 for managers. In sum, we expect an initially positive (or less negative) effect of moderate job-hopping on hiring chances, which turns (more) negative when the number of employers increases beyond a certain threshold.

The final candidate-level moderator considered in this study is the motivation for the current job change. This is because recent research calls for an examination of how voluntary and involuntary reasons for job changes affect the hiring chances of job-hoppers (Hollister et al., 2025). Specifically, it is expected that voluntary and involuntary motives may respectively strengthen and weaken the negative impact of job-hopping on hiring chances, as involuntary job changes may be seen as a more legitimate reason for job-hopping than voluntary ones. With respect to the voluntary reasons, the search for a new job may reflect a pursuit of personal growth (Lake et al., 2018; Rivers, 2018) or for a new challenge (Munasinghe & Sigman, 2004), which is especially applicable to job-hoppers. Concerning involuntary reasons, job changes may result from sequences of fixed-term contracts that compel individuals to repeatedly seek new employment as contracts expire (Arranz et al., 2010; De Cuyper et al., 2009; Imdorf et al., 2019). Similarly, periods of unemployment may force candidates to search for new jobs and may therefore be perceived as a more legitimate explanation for job-hopping. However, Cohn et al. (2021) note that for candidates who frequently change jobs and experience intervening periods of unemployment, the negative effect of job-hopping on employability may be

reinforced, possibly due to the combined signalling effect of job-hopping and unemployment on the resume.

2.3.2 Moderators at the recruiter level

Next, we consider four moderators at the recruiter level: their number of previous jobs, risk-taking behaviour, experience with recruiting job-hoppers, and organisational affiliation.

First, we expect that the negative impact of job-hopping is attenuated when recruiters themselves have frequently changed jobs. This expectation draws on the social comparison theory (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007) and ingroup-outgroup bias (Brewer, 1999), which suggest that recruiters evaluate candidates' behaviour through comparison with their own and respond more favourably to candidates with whom they identify.

Second, hiring a job-hopper may be perceived as a risky decision, as job-hoppers may be perceived as lower-quality workers (Subsection 2.2). Therefore, following Baert (2018), we propose that selection decisions may be influenced by recruiters' risk attitudes. Specifically, recruiters with a higher propensity for risk-taking may be more inclined to hire job-hoppers, thereby attenuating the negative effect of job-hopping on hiring chances.

Third, recruiters with prior positive experiences in hiring job-hoppers may evaluate such candidates more favourably. This expectation is grounded in confirmation bias, whereby recruiters rely on previous experiences and selectively attend to information that supports their existing beliefs (Klayman, 1995). Accordingly, we expect the negative effect of job-hopping on hiring chances to be attenuated among recruiters with positive prior experience in recruiting job-hoppers, relative to those who have either no experience or negative experience.

Final, the recruiter's organisational affiliation may influence their decision-making. Kroll et al. (2021) describe how contemporary recruitment practices, such as outsourcing, may increase the likelihood of unequal treatment. This is because negative perceptions (Section 2.2) may weigh more heavily among recruiters acting on behalf of external organisations than among those hiring for their own organisation. Hence, we expect the negative effect of job-hopping on hiring chances to be weaker when the recruiter is hiring for their own organisation.

2.3.3 Moderators at the job level

We conclude by considering two moderators at the job level: the educational and technical level required for the job.

Regarding the required level of education, the direction of the moderating effect remains unclear. This is because Shi (2024) finds that highly educated candidates are less negatively affected by job-hopping in terms of hiring chances. In contrast, other studies indicate the opposite pattern, with the negative effect of job-hopping being less pronounced among low-skilled individuals (Qin et al., 2026; Won & Bidwell, 2023). This greater tolerance for frequent

job changes among low-skilled candidates may be explained by their weaker attachment to the labour market, which may require them to search for new employment more frequently.

Similarly, contradictory evidence exists with respect to the required technical level. On the one hand, highly technically skilled candidates are expected to experience less unfavourable treatment in recruitment following job-hopping (Cohn et al., 2021; Qin et al., 2026). This may be explained by the specific skills valued by recruiters in such roles, which job-hoppers are presumed to have accumulated across different workplaces and functions. On the other hand, Shi (2024) and Hollister et al. (2025) report an adverse effect, finding that job-hoppers with low technical skills are less disadvantaged in terms of hiring chances, possibly due to their weaker labour market attachment, which results in a higher tolerance for job-hopping.

3 Experiment

To address the hypotheses outlined above, we set up a scenario experiment, as this is regarded as the golden standard approach for obtaining in-depth and causal insight into employers' perceptions of job candidates (Auspurg & Hinz). In such experiments, participating employers are asked to evaluate realistic candidate profiles (i.e. scenarios) that consist of multiple characteristics (e.g. gender), which varied in experimentally manipulated levels (e.g. woman). The multidimensional nature of the design conceals the primary research objective and requires employers to make trade-offs between different candidate characteristics, thereby reducing socially desirable responding and enhancing ecological validity compared with traditional survey methods.

3.1 Scenario design

As depicted in Table 1, our scenario design consisted of five dimensions: gender, age, work experience, motivation for application, and extracurricular activities.

< Table 1 about here >

The dimension of primary interest is the candidate's work experience, as it represents the independent variable, namely job-hopping. This dimension comprised six levels, ranging from one to six similar consecutive jobs held with different former employer(s) over the past five years. The term 'similar' was employed to indicate that the candidate possesses relevant experience for the job in question, while 'consecutive' ruled out any gaps in the employment history. The decision to restrict the prior work experience to a five-year window was motivated by two considerations. First, existing definitions of job-hopping generally suggest that candidates are classified as job-hoppers when they change employers every one to two years (Section 1). By limiting the observation period to five years, we were able to generate sufficient

variation between non-job-hoppers and job-hoppers using a manageable number of levels for previous employers. Specifically, candidates with one or two employers in the past five years are not classified as job-hoppers in our experiment, whereas those with three to six employers are. By contrast, using a longer observation window would have required the inclusion of additional levels, increasing the risk of a number-of-levels effect and potentially revealing the aim of the experiment (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015). Second, because both candidate age and the number of previous employers are included in the design, we restrict work experience to the past five years to avoid correlation between these two dimensions. Otherwise, older candidates could spread their number of previous employers over a longer time span than younger candidates, thereby reducing the likelihood of their being perceived as job-hoppers. Moreover, restricting the work history to the past five years allowed younger candidates to have as many, or even more, previous employers than their older counterparts, a pattern that was also observed in practice.

In addition, we included the age of the candidate to test for a potential moderation effect, with the corresponding levels set at 26, 36, 46, and 56 years. The lower bound of 26 years was required to create realistic candidate profiles, as our educational benchmark of a three-year professional bachelor's degree implies graduation at age 21 and candidates must have a minimum working history of 5 years. The upper bound of 56 years was chosen to ensure sufficient distance from the legal retirement age in Belgium, which was set at 66 at the time of the experiment. Furthermore, to enhance ecological validity, each age was randomly varied by ±1, 2, or 3 years, following the approach of Sterkens et al. (2025). Nevertheless, downward adjustments were not applied to the lowest age (i.e. 26 years), as this would have resulted in implausible scenarios.

We also assessed the potential moderating role of candidates' motivation for application. This dimension comprised four levels: (i) lack of professional growth opportunities with the current employer, (ii) need for a new challenge in a different work environment, (iii) unemployed due to bankruptcy of the current employer, (iv) fixed-term contract ends soon. The first two levels reflect voluntary reasons for the recent job change, whereas the latter two indicate involuntary job changes, which may respectively strengthen and mitigate the impact of job-hopping.

We also incorporated the gender of the candidate with the levels man and woman. This was done to investigate a potential moderation effect, and to enhance the ecological validity of the experiment, as gender is commonly indicated on resumes.

Similarly, the candidates' extracurricular activities were included with the associated levels none, sports, volunteering, and cultural activities (Nuijten et al., 2017) since this information frequently appears on resumes, and, thus, further enhances the experiment's ecological validity (Carlsson et al., 2018; Lahey, 2008).

The above dimensions with corresponding combinations of levels yielded a total of 768 unique scenarios: 2 (gender) x 4 (age) x 6 (experience in the past five years) x 4 (motivation for application) x 4 (extracurricular activities). To identify a smaller, more manageable set of scenarios with high statistical power, we employed the algorithms proposed by Auspurg and Hinz (2014) and Kuhfeld (2010), resulting in 200 scenarios with a D-efficiency score of 96.10%. Subsequently, these scenarios were divided into 40 decks of five scenarios, with the order of scenarios randomised within each deck to limit potential order effects.

3.2 Data collection

To safeguard the population validity of the experiment, email addresses of professional Flemish recruiters were collected from job vacancies published on the website of the Flemish Public Employment Service. This approach also allowed us to link each recruiter to one of the four fictitious vacancies employed in the experiment (Subsection 3.2.2), based on their experience with recruitment for these jobs. Recruiters were invited to complete an online survey on recruitment intentions, with the study's purpose concealed, anonymity ensured, and incentives provided to mitigate non-response (Griffin et al., 2011; Sterkens et al., 2025). A total of 147 professional recruiters completed the survey, of whom 29 were excluded for failing an attention check. Subsequently, the final sample consisted of 118 recruiters, each evaluating five scenarios, yielding a total of 590 (118 x 5) unique observations.

3.2.1 Experimental context

In the introductory part of the experiment, participating recruiters were provided with information about the general objective of the study (while the specific objective remained undisclosed), the expected duration, and were asked to give informed consent.

Next, they were instructed to assume the role of a recruitment advisor in a selection procedure for the fictitious company 'Flemmens NV', enhancing internal validity. They were informed that five candidates had been selected for the position by a colleague who had conducted an initial screening based on the required skills, relevant work experience and the level of education required for the fictitious vacancy (Subsection 3.2.2.). Subsequently, recruiters were asked to provide further advice on these selected candidates, based on summary tables extracted from an HR-software package. These tables displayed information on the candidate's gender, age, work experience over the past five years, motivation for application, and extracurricular activities (Subsection 3.1; Table 1). In this context, the use of HR-software tables implicitly justified why only the most recent five years of work experience were displayed, as such software packages are designed to streamline information processing. Furthermore, we clarified that recruiters could select candidates according to their own opinion,

and there was no restriction on the number of candidates they could assess positively for an invitation or recruitment.

3.2.2 Fictitious vacancies

Participating recruiters were presented with a fictitious vacancy for one of four possible jobs, each accompanied by a corresponding job description (Table A1 in Appendix), namely: (i) HR-manager, (ii) packer, (iii) operator assembly and fitting and (iv) IT-project-manager. These occupations were selected using the O*NET database based on the combinations of two relevant job characteristics: the required level of education and the required level of technical abilities (Subsection 2.3.3). First, the positions of HR-manager and IT-project-manager suggest a high level of education, whereas the other two represent positions with a lower educational requirement. Second, the roles of IT-project-manager and operator assembly and fitting involve a high level of technical skills, while the other two jobs indicate a low level.

To improve ecological validity, we controlled for gender balance across occupations, applying an 80/20% male-to-female cutoff to the data from VDAB (2025). Only the occupation of operator assembly and fitting deviates from this cut-off, with a workforce composition of approximately 90% men. This deviation reflects the absence of a more gender-balanced occupation within the category of low-skilled technical jobs, which are predominantly male-dominated (Wootton, 1997).

3.2.3 Candidate evaluations

For each of the five candidates, recruiters were asked to evaluate two sets of statements. The first set concerned recruitment outcomes, measuring the hiring intention as the proximal outcome variable and the interview intention as the distal outcome variable (Dalle et al., 2024). The second set focused on 16 potential explanatory perceptions, which were categorised into four clusters: work ethic, career dynamics, human capital, and social capital (Section 2.2). All 18 statements (Table A2 in Appendix) were measured on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from ‘totally disagree’ to ‘totally agree’ (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015). The statements measuring interview and hiring intentions were formulated as ‘I would recommend to interview/hire a candidate with such a profile’. Similarly, perceptions were assessed using statements beginning with: ‘I think candidates with such a profile are sufficiently …’.

After all candidates had been evaluated and recruiters could no longer return to these assessments, additional questions were asked in which job-hopping was explicitly mentioned. Specifically, each candidate profile was presented again individually, and recruiters were asked whether they considered the candidate to be a job-hopper (yes or no). Subsequently, recruiters were asked to indicate from how many jobs within a five-year period a candidate should be considered a job-hopper (slider ranging from 0 to 15), and in which situations this

applies (frequent voluntary job changes, frequent involuntary job changes, or both).

3.2.4 Post-experimental survey

In the final part of the experiment, participating recruiters completed a post-experimental survey in which they were asked about (i) their experience with similar vacancies, (ii) their propensity for risk-taking behaviour, (iii) their tendency towards socially desirable responding, and (iv) their personal characteristics.

First, we conducted a manipulation check to ensure that recruiters' self-assessed competencies fit with the conditions to which they were exposed during the experiment (Hoewe, 2017). Specifically, recruiters were asked to assess their perceived competence in recruiting for (i) the particular vacancy, (ii) jobs requiring a high education level, and (iii) jobs requiring a high technical level. Responses were measured on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 'totally not feeling competent' to 'totally feeling competent'.

Second, as risk-taking behaviour may influence recruiters' evaluations of job-hoppers, we measured this using the Domain-Specific Risk-Taking scale developed by Blais and Weber (2006). Specifically, we selected six statements that thematically matched the 'social risk preferences' and 'financial risk preferences' measured on a 7-point Likert scale (Baert, 2018).

Third, although job-hopping is not considered as a highly sensitive topic — given that it does not constitute a legally protected ground for discrimination as ethnicity or age (Shi, 2024) — we controlled for social desirability, as recruiters were aware of their participation in our experiment. Therefore, we employed the scales developed by Steenkamp et al. (2010), comprising the Egoistic Response Tendency (ERT) and the Moralistic Response Tendency (MRT) scales. Each scale captures a distinct dimension of socially desirable behaviour using ten statements, which recruiters rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Steenkamp et al., 2010).

Fourth, some personal characteristics of the recruiters were questioned. On the one hand, three of these characteristics were included to test potential moderation effects: the number of previous employers of the recruiter (slider from 1 to 20), the organisation for which the recruiter typically works (for own organisation, other organisation, or both), and whether the recruiter had prior experience with job-hoppers (yes, no, or no idea), and if so, how this experience was perceived (rather negative, rather neutral, or rather positive). On the other hand, six characteristics were surveyed to assess the external validity of the experiment. First, this concerns socio-demographic data of the recruiters: their gender (male, female, or other), their age (slider from 18 to 75), and their highest educational attainment (lower than secondary education, secondary education, bachelor, master, or doctorate). Then, questions were asked about their experience with selection decisions, namely regarding the frequency of decisions (daily, weekly, monthly, semestrial, annual or less frequent) and the number of years of recruitment experience (less than 1 year, between 1 and 5 years or more than 5 years). Final,

information was collected about the recruiters' current organisation, namely its size in terms of total number of employees (less than 10, 10 to 50, 50 to 250 or more than 250).

3.3 Data description

3.3.1 Participating recruiters

As depicted in the first column of Table A.3 in the Appendix, our sample consists predominantly of female recruiters (72.0%), holding at least a bachelor's degree (84.7%), and an average age of 41 years. This composition indicates good external validity, as it closely aligns with the profile of Belgian recruiters in the European Social Survey (2023), which likewise reports a predominantly female sample (58%), a high level of educational attainment (75%), and an average age of 47 years.

The external validity of our sample is further supported by recruiters' professional experience. Most recruiters reported having more than 5 years experience with selection decisions (60.2%) and being involved in such decisions on a daily basis (44.1%). Moreover, the results of the manipulation check indicate that recruiters felt highly competent to evaluate the specific vacancy (8.771), as well as positions requiring a high level of education (8.407), and a high level of technical skills (8.144), with mean scores exceeding the scale midpoint (5.000).

Furthermore, most of the participating recruiters reported making only selection decisions for their own organisation (44.1%) and working in organisations employing between 10 and 50 employees (33.1%). Moreover, 66.1% of them indicated having worked for at least three previous employers during their career, which does not necessarily imply job-hopping but indicates that they did not follow a traditional single-employer career path. Most recruiters also reported having experience with hiring job-hoppers (80.5%), with evaluations of this experience being predominantly neutral (37.3%) or negative (33.9%), and only a small minority reporting positive experiences (9.3%).

Concerning scale averages, recruiters scored a mean of 2.908 on the Egoistic Response Tendency Scale, 3.226 on the Moralistic Response Tendency Scale, and 3.904 on the Risk-Taking Behaviour Scale, which closely corresponds to the scale midpoints of 3.000 (first two scales) and 4.000 (latter scale).

As indicated in the second and third columns of Table 1, job-hopping and non-job-hopping candidates were evaluated by participating recruiters with similar characteristics. The statistically insignificant Chi-square tests and Kruskal– Wallis tests depicted in the fourth column confirm the successful randomisation of job-hopping across recruiters.

3.3.2 Job characteristics

In addition, we examined whether recruiters correctly interpreted the job characteristics as intended. This was largely the case for the required level of education, as HR-managers (8.079) and IT-project-managers (8.031) scored above the scale midpoint (5.000), whereas packers (2.000) and operators assembly and fitting (4.481) scored below it. The required level of technical skills was also generally interpreted as intended, with IT-project-managers (8.031) and operators assembly and fitting (7.815) scoring above the midpoint (5.000) and packers (3.571) scoring below it. Only the technical skill requirements of the HR-manager position were rated higher than intended (6.053). Consequently, in the analyses (Section 4), we rely on recruiters' perceived job characteristics rather than the theoretically predefined characteristics.

3.3.3 Job-hopping

To conclude, we examined how recruiters define job-hopping and whether this aligns with our theoretical expectations. Based on the literature (Section 1), we assumed that candidates with at least three employers within a five-year period would be considered job-hoppers. This assumption aligns well with recruiters' explicit responses to the question of how many employers within a five-year period a candidate must have had to be considered a job-hopper, as the largest share of recruiters (i.e. 40.68%) selected a threshold of three employers (Figure 1). However, recruiters were also asked to indicate for each candidate whether they considered the profile to represent a job-hopper. Their responses showed a more conservative pattern as only candidates with four or more previous employers were classified as job-hoppers by a majority of recruiters (Figure 2). Specifically, while only 34.00% of the recruiters considered a candidate with three prior employers to be a job-hopper, this increased to 52.53% for candidates with four employers. This suggests that, in practice, the threshold for job-hopping may be somewhat higher than theoretically anticipated and explicitly stated by recruiters, or that job-hopping is not defined by a strict cut-off but rather by a range.

< Figure 1 about here >

< Figure 2 about here >

Finally, recruiters predominantly defined job-hopping as involving at least partially voluntary job changes. Specifically, 83.9% indicated that job-hopping applies exclusively to voluntary changes, while the remaining 16.1% defined it as a combination of voluntary and involuntary job changes. Notably, no recruiters defined job-hopping as consisting solely of involuntary job changes.

4 Results

In this section, we assess the extent to which our hypotheses (Section 2) are supported by the data from our experiment. We begin with a visual inspection of these data (Section 4.1), followed by a description of the analytical framework used in the subsequent analyses (Section 4.2). Next, we discuss the results related to recruitment outcomes (Section 4.3), the underlying perceptions (Section 4.4), and the moderating factors (Section 4.5).

4.1 Visual inspection

Figure 3 illustrates a clear negative relationship between recruiters' hiring intentions and the number of previous employers that candidates have had over the past five years. Specifically, average hiring intentions decrease steadily from 79.7% for candidates with one prior employer to 55.8% for candidates with six prior employers. This decline is most pronounced between three and four employers, with a decrease of 6.5 percentage points. This finding is consistent with the earlier finding that the majority of our participating recruiters tend to classify candidates as job-hoppers once they have had four previous employers within a five-year period (Section 3.3.3).

< Figure 3 about here >

4.2 Statistical framework

Since descriptive statistics are insufficient to test our hypotheses, we applied a multivariate linear regression model, as presented in Equation 1 below. In this model, we regressed the recruitment (Subsection 4.3) or perception (Subsection 4.4) outcomes (Y) on job-hopping (JH) alongside other candidate (CAN), job (JOB) and recruiter (REC) characteristics as discussed in Section 3. For the characteristics for which we expect a moderation effect, we also include interaction terms with job-hopping (Subsection 4.5). Further, in these models, standard errors are adjusted for clustering of the observations at the recruiter level.

$$Y = \alpha_Y + \beta_Y JH + \gamma_Y CAN + \eta_Y JOB + \theta_Y REC + \varepsilon_Y \qquad (1)$$

Regarding the dependent variable, we focus our discussion below on hiring intentions and consider interview intentions as an alternative outcome measure, for which detailed results are available upon request. Going deeper into the independent variable, we employed three different operationalisations of job-hopping: a detailed, a theoretical, and an empirical measure. First, we used the continuous variable ranging from one to six previous employers over the past five years. This operationalisation was considered as the detailed measure, as it allows for a more fine-grained assessment of how candidate evaluations vary with the

employer count. Second, we constructed a binary variable based on the theoretical threshold for job-hopping, defined as changing employers every one to two years (Section 1). Accordingly, candidates with one or two employers in the past five years were classified as non-job-hoppers, whereas those with three to six employers within the same period were classified as job-hoppers. Third, we created an additional binary variable based on the empirical results, whereby participating recruiters explicitly indicated whether they perceived each candidate as a job-hopper or not (Section 3.2.3). Both binary operationalisations allowed us to contrast job-hoppers with non-job-hoppers and to compare theoretical expectations with empirical perceptions.

4.3 Recruitment outcomes

Table 2 demonstrates that job-hopping has a robust and substantial negative effect on hiring intentions across all three operationalisations. The negative effect is more pronounced for the empirical measure indicating whether a candidate was perceived by recruiters as a job-hopper — corresponding to a decrease of 18.8 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) — than for the theoretical measure distinguishing between candidates with one to two versus three or more previous employers — corresponding to a reduction of 15.5 percentage points ($p < 0.001$).[1] These effect sizes are exceptionally large, particularly when compared with the effects of other candidate characteristics examined in this scenario experiment and those reported in comparable experiments (Dalle et al., 2024; El Haj et al., 2026; Sterkens et al., 2025). The difference between both measures arises because candidates with three previous employers were not unanimously perceived as job-hoppers by all participating recruiters (Section 3.3.3), implying that the effect of job-hopping may be underestimated when relying on the theoretical cut-off. Accordingly, the detailed operationalisation demonstrates that a significant and sizeable negative effect already emerges at three previous employers — with a 5.9 percentage-point decline in hiring intentions ($p = 0.008$) — which aligns with the theoretical expectation that this threshold marks the onset of job-hopping, at least within a five-year period. However, the magnitude of the negative effect increases steadily as the number of former employers rises. For instance, compared to candidates who remained with the same employer during the five-year period, hiring intentions are 13.9 percentage points lower for candidates with four previous employers ($p < 0.001$), whereas this reduction amounts to as much as 23.3 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) for candidates with six previous employers.

[1] All beta coefficients can be converted into percentage-point differences by multiplying them by 10, as both the evaluation and perception scales ranged from 0 to 10.

< Table 2 about here >

Furthermore, the negative effect is also observed when interview intentions are used as the dependent variable, although the effect is slightly weaker for both the empirical ($\beta = -1.837$, $p < 0.001$) and theoretical operationalisation ($\beta = -1.494$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, the detailed measure shows that the effect on interview intentions becomes statistically significant only from four previous employers onwards ($\beta = -1.165$, $p < 0.001$), not from three ($\beta = -0.328$, $p = 0.137$). This suggests that recruiters may be more lenient when considering candidates for an interview than when making the final hiring decision. Taken together, these results support our hypothesis that job-hopping elicits lower recruitment chances compared to more stable employment histories (**H1**).

4.4 Driving signals

In this section, we examine which perceptions may explain the negative effect of job-hopping on hiring intentions. To this end, we first explore the causal relationships between job-hopping and the perceptions determined earlier (Section 2.2). Specifically, we discuss the four overarching perception clusters (Subsection 4.4.1), as well as the individual perceptions within each cluster: work attitudes (Subsection 4.4.2), career dynamics (Subsection 4.4.3.), human capital (Subsection 4.4.4), and social capital (Subsection 4.4.5). Subsequently, we examine the extent to which these perceptions are considered in selection decisions (Subsection 4.4.6). Although causal inference from mediation analyses is not possible in this latter analysis due to the non-manipulated nature of perceptions, examining their associations with hiring intentions provides a first indication of their relevance in selection decisions.

4.4.1 Signalling effects concerning overarching clusters

Part 1 of Table 3 demonstrates that job-hopping has a negative effect across all four perception clusters. Although these negative effects are again somewhat stronger for the empirical than for the theoretical operationalisation, both measures consistently indicate that the largest negative effects are observed for work attitudes, followed in descending order by human capital, career dynamics, and social capital. For example, the empirical operationalisation reveals that candidates who are perceived by recruiters as job-hoppers were rated substantially lower in terms of work attitudes ($\beta = -1.323$, $p < 0.001$), human capital ($\beta = -0.934$, $p < 0.001$), career dynamics ($\beta = -0.560$, $p < 0.001$), and social capital ($\beta = -0.307$, $p = 0.001$) than candidates who were not perceived as job-hoppers. In addition, the detailed operationalisation of job-hopping further shows that these negative effects also intensify with an increasing number of former employers. Nevertheless, although negative perceptions of work attitudes already emerge after three previous employers — in line with the hiring

intentions (Subsection 4.3) — negative effects on human capital and career dynamics only appear after four previous employers, and those on social capital after six previous employers.

< Table 3 about here >

4.4.2 Signalling effects concerning work attitudes

Focusing on the work attitudes cluster, as presented in part 2 of Table 3, we observe that job-hopping has a negative effect on all four underlying perceptions across our three different operationalisations of job-hopping. Specifically, candidates perceived as job-hoppers are evaluated as having lower perseverance ($\beta = -1.774$, $p < 0.001$), responsibility ($\beta = -1.313$, $p < 0.001$), motivation ($\beta = -1.234$, $p < 0.001$), and accuracy ($\beta = -0.968$, $p < 0.001$) than candidates who are not perceived as job-hoppers. The detailed operationalisation reveals that these four negative perceptions already emerge from three previous employers and increase as the number of former employers rises. Hence, these results provide evidence for our hypothesis that job-hopping signals adverse work attitudes (**H2**).

4.4.3 Signalling effects concerning career dynamics

Turning to the career dynamics cluster presented in part 3 of Table 3, we observe that job-hoppers are not perceived differently in terms of excessive expectations. In contrast, they are perceived more negatively with regard to loyalty, bore-out risk, and adaptability compared to non-job-hoppers, although the different operationalisations indicate that these perceptions manifest in distinct ways.

Across all three operationalisations, perceptions of loyalty are most strongly affected. In particular, the loyalty of candidates perceived as job-hoppers is rated 25.0 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) lower than that of non-job-hoppers. Notably, this negative effect already emerges from three previous employers onwards ($\beta = -1.415$, $p < 0.001$) and more than doubles for candidates with six previous employers ($\beta = -3.133$, $p < 0.001$).

A similar pattern is observed for perceptions of bore-out risk. Recruiters expect that job-hopping candidates have a 5.5 percentage points higher bore-out risk than non-job-hopping candidates. However, this effect only becomes significant from five previous employers onwards ($\beta = 0.825$, $p = 0.003$) and further intensifies up to six previous employers ($\beta = 1.113$, $p < 0.001$).

For adaptability, we find an overall negative effect of job-hopping when using both the theoretical ($\beta = -0.475$, $p = 0.002$) and empirical ($\beta = -0.561$, $p = 0.003$) operationalisations. However, the detailed operationalisation reveals a more nuanced pattern, with only a significantly positive effect for candidates with two previous employers ($\beta = 0.473$, $p = 0.011$). This suggests that while job-hopping is generally penalised in terms of perceived adaptability — although the effects at the category level are too small and only emerge when aggregated

into a binary distinction — having two previous employers may be viewed more favourably than having only one.

Taken together, these findings (together with those in Subsection 4.4.1) support our hypothesis that job-hopping signals adverse career dynamics (**H3**), although we find no evidence for one of the four underlying perceptions (i.e. excessive expectations).

4.4.4 Signalling effects concerning human capital

Turning to the human capital cluster presented in part 4 of Table 3, we consistently observe negative effects of job-hopping on three perceptions within this cluster across our three different operationalisations of job-hopping. Specifically, candidates perceived by recruiters as job-hoppers are rated significantly lower in terms of in-depth experience ($\beta = -1.409$, $p < 0.001$), past performance ($\beta = -1.441$, $p < 0.001$), and willingness to learn ($\beta = -0.786$, $p < 0.001$) than non-job-hopping candidates. These negative effects become significant from four previous employers onwards, although marginally significant negative effects for in-depth experience ($\beta = -0.417$, $p = 0.079$) and past performance ($\beta = -0.326$, $p = 0.097$) already emerge from three previous employers.

In contrast, perceptions of having varied experience display positive effects of a similar magnitude across all levels of prior employers ranging from two ($\beta = 0.627$, $p = 0.006$) to six previous employers ($\beta = 0.716$, $p = 0.005$) relative to one. However, these positive effects disappear when the levels are collapsed into binary operationalisations of job-hopping, as illustrated by the empirical measure for example ($\beta = -0.100$, $p = 0.598$). This suggests that recruiters primarily distinguish between having only one versus multiple previous employers, rather than between job-hoppers and non-job-hoppers. This interpretation is further supported by an additional analysis using a binary variable capturing this one-versus-multiple-employer distinction ($\beta = 0.699$, $p = 0.001$).

Overall, the results provide empirical support for our hypothesis that recruiters hold negative perceptions regarding the human capital of job-hoppers (**H4B**). This holds even for perceptions where a positive effect was expected, such as the willingness to learn. This suggests that job-hopping is not interpreted as a signal of willingness to learn through experiences with different employers, but rather as a signal of limited commitment to learning and development in their roles, which results in shorter job tenures (Imdorf et al., 2023). Similarly, contrary to our expectation that recruiters would positively value the varied experience accumulated by job-hoppers, recruiters appear unconvinced that their short tenure at each workplace results in sufficiently varied experience. Hence, we find no evidence for our hypothesis that recruiters also hold positive perceptions of job-hoppers' human capital (**H4A**).

4.4.5 Signalling effect concerning social capital

Within the social capital cluster and across our three different operationalisations, job-hopping exerts negative effects on three of the underlying perceptions. Recruiters rate the team spirit (β = −1.255, p < 0.001) and communicative skills (β = −0.562, p = 0.002) of job-hopping candidates lower than those of non-job-hopping candidates, while they score their interpersonal problems higher (β = 0.799, p < 0.001). The negative effect for team spirit emerges from three previous employers onwards (β = −0.618, p = 0.002), whereas the effects on communicative skills (β = −0.476, p = 0.015) and interpersonal conflicts (β = 0.599, p = 0.008) become significant only from four previous employers onwards. No significant effects of job-hopping are observed for perceptions regarding the professional network, neither for the binary operationalisations (i.e. empirical and theoretical) nor for the detailed measure.

Taken together, these results support our hypothesis that job-hopping signals low social capital (**H5B**) and reject the opposite hypothesis that job-hopping signals high social capital (**H5A**). Once again, characteristics for which a positive effect was expected are instead perceived negatively. Specifically, recruiters do not interpret exposure to multiple work environments as evidence of accumulated communicative skills but rather as a signal of deficiencies in these skills.

4.4.6 Associations between perceptions and hiring intentions

To conclude this chapter on the driving perceptions, we examine which perceptions are associated with selection decisions, and, therefore, may underpin hiring intentions. To this end, we first adapted our analytical model by including each of the sixteen individual perceptions and four overarching perception clusters separately. The results — which are available upon request — demonstrate that almost all individual perceptions and clusters are positively associated with hiring (and interview) intentions. There are only three exceptions: perceptions of bore-out risk and interpersonal conflicts are negatively associated with hiring intentions, whereas perceptions of excessive expectations are not significantly associated with hiring intentions. Furthermore, the negative effects of the three job-hopping measures remain statistically significant, albeit substantially attenuated in magnitude. These patterns, combined with the results reported in the subsections above, suggest indirect pathways through these (clusters of) perceptions.

Next, we adapted our analytical model by including either the four overarching perception clusters or the sixteen individual perception items simultaneously, to identify which (clusters of) perceptions have a unique association with hiring intentions, controlling for the other (clusters of) perceptions. The results reported in Table 4 show that, once the variance shared among the perceptions is accounted for, only a limited number of perceptions and perception clusters remain uniquely associated with hiring intentions. For brevity, we report only the

results for the empirical measure of job-hopping in the following discussion, as the alternative measures yield similar findings. At the cluster level, work attitudes (β = 0.690, p < 0.001) and human capital (β = 0.205, p = 0.068) uniquely contribute to hiring intentions.[2] When examined at the item level, three perceptions make a significant unique contribution: perseverance (β = 0.301, p = 0.002) within the work attitudes cluster, in-depth experience (β = 0.169, p = 0.024) within the human capital cluster, and interpersonal conflicts (β = 0.110, p = 0.039) within the social capital cluster.

Furthermore, simultaneously including either the four perception clusters or the sixteen individual perceptions also reduces the effect size of job-hopping on hiring intentions. Remarkably, the effect of job-hopping even becomes non-significant for the theoretical and detailed measures but remains significant for the empirical measure when the sixteen individual perceptions are included. This suggests that the perceptions that are uniquely related to hiring intentions account for part of the effect of the objective number of previous employers on hiring intentions, whereas recruiters' subjective assessment of a candidate as a job-hopper may capture an additional evaluative judgement beyond the perceptions captured in our model.

< Table 4 about here >

The analyses for interview intentions yield similar results, although they indicate that perceptions of interpersonal conflicts do not make a significant unique contribution (β = 0.073, p = 0.208), while two additional perceptions do. Specifically, unlike hiring intentions, interview intentions are also uniquely associated with the perception of the candidate's motivation within the work attitudes cluster (β = 0.293, p = 0.015) and bore-out risk within the career dynamics cluster (β = −0.074, p = 0.048) in addition to perceptions of perseverance (β = 0.168, p = 0.069) and in-depth experience (β = 0.231, p = 0.010).

4.5 Moderation effects

As a final step, we also examine which characteristics moderate the effect of job-hopping. To this end, we estimated four variants of the baseline model (Subsection 4.2). In the first three models, interaction terms between job-hopping measures and candidate, job, and recruiter characteristics were included separately, while the fourth model incorporated all interaction terms simultaneously. These four variants were re-estimated using the empirical operationalisation (Table 5), the theoretical operationalisation (Table A.4 in the appendix), and the detailed operationalisation of job-hopping (Table A.5 in the appendix), as well as using

[2] The significance level for the human capital cluster increases when the theoretical and detailed variable for job-hopping are considered.

interview intentions as the outcome variable (results available upon request), and yield largely comparable results.

Concretely, the results presented in these three tables indicate that candidate and job characteristics do not robustly moderate the impact of job-hopping, whereas two recruiter characteristics do. First, having prior positive experience with job-hoppers as a recruiter substantially mitigates the negative effects of the empirical (β = 2.019, p = 0.009) and theoretical (β = 1.801, p = 0.003) variables of job-hopping. The detailed variable demonstrates that this effect is driven primarily by candidates with five previous employers (β = 2.532, p = 0.019), as no robust significant effects are found for the other numbers of prior employers. In addition, among recruiters with five or more previous employers, the negative impact of job-hopping is also attenuated, as indicated by both the empirical (β = 0.782, p = 0.096) and theoretical (β = 1.103, p = 0.009) measures. The detailed specification indicates that this mitigating effect appears from the point at which the candidate has four previous employers (β = 1.831, p = 0.008), but that the magnitude of the effect decreases slightly as the number of the candidate's previous employers increases further, for instance to six employers (β = 1.536 p = 0.050). This suggests that job-hopping is penalised to a lesser extent when the recruiter is themselves a job-hopper, although we cannot conclusively determine that these recruiters are indeed job-hoppers, as we lack information on the time span over which their previous employment was accumulated. Moreover, job-hopping recruiters appear to be more lenient towards job-hopping candidates only up to a certain point, as the mitigating effect diminishes as the number of the candidate's previous employers increases.

< Table 5 about here >

5 Conclusion

Job-hopping has become a more common feature of careers, yet the limited literature suggests that it may disadvantage candidates in recruitment processes. Nevertheless, important questions remained unanswered, including the number of prior employers at which negative recruitment effects emerge, which recruiters' perceptions drive these effects, and which factors moderate these effects. To address these gaps, we conducted a scenario experiment in which professional Belgian recruiters indicated their intentions to interview and hire candidates who varied across a broad range in the number of their prior employers (i.e. one to six over the past five years). Drawing on the dominant theoretical frameworks in the literature, recruiters also indicated their perceptions of these candidates' work attitudes, career dynamics, human capital, and social capital. Whereas statistical discrimination theory suggests exclusively

negative inferences regarding work attitudes and career dynamics, human and social capital theories allow for both positive and negative interpretations of job-hopping.

Our findings demonstrate that job-hopping has a negative effect on hiring intentions from three prior employers within a five-year period, with the penalty increasing substantially as the number of prior employers rises. However, relying on the theoretical threshold of three prior employers within five years underestimates the magnitude of the job-hopping penalty, as this corresponds to a 15.5 percentage-point decrease in hiring intentions, compared with an 18.8 percentage-point reduction when distinguishing between candidates whom recruiters classified as job-hoppers and those whom they did not. This is because, although 40.68% of the recruiters explicitly confirmed the theoretical threshold of three prior employers, in practice, most recruiters classified only candidate profiles with four or more prior employers as job-hoppers. Regarding the underlying mechanisms, we found that job-hopping negatively affects recruiters' perceptions across all four perception clusters: most strongly work attitudes (i.e. perseverance, responsibility, motivation, and accuracy), followed by career dynamics (i.e. loyalty, bore-out risk, and adaptability), human capital (i.e. past performance, in-depth experience, and willingness to learn), and social capital (i.e. team spirit, interpersonal problems, and communicative skills). Although theoretical expectations point to positive human and social capital perceptions, our findings did not support these expectations for varied experience and professional network and even provide evidence to the contrary for willingness to learn and communicative skills. Furthermore, our exploratory analyses suggested that the negative hiring effect is primarily driven by perceptions of perseverance, in-depth experience, and interpersonal conflicts, whereas interview intentions also appeared to be shaped by perceptions of motivation and bore-out risk. Remarkably, while these perceptions account for the negative effect of the objective number of prior employers, the negative effect of recruiters' subjective classification of candidates as job-hoppers appears to reflect an additional — potentially more holistic — judgement not fully captured by these perceptions. Concerning moderating factors, our results indicated that the negative effects of job-hopping are attenuated among recruiters with prior positive experiences with job-hoppers and among recruiters who themselves have had five or more prior employers, which is consistent with confirmation bias (Klayman, 1995) and social comparison theory (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007). Furthermore, we found no empirical evidence for the other theoretically relevant moderators at the candidate, recruiter and job levels.

Our study offers practical advice for (potential) job-hoppers. We recommend that candidates carefully consider whether another change of workplace is worthwhile, given the disadvantages of frequent employer changes for future employability. Specifically, our findings suggest that limiting employer changes to no more than two within a five-year period, corresponding to an average job tenure of approximately 30 months, may reduce the risk of

negative recruitment penalties. Furthermore, although recruiters indicated that they interpret job-hopping as a series of voluntary job changes, our results demonstrate that the disadvantages of job-hopping cannot simply be offset by signalling that only the most recent move was involuntary due to organisational closure or the expiry of a fixed-term contract. However, candidates may potentially benefit from providing other involuntary reasons or from explaining the involuntary reasons underlying each short job tenure rather than only the most recent one. This may allow them to reduce the likelihood of being perceived as job-hoppers and prevent recruiters from attributing negative explanations to their short job tenures. In addition, because recruiters' interview and hiring intentions were associated perceptions of in-depth experience, perseverance, and motivation, job-hoppers should proactively address these concerns by highlighting these qualities in their resumes and cover letters.

We conclude with a discussion of the limitations of this study, which also points to promising avenues for future research. First, our scenario design captured recruiters' evaluations in a hypothetical context, which reflected hiring intentions rather than actual selection behaviour (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015). However, as demonstrated in prior research, intentions measured in scenario experiments are close to real behaviour (Hainmueller et al., 2015). Moreover, we mimicked an ecologically valid setting, controlled for possible social desirability bias, and found results consistent with existing evidence on the consequences of job-hopping, which further supported the validity of our conclusions. Nevertheless, future research could strengthen external validity by employing correspondence experiments that observe actual hiring outcomes based on comparable fictitious candidates' profiles. Second, while we explored the association between recruiters' perceptions and hiring intentions, these mechanisms were not experimentally manipulated and, therefore, could not be interpreted causally. Future studies could address this limitation by explicitly manipulating perceptual dimensions, for instance through a two-stage scenario design in which initial candidate profiles are followed by additional information on actual competencies. Third, our operationalisation of job-hopping was limited to the number of employers within a five-year period and did not capture the underlying pattern of employment history. This may have obscured potentially important differences between candidates with consistently short tenures (e.g. 5 one-year positions) and those combining longer periods of employment (e.g. two two-year positions) with occasional short spells (e.g. three four-month positions). Hence, future research should incorporate more detailed employment trajectories, including specific job durations and sequences, to examine whether different patterns of mobility are evaluated differently. Final, we only varied a limited set of reasons for the most recent job change and did not include a pure control condition without any stated reason. Future research could systematically vary both the presence and type of explanations across earlier job transitions to better understand how narrative framing shapes recruiters' evaluations. In doing so, a broader set of reasons for

job changes could be incorporated, such as temporary replacement during maternity leave, project-based contracts, family circumstances, relocation, managerial conflict, or health-related issues.

Declarations

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Conflict of interest: The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Data availability: The anonymised dataset that was generated and analysed for the current study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

General data protection: Data processing was organised in line with Ghent University's code of conduct and, therefore, adheres to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards.

Informed consent: Participating recruiters were asked to confirm that they were of age and participating of their own free will. They also gave consent for their personal data to be collected, processed, and anonymously reported. Finally, they were informed about the possibility of stopping the study at any time, retrieving their data, and contacting the researchers.

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Figures

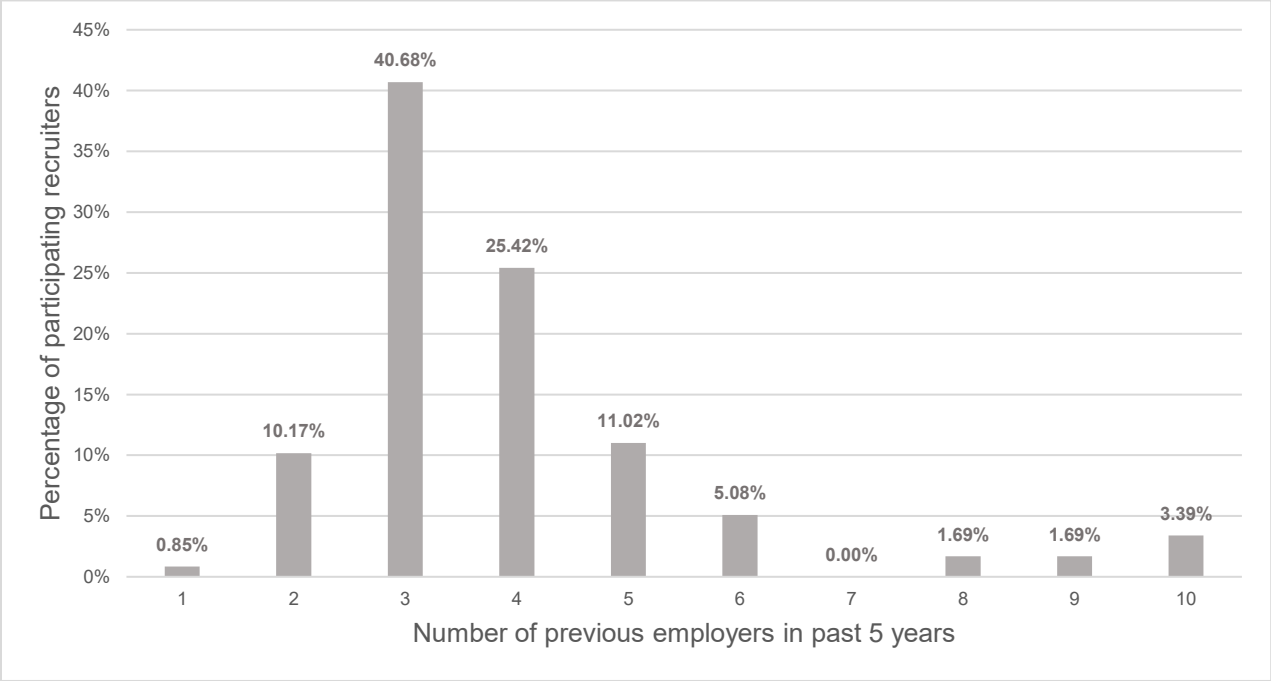

Figure 1. Minimum number of employers in the past 5 years used to define job-hopping.

Notes. These results are based on the question: "After how many employers within a five-year period should a candidate be considered a job-hopper?" (slider ranging from 0 to 15).

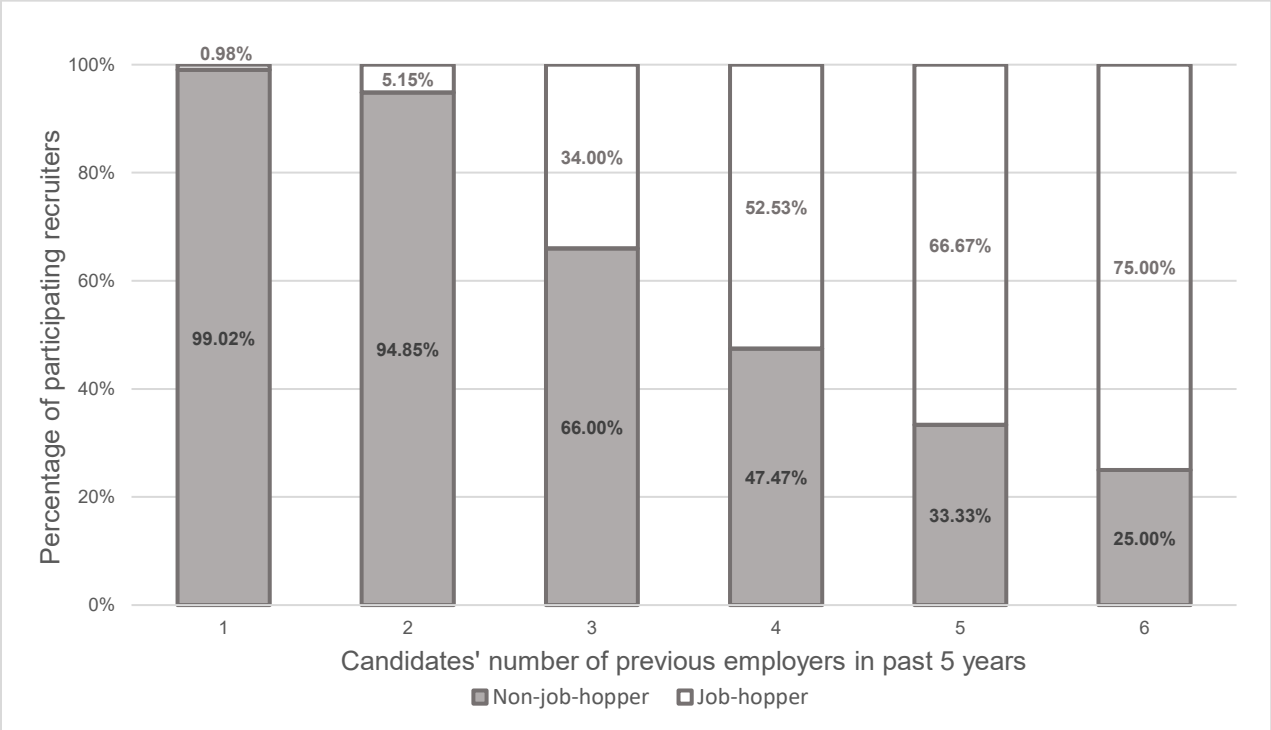

Figure 2. Recruiters' classification of candidate profiles as (non-)job-hopper.

Notes. These results are based on the question: "Do you consider this candidate to be a job-hopper?" (yes or no).

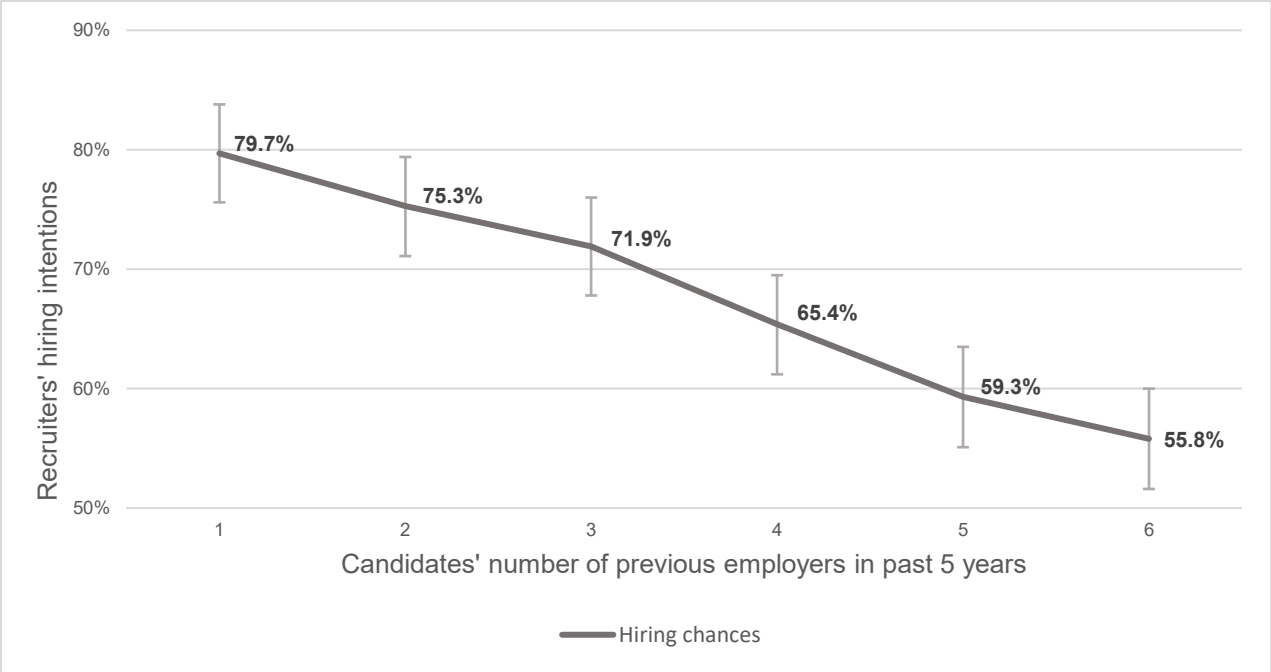

Figure 3. Hiring intentions according to the number of prior employers.

Notes. These results are based on the question: “To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I would recommend recruiting candidates with such a profile?” (11-point Likert-scale ranging from 0 ‘completely disagree’ to 10 ‘completely agree’).

Tables

Table 1 Experimental design

Dimensions	Levels
Gender	{Man; woman}
Age	{26 ±1, 2 or 3 years; 36 ±1, 2 or 3 years; 46 ±1, 2 or 3 years; 56 ±1, 2 or 3 years}
Work experience in the past five years	{1 similar position with another employer; 2 consecutive similar positions, each with a different employer; 3 consecutive similar positions, each with a different employer; 4 consecutive similar positions, each with a different employer; 5 consecutive similar positions, each with a different employer; 6 consecutive similar positions, each with a different employer}
Motivation for application	{Lack of professional growth with the current employer; need for new challenge in a different work environment; currently unemployed due to the bankruptcy of the previous employer; fixed-term contract nearing its end}
Extracurricular activities	{None; volunteering; sports; cultural activities}

Notes. The factorial product of the scenario levels (i.e. 2x4x6x4x4) resulted in 768 possible combinations. Forty sets of five scenarios were drawn from this scenario universe using a D-efficient design (D-efficiency: 96.10%; Auspurg & Hinz, 2014) and distributed at random to the recruiters as described in Subsection 3.

Table 2 Regression results with different operationalisations of job-hopping (independent variable) and hiring intentions (dependent variable)

	OPERATIONALISATION OF JOB-HOPPING		
	Empirical variable	**Theoretical variable**	**Detailed variable**
A. CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS			
Job-hopper: as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−1.882*** (0.201)		
Job-hopper: >2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)		−1.545*** (0.180)	
Number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)			
2 employers			−0.387† (0.227)
3 employers			−0.593** (0.220)
4 employers			−1.385*** (0.266)
5 employers			−1.912*** (0.300)
6 employers			−2.329*** (0.300)
Motivation (ref. = Lack of profession growth)			
Need for a new challenge	−0.149 (0.227)	−0.175 (0.230)	−0.222 (0.222)
Unemployment due to bankruptcy	0.326 (0.251)	0.465† (0.252)	0.429† (0.246)
End of fixed-term contract	0.013 (0.230)	0.192 (0.240)	0.159 (0.232)
Man (ref. = Woman)	0.021 (0.151)	−0.039 (0.158)	−0.022 (0.152)
Age (c.)	−0.001 (0.007)	0.020** (0.006)	0.016* (0.006)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)			
Volunteering	−0.049 (0.200)	0.115 (0.198)	0.078 (0.200)
Sports	0.078 (0.219)	0.190 (0.236)	0.148 (0.234)
Cultural activities	0.252 (0.198)	0.414* (0.198)	0.336† (0.199)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS			
High educational level required (ref. = Low)	−0.344 (0.278)	−0.370 (0.279)	−0.355 (0.278)
High technical level required (ref. = Low)	0.197 (0.321)	0.341 (0.345)	0.339 (0.346)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS			
Man (ref. = Woman)	−0.064 (0.296)	0.079 (0.312)	0.083 (0.315)
Age (c.)	0.019 (0.016)	0.021 (0.016)	0.021 (0.016)
Educational level (ref. = Secondary)			
Bachelor	−0.294 (0.409)	−0.521 (0.410)	−0.508 (0.412)
Master or higher	−0.450 (0.395)	−0.574 (0.396)	−0.566 (0.396)

Frequency of hiring (ref. = Less frequent than weekly)			
Weekly	−0.068 (0.367)	−0.185 (0.386)	−0.158 (0.388)
Daily	0.336 (0.415)	0.435 (0.442)	0.454 (0.445)
Years of hiring (ref. = Less than 1 year)			
Between 1 and 5 years	−0.024 (0.494)	0.053 (0.518)	0.107 (0.520)
More than 5 years	−0.295 (0.497)	−0.294 (0.541)	−0.269 (0.547)
Experience with job-hoppers (ref. = None)			
Negative experience	−0.047 (0.356)	0.036 (0.380)	0.006 (0.384)
Neutral experience	0.157 (0.357)	0.340 (0.380)	0.333 (0.384)
Positive experience	0.627 (0.462)	1.128* (0.440)	1.115* (0.440)
Number of former employers (ref. = 1 or 2 employers)			
3 or 4 employers	−0.365 (0.395)	−0.264 (0.415)	−0.283 (0.418)
5 or more employers	0.048 (0.388)	0.160 (0.389)	0.131 (0.388)
Number of employees in the organisation (ref. = Less than 10)			
Between 10 and 50 employees	0.919* (0.418)	0.989* (0.439)	0.981* (0.442)
Between 50 and 250 employees	0.076 (0.390)	0.108 (0.413)	0.100 (0.414)
More than 250 employees	0.668 (0.457)	0.739 (0.469)	0.756 (0.469)
Recruiting for other organisations (ref. = Own organisation)	−0.258 (0.283)	−0.218 (0.287)	−0.222 (0.288)
Risk-taking behaviour (s.)	−0.159 (0.159)	−0.098 (0.161)	−0.084 (0.162)
Egoistic response tendency (s.)	0.087 (0.348)	0.151 (0.353)	0.151 (0.357)
Moralistic response tendency (s.)	−0.530* (0.210)	−0.598** (0.202)	−0.601** (0.202)
D. OTHER PARAMETERS			
Intercept	8.833*** (1.619)	7.241*** (1.701)	7.693*** (1.713)

Notes. The empirical variable is a binary measure based on recruiters' own assessments of each candidate as a job-hopper (yes or no). The theoretical variable is a binary measure based on the theoretical threshold for job-hopping, whereby candidates with one or two employers in the past five years are classified as non-job-hoppers, whereas those with three to six employers are classified as job-hoppers. The detailed variable is a continuous measure ranging from one to six previous employers over the past five years, as integrated in our vignette design (Table 1). Abbreviations used: c. (continuous variable), s. (scale consisting of multiple items) and ref. (reference category). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the recruiter level. Significances are indicated as *** when p < .001, ** when p < .01, * when p < .05, † when p < .10.

Table 3 Summary of regression results across different operationalisations of job-hopping (independent variable) and different perceptions (dependent variable)

	PART 1: PERCEPTION CLUSTERS			
	Cluster on work attitudes	**Cluster on career dynamics**	**Cluster on human capital**	**Cluster on social capital**
A. Regressions with empirical variable for job-hopping				
Job-hopping as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−1.323*** (0.183)	−0.560*** (0.110)	−0.934*** (0.136)	−0.307** (0.094)
B. Regressions with theoretical variable for job-hopping				
>2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)	−1.304*** (0.144)	−0.536*** (0.101)	−0.680*** (0.122)	−0.196* (0.084)
C. Regressions with detailed variable for job-hopping				
Number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)				
2 employers	−0.089 (0.140)	0.009 (0.120)	0.199 (0.166)	−0.061 (0.118)
3 employers	−0.570*** (0.139)	−0.209 (0.128)	0.022 (0.155)	−0.033 (0.101)
4 employers	−1.217*** (0.198)	−0.626*** (0.146)	−0.420* (0.184)	−0.129 (0.114)
5 employers	−1.553*** (0.234)	−0.576*** (0.157)	−0.544* (0.225)	−0.121 (0.135)
6 employers	−1.811*** (0.209)	−0.603*** (0.137)	−0.869*** (0.199)	−0.432** (0.138)
	PART 2: PERCEPTIONS WITHIN THE WORK ATTITUDE CLUSTER			
	Motivation	**Perseverance**	**Accuracy**	**Responsibility**
A. Regressions with empirical variable for job-hopping				
Job-hopping as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−1.234*** (0.213)	−1.774*** (0.217)	−0.968*** (0.184)	−1.313*** (0.184)
B. Regressions with theoretical variable for job-hopping				
>2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)	−1.288*** (0.169)	−1.668*** (0.181)	−1.003*** (0.140)	−1.255*** (0.148)
C. Regressions with detailed variable for job-hopping				
Number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)				
2 employers	−0.082 (0.178)	0.020 (0.198)	−0.125 (0.153)	−0.167 (0.157)
3 employers	−0.433* (0.187)	−0.563** (0.207)	−0.767*** (0.159)	−0.518** (0.168)
4 employers	−1.124*** (0.238)	−1.448*** (0.265)	−1.147*** (0.206)	−1.149*** (0.212)
5 employers	−1.621*** (0.277)	−1.938*** (0.294)	−1.235*** (0.237)	−1.419*** (0.244)
6 employers	−1.647*** (0.255)	−2.180*** (0.276)	−1.523*** (0.212)	−1.893*** (0.225)

	PART 3: Detailed variables within the career dynamics cluster			
	Adaptability	**Loyalty**	**Bore−out risk**	**High expectations**
A. Regressions with empirical variable for job-hopping				
Job-hopping as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−0.561** (0.184)	−2.496*** (0.201)	0.546** (0.187)	0.272 (0.210)
B. Regressions with theoretical variable for job-hopping				
>2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)	−0.475** (0.150)	−2.194*** (0.187)	0.490** (0.169)	0.037 (0.167)
C. Regressions with detailed variable for job-hopping				
Number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)				
2 employers	0.473* (0.183)	−0.475† (0.244)	0.330 (0.299)	−0.293 (0.268)
3 employers	0.230 (0.186)	−1.415*** (0.254)	0.524† (0.297)	−0.176 (0.258)
4 employers	0.006 (0.226)	−2.543*** (0.272)	0.393 (0.260)	−0.362 (0.254)
5 employers	−0.320 (0.278)	−2.794*** (0.298)	0.825** (0.272)	−0.017 (0.282)
6 employers	−0.433† (0.247)	−3.133*** (0.299)	1.113*** (0.260)	0.040 (0.289)
	PART 4: Detailed variables within the human capital cluster			
	In−depth experience	**Varied experience**	**Willingness to learn**	**Past performance**
A. Regressions with empirical variable for job-hopping				
Job-hopping as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−1.409*** (0.193)	−0.100 (0.188)	−0.786*** (0.180)	−1.441*** (0.177)
B. Regressions with theoretical variable for job-hopping				
>2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)	−1.038*** (0.162)	0.195 (0.164)	−0.791*** (0.136)	−1.085*** (0.155)
C. Regressions with detailed variable for job-hopping				
Number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)				
2 employers	0.043 (0.241)	0.627** (0.223)	0.061 (0.189)	0.063 (0.212)
3 employers	−0.417† (0.235)	0.833*** (0.230)	−0.004 (0.176)	−0.326† (0.195)
4 employers	−0.920** (0.269)	0.702** (0.252)	−0.536* (0.207)	−0.926*** (0.234)
5 employers	−1.058*** (0.292)	0.607* (0.298)	−0.712** (0.268)	−1.012*** (0.267)
6 employers	−1.520*** (0.294)	0.716** (0.249)	−1.081*** (0.225)	−1.591*** (0.241)

	PART 5: Detailed variables within the social capital cluster			
	Professional network	**Team spirit**	**Communicative skills**	**Interpersonal problems**
A. Regressions with empirical variable for job-hopping				
Job-hopping as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−0.212 (0.165)	−1.255*** (0.175)	−0.562** (0.179)	0.799*** (0.186)
B. Regressions with theoretical variable for job-hopping				
>2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)	0.038 (0.140)	−0.933*** (0.134)	−0.505*** (0.127)	0.618*** (0.156)
C. Regressions with detailed variable for job-hopping				
Number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)				
2 employers	0.010 (0.231)	−0.163 (0.203)	−0.098 (0.176)	0.007 (0.256)
3 employers	0.225 (0.206)	−0.618** (0.194)	−0.184 (0.179)	0.445† (0.240)
4 employers	0.247 (0.215)	−0.886*** (0.195)	−0.476* (0.194)	0.599** (0.221)
5 employers	0.263 (0.255)	−1.144*** (0.238)	−0.478* (0.233)	0.875** (0.272)
6 employers	−0.165 (0.253)	−1.560*** (0.235)	−0.842*** (0.227)	0.841** (0.286)

Notes. This table summarises the results of 60 separate regression analyses, comprising 20 dependent variables (i.e. sixteen perceptions and four perception clusters) estimated using three alternative operationalisations of job-hopping (i.e. empirical, theoretical, and detailed). The empirical variable is a binary measure based on recruiters' own assessments of each candidate as a job-hopper (yes or no). The theoretical variable is a binary measure based on the theoretical threshold for job-hopping, whereby candidates with one or two employers in the past five years are classified as non-job-hoppers, whereas those with three to six employers are classified as job-hoppers. The detailed variable is a continuous measure ranging from one to six previous employers over the past five years, as integrated in our vignette design (Table 1). Although other candidate, job and recruiter characteristics are included as described in Section 3, only the results for the job-hopping variables are presented for conciseness. The 60 full tables are available upon request. Abbreviation used: ref. (reference category). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the recruiter level. Significances are indicated as *** when $p < .001$, ** when $p < .01$, * when $p < .05$, † when $p < .10$.

Table 4 Summary of regression results with different operationalisations of job-hopping (independent variable), perceptions (mediators) and hiring intentions (dependent variable)

	WITH PERCEPTION CLUSTERS			WITH DETAILED PERCEPTIONS		
	Empirical variable	**Theoretical variable**	**Detailed variable**	**Empirical variable**	**Theoretical variable**	**Detailed variable**
A. JOB-HOPPING VARIABLES						
Empirical: as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−0.738*** (0.183)			−0.427* (0.185)		
Theoretical: >2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)		−0.444** (0.124)			−0.147 (0.136)	
Detailed: number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)						
2 employers			−0.377* (0.179)			−0.288 (0.183)
3 employers			−0.197 (0.196)			0.007 (0.223)
4 employers			−0.408* (0.196)			−0.075 (0.234)
5 employers			−0.682** (0.222)			−0.290 (0.246)
6 employers			−0.845*** (0.226)			−0.385 (0.244)
B. OTHER CHARACTERISTICS						
Other candidate characteristics	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Job characteristics	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Recruiter characteristics	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
C. PERCEPTIONS						
Perceptions on work attitudes	0.690*** (0.094)	0.690*** (0.103)	0.675*** (0.105)			
Motivation				0.158 (0.109)	0.148 (0.107)	0.147 (0.108)
Perseverance				0.301** (0.093)	0.309** (0.093)	0.310** (0.094)
Accuracy				0.053 (0.077)	0.033 (0.077)	0.048 (0.082)
Responsibility				0.019 (0.089)	0.023 (0.089)	0.005 (0.089)
Perceptions on career dynamics	0.066 (0.099)	0.072 (0.100)	0.086 (0.100)			
Adaptability				0.021 (0.059)	0.022 (0.059)	0.028 (0.059)
Loyalty				0.112 (0.077)	0.134† (0.078)	0.139† (0.081)
Bore-out risk				−0.057 (0.036)	−0.059 (0.036)	−0.054 (0.036)
High expectations				0.029 (0.041)	0.030 (0.041)	0.031 (0.039)
Perceptions on human capital	0.205† (0.111)	0.238* (0.117)	0.248* (0.117)			

In-depth experience				0.169* (0.074)	0.176* (0.076)	0.173* (0.074)
Varied experience				−0.050 (0.063)	−0.051 (0.066)	−0.044 (0.068)
Willingness to learn				0.100 (0.075)	0.096 (0.074)	0.089 (0.073)
Past performance				0.074 (0.074)	0.092 (0.073)	0.093 (0.072)
Perceptions on social capital	0.010 (0.122)	0.003 (0.128)	−0.012 (0.126)			
Professional network				0.019 (0.066)	0.013 (0.066)	0.008 (0.064)
Team spirit				0.039 (0.067)	0.048 (0.067)	0.044 (0.068)
Communicative skills				−0.086 (0.080)	−0.095 (0.080)	−0.095 (0.081)
Interpersonal problems				0.110* (0.053)	0.112* (0.053)	0.106* (0.053)
D. OTHER PARAMETERS						
Intercept	2.013 (1.298)	1.109 (1.285)	1.380 (1.293)	2.031 (1.331)	1.539 (1.312)	1.661 (1.309)

Notes. The empirical variable is a binary measure based on recruiters' own assessments of each candidate as a job-hopper (yes or no). The theoretical variable is a binary measure based on the theoretical threshold for job-hopping, whereby candidates with one or two employers in the past five years are classified as non-job-hoppers, whereas those with three to six employers are classified as job-hoppers. The detailed variable is a continuous measure ranging from one to six previous employers over the past five years, as integrated in our vignette design (Table 1). Abbreviation used: ref. (reference category). Although other candidate, job and recruiter characteristics are included as described in Section 3, only the results for the job-hopping variables are presented for conciseness. The full table is available upon request. The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the recruiter level. Significances are indicated as *** when $p < .001$, ** when $p < .01$, * when $p < .05$, † when $p < .10$.

Table 5 Regression results with empirical operationalisation of job-hopping (independent variable), interactions (moderators) and hiring intentions (dependent variable)

	Only candidate characteristics	Only job characteristics	Only recruiter characteristics	All characteristics
A. CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS				
Empirical: job-hopper as classified by recruiter (ref. = None)	−2.062** (0.721)	−1.957*** (0.392)	−4.340*** (1.055)	−5.148** (1.551)
Motivation (ref. = Lack of profession growth)				
Need for a new challenge	−0.046 (0.257)	−0.156 (0.227)	−0.182 (0.219)	−0.080 (0.258)
Unemployment due to bankruptcy	0.516† (0.274)	0.323 (0.252)	0.343 (0.244)	0.547* (0.274)
End of fixed-term contract	0.131 (0.284)	0.015 (0.231)	0.040 (0.235)	0.147 (0.290)
Man (ref. = Woman)	−0.098 (0.164)	0.018 (0.152)	0.028 (0.151)	−0.088 (0.166)
Age (c.)	−0.004 (0.008)	−0.001 (0.007)	−0.001 (0.007)	−0.005 (0.008)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)				
Volunteering	−0.056 (0.202)	−0.053 (0.201)	−0.039 (0.195)	−0.053 (0.195)
Sports	0.066 (0.218)	0.074 (0.219)	0.078 (0.216)	0.061 (0.214)
Cultural activities	0.257 (0.201)	0.252 (0.199)	0.282 (0.205)	0.290 (0.209)
Interactions				
*Job-hopper * Man*	0.327 (0.347)			0.324 (0.345)
*Job-hopper * Age*	0.005 (0.017)			0.009 (0.017)
*Job-hopper * Need for a new challenge*	−0.207 (0.497)			−0.221 (0.503)
*Job-hopper * Unemployment due to bankruptcy*	−0.492 (0.520)			−0.518 (0.516)
*Job-hopper * End of fixed-term contract*	−0.227 (0.565)			−0.167 (0.564)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS				
High educational level required (ref. = Low)	−0.354 (0.284)	−0.399 (0.300)	−0.327 (0.275)	−0.395 (0.300)
High technical level required (ref. = Low)	0.204 (0.320)	0.201 (0.332)	0.284 (0.318)	0.181 (0.323)
Interactions				
*Job-hopper * High educational level*		0.145 (0.457)		0.148 (0.470)
*Job-hopper * High technical level*		−0.021 (0.469)		0.296 (0.454)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS				
Man (ref. = Woman)	−0.072 (0.296)	−0.063 (0.299)	−0.029 (0.295)	−0.044 (0.297)
Age (c.)	0.018 (0.017)	0.018 (0.017)	0.020 (0.016)	0.020 (0.016)

Educational level (ref. = Secondary)				
Bachelor	−0.264 (0.414)	−0.296 (0.411)	−0.373 (0.400)	−0.364 (0.409)
Master or higher	−0.439 (0.398)	−0.449 (0.397)	−0.602 (0.392)	−0.609 (0.398)
Frequency of hiring (ref. = Less frequent than weekly)				
Weekly	−0.073 (0.367)	−0.071 (0.369)	−0.106 (0.358)	−0.120 (0.358)
Daily	0.321 (0.420)	0.332 (0.414)	0.297 (0.413)	0.269 (0.419)
Years of hiring (ref. = Less than 1 year)				
Between 1 and 5 years	−0.050 (0.492)	−0.012 (0.499)	−0.125 (0.497)	−0.148 (0.498)
More than 5 years	−0.322 (0.493)	−0.283 (0.503)	−0.338 (0.509)	−0.348 (0.508)
Experience with job-hoppers (ref. = None)				
Negative experience	−0.041 (0.355)	−0.046 (0.357)	−0.218 (0.407)	−0.232 (0.403)
Neutral experience	0.166 (0.355)	0.159 (0.357)	−0.097 (0.417)	−0.113 (0.414)
Positive experience	0.630 (0.464)	0.627 (0.465)	0.218 (0.455)	0.206 (0.450)
Number of former employers (ref. = 1 or 2 employers)				
3 or 4 employers	−0.382 (0.397)	−0.360 (0.397)	−0.481 (0.425)	−0.500 (0.428)
5 or more employers	0.037 (0.390)	0.047 (0.387)	−0.317 (0.405)	−0.348 (0.415)
Number of employees in the organisation (ref. = Less than 10)				
Between 10 and 50 employees	0.917* (0.417)	0.916* (0.418)	0.886* (0.414)	0.881* (0.413)
Between 50 and 250 employees	0.103 (0.392)	0.066 (0.389)	0.101 (0.389)	0.122 (0.391)
More than 250 employees	0.688 (0.457)	0.660 (0.457)	0.674 (0.452)	0.685 (0.454)
Recruiting for other organisations (ref. = Own organisation)	−0.255 (0.286)	−0.256 (0.283)	−0.393 (0.294)	−0.397 (0.296)
Risk-taking behaviour (s.)	−0.156 (0.159)	−0.158 (0.160)	−0.294† (0.172)	−0.289† (0.171)
Egoistic response tendency (s.)	0.090 (0.351)	0.089 (0.352)	0.061 (0.341)	0.057 (0.349)
Moralistic response tendency (s.)	−0.527* (0.214)	−0.531* (0.210)	−0.517* (0.208)	−0.514* (0.213)
Interactions				
*Job-hopper * 3 or 4 former employers*			0.128 (0.497)	0.124 (0.525)
*Job-hopper * 5 or more former employers*			0.717 (0.442)	0.782† (0.466)
*Job-hopper * Negative experience with job-hoppers*			0.376 (0.528)	0.431 (0.532)
*Job-hopper * Neutral experience with job-hoppers*			0.693 (0.498)	0.785 (0.510)
*Job-hopper * Positive experience with job-hoppers*			1.928* (0.761)	2.019** (0.761)
*Job-hopper * Recruiting for other organisations*			0.326 (0.386)	0.344 (0.392)
*Job-hopper * Risk-taking behaviour*			0.398† (0.222)	0.422† (0.222)

E. OTHER PARAMETERS				
Intercept	8.892*** (1.603)	8.869*** (1.616)	9.834*** (1.574)	10.131*** (1.590)

Notes. The empirical variable is a binary measure based on recruiters' own assessments of each candidate as a job-hopper (yes or no). Abbreviations used: c. (continuous variable), s. (scale consisting of multiple items) and ref. (reference category). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the recruiter level. Significances are indicated as *** when p < .001, ** when p < .01, * when p < .05, † when p < .10.

Appendix

Table A.1 Jobs and descriptions used in the experiment

Job title	Required level of education	Required level of technical skills	Corresponding description
HR-manager	High	Low	This employee will be responsible for planning, leading or coordinating the organisation's personnel activities. This includes ultimate responsibility for recruitment and training in the organisation.
Packer	Low	Low	This employee will be responsible for packaging a wide variety of products and materials. This is done with due attention to quality and safety standards.
Operator assembly and fitting	Low	High	This employee will oversee operating industrial machinery to assemble or overhaul certain equipment. This is one according to certain technical drawings or work instructions.
IT-project manager	High	High	This employee will be responsible for leading, planning, initiating and managing information technology projects and providing direction to technical staff.

Notes. The jobs were selected based on the two job characteristics derived from O*NET (Subsection 3.2.2). The job descriptions were retrieved from the Flemish Centre for Student Guidance.

Table A.2 Outcome and perception statements

Outcomes and perceptions	Statements
A. Recruitment outcomes	
Interview intention	I would recommend inviting candidates with such a profile for a job interview.
Hiring intention	I would recommend recruiting candidates with such a profile.
B. Perceptions concerning work attitudes	
Motivation	I think candidates with such a profile are sufficiently motivated.
Perseverance	I think candidates with such a profile show sufficient perseverance.
Conscientiousness	I think candidates with such a profile work with sufficient conscientiousness.
Responsibility	I think candidates with such a profile are sufficiently responsible.
C. Perceptions concerning career dynamics	
Adaptability	I think candidates with such a profile adjust quickly.
Loyalty	I think candidates with such a profile are sufficiently loyal.
Bore-out[a]	I think candidates with such a profile have a low chance of getting a bore-out.
High expectations[a]	I think candidates with such a profile do not set too high expectations.
D. Perceptions concerning human capital	
In-depth experience	I think candidates with such a profile have enough in-depth experience.
Varied experience	I think candidates with such a profile have enough varied experience.
Willingness to learn	I think candidates with such a profile are sufficiently willing to learn.
Strong performance	I think candidates with such a profile have had strong performances in the past.
E. Perceptions concerning social capital	
Professional network	I think candidates with such a profile have a large professional network.
Team spirit	I think candidates with such a profile show good team spirit.
Communicative abilities	I think candidates with such a profile are sufficiently communicative.
Interpersonal problems[a]	I think candidates with such a profile are unlikely to get into conflict with others.

Notes. This table presents the statements regarding selection outcomes and perceptions as they were shown to the recruiters in the online experiment (Subsection 3.2.3). The recruiters evaluated each statement on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (i.e. 'completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree').

[a] These items were reverse-coded in the analyses so that higher scores reflect perceptions of greater bore-out risk, excessive expectations, and a higher likelihood of interpersonal problems.

Table A.3. Description of recruiter characteristics by experimental conditions

	Mean			Independence test
	Full sample (N = 590)	Subsample: Non-job-hoppers with 1 or 2 ex-employers [N = 299]	Subsample: Job-hoppers with 3 to 6 ex-employers [N = 291]	X^2 (probability)
A. Demographic characteristics				
Man (ref. = Woman)	28.0%	27.8%	28.2%	0.013 (0.910)
Age (c.)	40.814	41.027	40.595	0.240 (0.625)
Educational level				
Secondary	15.3%	15.1%	15.5%	0.020 (0.889)
Bachelor	48.3%	47.8%	48.8%	0.056 (0.813)
Master or higher	36.4%	37.1%	35.7%	0.122 (0.727)
B. Experience characteristics				
Frequency of hiring experience				
Less frequent than weekly	30.5%	30.1%	30.9%	0.048 (0.827)
Weekly	25.4%	26.4%	24.4%	0.318 (0.573)
Daily	44.1%	43.5%	44.7%	0.086 (0.770)
Years of hiring experience				
Less than 1 year	10.2%	10.0%	10.3%	0.012 (0.912)
Between 1 and 5 years	29.7%	29.4%	29.9%	0.015 (0.902)
More than 5 years	60.2%	60.5%	59.8%	0.034 (0.854)
Experience with job-hoppers				
No experience	19.5%	20.4%	18.6%	0.320 (0.572)
Negative experience	33.9%	33.8%	34.0%	0.004 (0.951)
Neutral experience	37.3%	36.5%	38.1%	0.180 (0.671)
Positive experience	9.3%	9.4%	9.3%	0.001 (0.971)
C. Behavioural characteristics				
Egoistic response tendency (s.)	3.321	3.317	3.325	0.164 (0.686)
Moralistic response tendency (s.)	3.226	3.225	3.228	0.001 (0.973)
Risk-taking behaviour (s.)	3.904	3.906	3.901	0.000 (0.990)
D. Employment characteristics				
Number of former employers				
1 or 2 employers	33.9%	33.8%	34.0%	0.004 (0.951)
3 or 4 employers	32.2%	31.8%	32.6%	0.052 (0.820)
5 or more employers	33.9%	34.4%	33.3%	0.082 (0.775)
Number of employees in the organisation				
Less than 10	16.9%	16.1%	17.9%	0.345 (0.557)
Between 10 and 50 employees	33.1%	33.4%	32.6%	0.043 (0.837)
Between 50 and 250 employees	28.0%	27.4%	28.5%	0.088 (0.766)
More than 250 employees	22.0%	23.1%	21.0%	0.384 (0.536)
Recruiting for other organisations (ref. = Own organisation)	44.1%	45.2%	43.0%	0.288 (0.591)
E. Competence characteristics				
General competence	8.771	8.773	8.770	0.014 (0.907)
Competence regarding jobs requiring higher education	8.407	8.448	8.364	0.173 (0.677)
Competence regarding jobs requiring high technical skills	8.144	8.130	8.158	0.003 (0.954)

Notes. Abbreviation used: c (continuous variable scored from 0 to 10) and s. (scale consisting of multiple items). The independence between the recruiter characteristic and the experimental condition is tested by a Pearson Chi-square test for indicator variables and by a Kruskal–Wallis test for continuous variables. The resulting X^2 and accompanying p-value are presented in the final column.

Table A.4 Regression results with theoretical operationalisation of job-hopping (independent variable), interactions (moderators) and hiring intentions (dependent variable)

	Only candidate characteristics	Only job characteristics	Only recruiter characteristics	All characteristics
A. CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS				
Theoretical job-hopper: >2 employers in last 5 years (ref. = <2)	−2.853*** (0.787)	−1.827*** (0.371)	−3.576** (1.107)	−5.426** (1.535)
Motivation (ref. = Lack of profession growth)				
Need for a new challenge	−0.228 (0.290)	−0.175 (0.230)	−0.243 (0.221)	−0.332 (0.289)
Unemployment due to bankruptcy	0.630* (0.299)	0.474† (0.252)	0.454† (0.245)	0.647* (0.304)
End of fixed-term contract	−0.200 (0.305)	0.189 (0.236)	0.177 (0.231)	−0.231 (0.299)
Man (ref. = Woman)	−0.021 (0.205)	−0.033 (0.158)	−0.029 (0.153)	−0.013 (0.203)
Age (c.)	0.005 (0.010)	0.021** (0.006)	0.020** (0.006)	0.007 (0.010)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)				
Volunteering	0.088 (0.195)	0.126 (0.197)	0.045 (0.191)	0.033 (0.189)
Sports	0.180 (0.240)	0.186 (0.235)	0.160 (0.227)	0.143 (0.230)
Cultural activities	0.428* (0.199)	0.419* (0.200)	0.391* (0.193)	0.414* (0.198)
Interactions				
*Job-hopper * Man*	−0.009 (0.386)			0.005 (0.387)
*Job-hopper * Age*	0.028† (0.016)			0.028† (0.016)
*Job-hopper * Need for a new challenge*	0.088 (0.445)			0.160 (0.446)
*Job-hopper * Unemployment due to bankruptcy*	−0.360 (0.423)			−0.398 (0.430)
*Job-hopper * End of fixed-term contract*	0.804 (0.502)			0.822 (0.505)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS				
High educational level required (ref. = Low)	−0.406 (0.276)	−0.375 (0.302)	−0.355 (0.279)	−0.423 (0.303)
High technical level required (ref. = Low)	0.370 (0.348)	0.137 (0.370)	0.325 (0.343)	0.034 (0.358)
Interactions				
*Job-hopper * High educational level*		−0.005 (0.413)		0.035 (0.418)
*Job-hopper * High technical level*		0.415 (0.474)		0.640 (0.482)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS				
Man (ref. = Woman)	0.048 (0.318)	0.075 (0.314)	0.070 (0.313)	0.034 (0.322)
Age (c.)	0.019 (0.016)	0.021 (0.016)	0.021 (0.016)	0.020 (0.016)

Educational level (ref. = Secondary)				
Bachelor	−0.520 (0.418)	−0.523 (0.410)	−0.534 (0.409)	−0.529 (0.419)
Master or higher	−0.626 (0.402)	−0.577 (0.397)	−0.590 (0.395)	−0.647 (0.404)
Frequency of hiring (ref. = Less frequent than weekly)				
Weekly	−0.234 (0.373)	−0.191 (0.386)	−0.176 (0.387)	−0.227 (0.375)
Daily	0.387 (0.443)	0.431 (0.442)	0.450 (0.439)	0.392 (0.439)
Years of hiring (ref. = Less than 1 year)				
Between 1 and 5 years	0.081 (0.526)	0.056 (0.518)	0.080 (0.519)	0.114 (0.527)
More than 5 years	−0.232 (0.544)	−0.289 (0.540)	−0.276 (0.544)	−0.208 (0.547)
Experience with job-hoppers (ref. = None)				
Negative experience	0.040 (0.372)	0.044 (0.379)	−0.490 (0.399)	−0.491 (0.385)
Neutral experience	0.346 (0.373)	0.343 (0.378)	0.094 (0.421)	0.057 (0.411)
Positive experience	1.132* (0.439)	1.127* (0.439)	0.276 (0.522)	0.229 (0.514)
Number of former employers (ref. = 1 or 2 employers)				
3 or 4 employers	−0.283 (0.421)	−0.261 (0.416)	−0.300 (0.403)	−0.310 (0.410)
5 or more employers	0.169 (0.389)	0.156 (0.389)	−0.355 (0.407)	−0.415 (0.424)
Number of employees in the organisation (ref. = Less than 10)				
Between 10 and 50 employees	1.009* (0.443)	0.994* (0.440)	0.968* (0.435)	0.989* (0.440)
Between 50 and 250 employees	0.150 (0.427)	0.111 (0.414)	0.089 (0.410)	0.134 (0.425)
More than 250 employees	0.793 (0.481)	0.736 (0.469)	0.714 (0.462)	0.760 (0.473)
Recruiting for other organisations (ref. = Own organisation)	−0.192 (0.289)	−0.219 (0.288)	−0.203 (0.301)	−0.209 (0.305)
Risk-taking behaviour (s.)	−0.095 (0.162)	−0.098 (0.161)	−0.232 (0.153)	−0.224 (0.156)
Egoistic response tendency (s.)	0.087 (0.351)	0.144 (0.354)	0.119 (0.353)	0.037 (0.353)
Moralistic response tendency (s.)	−0.569** (0.202)	−0.597** (0.203)	−0.582** (0.204)	−0.549** (0.204)
Interactions				
*Job-hopper * 3 or 4 former employers*			0.081 (0.454)	0.066 (0.468)
*Job-hopper * 5 or more former employers*			0.994* (0.397)	1.103** (0.415)
*Job-hopper * Negative experience with job-hoppers*			1.023* (0.505)	1.058* (0.503)
*Job-hopper * Neutral experience with job-hoppers*			0.489 (0.500)	0.590 (0.496)
*Job-hopper * Positive experience with job-hoppers*			1.701** (0.612)	1.801** (0.600)
*Job-hopper * Recruiting for other organisations*			−0.056 (0.351)	0.003 (0.357)
*Job-hopper * Risk-taking behaviour*			0.256 (0.222)	0.241 (0.215)

E. OTHER PARAMETERS				
Intercept	8.054*** (1.679)	7.354*** (1.686)	8.403*** (1.633)	9.469*** (1.659)

Notes. The theoretical variable is a binary measure based on the theoretical threshold for job-hopping, whereby candidates with one or two employers in the past five years are classified as non-job-hoppers, whereas those with three to six employers are classified as job-hoppers. Abbreviations used: c. (continuous variable), s. (scale consisting of multiple items), ref. (reference category). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the recruiter level. Significances are indicated as *** when p < .001, ** when p < .01, * when p < .05, † when p < .10.

Table A.5 Regression results with detailed operationalisation of job-hopping (independent variable), interactions (moderators) and hiring intentions (dependent variable)

	Only candidate characteristics	Only job characteristics	Only recruiter characteristics	All characteristics
A. CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS				
Number of employers in last 5 years (ref. = 1 employer)				
2 employers	0.286 (1.346)	0.210 (0.356)	−0.821 (1.152)	−0.195 (2.056)
3 employers	−0.364 (1.297)	−0.979* (0.425)	−1.598 (1.170)	−2.357 (2.133)
4 employers	−0.979 (1.307)	−1.439** (0.426)	−2.356 (1.460)	−3.063 (2.239)
5 employers	−3.144* (1.348)	−2.105** (0.602)	−6.520*** (1.776)	−8.633** (2.542)
6 employers	−4.608** (1.577)	−2.766*** (0.601)	−4.823* (1.838)	−7.916** (2.843)
Motivation (ref. = Lack of profession growth)				
Need for a new challenge	−1.116† (0.593)	−0.210 (0.223)	−0.298 (0.218)	−1.473* (0.602)
Unemployment due to bankruptcy	0.305 (0.537)	0.459† (0.251)	0.408† (0.238)	0.278 (0.506)
End of fixed-term contract	−0.492 (0.700)	0.217 (0.236)	0.178 (0.235)	−0.501 (0.775)
Man (ref. = Woman)	0.815* (0.374)	−0.007 (0.151)	0.018 (0.161)	0.793* (0.397)
Age (c.)	0.009 (0.023)	0.017** (0.006)	0.017* (0.007)	0.011 (0.025)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)				
Volunteering	0.016 (0.205)	0.074 (0.205)	0.012 (0.189)	−0.048 (0.212)
Sports	0.073 (0.250)	0.119 (0.234)	0.124 (0.237)	−0.009 (0.247)
Cultural activities	0.299 (0.201)	0.331 (0.203)	0.329 (0.200)	0.284 (0.218)
Interactions				
*2 employers * Man*	−1.440* (0.548)			−1.422* (0.556)
*3 employers * Man*	−1.032† (0.543)			−1.023† (0.537)
*4 employers * Man*	−0.840 (0.515)			−0.497 (0.581)
*5 employers * Man*	−1.247* (0.589)			−1.143† (0.660)
*6 employers * Man*	−0.204 (0.628)			−0.206 (0.654)
*2 employers * Age*	−0.015 (0.031)			−0.019 (0.033)
*3 employers * Age*	−0.004 (0.031)			−0.002 (0.034)
*4 employers * Age*	−0.009 (0.029)			−0.006 (0.033)
*5 employers * Age*	0.035 (0.032)			0.036 (0.033)

*6 employers * Age*	0.046 (0.036)			0.041 (0.040)
*2 employers * Need for a new challenge*	1.475 (0.895)			1.950* (0.912)
*3 employers * Need for a new challenge*	1.100 (0.825)			1.515† (0.854)
*4 employers * Need for a new challenge*	0.694 (0.920)			1.016 (0.927)
*5 employers * Need for a new challenge*	0.635 (0.940)			1.098 (0.900)
*6 employers * Need for a new challenge*	1.291 (0.834)			1.433 (0.960)
*2 employers * Unemployment due to bankruptcy*	0.604 (0.750)			0.739 (0.734)
*3 employers * Unemployment due to bankruptcy*	0.356 (0.769)			0.364 (0.763)
*4 employers * Unemployment due to bankruptcy*	0.090 (0.732)			0.055 (0.748)
*5 employers * Unemployment due to bankruptcy*	0.223 (0.842)			0.209 (0.849)
*6 employers * Unemployment due to bankruptcy*	−0.446 (0.808)			−0.342 (0.848)
*2 employers * End of fixed-term contract*	0.480 (0.998)			0.853 (1.042)
*3 employers * End of fixed-term contract*	0.438 (0.924)			0.759 (1.013)
*4 employers * End of fixed-term contract*	0.916 (0.819)			0.942 (0.893)
*5 employers * End of fixed-term contract*	0.940 (0.998)			0.810 (1.061)
*6 employers * End of fixed-term contract*	1.143 (1.014)			1.183 (1.172)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS				
High educational level required (ref. = Low)	−0.441 (0.275)	−0.567 (0.425)	−0.331 (0.284)	−0.756† (0.449)
High technical level required (ref. = Low)	0.415 (0.372)	0.392 (0.498)	0.330 (0.353)	0.305 (0.529)
Interactions				
*2 employers * High educational level*		−0.178 (0.428)		−0.101 (0.462)
*3 employers * High educational level*		0.682 (0.459)		0.903† (0.503)
*4 employers * High educational level*		0.307 (0.578)		0.471 (0.625)
*5 employers * High educational level*		0.097 (0.649)		0.434 (0.720)
*6 employers * High educational level*		0.263 (0.751)		0.309 (0.771)
*2 employers * High technical level*		−0.664 (0.506)		−0.448 (0.522)
*3 employers * High technical level*		−0.076 (0.445)		−0.151 (0.572)
*4 employers * High technical level*		−0.200 (0.672)		−0.049 (0.750)
*5 employers * High technical level*		0.183 (0.738)		0.438 (0.901)
*6 employers * High technical level*		0.398 (0.764)		0.659 (0.807)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS				

Man (ref. = Woman)	0.004 (0.312)	0.059 (0.317)	0.060 (0.324)	−0.035 (0.320)
Age (c.)	0.016 (0.016)	0.020 (0.016)	0.021 (0.016)	0.015 (0.016)
Educational level (ref. = Secondary)				
Bachelor	−0.462 (0.425)	−0.513 (0.414)	−0.534 (0.422)	−0.447 (0.443)
Master or higher	−0.547 (0.415)	−0.567 (0.398)	−0.564 (0.407)	−0.481 (0.436)
Frequency of hiring (ref. = Less frequent than weekly)				
Weekly	−0.239 (0.366)	−0.175 (0.390)	−0.142 (0.396)	−0.193 (0.379)
Daily	0.461 (0.445)	0.450 (0.446)	0.458 (0.454)	0.496 (0.455)
Years of hiring (ref. = Less than 1 year)				
Between 1 and 5 years	0.229 (0.505)	0.133 (0.517)	0.114 (0.515)	0.256 (0.494)
More than 5 years	−0.123 (0.516)	−0.229 (0.543)	−0.248 (0.539)	−0.099 (0.508)
Experience with job-hoppers (ref. = None)				
Negative experience	0.090 (0.381)	0.017 (0.384)	−0.699 (0.634)	−0.624 (0.642)
Neutral experience	0.402 (0.383)	0.329 (0.385)	0.168 (0.572)	0.200 (0.528)
Positive experience	1.221** (0.448)	1.095* (0.438)	0.134 (0.794)	0.382 (0.704)
Number of former employers (ref. = 1 or 2 employers)				
3 or 4 employers	−0.334 (0.438)	−0.280 (0.419)	−0.315 (0.511)	−0.327 (0.566)
5 or more employers	0.137 (0.394)	0.125 (0.389)	−0.714 (0.466)	−0.950† (0.493)
Number of employees in the organisation (ref. = Less than 10)				
Between 10 and 50 employees	1.067* (0.439)	0.982* (0.447)	0.923* (0.445)	0.990* (0.442)
Between 50 and 250 employees	0.176 (0.428)	0.119 (0.418)	0.086 (0.417)	0.164 (0.431)
More than 250 employees	0.850† (0.476)	0.760 (0.470)	0.700 (0.467)	0.767 (0.470)
Recruiting for other organisations (ref. = Own organisation)	−0.275 (0.288)	−0.216 (0.289)	−0.021 (0.400)	−0.183 (0.381)
Risk-taking behaviour (s.)	−0.064 (0.167)	−0.073 (0.163)	−0.305 (0.211)	−0.321 (0.243)
Egoistic response tendency (s.)	0.040 (0.348)	0.143 (0.358)	0.101 (0.368)	0.000 (0.367)
Moralistic response tendency (s.)	−0.550** (0.201)	−0.592** (0.203)	−0.597** (0.211)	−0.543* (0.215)
Interactions				
*2 employers * 3 or 4 former employers*			0.173 (0.610)	0.036 (0.677)
*3 employers * 3 or 4 former employers*			−0.173 (0.598)	−0.041 (0.630)
*4 employers * 3 or 4 former employers*			0.187 (0.637)	0.231 (0.737)
*5 employers * 3 or 4 former employers*			0.289 (0.761)	0.234 (0.857)
*6 employers * 3 or 4 former employers*			0.050 (0.766)	−0.011 (0.796)

*2 employers * 5 or more former employers*	1.183* (0.529)	1.326* (0.605)
*3 employers * 5 or more former employers*	−0.140 (0.535)	0.188 (0.554)
*4 employers * 5 or more former employers*	1.508* (0.609)	1.831** (0.676)
*5 employers * 5 or more former employers*	1.529* (0.635)	1.826* (0.715)
*6 employers * 5 or more former employers*	1.201 (0.757)	1.536† (0.776)
*2 employers * Negative experience with job-hoppers*	0.532 (0.659)	0.458 (0.730)
*3 employers * Negative experience with job-hoppers*	0.099 (0.715)	0.063 (0.737)
*4 employers * Negative experience with job-hoppers*	1.148 (0.803)	1.287 (0.821)
*5 employers * Negative experience with job-hoppers*	2.072* (0.823)	2.012* (0.854)
*6 employers * Negative experience with job-hoppers*	0.570 (1.030)	0.719 (1.013)
*2 employers * Neutral experience with job-hoppers*	−0.221 (0.582)	−0.480 (0.596)
*3 employers * Neutral experience with job-hoppers*	0.019 (0.580)	−0.092 (0.562)
*4 employers * Neutral experience with job-hoppers*	0.217 (0.702)	0.312 (0.720)
*5 employers * Neutral experience with job-hoppers*	1.708* (0.806)	1.684* (0.789)
*6 employers * Neutral experience with job-hoppers*	−0.387 (0.927)	−0.132 (0.868)
*2 employers * Positive experience with job-hoppers*	0.108 (0.664)	−0.348 (0.682)
*3 employers * Positive experience with job-hoppers*	0.403 (0.734)	0.107 (0.751)
*4 employers * Positive experience with job-hoppers*	1.162 (0.917)	1.015 (1.036)
*5 employers * Positive experience with job-hoppers*	2.478* (1.092)	2.532* (1.062)
*6 employers * Positive experience with job-hoppers*	2.001† (1.195)	1.775 (1.146)
*2 employers * Recruiting for other organisations*	−0.416 (0.439)	−0.303 (0.456)
*3 employers * Recruiting for other organisations*	−0.079 (0.441)	0.110 (0.448)
*4 employers * Recruiting for other organisations*	−0.067 (0.502)	0.106 (0.518)
*5 employers * Recruiting for other organisations*	−0.712 (0.593)	−0.587 (0.587)
*6 employers * Recruiting for other organisations*	−0.014 (0.640)	0.063 (0.648)
*2 employers * Risk-taking behaviour*	0.012 (0.271)	0.123 (0.303)
*3 employers * Risk-taking behaviour*	0.260 (0.239)	0.272 (0.282)
*4 employers * Risk-taking behaviour*	−0.048 (0.309)	0.007 (0.323)
*5 employers * Risk-taking behaviour*	0.690† (0.359)	0.693† (0.366)
*6 employers * Risk-taking behaviour*	0.470 (0.361)	0.486 (0.361)
E. OTHER PARAMETERS		

Intercept	8.174*** (1.902)	7.696*** (1.692)	9.365*** (1.743)	10.358*** (2.075)

Notes. The detailed variable is a continuous measure ranging from one to six previous employers over the past five years, as integrated in our vignette design (Table 1). Abbreviations used: c. (continuous variable), s. (scale consisting of multiple items) and ref. (reference category). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the recruiter level. Significances are indicated as *** when p < .001, ** when p < .01, * when p < .05, † when p < .10.