



The role of selection and socialization processes in career mobility: explaining expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions

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Abstract

The “traditional career,” staying for the entirety of one’s work life in a single occupation, is disappearing; the current career environment demands increasing flexibility and mobility. Research indicates that there are individual differences between mobile and non-mobile people. On the basis of selection (career orientation and competition orientation) and socialization (course and length of study) processes, this study examines the intentions of university students to expatriate or become self-employed as alternatives to traditional employment. The findings reveal that entrepreneurial intentions are predominantly a function of selection processes, while expatriation intentions are a function of both selection and socialization processes.

Keywords Career mobility · Entrepreneurial intentions · Expatriation

Résumé

Le rôle des processus de sélection et de socialisation dans la mobilité de carrière : expliquer l’expatriation et les intentions entrepreneuriales La « carrière traditionnelle », caractérisée par une vie professionnelle dans une seule et même profession, est en voie de disparition; le monde du travail actuel exige une flexibilité et une mobilité croissantes. Les recherches indiquent qu’il existe des différences individuelles entre les personnes « mobiles » et « non-mobiles ». Sur la base des processus de sélection (orientation de carrière et de compétition) et de socialisation (filière et durée des études), cette étude examine les intentions des étudiants universitaires d’expatrier ou de devenir indépendants en tant qu’alternatives à l’emploi traditionnel. Les résultats révèlent que les intentions entrepreneuriales sont principalement fonction des processus de sélection, tandis que les intentions d’expatriation dépendent à la fois des processus de sélection et de socialisation.

Zusammenfassung

Die Rolle von Selektions- und Sozialisationsprozessen bei der beruflichen Mobilität: Aufklärung von Expatriierungs- und unternehmerischen Absichten Die “traditionelle Karriere”, das heisst, das gesamte Berufsleben in einem einzigen Beruf zu verbringen, wird immer unbedeutender; das aktuelle Karriereumfeld erfordert

zunehmend Flexibilität und Mobilität. Die Forschung zeigt, dass es individuelle Unterschiede zwischen mobilen und nicht-mobilen Menschen gibt. Auf der Grundlage von Selektions- (Karriere- und Wettbewerbsorientierung) und Sozialisationsprozessen (Studiengang und Studiendauer) untersucht diese Studie die Absichten von Hochschulstudentinnen und -studenten, ins Ausland zu gehen oder sich selbstständig zu machen, als Alternativen zur traditionellen Beschäftigung. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass unternehmerische Absichten überwiegend eine Funktion von Selektionsprozessen sind, während Expatriierungsabsichten eine Funktion von gleichermassen Selektions- und Sozialisationsprozessen sind.

Resumen

El papel de los procesos de selección y socialización en la movilidad profesional:

Explicando la Expatriación y las Intenciones Empresariales La “carrera profesional tradicional”, permanecer durante toda la vida laboral en una sola ocupación, está desapareciendo; el entorno profesional actual exige una mayor flexibilidad y movilidad. Las investigaciones indican que existen diferencias individuales entre las personas móviles y no móviles. Sobre la base de los procesos de selección (orientación profesional y orientación a la competencia) y de socialización (curso y duración de los estudios), este estudio examina las intenciones de los estudiantes universitarios de expatriarse o de trabajar por cuenta propia como alternativas al empleo tradicional. Los resultados revelan que las intenciones empresariales son predominantemente una función de los procesos de selección, mientras que las intenciones de expatriación son una función tanto de los procesos de selección como de socialización.

Introduction

Individuals seek higher education for different reasons, but for most, it is to improve employability and provide a path towards career success. This can be traced to several questions prospective graduands ask themselves: for example, “Will I find a decent and well-paying job in my field of study?” “How do I become successful in a short amount of time?” “Do I have the capacity to go to the next step in my career development?” “How do I get started in the job market?” Students raised some of these questions in a discussion between one of this paper’s authors and his graduating students. The most interesting issue was raised by a graduand who already had a volunteering position: “Chances are slim of getting what one wants because life changes suddenly; those who give jobs don’t even care about one’s college grade but the value one brings to the company, yet lecturers did not tell us these realities.”

These questions indicate that a university degree alone no longer guarantees a successful career (Falk & Reimer, 2007). So, what about alternative career paths to traditional salaried employment in an organization—for example, self-employment or expatriation? In a career without boundaries, individuals experience a series of frequent transition cycles (Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Linnehan, 2000). Hence, individuals can begin a career at any point offering them the most rapid transition from school or unemployment to work as they explore opportunities in the field.

Moreover, across professions, careers have become less predictable and less structured (Arnold, 2001). So-called hard skills such as subject matter expertise are no longer sufficient for “climbing the ladder” or for sustaining one’s employability (Laker & Powell, 2011). The present vocational environment is dynamic and characterized by uncertainties, globalization, competition in the labor market, new work arrangements, and job insecurity (Lent & Brown, 2013). These and other factors not only demand a high level of flexibility in career decisions, but also call for young people to take charge of their career development (Arthur, 2014; Lent & Brown, 2013). These emphases have implications for career counseling (Amundson, 2005), particularly in guiding young people on how to “kick-start” their careers in the turbulent current job market. To avoid challenges associated with the prolonged transition from school or following unemployment, young graduates have two alternatives, both of which suggest career mobility: expatriation (that is, working abroad) and self-employment or entrepreneurship.

In a highly globalized world, individuals have attractive opportunities for business, study, and work almost anywhere (Findlay, King, Smith, Geddes, & Skeldon, 2012; Froese, 2012). Hence, mobility is not only “en vogue”, it is more of a necessity for today’s workforce. In earlier eras, the slogan “today here, tomorrow there” was a sign of privilege, almost exclusively reserved for those of high potential; by contrast, mobility seems to be stock and trade for many modern graduates. The typical attributes of modern graduates, such as their young age and greater cultural adaptability (Locks et al., 2008), can enable them to work abroad as expatriates or entrepreneurs with fewer impediments. Mobility is frequently seen as central to creating a successful career, and several studies have found that mobile people report higher career success on both objective and subjective measures (e.g., Verbruggen, 2012).

This study applies selection and socialization theories to explain readiness to expatriate and to become self-employed. Despite the extensive research on selection and socialization factors influencing career choices and consequent success, Porter and Umbach (2006) observe that researchers have not integrated theoretical perspectives into a broader examination; while Porter and Umbach applied a combined model, their focus was confined to effects of race and gender (socialization) and personality (selection) on the choice of college majors. However, broader examination has not occurred in relation to the choice of career paths at or after graduation. The present study, therefore, aims to contribute to the career mobility literature by juxtaposing selection and socialization processes as predictors of readiness to expatriate or become self-employed as alternatives to traditional employment. We posit that some aspects of selection and socialization processes explain readiness to work abroad and to become self-employed, while other aspects explain only one of these two alternative career paths. We also tested for the interaction between the two approaches to explaining career path choices, which has implications for providing career guidance to young people preparing to enter the labor market.

Person–environment fit as a model for selection and socialization

The person–environment fit perspective is well suited to study whether individuals select a career path due to personal attributes, socialization mechanisms, or an interaction of both. Research highlights that a good person–environment fit is an antecedent to optimal career functioning and that this fit facilitates stability in the chosen career path (Holland, 1996). From this perspective, the choice of work environment is based on personal factors such as attitudes, values, abilities, and personality, as well as job factors such as work characteristics, organizational structure, and culture (Van Vianen, 2000). Therefore, a preferred career path is a general representation of one’s self-concept (Parasuraman et al., 2000). Individuals value these factors highly that individuals choose careers in which they have a higher likelihood of success and satisfaction (Holland, 1996, 1997). This is also linked to persistence in the chosen career (Donohue, 2006; Lent et al., 2013). A “well-fitting” work environment reinforces abilities and interests, thus enabling success and persistence in the chosen career path.

Perceived congruence between personal and work environment factors is reflected in career selection (Spokane, Meir, & Catalano, 2000). Hence, based on perceived congruence to mobile careers, some individuals are more likely to be ready for a job abroad or to become self-employed. Based on Holland’s (1996, 1997) theory of vocational personalities, applying person–environment fit to career research has emphasized the role of personality in career choices.

Expatriation and self-employment can be regarded as career-adaptive behaviors—that is, they offer opportunities for individuals to direct their own career development, which is in line with the social cognitive model of career self-management (Lent & Brown, 2013). This model presents career-adaptive behaviors as a function of personal and contextual determinants, with personal antecedents including attributes such as self-efficacy, personality, interests, and abilities and contextual determinants including educational influences and socioeconomic resources. These factors tend to influence individuals’ self-efficacy to explore careers and to make decisions and take action (Lent & Brown, 2013). The personal determinants suggest a selection process, while the contextual determinants suggest a socialization process through which individuals develop an interest in expatriation or entrepreneurship.

Selection process

The selection process comprises personal attributes such as personality, competencies, and attitudes. Particularly, scholars have posited that aspects of personality influence career-adaptive behaviors through emotional responses (Lent & Brown, 2013). However, the person’s affective attributes also depend on the specific adaptive behavior of interest (Lent, Ezeofor, Morrison, Penn, & Ireland, 2016). Hence, this study specifically focuses on the attitudinal aspect of personal attributes that influence career-adaptive behaviors. Different models have demonstrated the essential nature of attitudes for career selection—for example, Schein’s (1996) careers anchors and the planned behavior theory (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, we posit

that attitudes play a role in choosing a career in self-employment or expatriation. Although attitudes can also be considered part of a socialization process, this study focuses on two—competition orientation and career orientation—and considers them subjective representations of career preferences situated in personal attributes rather than socially framed.

Competition orientation

A competitive attitude reflects an individual's winning mentality (Schwarz, Wdowiak, Almer-Jarz, & Breitenecker, 2009). Competitiveness is increasingly a key aspect of career life, especially in striving for success both in school and at work. Some scholars have argued that competitiveness can be healthy for personal development because it facilitates mastery (Ryckman, Hammer, Kaczor, & Gold, 1996), and mastery or self-efficacy is important for expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions, particularly as establishing a business is one way individuals express and fulfill the need for competition (Schwarz et al., 2009). It has been argued that competitiveness is one of the most important attitudes proximal to entrepreneurial behavior and thus essential for self-employment (Hofstede et al., 2004; Massey & Lynn, 1991). By contrast, expatriates often work in organizational contexts in which teamwork rather than competition is emphasized. However, competition in the global labor market requires individuals to be competitive. Therefore, we hypothesize that competition orientation is positively associated with both entrepreneurial intention (*H1a*) and expatriation intention (*H1b*).

Related to the need for competition is *career orientation* attitude, which is largely an expression of career ambition (Otto, Roe, Sobiraj, Baluku, & Garrido, 2017) and the resolute desire to attain one's vocational goals (Maier, Wastian, & Rosenstiel, 2009). This approach to understanding career orientation emphasizes the preference for intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards from career activities (Simpson, 2005), in line with the self-determination perspective (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This paper, however, focuses on the intrinsic aspect of desire to succeed in work that is close to one's professional field, and we presume this desire might constrain or enhance the intention to become self-employed or expatriate. Stumpf (2014) argues that individuals use mobility to advance their career success. To this end, we assume that expatriation, which involves professionals offering their expertise to foreign organizations and governments (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013), is an opportunity for professional success. By contrast, some professions such as medicine offer high-quality opportunities that are professionally related, in which individuals use self-determination to specialize in businesses that are in line with their intrinsic profession interests. Overall, we hypothesize that career orientation is positively associated to both entrepreneurial intention (*H2a*) and expatriation intention (*H2b*).

Socialization process

Although career choices are relatively stable, research shows they are influenced by environmental factors to some extent (Rodrigues, Guest, & Budjanovcanin, 2013).

The socialization view posits that adaptive intrapersonal and interpersonal processes—occurring, for example, during training—lead to attitudinal and behavioral changes that in turn affect career interests and choices (Starr & Fondas, 1992). Research based on the social cognitive perspective (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) has demonstrated how social environments impact career processes and outcomes (e.g., Lent & Brown, 2013; Thungjaroenkul, Cummings, & Tate, 2016). Social contexts influence the development of career preferences over time through individuals' interactions with the social environment, including family, culture, education, labor market dynamics, and work experience (Rodrigues et al., 2013). These contexts provide scripts of normative principles for career actions (Dany, Louvel, & Valette, 2011) and thus shape career preferences (Rodrigues et al., 2013). Specifically, professional socialization occurring during training (e.g., internships) impacts beliefs and values (Howkins & Ewens, 1999). We focus on two factors of professional socialization that occur during training: course and length of study.

Course and length of study

Besides choosing particular fields of study based on selection processes (e.g., match in personal and profession characteristics), students are also socialized towards certain career paths. Schools or faculties—and their characteristics—not only impact abilities, interests, and learning outcomes, but also students' career choices at graduation (Porter & Umbach, 2006). Moreover, the effect of field of study lasts long after graduation (Porter & Umbach, 2006). These effects are, for example, related to entrepreneurial intentions (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2015).

To enhance professional socialization, most universities and colleges require students to undertake several months of internship experience. It is increasingly common that students prefer an internship abroad, which in turn socializes them towards expatriation. Moreover, there is an increasing number of programs that specifically promote student mobility, such as the Erasmus Program (Teichler & Jahr, 2001). Most students who study abroad become employed abroad (Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Teichler & Jahr, 2001) since hosting countries are increasingly recognizing that such students enhance their human capital and labor markets. Moreover, courses involving international engagement produce more mobile graduates (Ryan, Silvanto, & Brown, 2013). This supports the hypothesis that previous mobility is associated with future mobility behavior (Froese, Jommersbach, & Klautzsch, 2013; Stumpf, 2014).

The university's orientation (Ryan, Silvanto, & Ozkaya, 2015), that is the university's areas of emphasis during study also determine socialization opportunities available to students. For example, internships abroad are emphasized for some courses, such as those related to international business. Such experiences, in line with the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994, 2000; Lent & Brown, 2013), are sources of self-efficacy that simultaneously influence career interests and serve as proximal contextual factors that can directly inspire students' career choices at or after graduation. Hence, the differential potential for career mobility is influenced by the extent of international or business orientation of the field of study and the orientation of the university.

Prior research on entrepreneurial and expatriation socialization has mostly emphasized the field of study, course content, and level at which entrepreneurship education is offered (e.g., Nabi & Liñán, 2011; Wu & Wu, 2008). Beyond this, we argue that the length of the socialization process impacts students' perception of given professions or career paths. It is possible that, for example, entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions increase alongside time spent in business-related training. Similarly, the number and intensity of mobility experiences increase readiness to be geographically mobile (Dette & Dalbert, 2005; Felker & Gianecchini, 2015), which also applies to mobility prior to and after graduation. Overall, we hypothesize that field of study is associated with expatriation intention (*H3a*) and entrepreneurial intention (*H3b*), such that the intentions vary with the study program. Similarly, we posit that length of study is positively associated with both expatriation intention (*H3c*) and entrepreneurial intention (*H3d*).

The interplay of socialization and selection

Most prior studies on expatriation and entrepreneurship have treated attitudes as a mediator (e.g., Baluku, Löser, Otto, & Schummer, 2018; Froese et al., 2013; Kautonen, Tornikoski, & Kibler, 2011). However, we argue that competition orientation and career orientation are attitudes situated in personal characteristics. In line with the person–environment fit models, specifically vocational personalities and work environments (Holland, 1997), we suggest that outcomes are produced by an interaction between the person and his or her environments. Lent et al. (2000) and Lent and Brown (2013) further propose that contextual factors can moderate career choice processes. We propose that selection and socialization processes reinforce each other; hence, interactive effects emerge for selection processes (competition orientation and career orientation) and socialization processes (field of study) on the choice of career path. We also propose that the field of study can interact with the length of time a student takes to complete the program to enhance or diminish expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions. Hence, we propose that field of study moderates the effect of career orientation on expatriation intention (*H4a*) and entrepreneurial intention (*H4b*). Similarly, we propose that field of study moderates the effects of completion orientation on both mobility options: expatriation intention (*H4c*) and entrepreneurial intention (*H4d*). Additionally, we further propose that length of study and field of study have interactive effects on expatriation intention (*H4e*) and entrepreneurial intention (*H4f*). That is, depending on the program study, expatriation and entrepreneurial intention may increase with period spend on the program.

Methods

Sample

Overall, 544 German university students (61.2% female) aged 18–54 years ($M=23.1$; $SD=3.52$) participated via an online survey. The sample consisted of

168 business administration students (male = 80, female = 87, not specified = 1), 161 psychology students (male = 23, female = 138), 101 lectureship students (male = 20, female = 81), and 114 students of engineering and natural sciences (male = 88, female = 26). Of the 544 participants, 51% were at the beginning or end of their study period, 26% had been abroad for more than 3 months, and 92.1% had changed their location at least once ($M = 2.22$; $SD = 1.93$). Additionally, 65.6% of our sample had friends abroad; only 3.9% had children, and 41.1% were in a partnership or married.

Research instruments

All measures were administered in German, with answer options on a six-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree): For further analyses, scale scores were estimated by averaging across items. When more than one item per scale was missing, the entire scale was defined as missing. Table 1 provides mean, standard deviation, and inter-correlation for variables.

Mobility intentions

We assessed expatriate intentions with the four most valid items from a scale to measure geographic mobility readiness by Otto and Dalbert (2012). The original scale was modified so all items related to the context of foreign countries ($\alpha = .86$; e.g., “I can easily imagine myself working for a limited time abroad”). To reflect entrepreneurship intentions, we again selected the four most valid items from a scale to measure entrepreneurial mobility readiness (Glaser, 2004)—for example, “To set up a business of my own is part of my professional goals.” The measure showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$).

Values and attitudes

We operationalized career orientation using a scale from the German General Social Survey (Koch, Gabler, & Braun, 1994), comprising four items ($\alpha = .75$; e.g., “To be successful in my profession is very important to me”). To assess competition orientation, we used a shortened version of the Preference for the Merit Principle Scale (Davey, Ramona Bobocel, Son Hing, & Zanna, 1999). The scale consists of 15 items

Table 1 Descriptive findings and correlation of the study variables

Measure		<i>N</i> Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	<i>N</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Career orientation	(A)	4	4.14	.87	.74	543	1			
Competition orientation	(B)	6	4.38	.73	.70	515	.10*	1		
Entrepreneurship intention	(C)	4	3.62	1.35	.90	535	.31***	.05	1	
Expatriate intention	(D)	4	4.14	1.22	.86	540	.18***	.03	.19***	1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

that broadly measure people's attitudes on how merit should be used to allocate outcomes in various distribution contexts (Davey et al., 1999). We chose the six scale items exclusively related to material benefits in the workplace ($\alpha = .70$; e.g., "The effort a worker puts into a job ought to be reflected in the size of a raise he or she receives").

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive findings on the study variables.

Selection versus socialization effects

For **selection effects** ($H1$, $H2$), the bivariate correlations in Table 1 indicate that career orientation was significantly and positively correlated with both entrepreneurship and expatriate intentions, confirming $H2a$ and $H2b$. By contrast, no substantial relationship could be found for competition orientation, contradicting our assumptions formulated in $H1a$ and $H1b$.

To first test for **socialization effects** ($H3$, $H4e$, and $H4f$), we performed two multivariate analyses of variance, with field of study (business administration/psychology/lectureship/engineering and natural sciences) and length of study (main courses/advanced courses) as between-subject factors. Dependent variables were expatriate intention and entrepreneurship intention, respectively.

Concerning **expatriate intention**, we found a significant main effect for field of study $F(3, 532) = 7.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, confirming $H3a$. Probing this association with post hoc Scheffé comparisons revealed only one substantial difference: business administration students held more positive attitudes toward going abroad ($M = 4.67$; $SD = 1.12$) than teacher students ($M = 4.04$; $SD = 1.38$). Moreover, a significant main effect appeared for length of study $F(1, 532) = 9.58$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, with those in advanced courses reporting an overall greater readiness to go abroad ($M = 4.54$; $SD = 1.18$) compared to those in basic courses ($M = 4.28$; $SD = 1.24$). These findings confirm $H3c$. Finally, as illustrated in Figure 1, we found a significant interaction effect of field of study and length of study $F(3, 532) = 4.05$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, which supports $H4e$.

By contrast, regarding **entrepreneurship intention**, we found a significant main effect only for field of study $F(3, 527) = 19.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. The main effects of length of study and the interactive effects of length of study and field of study were marginal (also see Figure 2 for the interaction effect). Hence, $H3b$ is supported, but $H3d$ and $H4f$ are not supported.

Predicting mobility intentions as an interplay of selection and socialization

We conducted six moderated regression analyses (three for each outcome) to test if the selection process interacts with the socialization process to enhance expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions. The first and second regression models (Table 2)

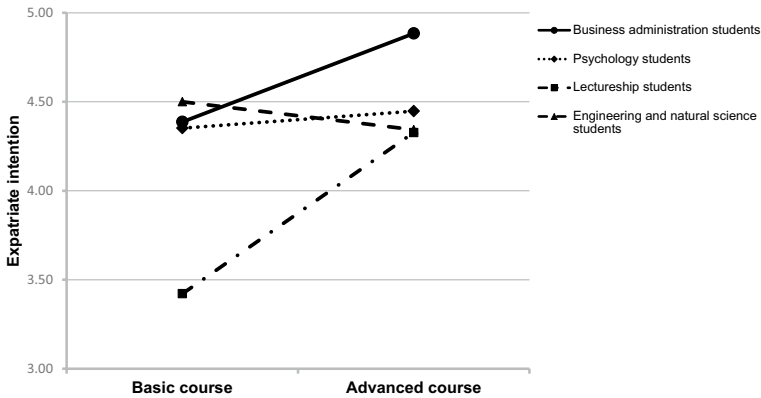


Figure 1 Selection and socialization effects on expatriation intention

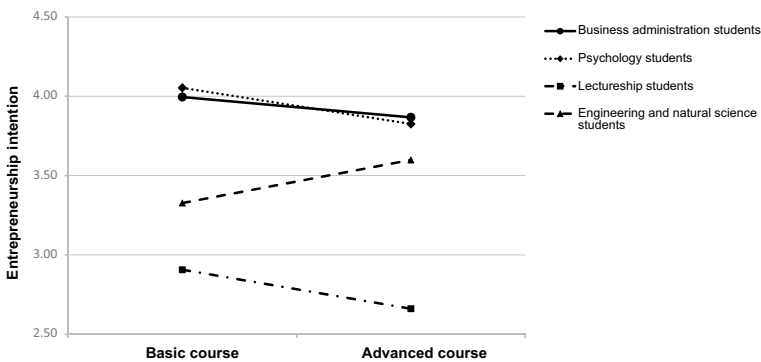


Figure 2 Selection and socialization effects on entrepreneurial intention

assessed interaction effects of the course of program (socialization process) with career orientation (selection process) on both expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions. The third and fourth regression models (Table 3) show the interaction effects of field of study (socialization process) with competition orientation (selection process). Table 4 shows the results of regression models analyzing the interaction effects of field of study and length of study (both socialization processes, although we argue that field of study can represent a selection effect). Regarding field of study, we can thus group students into two categories: business administration students and students of other subjects. This grouping is possible because we can assume that business administration students' studies specifically socialize them towards entrepreneurship and expatriation and thus that they are more likely to start a business and be ready to work abroad. We calculated simple slope tests using an online tool by Preacher, Curran, and Bauer (2006).

Tables 2 and 3 provide the results of the regression equations for attitudes and field of study. Career orientation was positively associated with both career mobility

Table 2 Regression analyses of moderator effects of business administration on the effects of career orientation on the outcome variables

Predictors	Entrepreneurship intention			Expatriate intention		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Step 1						
Constant	1.66	.27		3.39	.25	
Career orientation	.45	.06	.29***	.22	.06	.16***
Business administration	.34	.12	.12**	.31	.11	.12**
ΔR^2	.11			.05		
Step 2						
Constant	1.65	.27		3.43	.25	
Career orientation	.45	.07	.29***	.22	.06	.16***
Business administration	.33	.12	.11**	.34	.11	.13**
Career orientation \times business administration	.04	.07	.02	-.13	.06	-.09*
ΔR^2	.00			.01		
Total R^2	.11			.05		
<i>N</i>	533			539		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; two-tailed. Business administration: 0=other subjects, 1=business administration

Table 3 Regression analyses of moderator effects of business administration on the effects of competition orientation on the outcome variables

Predictors	Entrepreneurship intention			Expatriate intention		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Step 1						
Constant	2.95			4.00		
Competition orientation	.11	.08	.06	.07	.07	.04
Business administration	.50	.13	.17***	.39	.12	.15**
ΔR^2	.03			.02		
Step 2						
Constant	2.98			4.00		
Competition orientation	.11	.08	.06	.07	.08	.04
Business administration	.51	.13	.17***	.39	.12	.15**
Competition orientation \times business administration	.07	.06	.05	.02	.05	.01
ΔR^2	.00			.00		
Total R^2	.04			.02		
<i>N</i>	508			512		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; two-tailed. Business administration: 0=other subjects, 1=business administration

Table 4 Regression analyses of moderator effects of business administration on the effects of semester on the outcome variables

Predictors	Entrepreneurship intention			Expatriate intention		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Step 1						
Constant	3.64	.11		4.09	.10	
Semester	-.04	.02	-.08 ^a	.05	.02	.12**
Business administration	.48	.13	.16***	.33	.11	.13**
ΔR^2	.03			.03		
Step 2						
Constant	3.65	.11		4.09	.10	
Semester	-.04	.02	-.08 ^a	.05	.02	.11**
Business administration	.45	.13	.15***	.31	.11	.12**
Semester \times business administration	.12	.06	.09*	.08	.05	.07
ΔR^2	.01			.00		
Total R^2	.04			.04		
<i>N</i>	535			540		

^a The effect is the same in both Step 1 and Step 2

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; two-tailed. Business administration: 0 = other subjects, 1 = business administration

types, confirming *H2a* and *H2b*. However, competition orientation was associated with neither entrepreneurship nor expatriate intentions, hence *H1a* and *H1b* are not supported (see Table 2, Step 1).

Additionally, we found a significant interaction effect of career orientation and field of study on expatriation intention, supporting *H4a* (see Table 2, Step 2). Figure 3 illustrates the implication of this interaction, showing regression lines for business administration students and students from other fields of study. Simple slope analysis revealed career orientation was not significantly related to expatriate intentions for business administration students ($b = .03$, *n.s.*), although career orientation was positively related to expatriate intentions for other students ($b = .30$, $p < .01$). However, the interaction effects of career orientation and field of study on expatriation intention were not significant; hence, *H4b* was not confirmed. Similarly, the interaction effects of competition orientation and field of study on both expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions were not significant; hence, *H4c* and *H4d* must be rejected.

As shown in Table 4, length of study (semester) was marginally negatively associated with entrepreneurship intentions, providing some support for *H3d*, and positively with expatriate intentions, further supporting *H3c*. Moreover, as illustrated in Table 4, Step 2, a significant interaction effect existed for length of study (semester) and field of study on entrepreneurship intentions, further supporting *H4f*. Simple slope analyses indicate the regression slopes can only be meaningfully interpreted for students of other subjects ($b = -.06$, $p < .01$) and not for business administration students ($b = .02$, *n.s.*; see Figure 4).

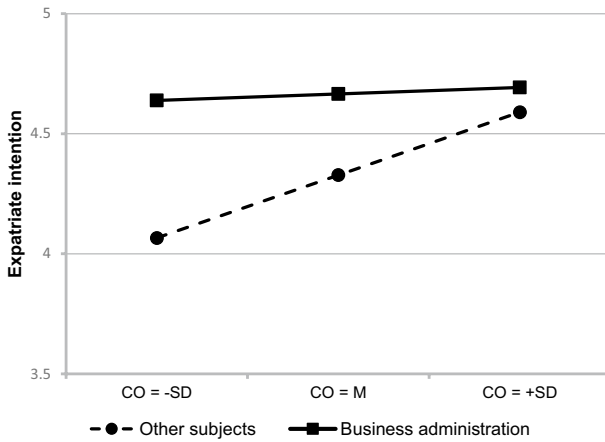


Figure 3 Interaction between career orientation (CO) and course of study (business administration vs. other subject) predicting expatriate intention

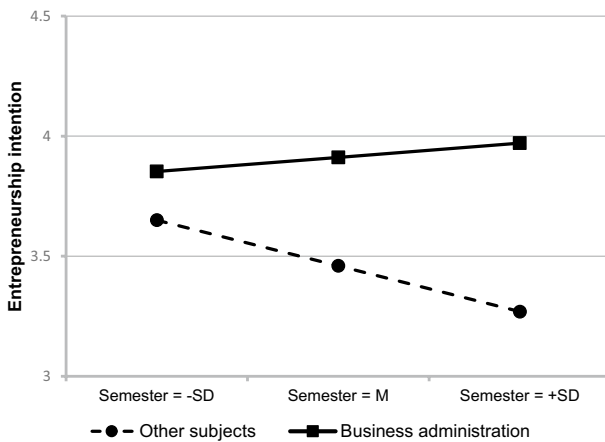


Figure 4 Interaction between length of study period (semester) and course of study (business administration vs. other subject) predicting entrepreneurship intention

Discussion

The labor market is more dynamic than ever, characterized by global competition and high unemployment. Consequently, a university degree is no longer a guarantee for obtaining a desired job in a field of expertise or preferred location. Self-employment and expatriation are feasible alternatives. This study aimed to examine whether choosing expatriation and entrepreneurship is a result of selection or socialization processes and whether an interaction between these processes enhances readiness to expatriate or to become self-employed. We operationalized the selection process by focusing on career attitudes, specifically competition orientation and career

orientation, and we operationalized the socialization process by focusing on the training aspects (course and length of study). By focusing on these processes, our study has addressed gaps in applying selection and socialization theories, which are often applied separately in mobility research. The study also contributes to entrepreneurship and career mobility literature.

Results on career attitudes partially confirm our assumption that the selection process predicts the intention to expatriate and entrepreneurial intention. Our results also reaffirm previous findings that attitudes play a role in career choices related to entrepreneurship and expatriation (e.g., Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2012; Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Froese et al., 2013). Our study contributes to this literature by showing that more specific forms of attitudes are essential for different forms of mobility. More specifically, the results confirm that career orientation is positively associated with intention both to expatriate and to enter entrepreneurship. By contrast, competition orientation does not explain either alternative. Thus, individuals with strong career orientation appear to perceive expatriation and entrepreneurship as feasible pathways for career development and success.

Our findings highlight the importance of career orientation in choosing career paths and proactive behaviors to achieve career success. Otto et al.'s (2017) conceptualization suggests that career orientation attitudes represent the intrinsic desire to achieve career success. Overall, graduates with a strong career orientation proactively consider various career options that offer chances of success, including entrepreneurship and expatriation and are, therefore, often more ready to work in foreign countries. Working abroad is one method to achieve career success, drawing from the evidence suggesting that globetrotting professionals are considered more successful in their careers (e.g., Bolino, 2007; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). Similarly, career success in terms of job satisfaction is higher among entrepreneurs than people in salaried employment (Berglund, Johansson Sevä, & Strandh, 2015). Moreover, autonomy and the challenge of owning a business can attract people with high career orientation to entrepreneurship.

Our study's most intriguing finding is that competition orientation is neither associated with expatriation intention nor entrepreneurial intention. Given the competitive nature of entrepreneurship, it naturally follows that individuals with a competition orientation would be attracted to this type of career. However, our study is not the first to observe that competition is less important in developing interest in an entrepreneurial role; competitive attitude is also reported to be unrelated to entrepreneurial attitudes and aspiration to establish one's own business (Schwarz, Wdowiak, Almer-Jarz, & Breitenecker, 2009). Therefore, we posit that while competitiveness may be a factor in entrepreneurial success, it does not necessarily motivate individuals to pursue entrepreneurial or expatriate work.

Concerning socialization effects, we found that field of study significantly affects both expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions. However, length of study was only associated with expatriation intentions. Entrepreneurial education literature shows that business socialization occurs through interactions with role models, teachers, and practical exposure, which impact knowledge, attitudes, and consequently vocational behavior (Adamoniën & Astromskienė, 2015; Cope, 2003). Presumably, students enrolled in business-related courses should have comparatively greater interest

in entrepreneurial careers. Based on this assumption, we paid particular interest to establishing differences in entrepreneurial intentions by field of study. Further confirming the socialization effect, business administration students reported higher entrepreneurial intention than others (in teacher education, psychology, and engineering and natural sciences). Yet, it is also possible to attribute this effect to the selection process—that is, students with positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship are already attracted to a business-related field of study.

To confirm that attitudes towards and intention for entrepreneurship change, we investigated the effect of length of study as measured by the number of semesters spent on the field of study. Length of study did not impact entrepreneurial intention, although it did demonstrate a significant effect when considering only business students. Therefore, while there is a likelihood that selection process plays a role (that those already interested in entrepreneurship choose business courses at college), the differential socialization of students towards business in different fields of study impacts entrepreneurial intentions.

However, socialization impact is better represented in expatriation intentions, for which both field of study and length of study demonstrate significant effects. It is, therefore, probable that expatriation intentions are mostly a function of a socialization process. Except for those in engineering and natural sciences, students reported high intentions to work abroad. Moreover, for business administration and engineering and natural sciences students, the intent to work abroad was higher among those nearing the end of their studies. There are two possible explanations: First, towards the end of the field of study, students have evaluated their options and have ideas on where to find employment opportunities; thus, they have formed more concrete plans or at least intentions for exploiting those opportunities (Schwarz et al., 2009). Second, these students are likely to have greater cross-cultural or internal exposure through internships. Increasingly, students undertake internships abroad, which not only expose them to employment opportunities abroad, but also allow sensitization toward and appreciation of different cultures. This may explain why education or travel abroad during schooling predicts future geographical career mobility behavior (Froese et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2013; Stumpf, 2014; Teichler & Jahr, 2001). Thus, students who have been abroad during their studies are likely more willing to expatriate.

The main research question relates to the interaction effects of selection and socialization on intention to expatriate or enter entrepreneurship. The moderation analyses suggest that there is no interactional effect of competition orientation and field of study on both expatriation and entrepreneurial intention. Conversely, we find interaction effects of career orientation and field of study on expatriation intention. For non-business students, career orientation enhances expatriate intentions, whereas for business students, career orientation is not associated with expatriate intentions. Expatriation intentions for business students are relatively stable at both low and high levels of career orientation, pointing to the selection process—individuals who chose business as a field of study already have a positive attitude towards and are ready to work internationally. The globalized nature of the business environment requires business-oriented students to be willing to work abroad even before they enroll in college. Whereas we consider field of study a socialization aspect, we

have noted that it also portrays selection effect to some extent and thus assessed its interaction effects on entrepreneurial intentions using length of study. Our results indicate that entrepreneurial intentions increase over time for business students, but not for non-business students. Therefore, interaction effects between selection and socialization are confirmed; (1) career orientation and field of study have significant interaction effects on expatriation effects; (2) field of study and length of study have significant interaction effects on entrepreneurial intention.

Limitations

This study has at least two key limitations: its design was cross-sectional, and our data were gathered by self-reports. As a consequence, we cannot rule out that shared method variance between our investigated variables inflated the association between the variables (e.g., Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). We, therefore, are cautious in affirming our results with total certainty. Future studies could consider a longitudinal approach to track changes in expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions beginning in high school, before students choose university courses; this could allow for examining causes behind the choice of study area and how career path preferences change over time. A cross-cultural sample application might also be limited given that culture plays an important role in vocational attitudes and socialization. In addition, future studies should consider a wider range of subjects (for example legal, vocational, and medical or health studies). Furthermore, we investigated mobility intentions, but not mobility behavior. Although studies have found a relationship between the two (e.g., Brett & Reilly, 1988), as well as between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurship entry (e.g., Fayolle, Liñán, & Moriano, 2014), the impact of willingness to move on actual job transfer decisions remains unclear. Our study has focused on limited indicators of selection, and future studies could benefit from considering a wider range of selection aspects such as openness, flexibility, independence, dispositional optimism, and uncertainty tolerance.

Conclusion and practical implications

Our results suggest that both selection and socialization processes play essential roles in deciding to pursue a career in entrepreneurship or expatriate work. Regarding selection effects, we specifically demonstrate that career orientation is important for entrepreneurial intention and readiness to work abroad. Concerning socialization effects, our results demonstrate that both course and length of study impact expatriation intention, but only field of study impacts entrepreneurial intention. This drew our attention toward selection of field of study, and our findings reaffirm the uniqueness of entrepreneurs (Martin Mabunda Baluku, Kikooma, & Kibanja, 2016; Henderson & Robertson, 2000) and suggest that entrepreneurial intention is predominantly a function of a selection process; by contrast, expatriation intention is a function of both selection and socialization processes. However, both expatriation and entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by the interaction between socialization and selection processes.

Given the increased internationalization of work, our results highlight the importance of orienting studies towards an open mobility attitude. Protean attitudes, as well as so-called happenstance skills, are useful in the school-to-work transition (Yang, Yaung, Noh, Jang, & Lee, 2017); hence, university instructors should strengthen these attributes among their students through various learning activities. For example, universities could emphasize international internship programs to enable students to gain experience working abroad, which in turn increases flexibility for expatriate work. This may be important in enhancing career development and success. In some situations, students can find attractive job opportunities in foreign countries where they had studied (Arthur & Flynn, 2011) or had internship exposures.

Moreover, with increased unemployment and demand for services, entrepreneurship is an important opportunity for career development not only for business students, but also for all fields of study. Therefore, universities could include a business-related curriculum, or at least entrepreneurship mentoring programs, for all students. Our findings also have implications for career counseling practices. Specifically, our results suggest that career orientation should be promoted during career education and counseling for non-business students. For business students, socialization during the field of study influences entrepreneurial and geographical mobility intentions, but the selection process also plays a role and thus their entrepreneurial intentions can be predicted and supported early in the education process.

Finally, our findings have implication for future mobility research. We specifically show that competition attitude is not associated with expatriation or entrepreneurial intention. Previous research (e.g., Schwarz et al., 2009) has also demonstrated that competition attitude is not related to entrepreneurial intention. Yet, entrepreneurship is competitive in nature, and the roles of competitive attitude and competition competency in entrepreneurship require further research. This includes, for example, how competition orientation influences entrepreneurial performance, whether entrepreneurs need a competitive attitude given that it does not shape entrepreneurial intention, and how competitive competence develops among nascent entrepreneurs.

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