

Applying self-determination theory to explaining differences in career commitment between self-employed and salaried employees

The role of basic psychological needs

Martin Mabunda Baluku

*Department of Educational, Organizational and Social Psychology,
School of Psychology, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda and
Faculty of Psychology, Work and Organizational Psychology,
Philipps-Universität Marburg, Marburg, Germany*

Richard Balikooa

*Department of Educational, Organizational and Social Psychology,
School of Psychology, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda*

Edward Bantu

Faculty of Education and Human Resource, Kisii University, Kisii, Kenya, and

Kathleen Otto

*Faculty of Psychology, Work and Organizational Psychology,
Philipps-Universität Marburg, Marburg, Germany*

The role of
basic
psychological
needs

Received 6 May 2019
Revised 17 August 2019
Accepted 13 February 2020

Abstract

Purpose – Based on self-determination theory, this study aims to examine the impact of satisfaction of basic psychological needs (BPNs) on the commitment to stay self- or salary-employed. Not only the entry of individuals but also their commitment to remain self-employed is important. Enterprises established by the self-employed can only survive longer if the owners are willing to continue in self-employment.

Design/methodology/approach – The study was conducted among a cross-country sample drawn from Germany, Kenya and Uganda. An online survey was conducted among self- and salary-employed individuals in Germany. In Uganda and Kenya, cross-sectional samples were recruited through their workplaces and business forums. These processes yielded 869 responses (373 self-employed and 494 salary-employed). Differences in the impact of BPNs on the commitment to self-employed or salaried-employment across countries were examined using PROCESS macro 2.16.

Findings – The findings revealed that the self-employed exhibit higher commitment to their current form of employment than the salary-employed. The satisfaction of needs for autonomy and competence were associated with higher levels of commitment to self-employment than to salary-employment across the three

The authors thank Dr. Peter Onderi, MR. Manuel Menning, Ms. Maureen Agalo Mitch for their support and efforts in the data collection process. The study was supported by a scholarship offered to Dr Martin Baluku by the DAAD (Ref. No. 91525333).



countries. The need for relatedness was also strongly associated with commitment to self-employment much more than to salary-employment for Ugandan and Kenyan participants; but not for the German participants.

Originality/value – Persistence in self-employment is essential not only for individuals to remain employed but also as a pathway to achieving career success. However, research has paid limited attention to persistence in self-employment. This research contributes to the understanding of antecedents for commitment to self-employment across countries, and therefore what should be done to enable particularly young individuals to stay self-employed. Moreover, the study also examines whether these antecedents have similar effects among individuals in salaried-employment.

Keywords Self-employment, Self-determination theory, Career commitment, Basic psychological needs, Need for autonomy, Need for competence

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Self-employment is an important driver of economic development, both at individual and societal levels. At the individual level, self-employment is a viable career alternative. At the societal level, the resulting entrepreneurial process creates new workplaces (Wolff and Nivorozhkin, 2012), which contribute to economic resilience, growth and development (Skriabikova *et al.*, 2014; Valliere and Peterson, 2009). However, the importance of this contribution varies with the level of a country's development; whereby entrepreneurship is likely to make a significant contribution to economic growth in developed countries (Valliere and Peterson, 2009). Nonetheless, self-employment is increasingly playing a bigger role in the development of emerging and less developed countries (Chigunta, 2017; Falco and Haywood, 2016). It is the biggest form of employment in developing countries (Gindling and Newhouse, 2014) and an important contributor to individuals' or household income and social protection (Ahn, 2015; Desai and Rudra, 2018); despite the rather high failure rates (Fatoki, 2014; Gindling and Newhouse, 2014).

High failure rates have a negative connotation for commitment to or persistence in self-employment ventures. Moreover, commitment and persistence are essential to realizing the benefits of self-employment given that such benefits accrue in the long rather than in the short-term (Baluku *et al.*, 2018c; Patel and Thatcher, 2014). However, committing to self-employment, which may be reflected in the level of persistence, is as difficult as entering into it. In addition, the entrepreneurial environment (Kumar and Das, 2019; Yao *et al.*, 2016) that limits individuals' entry into self-employment, statutory and startup requirements make entry phase difficult and stressful. These same requirements frustrate nascent entrepreneurs and may result in exit intentions. In addition, unlike in salaried employment, returns from self-employment such as earnings are not instant (Ahn, 2015; Bruce and Schuetze, 2004; Hamilton, 2000). Yet in some cases, entrepreneurs have to deal with losses and possibilities of failure and several uncertainties and long working hours (Baron *et al.*, 2016; Uy *et al.*, 2013). Such realities may result in intentions to quit self-employment, particularly for individuals whose enterprises are at a nascent phase. This challenge is particularly common in developing economies, where success rates in self-employment are worryingly low.

It has been suggested that self-employment is an important form of employment in turbulent economic times that could help turn labor market challenges such as unemployment into development opportunities (Vogel, 2015a, 2015b). More still, even individuals with salaried employment are not assured of job security. This may affect an individual's commitment to stay in salaried-employment, consequently increasing the likelihoods of going into self-employment. Previous research has actually noted insecure salaried employment as a precedent for increased entry into self-employment (Kuhn and

Schuetze, 2001). However, extant research indicates that the self-employed are also paradoxically faced with job security challenges (Millán *et al.*, 2013); particularly financial insecurity. This may be a common situation among those who resort to self-employment due to the lack of salaried employment opportunities (Tammelin, 2019); which may further negatively impact individuals' commitment to stay in self-employment.

Despite their importance, persistence in or commitment to self-employment is not among the prominent debates in entrepreneurship discourses. Similarly, unlike organizational commitment and professional commitment, the commitment of salary-employed individuals to stay in this form of employment has not been explored. While there exists an extensive literature on predictors of entry into self-employment, as well as factors that affect success and failure or exit (Ahm, 2010; Dunn and Holtz-Eakin, 1996), such factors may not automatically mean or guarantee commitment to stay in self-employment. Analogous to the initiation of the entrepreneurial process (Morrison, 2000), the process through which commitment to stay in self-employment is partly triggered by personal level outcomes and expectations. Based on the self-determination theory (SDT), the present study proposes that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (BPNs), which are central to an individual's psychological functioning and well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2015), is essential to one's commitment to the current form of employment.

Previous research has shown differences in job outcomes for salaried and self-employed. However, these research efforts have yielded inconsistent findings. For example, some studies have found that the self-employed have lower earnings than the salary-employed (Hamilton, 2000) but higher satisfaction and subjective well-being (Berglund *et al.*, 2015; Stam *et al.*, 2016). Other studies show that income, satisfaction and well-being of the self-employed tend to improve over time (Dunn and Holtz-Eakin, 1996). Additionally, research has indicated that self-employed and salary-employed individuals also tend to differ in process variables that are associated with employment outcomes; for example, differences in work engagement, working excessively (Gorgievski *et al.*, 2010) and workability (Saarni *et al.*, 2008).

Although there is limited research linking the above employment outcomes to the commitment to one's current form of employment, there is evidence in entrepreneurship literature indicating that unlike successful ones, those unsuccessful in self-employment achieve more well-being when they transit into salaried-employment (Mattes, 2016). This suggests that well-being, as may be reflected in satisfaction of BPNs according to SDT (Ryan, 2009; Ryan *et al.*, 2013) plays an influential role in committing to a particular form of employment. Moreover, previous research shows that BPNs, particularly autonomy and competence, mediate the relationship between engaging in entrepreneurial activities and higher-level outcomes such as well-being (Nikolaev *et al.*, 2019; Shir *et al.*, 2018). In this direct, the present study investigates whether satisfaction of BPNs impact on the commitment to the current form of employment; and whether such impact is different for salary-employed and self-employed individuals. The paper also examines whether the impact of BPNs on the commitment to the current form of employment varies among countries of differing cultural and economic development contexts. The subsequent section presents the theory and literature underpinning our assumptions.

Theory and hypotheses

Self-employment and entrepreneurship

Self-employment and entrepreneurship are concepts that overlap in meaning and tend to be used interchangeably (Startienė *et al.*, 2010) in both popular and scholarly literature. While some scholars have offered distinctions between the two concepts, it is still contentious

whether entrepreneurs are self-employed or whether the self-employed are entrepreneurs. Earlier literature suggested that all own account workers including beggars and thieves were entrepreneurs, as they face the risk of economic uncertainty (Dana, 1996). Rona-Tas and Sagi (2005) indicate that self-employment and entrepreneurship differ based on the Weberian distinction between enterprise-centered and household-centered businesses. Accordingly, self-employment involves engaging in business aimed at increasing household income, while the distinguishing feature of entrepreneurship is innovations. This could be starting a new company or bring new innovations within an existing company (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001, 2003). Patel and Thatcher (2014) bring in the income aspect as a line of distinction between self-employment and entrepreneurship. In this perspective, both self-employed and entrepreneurs derive residual income. Overall, it is suggested that all entrepreneurs are self-employed while not all self-employed individuals are entrepreneurs (Patel and Thatcher, 2014; Startienė *et al.*, 2010).

From the careers perspective, the term entrepreneurs have been applied to also refer to individuals who are self-employed or business owners (Gorgievski and Stephan, 2016; Van Praag and Versloot, 2008); hence, our choice to use the more general term of self-employment and not the restrictive term of entrepreneurship. The term self-employment in the present study is used to encompass different forms of employment as follows: traditional self-employed, who take no or less risk or innovation: there are “Schumpeterian” innovators whose major characteristic is innovation; there are social change agents who engage in social entrepreneurship; reactive self-employment who go into entrepreneurial activities because of negative economic situations; and opportunity seekers (cultural and personality determined) who are driven by personal and culturally acquired values (Dana, 1995, 1996).

Self-determination theory and commitment

The direction for this study is developed on the foundations of SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1980; Deci, 1973; Deci and Ryan, 2000). In over 40 years of its existence, the theory has particularly offered important insights into what motivates and sustains human behavior, including in work situations. Accordingly, human actions are caused by attitudes and goals that vary in nature. Some aspirations are internally generated by inherent interest (intrinsic motivation), while others are elicited by envisaged separable outcomes (extrinsic motivation) (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000a, 2000b). SDT presents self-motivation or autonomous motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2008a, 2008b; Gagné and Deci, 2005) as most essential for active engagement, involvement and persistence in activities; thus individuals seek work or careers that are interesting and enjoyable to them (Deci and Ryan, 2000). This kind of motivation comprises of intrinsic motivation, as well as some forms of extrinsic motivation whereby an individual identifies with the value of an activity and integrates it into the sense of self (Deci and Ryan, 2008a, 2008b). In such situations, the motivation for behavior is self-determined and is only enhanced or undermined by social and environmental factors. SDT posits that this is essential for psychological growth and well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2000, 1980).

SDT further posits that the inspiration for engaging in actions that are inherently interesting or enjoyable to an individual is nourished by the desire to satisfy three BPNs, namely, competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Engagement in activities inspired by self-motivation satisfies these BPNs (Ryan and Deci, 2000a, 2000b), yet conditions that facilitate satisfaction of these needs tend to enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000); thus, the likelihood of commitment to continue with the activity. It has been noted that a high level of aspiration or desire elicits a high level of effort for entrepreneurial activity (Hanifzadeh *et al.*, 2018). These assumptions are supported by

empirical evidence from career and entrepreneurship research. For example, it is related to persistence in post-school activities such as job search behavior and job search success (Welters *et al.*, 2014). In relation to self-employment, the satisfaction of BPNs enhances the well-being of entrepreneurs compared to non-entrepreneurs (Nikolaev *et al.*, 2019; Shir *et al.*, 2018). When these needs are frustrated, the individuals will pursue extrinsic goals such as monetary rewards. It is also known that individuals in self-employment, like their salary-employed counterparts, seek outcomes beyond monetary benefits (Hamilton, 2000). A discussion of the BPNs and their relationship to commitment in the context of employment is presented in the subsequent sections of the literature review.

Career commitment

The term career commitment is used in this paper to denote commitment to the current form of employment; that is committed to self-employment or salaried employment consistent with Blau's (1985, 1988) and Carson and Bedeian's (1994) definition of career commitment as a person's attitude toward or the motivation to work in a chosen vocation. Congruent to SDT assumptions about autonomous motivations, career commitment has been described to involve the development of career goals, identification, involvement and engagement in a chosen career (Colarelli and Bishop, 1990; Goulet and Singh, 2002). This kind of commitment is somewhat different from the commitment to institutions (organizational commitment: Meyer and Allen, 1991) or to a specific profession (professional commitment: Wallace, 1993). It represents the commitment to long-term, self-generated career goals; and is behaviorally displayed in the individual's persistence in pursuing goals or a subjectively envisioned career (Blau, 1988; Colarelli and Bishop, 1990).

The study examines the commitment of both salary-employed and self-employed to stay in their current form of employment. However, most attention is given to the self-employed given the challenges of pursuing this career path. Unlike in salaried positions, the self-employed have a tough task of establishing the venture. The job gets even harder after the establishment phase, to ensure that the venture is sustained and grows, yet competing with bigger and well-established companies (Patel and Thatcher, 2014). Moreover, the risks of failure render self-employment insecure (Blanchflower, 2000; Millán *et al.*, 2013). In this direction, some forms of self-employment are considered by some people as precarious work (Kottwitz *et al.*, 2017). These may make a commitment to stay in self-employment a difficult decision. However, in line with SDT, autonomy is a major factor that pulls individuals to self-employment. The opportunity to be one's own boss, thus independence in work schedules, reporting and decision-making (Blanchflower, 2000; Chu *et al.*, 2011; Croson and Minniti, 2012; Millán *et al.*, 2013), as well as recognition (Chu *et al.*, 2011) are an attraction for individuals to continue in self-employment despite the challenges associated with this career path.

However, with the changing nature of labor markets and organizations, it is difficult to conclude that salaried employment is more secure than self-employment. This is a global challenge affecting both developed, emerging and less developed economies (Lewchuk, 2017) and is a major cause of turnover (Lebert and Voorpostel, 2016; Lee and Jeong, 2017). In such circumstances, individuals would be less committed to staying in salaried employment. However, extant research indicates differences in earnings in favor of salaried employees (Binder and Coad, 2013; Hamilton, 2000), which would attract individuals to stay in salaried employment. Nonetheless, it has been indicated that individuals are increasingly motivated by non-monetary outcomes of work (Hall, 1996). Hence, in line with SDT, intrinsic motivators such as autonomy in the workplace may make self-employed individuals more committed to their present form of employment than those in salaried employment.

H1. Self-employed individuals are more committed to their present form of employment than those in salaried employment.

Basic psychological needs

SDT claims that BPNs are essential for understanding human behavior motivations (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The expectations from engaging in particular activities are linked to the desire to satisfy these needs. This is assumed to give strength to aspirations thus influencing what people chose to do and why they do it (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Yet when individuals chose goals related to BPNs, they tend to be autonomously motivated, which, in turn, is associated with superior performance in tasks (Deci and Ryan, 2000). When individuals evaluate certain activities as contributing to satisfying these needs, there will be increased intentions to continue performing those activities. Studies in career-related activities reveal, for example, that satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and relatedness are associated with young people's persistence or exit in sporting activities (García Calvo *et al.*, 2010); while satisfaction of the need for competence is associated with learners' persistence in a science subject (Lavigne *et al.*, 2007). In Patel and Thatcher's (2014) study, the satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and environmental mastery (competence) predicted persistence in self-employment.

Existing literature suggests that employment contributes to the satisfaction of BPNs in different ways (Welters *et al.*, 2014). However, research on work motivation has particularly focused on autonomy, despite the suggestion that generally there is inadequate research on this important motivator and outcome of self-employment (van Gelderen, 2016). Yet, the role of competence and relatedness cannot be undervalued (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The contemporary business and work forms that increasingly emphasize healthy working relations and networking imply the importance of the need for relatedness in pursuing a career or work goals. There is limited research on differences in the extent to which self-employment and salary-employment facilitate the satisfaction of BPNs, with exception of autonomy. Welters *et al.* (2014) mention that paid employment boosts the satisfaction of all three needs. Is this a reason to commit to staying in salary-employment? Can the same be said of self-employment? A review of the role of each of the needs is presented in the following paragraphs.

Need for autonomy, in entrepreneurial research is the most emphasized psychological outcome of self-employment. Generally, independence in the workplace is a basic condition that all workers tend to strive for (Otto *et al.*, 2013). When this need together with competence and relatedness is satisfied, greater self-motivation will result (Gagné and Deci, 2005; Ryan and Deci, 2000a, 2000b). Consequently, autonomy is an important driver of entrepreneurial intention and behavior (Baluku *et al.*, 2018d; Wang *et al.*, 2012; Zgheib, 2018). Many self-employed individuals either left regular employment or have never sought salaried positions in pursuit of greater autonomy, even when self-employment involves numerous hardships (Binder and Coad, 2013; Croson and Mimiti, 2012; Benz and Frey, 2008). This is associated with procedural utility, which includes valuing both outcomes and process by which outcomes are achieved and is obtained through self-determination and independence offered by self-employment (Benz and Frey, 2008). This is in the direction of viewing autonomy as a motivator; in line with the categorization of psychological well-being components into motivational and social factors (Keyes *et al.*, 2002).

Autonomy, as conceived in SDT, involves self-organization and self-regulation or independence in pursuit of aspirations (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Lumpkin *et al.*, 2009). Changing work trends such as having to fulfill multiple career roles, are increasingly

demanding for self-reliance (van Gelderen, 2010); thus independence in the workplace is also increasingly becoming an important goal (Croson and Minniti, 2012; Douglas and Shepherd, 2002). These studies reveal that independence is an important aspiration for many self-employed individuals and one reason that the self-employed tend to have higher job satisfaction than the salary-employed (Hundley, 2001; Lange, 2012; Schneck, 2014). Although autonomy is not necessarily self-employment as its attainment requires the effort of the self-employed individual (van Gelderen, 2016), it is an incentive for the self-employed to remain in the entrepreneurial role (Stam *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, autonomy further enhances other well-being aspects, particularly competence (Deci and Ryan, 1987). Autonomy does not only enhance intrinsic motivation for work roles but also, complimented by competence, facilitates regulation and sustaining actions (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The self-regulation or freedom of agency aspect of autonomy (Shir *et al.*, 2018) is an important value for the self-employed compared to individuals in salaried positions in organizations (Warr, 2018). Moreover, autonomy is useful resources when entrepreneurs are faced with hardships as it facilitates entrepreneurs' help-seeking behavior (Studdard and Munchus, 2009). This contributes to building resilience that is important for persistence or commitment to entrepreneurial activities. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H2a. Self-employed report higher levels of need for autonomy than the salary-employed.

H2b. The need for autonomy is positively related to commitment to the current form of employment.

Competence: An important contributor to commitment in a given task or job is how well an individual is performing in that task or job. Yet performance is largely a function of competence (Bartram, 2005; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009). As stated in the previous subsection, competence and autonomy are linked to enhancement of intrinsic motivation or self-determined extrinsic motivation (Deci *et al.*, 2001; Deci and Moller, 2005; Deci and Ryan, 2000), which are factors for sustained action (Deci and Ryan, 2000). In this direction, extant literature shows that competence is essential for sustaining a venture (Rauch and Frese, 2007) and success (Mary *et al.*, 2015). Commitment to self-employment is also related to the need for personal fulfillment (Kerr and Armstrong-Stassen, 2011), which may include a need for personal growth and competence. However, the differences between salary-employed and self-employed in regard to satisfaction of the need for competence may depend on several factors including level of education and nature of work or business. In some professions, the need for competence can be satisfied through engaging in profession-related self-employment projects, a feature that is common among freelancers, for example. Self-employment offers opportunities to engage in different activities involved in the business operation, which can enhance the gratification of the need for competence. In general terms, the satisfaction of the need for competence boosts career self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Ko, 2012), which, in turn, can enhance the chances of commitment to one's current form of employment.

H3a. Self-employed report a higher level of need for competence than the salary-employed.

H3b. The need for competence is positively related to commitment to the current form of employment.

Relatedness: Intrinsic motivation, which is the highest form of autonomous motivation, is mostly associated with autonomy and competence needs (Deci *et al.*, 2001; Gagné and Deci, 2005). However, the role of the need for relatedness in choice and commitment to career roles

cannot be ignored. The need for relatedness is the desire to feel connected to others and is satisfied when people experience close and intimate relations with others (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The workplace provides individuals with opportunities for social contacts and networks (Dendinger *et al.*, 2005), hence, relevant to the satisfaction of the need for relatedness. The contribution of work to satisfying the need for relatedness, however, may depend on the nature of work; that is one's job facilitates or limits interactions with others, including co-workers, clients, friends and family. Regarding self-employment, previous empirical studies have indicated that social support from family and friends is a factor in enabling some individuals to go into self-employment (Allen, 2000; Chay, 1993; Otto *et al.*, 2019). In this direction, the need to keep family social times or to keep the balance between family and work needs, some individuals prefer to self-employment and also influences the type of business or company an individual establishes (Hilbrecht and Lero, 2014; Joon, 2017; Schölin *et al.*, 2016). The benefits of being able to maintain family ties or work-family balance can be an incentive for some individuals to remain in self-employment. A previous study has indicated that women, for example, who run a small business and are part-time in self-employment spend less time at work (Bögenhold and Klingmair, 2015), hence are able to attend to their family and other social needs. It has also been argued that entrepreneurship can provide opportunities for meaningful relationships, for example, with clients and co-founders, which opportunities may be limited for individuals in salaried positions (Shir *et al.*, 2018).

On the other hand, person-environment theory applications to vocational behavior indicate that social interests are not congruent with entrepreneurial roles (Almeida *et al.*, 2014; Berings *et al.*, 2004; Holland, 1997). Altruistic tendencies associated with relatedness may be dangerous for business (Baluku *et al.*, 2018c), hence the high need for relatedness can harm success, consequently also bad for commitment to stay in self-employment. With specific regards to satisfaction of need for relatedness, time demands and the nature of business constrain the work-life/family balance of self-employed (Haggvist *et al.*, 2018; Hilbrecht and Lero, 2014). Individuals in solo self-employment particularly tend to have more time pressure given that they have to run all business errands alone, with no one to delegate to. Consequently, the self-employed in such situations have limited time for family and friends grossly impacting on their satisfaction of the need for relatedness.

Although some individuals are attracted to self-employment and remain self-employed because they are able to satisfy their family and social needs because of the flexibility self-employment offers, the salary-employed are likely to have higher gratification of the need for relatedness. Welters *et al.* (2014) suggest that salaried employment enhances the satisfaction of the need for relatedness through networking in the workplace. Increasingly, organizations are emphasizing working in teams (Dulebohn and Hoch, 2017; Kozlowski and Bell, 2012), which foster friendship, networking and social identity of employees (Fransen *et al.*, 2015; Venkataramani *et al.*, 2016), contributing to the gratification of need for relatedness. In this direction, we hypothesize that:

- H4a.* Self-employed will report lower levels of need for relatedness than the salary-employed.
- H4b.* The need for relatedness is positively related to commitment to the current form of employment.

Country differences and moderation hypotheses

Generally, commitment to one's current form of employment is expected to be a function of perceived contribution of present work to psychological functioning and well-being; which

is also dependent on if one's employee facilitates the satisfaction of BPNs (Deci and Ryan, 2008b; Ryan, 2009). The authors further postulate that career commitment varies between salary- and self-employed, hence the form of employment is a moderator of the impact of satisfaction of BPNs on career commitment. This is based on Conen *et al.* (2016) finding that, solo self-employment, for example, has a negative effect on the probability of entering salaried employment, suggesting that they prefer to stay in self-employment.

This study uses a cross-national sample to test the stated hypotheses. Therefore, national differences, which may be based on the development and cultural contexts, are considered in the analyzes. Previous research has highlighted the characteristics of entrepreneurial cultures (Hayton and Cacciotti, 2013; Krueger *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, it is believed that the benefits of self-employment and failure vary between developed and less developed countries (Gindling and Newhouse, 2014; Valliere and Peterson, 2009). However, from the assumptions of SDT, it appears that satisfaction of BPNs is a universal work outcome, that everyone seeks. Extant research, for example, indicates that the role of autonomy in motivating individuals into self-employment is similar across countries (Baluku *et al.*, 2018d; Wang *et al.*, 2012) confirming it is universality as an important need in the workplace (Otto *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, no or marginal differences are expected in the way the BPNs affect commitment to the current form of employment between more and less developed countries. However, care should be exercised in generalizing this proposition, given the cross-cultural differences in emphasis on values such as autonomy and social relations:

- H5a.* The effects of autonomy on commitment are moderated by the form of employment and country such that the effects are higher among the self-employed than salary-employed in Germany compared to Uganda and Kenya.
- H5b.* The effects of competence on commitment are moderated by the form of employment and country such that the effects are higher among the self-employed than salary-employed in Germany compared to Uganda and Kenya.
- H5c.* The effects of relatedness are moderated by the form of employment and country such that the effects are higher among the self-employed than salary-employed in Uganda and Kenya compared to Germany.

Methods

The sample

The study used a sample of 869 young self-employed and salary-employed individuals from three countries; Uganda, Kenya and Germany. The sample of self-employed in Uganda and Kenya was recruited by approaching them at their workplaces in Kampala, Kisii and Maseno cities. Similarly, the sample of salary-employed individuals was recruited from various organizations in the three cities with the support of the human resources officers of those organizations. For Uganda, a total of 409 participants responded fully to the survey questionnaire. These included 150 self-employed (88 men, 70 women) and 251 salary-employed (133 men, 118 women). The Kenyan sample comprised 285 individuals who fully responded to the questionnaire; including 136 self-employed (62 men, 74 women) and 149 salary-employed (74 men, 75 women). To obtain the German self-employed sample, an invitation for participation was posted on several social network groups for self-employed people, including freelancers. This process resulted in 87 completed surveys (40 men, 47 women). The salary-employed sample was also obtained through online invitation resulting in 88 completed surveys (29 men, 59 women).

The average age of the study sample was 24.96 years (SD = 1.02). On the overall, the sample was virtually equally distributed between men (49 per cent) and women (51 per cent). Regarding the education levels, 54.3 per cent had obtained a university degree (bachelor and diploma/master), 26.9 per cent had completed professional courses at diploma or certificate level, 11.7 per cent had completed high school and only 7.0 per cent had completed a lower level or no educational certificates.

Measures

Basic psychological needs

To measure the *BPNs*, we used the short form of Deci and Ryan *BPNs* scale (Samman, 2007). The scale comprises seven items (three for autonomy, three for competence and one for relatedness). All items are measured on a four-point scale from one (not at all true) to four (completely true). For the present study, the autonomy and competence aspects were assessed with two items each. The third item for each was dropped because they loaded highly on another dimension of eudaemonic well-being, meaning in life (not report in this paper). Sample items on each aspect read: "I feel like I can pretty much be myself in daily situations" (autonomy); "most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do" (competence); and "I get along well with people I come into contact with" (relatedness). Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which ranged from 0.75 to 0.90 (Table I), thus considered adequate (Nunnally, 1978).

Commitment

To measure *Commitment to the Current form of Employment*, the career commitment scale (Blau, 1988, 1985) was adopted. The seven-item scale measures an individual's commitment to his/her career field or occupation. Four of the items that fit the purpose of the current study of measuring commitment to one's current form of employment were used. A sample item reads "self-employment is the ideal vocation for a life work" (for self-employed sample) or "A salaried position is ideal for a life work" (for salary-employed sample). Cronbach's alpha test revealed a satisfactory coefficient of 0.84.

Analytical approach

To rule out the influence of multicollinearity on the findings, a multicollinearity check was conducted by assessing the variance inflation factor values. These ranged from 1.08 to 1.75; which are below the cutoff mark of 10 (Hair et al., 2006). To test our hypotheses, we used PROCESS macro version 2.16.3 Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Hayes, 2013). Model 3 was applied to test for the moderated moderation effects. A separate regression model was run for each of the well-being aspects (i.e. each psychological need) including the form of employment (Moderator 1) and country (Moderator 2). In addition, sample bootstrapping at 5,000 and 95 per cent confidence interval was used as recommended by

Table I.
Descriptive statistics
and correlations of
variables

| Variables | M [min, max] | SD | α | A | B | C | D |
|-------------|--------------|------|----------|---------|---------|------|------|
| Autonomy | 3.20 [1, 4] | 0.71 | 0.75 | 1.00 | | | |
| Competence | 3.21 [1, 4] | 0.68 | 0.76 | 0.52*** | 1.00 | | |
| Relatedness | 3.07 [1, 4] | 0.81 | – | 0.15*** | 0.24*** | 1.00 | |
| Commitment | 3.11 [1, 5] | 1.04 | 0.84 | 0.15*** | 0.20*** | 0.06 | 1.00 |

Note: *** $p < 0.001$

Hayes (2013). Confidence intervals (CIs) were used in the interpretation of the results. It has been argued that CIs is superior as they promote meta-analytic reasoning, a more efficient and informative way of describing effect sizes (Altman, 2005; Colegrave and Ruxton, 2003; Thompson, 2007). However, the p -values have also been reported for purposes or robustness checks. In regression models, we controlled for the effects of age, sex and level of education. These are considered important personal characteristics that have been found to influence work outcomes, especially in self-employment (Atherton *et al.*, 2018).

Results

Table I contains the correlation matrix and descriptive statistics. The correlation matrix shows that BPNs, except the need for relatedness, were correlated to career commitment (commitment to one's current form of employment). To establish the differences between the groups, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. Results (Table II) show that German participants reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction of the need for autonomy and career commitment than the Ugandan and Kenyan participants. Kenyan participants reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the need for relatedness. Although Ugandans had a higher mean on the need for competence, the differences were not significant. In relation to differences between self- and salary-employed; the self-employed had higher mean scores on career commitment (confirming *H1*), while the salary-employed had higher mean scores on the satisfaction of the need for autonomy (*H2a* is not supported) and competence (*H3a* is not supported). The self- and salary-employed did not differ significantly on the satisfaction of the need for relatedness (*H3a* is not supported).

The regression models in Table III test for the effects of BPNs on career commitment. A separate model for each BPN was performed. Additionally, each model also involved a three-way moderation test for the interactive effects of these constructs with the form of employment (Moderator 1) and country (Moderator 2) on career commitment. Across the three models, control variables had differing effects on career commitment. The effects of sex and level of education were consistently not significant. However, age was significant in the models for autonomy ($B = 0.09$, $CI = 0.01$ to 0.17) and competence ($B = 0.09$, $CI = 0.00$ to 0.18). Similarly, our moderators had differing effects on commitment across the models. The country had positive significant effects in all the models; indicating that the level of commitment to the current form of employment was thus higher among German participants when needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are the independent variables.

Model 1 tested for the effects of the need for autonomy and its interaction with the form of employment and country on career commitment. As hypothesized (*H2b*), the need for autonomy was positively related to career commitment ($B = 0.29$, $CI = 0.16$ to 0.41). There was a significant effect of the need for autonomy and form of employment ($B = -0.48$, $CI = -0.74$ to -0.22), but the interaction effect of need for autonomy and country, as well as the three-way interaction effect, was not significant. However, probing of the moderation revealed that there were significant interactive effects of need for autonomy and form of employment for all three countries; Uganda ($B = -0.42$, $CI = -0.80$ to -0.05), Kenya ($B = -0.48$, $CI = -0.74$ to -0.22) and Germany ($B = -0.53$, $CI = -0.89$ to -0.18). These indicate that career commitment was higher for salary-employed at low levels of satisfaction of the need for autonomy in all the countries. However, commitment is superior for the self-employed at a high level of satisfaction of the need for autonomy. The effect is much higher for the self-employed in German than those in Uganda and Kenya.

Model 2 regards the effects of need for competence and its interaction with the form of employment and country on career commitment. The results of this model reveal that

Table II.
MANOVA results for differences between groups on predictor and outcome variables

| Variables | Country | | Form of employment | | Sex | | Age | | Education | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|
| | <i>M(SD)</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>M(SD)</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>M(SD)</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>M(SD)</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>M(SD)</i> | <i>F</i> | | | |
| Autonomy | Uganda | 3.15(0.73) | 21.97*** | Self | 3.13(0.57) | 8.01** | Male | 15-17 | 3.19(0.88) | 8.49*** | Below HS | 2.72(0.80) | 40.02*** |
| | Kenya | 3.10(0.65) | | Salaried | 3.26(0.79) | | Female | 18-21 | 3.17(0.70) | | HS | 3.28(0.57) | |
| | Germany | 3.51(0.65) | | | | | | 22-25 | 3.08(0.62) | | TC/D | 2.91(0.74) | |
| Competence | Uganda | 3.23(0.70) | 0.37 | Self | 3.13(0.54) | 10.10** | Male | 26-30 | 3.31(0.80) | | Degree | 3.40(0.62) | |
| | Kenya | 3.18(0.65) | | Salaried | 3.27(0.77) | | Female | 31-35 | 3.69(0.47) | | | | |
| | Germany | 3.21(0.70) | | | | | | 36+ | 3.35(0.85) | | | | |
| Relatedness | Uganda | 3.08(0.85) | 4.90** | Self | 3.10(0.55) | 0.76 | Male | 15-17 | 2.87(0.75) | 14.04*** | Below HS | 2.81(0.74) | 22.78*** |
| | Kenya | 3.15(0.75) | | Salaried | 3.05(0.96) | | Female | 18-21 | 3.05(0.69) | | HS | 3.10(0.59) | |
| | Germany | 2.91(0.78) | | | | | | 22-25 | 3.14(0.67) | | TC/D | 3.04(0.70) | |
| Commitment | Uganda | 3.05(0.98) | 36.33*** | Self | 3.15(1.13) | 1.04 | Male | 26-30 | 3.35(0.68) | | Degree | 3.37(0.65) | |
| | Kenya | 2.85(0.90) | | Salaried | 3.08(0.96) | | Female | 31-35 | 3.78(0.38) | | | | |
| | Germany | 3.65(1.17) | | | | | | 36+ | 3.31(0.57) | | | | |
| Relatedness | Uganda | 3.08(0.85) | 4.90** | Self | 3.10(0.55) | 0.76 | Male | 15-17 | 3.22(0.89) | 6.42*** | Below HS | 2.85(0.81) | 3.19* |
| | Kenya | 3.15(0.75) | | Salaried | 3.05(0.96) | | Female | 18-21 | 2.93(0.83) | | HS | 3.04(0.66) | |
| | Germany | 2.91(0.78) | | | | | | 22-25 | 2.97(0.76) | | TC/D | 3.00(0.82) | |
| Commitment | Uganda | 3.05(0.98) | 36.33*** | Self | 3.15(1.13) | 1.04 | Male | 26-30 | 3.28(0.75) | | Degree | 3.14(0.82) | |
| | Kenya | 2.85(0.90) | | Salaried | 3.08(0.96) | | Female | 31-35 | 3.31(1.10) | | | | |
| | Germany | 3.65(1.17) | | | | | | 36+ | 3.04(0.60) | | | | |
| Commitment | Uganda | 3.05(0.98) | 36.33*** | Self | 3.15(1.13) | 1.04 | Male | 15-17 | 3.12(0.88) | 6.58*** | Below HS | 2.96(0.84) | 4.12** |
| | Kenya | 2.85(0.90) | | Salaried | 3.08(0.96) | | Female | 18-21 | 3.11(1.02) | | HS | 3.04(1.07) | |
| | Germany | 3.65(1.17) | | | | | | 22-25 | 2.99(0.98) | | TC/D | 2.95(0.92) | |
| Commitment | Uganda | 3.05(0.98) | 36.33*** | Self | 3.15(1.13) | 1.04 | Male | 26-30 | 3.12(1.10) | | Degree | 3.22(1.10) | |
| | Kenya | 2.85(0.90) | | Salaried | 3.08(0.96) | | Female | 31-35 | 3.35(0.97) | | | | |
| | Germany | 3.65(1.17) | | | | | | 36+ | 4.13(1.15) | | | | |

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; HS = high school, TC/D = technical or professional certificate or diploma

| Predictors | Model 1 Autonomy (X ₁) | | | Model 2 Competence (X ₂) | | | Model 3 Relatedness (X ₃) | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|------|-------|---|------|-------|--|------|-------|
| | B | SE | p | B | SE | p | B | SE | p |
| Intercept | 2.83 | 0.20 | 0.000 | 2.86 | 0.19 | 0.000 | 2.74 | 0.19 | 0.000 |
| Sex | -0.04 | 0.07 | 0.615 | -0.03 | 0.07 | 0.676 | -0.03 | 0.07 | 0.669 |
| Age | 0.09 | 0.04 | 0.036 | 0.09 | 0.04 | 0.045 | 0.08 | 0.04 | 0.052 |
| Education | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.582 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.886 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.160 |
| Employ. | -0.08 | 0.07 | 0.270 | -0.09 | 0.07 | 0.229 | 0.01 | 0.08 | 0.870 |
| Country | 0.20 | 0.05 | 0.000 | 0.21 | 0.05 | 0.000 | 0.26 | 0.05 | 0.000 |
| Autonomy | 0.29 | 0.06 | 0.000 | | | | | | |
| Competence | | | | 0.36 | 0.07 | 0.000 | | | |
| Relatedness | | | | | | | 0.19 | 0.07 | 0.009 |
| X × employ | -0.48 | 0.13 | 0.000 | -0.44 | 0.14 | 0.002 | -0.28 | 0.16 | 0.093 |
| X × country | -0.06 | 0.08 | 0.454 | 0.06 | 0.08 | 0.500 | -0.12 | 0.08 | 0.114 |
| Employ × country | -0.23 | 0.10 | 0.026 | -0.19 | 0.10 | 0.058 | -0.35 | 0.11 | 0.001 |
| X × employ × country | -0.07 | 0.18 | 0.682 | -0.01 | 0.18 | 0.972 | 0.50 | 0.16 | 0.002 |
| R ² | 0.11 | | | 0.11 | | | 0.09 | | 0.09 |
| ΔR ² due to three-way interaction | 0.00 | | | 0.00 | | | 0.02 | | 0.002 |
| F | 7.56 | | | 7.88 | | | 5.85 | | 0.000 |
| <i>Conditional effects of X on the commitment by country and employment status</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Uganda | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-employed | 0.57 | 0.18 | 0.002 | 0.57 | 0.19 | 0.003 | 0.64 | 0.25 | 0.011 |
| Salary-employed | 0.14 | 0.07 | 0.036 | 0.13 | 0.07 | 0.060 | -0.00 | 0.06 | 0.964 |
| Kenya | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-employed | 0.55 | 0.12 | 0.000 | 0.61 | 0.13 | 0.000 | 0.35 | 0.16 | 0.028 |
| Salary-employed | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.214 | 0.17 | 0.07 | 0.008 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.118 |
| Germany | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-employed | 0.54 | 0.15 | 0.000 | 0.66 | 0.14 | 0.000 | 0.04 | 0.10 | 0.691 |
| Salary-employed | 0.01 | 0.10 | 0.969 | 0.21 | 0.11 | 0.062 | 0.15 | 0.08 | 0.060 |
| <i>Conditional effects of X × employment status on the commitment by the country</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Uganda | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-employed | -0.42 | 0.19 | 0.028 | -0.44 | 0.20 | 0.081 | -0.64 | 0.26 | 0.013 |
| Salary-employed | -0.48 | 0.13 | 0.000 | -0.44 | 0.13 | 0.002 | -0.28 | 0.16 | 0.093 |
| Kenya | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-employed | -0.53 | 0.18 | 0.004 | -0.45 | 0.18 | 0.014 | 0.11 | 0.13 | 0.384 |
| Salary-employed | | | | | | | | | |

Notes: X = predictors of commitment; CI = confidence interval; Employ. = form of employment; JS = job satisfaction; Bootstraps = 5,000

Table III.
Regression results
for moderated
moderations of BPNs
on career
commitment

satisfaction of the need for competence was positively related to commitment to the present form of employment ($B = 0.36$, $CI = 0.23$ to 0.31), hence *H3b* is supported. The interaction of the need for competence with the form of employment also had a significant effect on career commitment ($B = -0.44$, $CI = -0.72$ to -0.17), however the interaction with the country as well as the three-way interaction had non-significant effects. Probing of the three-way moderation revealed that interactive effects of need for competence and form of employment had similar, but significant effects on career commitment for all the countries ($B = -0.44$ for Uganda, $B = -0.44$ for Kenya and $B = -0.45$ for Germany). Overall, [Figure 2](#) shows that career commitment is higher for self-employed than salary-employed at a high level of satisfaction of the need for competence.

In line with *H4b*, results of Model 3 reveal that satisfaction of the need for relatedness was positively related to career commitment ($B = 0.19$, $CI = 0.05$ to 0.34). The interaction of the need for relatedness with the form of employment and the country had no significant effects. Probing of these interactions, as can also be seen in [Figure 3](#), reveal that relatedness was significantly related to career commitment only for the self-employed in Uganda ($B = 0.64$, $CI = 0.15$ to 1.13) and Kenya ($B = 0.35$, $CI = 0.04$ to 0.66); but not for self-employed in Germany and salary-employed in all three countries. However, the three-way interaction of the need for relatedness, the form of employment and country was significant ($B = 0.50$, $CI = 0.18$ to 0.82).

With exception of the need for relatedness (Model 3), the results regression models testing for effects of satisfaction of the BPNs on the commitment to present form of employment reveal that the effects of BPNs on career commitment is higher among the self-employed in all the countries. This implies that the effects of satisfaction of the need for autonomy (Model 1) and competence (Model 2) on the commitment to self-employment or salaried-employment were quite similar among three countries. Thus, *H5a* and *H5b* are rejected. On the contrary, *H5c* is accepted, confirming that the satisfaction of the need for relatedness is more related to commitment to self-employment than to salaried employment in Uganda and Kenya but not in Germany. The regression plots in [Figures 1](#) and [2](#) show that in the three countries, the effects of need for autonomy and need for competence, respectively, are higher among the self-employed than the salary-employed at high levels of autonomy and competence. [Figure 3](#), on the other hand, shows that the effects of relatedness on the commitment to self-employment are higher than salary-employed in Germany at all levels of relatedness. However, the effects of relatedness on the commitment to the current form of employment are higher among the self-employed in Uganda and Kenya only at high levels of relatedness.

Discussion

The current study focuses on the impact of satisfaction of the BPNs on career commitment (commitment to stay in self- or salaried employment). Committing to or persisting in self-employment is largely lacking in extant literature ([Patel and Thatcher, 2014](#)). Yet these are essential to success in self-employment given that expected outcomes tend to accrue in the long run than in the short term. However, if employment helps to satisfy the BPNs even in the short term, then individuals are more likely to commit to their current form of employment. In line with the SDT ([Deci and Ryan, 2015](#); [Deci and Ryan, 2000](#); [Ryan and Deci, 2000a, 2000b](#); [Ryan et al., 2013](#)), *H2a*, *H3a* and *H4a* proposed that the self-employed have higher satisfaction of the BPNs including autonomy, competence and related. However, individuals in salaried employment reported higher levels of autonomy and competence. In the direction of these results, previous findings indicate that the level of satisfaction of the need for autonomy in self-employment is not automatic; there must be deliberate efforts to

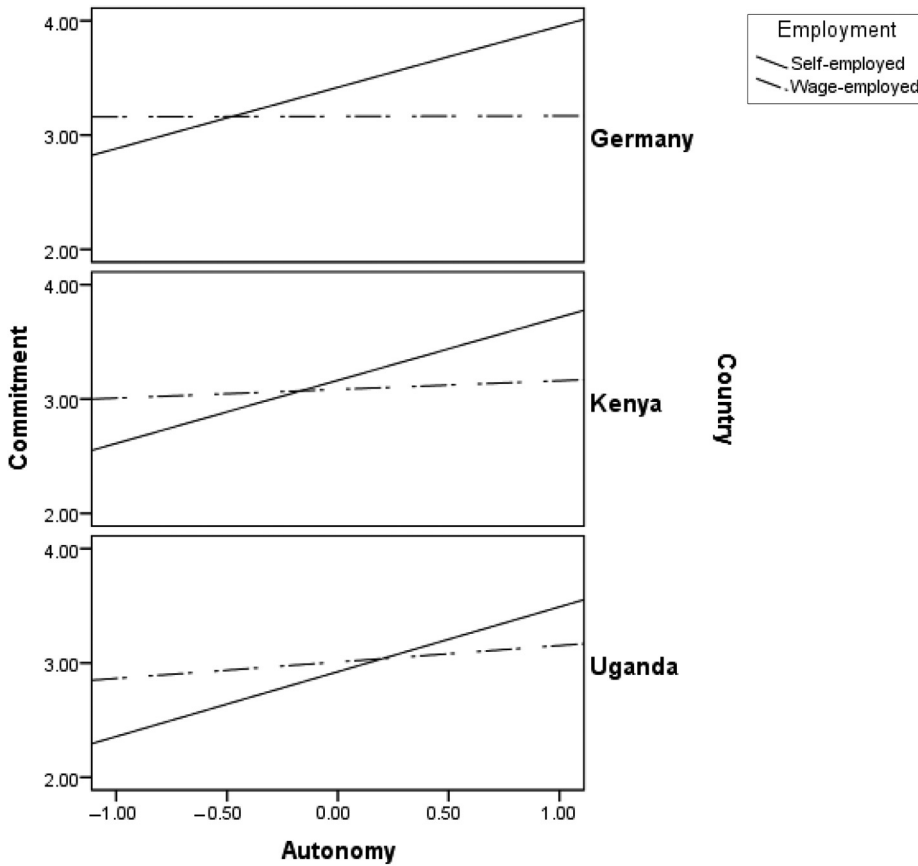


Figure 1. Three-way interaction effect of autonomy, the form of employment and country on career commitment

achieve it and also dependent on whether one has employees or not (van Gelderen, 2016; Shir et al., 2018). Country differences must be taken into consideration. Majority of the self-employed participants were young and nascent business owners from Kenya and Uganda, who depend on parents and significant others to make entry decisions and to fund the business startup (Baluku et al., 2018d; Otto et al., 2019); which may have a negative impact on the autonomy of the self-employed.

Regarding *H1*, the study reveals that self-employed individuals are less committed to their current form of employment than their counterparts in salaried employment, particularly for Kenya and Uganda. This is also in line with the finding that the self-employed reported lower levels of autonomy and can be explained by the nature of businesses the self-employed operate and the outcomes of these businesses. The study sample particularly comprised of self-employed who own small businesses. Literature suggests that such businesses are affected by a number of factors but importantly low capital and profitability (Bjornlund et al., 2017; Tran et al., 2017). These can eventually lead to intentions to quit the business, hence lowering commitment to staying in self-employment. In addition, in the context of unemployment, some individuals go into self-employment because it is the most available employment alternative. It is noted that

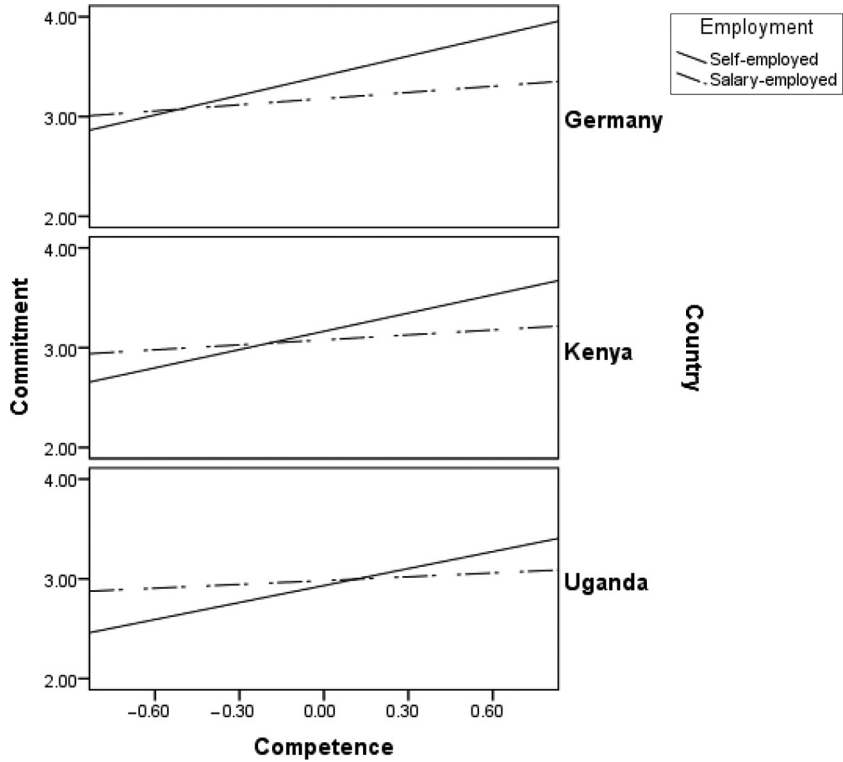
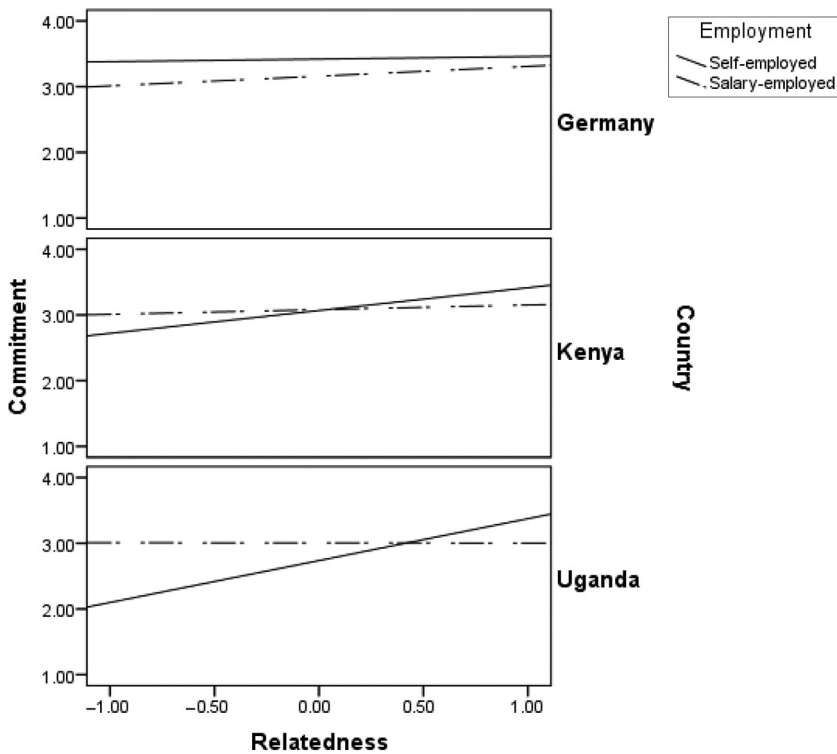


Figure 2.
Three-way
interaction effect of
competence, the form
of employment and
country on career
commitment

financial insecurity remains a challenge for such individuals especially if they are in solo self-employment (Tammelin, 2019). For such individuals, salaried employment may remain their preferred form of employment whenever there are opportunities, hence a lowered commitment to self-employment as a career path.

Concerning *H2b*, *H3b* and *H4b*, the study findings indicate that satisfaction of the BPNs is important for individuals' commitment to their current form of employment. This applies to both salaried and self-employment. Although individuals in salary-employment reported higher satisfaction of the need for autonomy and competence, their effects on the commitment to the current form of employment were higher for the self-employed. Moreover, no country differences were observed in the effects of satisfaction of the need for autonomy and the need for competence on the commitment to present form of employment (interaction effects of autonomy/competence and country in Table III). Basing on SDT, when the self-employment activities provide avenues for satisfying these needs, the motivation increases, which, in turn, is a driver for commitment and persistence in self-employment (Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017). Concerning autonomy, it is a goal that both self- and salary-employed individuals seek to achieve in the workplace (Croson and Minniti, 2012; Douglas and Shepherd, 2002). Achieving this goal motivates persistence in a given behavior (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000a, 2000b). This link is particularly emphasized in entrepreneurial activities (Patel and Thatcher, 2014; Stam *et al.*, 2010); hence satisfaction of the need for autonomy in self-employment facilitates the development of a commitment to stay in this form of employment.



The role of basic psychological needs

Figure 3. Three-way interaction effect of relatedness, the form of employment and country on career commitment

The role of need for competence and the need for relatedness should not be neglected. While gratification of the needs for competence is related to commitment to self-employment, its effects on the commitment to salaried-employment were marginal. Previous research has particularly posited that competence enhances motivation and sustained action (Deci *et al.*, 2001; Deci and Moller, 2005; Deci and Ryan, 2000). In relation to self-employment, it has been found to be essential for sustaining a venture and achieving success (Mary *et al.*, 2015; Rauch and Frese, 2007). In this direction, the findings of the present study reaffirm that the self-employed who feel satisfied as regards to need for competence prefer to remain in self-employment. This seems to be the case in at least the three countries included in our study (H5b).

Regarding the need for relatedness (H4b), previous research largely suggests that it is not fitting to entrepreneurial roles (Almeida *et al.*, 2014; Baluku *et al.*, 2016), except for its relevance to building social capital (Baron and Markman, 2003). Conversely, the present study demonstrates that satisfaction of this need is particularly important for commitment to self-employment. It has been argued that the autonomy involved in self-employment or entrepreneurship allows individuals the opportunity to organize their social networks and interactions in a manner they choose to, and hence, more likely to maintain those social relations (Shir *et al.*, 2018). For example, some individuals go into self-employment seeking flexibility in work hours to enable them to meet family responsibilities, which translates into strengthening family social relations. Hence, there are several avenues for satisfying the need for relatedness and consequently the desire to continue in self-employment.

The cross-country analysis indicates that the effects of BPNs on career commitment are relatively consistent across the three countries. Thus, the country context seems to have minimal effects on the relationship between satisfaction of need for autonomy and commitment to present form of employment (*H5a*) and the relationship between satisfaction of the need for competence and commitment to present form of employment (*H5b*). On the contrary, significant country differences in the effects of satisfaction of the need for relatedness on the commitment to the present form of employment (*H5c*). The commitment to the current form of employment among the self-employed seems to be lower at low levels of relatedness, but higher than for salary-employed at high levels of relatedness. On the other hand, for Germany, the self-employed reported higher commitment to their current form of employment than those in salaried positions, regardless of the level of relatedness.

Generally, the level of commitment varied marginally with the level of need for relatedness. In the authors' view, this could be the effect of cultural differences. Given the collectivistic nature of East African countries (Ma and Schoeneman, 1997), relatedness could be an important need at the workplace, that could determine whether individuals develop commitment toward their employment or seek for opportunities in another form of employment. The results show that this is true specifically for individuals in self-employment, whose commitment to their roles as self-employed were low when their level of need for relatedness was low. The trend for Germany is quite different as follows: Germany is more individualistic (Fernandez *et al.*, 1997); whereby interpersonal relations are generally loose – consequently, relatedness could have a minor effect on the commitment to one's current form of employment. In addition, Germany scores high on risk aversion and ambiguity intolerance. Therefore, many individuals are less willing to trade the security salaried employment offers to switch to self-employment, which is in cases considered precarious employment. On the overall, previous research shows that the self-employed experience less relatedness than those in salaried employment. The fact that the majority of the sample were from Kenya and Uganda, which are collectivistic in nature where relatedness is important (Baluku *et al.*, 2018a; Baluku *et al.*, 2018b) explains why we found that the self-employed were less committed to their current form of employment.

Conclusions

In contrast to salaried employment, the benefits of self-employment to individuals and the economy occur in the long rather than the short term. Therefore, the willingness to stay in self-employment is critical. This also represents the readiness to persist in self-employment. The study extends the application of SDT to explaining commitment to stay in self-employment in comparison to the commitment of salary-employment individuals to stay in this form of employment. Based on this theory, the study examined whether the level of satisfaction of BPNs might increase commitment to one's present form of employment. In support of the assumption of this theory, the study findings have demonstrated that BPNs are important to work outcomes that consequently arouse the willingness to stay in one's current form of employment. The effect is particularly higher for the self-employed such that the higher the level of fulfillment, the higher the intention to remain in self-employment. Moreover, there seem to be only marginal variations among countries, which demonstrate the importance and generalizability of these factors across different contexts.

Implications for theory, policy and practice

The findings regarding commitment to one's current form of employment have implications for research, the self-employed, entrepreneurship intervention initiatives and employers who seek to retain their entrepreneurial employees. Entrepreneurial research has so far

emphasized factors for entry, success, failure and exit. However, [Patel and Thatcher \(2014\)](#) observe that there is a limited focus on factors for persistence. This study contributes to building a body of knowledge on persistence and commitment to entrepreneurial roles. It is hoped that this contribution can motivate more research in this field.

The study has highlighted that the real benefits of self-employment to individuals and the economy are less likely to be realized at the initial stages of the venture. Unlike the old age individuals who enter self-employment after retirement, many young self-employed individuals, especially in developing countries, may be tempted to seek opportunities in salaried, regardless of whether their entry into self-employment particularly if they became self-employed as a result of failing to get job opportunities. Our study highlights that beyond the economic benefits of self-employment, the satisfaction of BPNs is essential in sustaining individuals in self-employment. This has implications for the self-employed and entrepreneurship promotion initiatives. Entrepreneurship promotion and support interventions for young and nascent entrepreneurs should focus on the mindset and realization of subjective or psychological outcomes in the short-term to boost the likelihood of persistence in self-employment.

Concerning employers, [Hsu et al. \(2017\)](#) have already emphasized the need for organizations to establish structures that are attractive to entrepreneurs that would motivate them to stay in the organization. This study highlights the importance of satisfaction of BPNs to career commitment among enterprising individuals. An individual would have a higher intention to leave the company to start his/her own venture if the job is not facilitating the satisfaction of BPNs. This knowledge is important to employers who seek to retain their enterprising employees; to understand what motivates them and how they can enhance their commitment.

Limitations and directions for future research

There are a number of limitations with respect to this study. First, the study examines career commitment (commitment to self- or salaried employment) among young people (average age is approximately 25 years) in Germany and East African countries (Uganda and Kenya). However, it is possible that the differences in economic contexts make comparisons between the two regions less effective. Germany is among the most developed countries with low unemployment rates ([Hoffmann and Lemieux, 2016](#)); hence, self-employment among young people is rather voluntary. On the other hand, East Africa has very high youth unemployment rates ([Chigunta, 2017](#)); hence, self-employment in this context is rather involuntary. Also, there are differences in startup resources and income from self-employment ([Gindling and Newhouse, 2014](#)). Beyond the cultural differences between these regions, these economic factors could have significant effects on the commitment to self-employment or the intentions of salary-employed individuals to switch to self-employment. Future research should investigate the impact of these factors; particularly the effect of voluntary versus involuntary entry into self-employment on persistence. Moreover, future research should take into consideration the effects of economic factors such as company size and earnings on the commitment to stay in self-employment.

The second limitation regards the measurement for the need for relatedness construct. A single-item measure was adopted. This presents a challenge to the possibility of inadequate psychometric properties of the measure ([Miller et al., 2009](#)). Future research measuring relatedness could address this challenge by adopting long versions of measures.

Thirdly, the study is further limited by the use of cross-sectional survey data. While the data has strengths combining cross-national with multi-group samples, the measurement was only conducted once. Therefore, we could not measure how satisfaction of BPNs and

career commitment co-vary with time and changing circumstances. Future research could benefit from longitudinal or experimental approaches; where the changes in scores on these constructs can be observed with changes in circumstances. This can also facilitate the measurement of whether these predictors are related to success in or exit from the current form of employment.

Finally, future research could consider more factors that might influence commitment to, especially self-employment. Factors such as size and source of start-up capital, time spent in self-employment, nature and size of the venture are likely to influence outcomes and consequently affect persistence. The present study only considered country differences and forms of employment as possible moderators. The authors believe that this initial effort provides a good basis for future investigations of more moderating factors.

References

- Ahn, T. (2010), "Attitudes toward risk and self-employment of young workers", *Labour Economics*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 434-442.
- Ahn, T. (2015), "The employment dynamics of less-educated men in the United States: the role of self-employment", *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue Canadienne D'économique*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 110-133.
- Allen, W.D. (2000), "Social networks and self-employment", *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. 487-501.
- Almeida, P.I.L., Ahmetoglu, G. and Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2014), "Who wants to be an entrepreneur? The relationship between vocational interests and individual differences in entrepreneurship", *Journal of Career Assessment*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 102-112.
- Altman, D.G. (2005), "Why we need confidence intervals", *World Journal of Surgery*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. 554-556.
- Antonic, B. and Hisrich, R.D. (2001), "Intrapreneurship: construct refinement and cross-cultural validation", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 16 No. 5, pp. 495-527.
- Antonic, B. and Hisrich, R.D. (2003), "Clarifying the intrapreneurship concept", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 7-24.
- Atherton, A., Wu, D. and Wu, Z. (2018), "Self-exploitation or successful entrepreneurship? the effects of personal capital on variable outcomes from self-employment", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 25 No. 6, pp. 866-885.
- Baluku, M.M., Bantu, E. and Otto, K. (2018a), "Effect of locus of control on entrepreneurial attitudes and self-employment intentions: the moderating role of individualism", *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 251-283.
- Baluku, M.M., Kikooma, J.F. and Kibanja, G.M. (2016), "Psychological capital and the startup capital-entrepreneurial success relationship", *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 27-54.
- Baluku, M.M., Kikooma, J.F., Bantu, E. and Otto, K. (2018b), "Psychological capital and entrepreneurial outcomes: the moderating role of social competences of owners of micro-enterprises in East Africa", *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, Vol. 8 No. 1, p. 26.
- Baluku, M.M., Kikooma, J.F. and Otto, K. (2018c), "Positive mindset and entrepreneurial outcomes: the magical contributions of psychological resources and autonomy", *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 30 No. 6, pp. 473-498.
- Baluku, M.M., Leonsio, M., Bantu, E. and Otto, K. (2018d), "The impact of autonomy on the relationship between mentoring and entrepreneurial intentions among youth in Germany, Kenya, and Uganda", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 170-192.

-
- Barba-Sánchez, V. and Atienza-Sahuquillo, C. (2017), "Entrepreneurial motivation and self-employment: evidence from expectancy theory", *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 1097-1115.
- Baron, R.A., Franklin, R.J. and Hmieleski, K.M. (2016), "Why entrepreneurs often experience low, not high, levels of stress: the joint effects of selection and psychological capital", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 42 No. 3, pp. 742-768.
- Baron, R.A. and Markman, G.D. (2003), "Beyond social capital: the role of entrepreneurs' social competence in their financial success", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 41-60.
- Bartram, D. (2005), "The great eight competencies: a criterion-centric approach to validation", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 90 No. 6, pp. 1185-1203.
- Benz, M. and Frey, B.S. (2008), "Being independent is a great thing: subjective evaluations of self-employment and hierarchy", *Economica*, Vol. 75 No. 298, pp. 362-383.
- Berglund, V., Johansson Sevä, I. and Strandh, M. (2015), "Subjective well-being and job satisfaction among self-employed and regular employees: does personality matter differently?", *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 1-19.
- Berings, D., De Fruyt, F. and Bouwen, R. (2004), "Work values and personality traits as predictors of enterprising and social vocational interests", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 349-364.
- Binder, M. and Coad, A. (2013), "Life satisfaction and self-employment: a matching approach", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 1009-1033.
- Bjornlund, H., van Rooyen, A. and Stirzaker, R. (2017), "Profitability and productivity barriers and opportunities in small-scale irrigation schemes", *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, Vol. 33 No. 5, pp. 690-704.
- Blanchflower, D.G. (2000), "Self-employment in OECD countries", *Labour Economics*, Vol. 7 No. 5, pp. 471-505.
- Blau, G.J. (1985), "The measurement and prediction of career commitment", *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, Vol. 58 No. 4, pp. 277-288.
- Blau, G.J. (1988), "Further exploring the meaning and measurement of career commitment", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 284-297.
- Bögenhold, D. and Klinglmair, A. (2015), "Female solo self-employment-features of gendered entrepreneurship", *International Review of Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 47-58.
- Bruce, D. and Schuetze, H.J. (2004), "The labor market consequences of experience in self-employment", *Labour Economics*, Vol. 11 No. 5, pp. 575-598.
- Carson, K.D. and Bedeian, A.G. (1994), "Career commitment: construction of a measure and examination of its psychometric properties", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 237-262.
- Chay, Y.W. (1993), "Social support, individual differences and well-being: a study of small business entrepreneurs and employees", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 66 No. 4, pp. 285-302.
- Chigunta, F. (2017), "Entrepreneurship as a possible solution to youth unemployment in Africa", *Laboring and Learning*, Vol. 10, pp. 433-451.
- Chu, H.M., Kara, O., Zhu, X. and Gok, K. (2011), "Chinese entrepreneurs: motivations, success factors, problems, and business-related stress", *Journal of Chinese Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 84-111.
- Colarelli, S.M. and Bishop, R.C. (1990), "Career commitment: functions, correlates, and management", *Group and Organization Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 158-176.
- Colegrave, N. and Ruxton, G.D. (2003), "Confidence intervals are a more useful complement to nonsignificant tests than are power calculations", *Behavioral Ecology*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 446-447.
- Conen, W., Schippers, J. and Schulze Buschoff, K. (2016), "Self-employed without personnel between freedom and insecurity", *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 321-348.

-
- Croson, D.C. and Minniti, M. (2012), "Slipping the surly bonds: the value of autonomy in self-employment", *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 355-365.
- Dana, L. (1995), "Entrepreneurship in a remote sub-arctic community", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 57-73.
- Dana, L.P. (1996), "Self-employment in the Canadian Sub-Arctic: an exploratory study", *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne Des Sciences de L'administration*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 65-77.
- Deci, E.L. (1973), *Intrinsic Motivation.*, *Computers and Education*, Vol. 55, Springer, Boston, MA, doi: [10.1016/j.compedu.2009.12.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.12.012).
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (1980), "Self-determination theory: when mind mediates behavior", *Journal of Mind and Behavior*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 33-43.
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (1987), "The support of autonomy and the control of behavior", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 53 No. 6, pp. 1024-1037.
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2000), "The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: human needs and the self-determination of behavior", *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 227-268.
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2008a), "Self-determination theory: a macro theory of human motivation, development, and health", *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, Vol. 49 No. 3, pp. 182-185.
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2008b), "Hedonia, Eudaimonia, and well-being: an introduction", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 1-11.
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2015), "Self-determination theory", *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 23, pp. 486-491.
- Deci, E.L., Ryan, R.M., Gagné, M., Leone, D.R., Usunov, J. and Kornazheva, B.P. (2001), "Need satisfaction, motivation, and well-being in the work organizations of a former Eastern bloc country: a cross-cultural study of self-determination", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 27 No. 8, pp. 930-942.
- Deci, E. and Moller, A. (2005), "The concept of competence: a starting place for understanding intrinsic motivation and self-determined extrinsic motivation", available at: <http://doi.apa.org/psycinfo/2005-08058-031> (accessed 7 November 2016).
- Dendinger, V.M., Adams, G.A. and Jacobson, J.D. (2005), "Reasons for working and their relationship to retirement attitudes, job satisfaction and occupational self-efficacy of bridge employees", *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, Vol. 61 No. 1, pp. 21-35.
- Desai, R.M. and Rudra, N. (2018), "Trade, poverty, and social protection in developing countries", *European Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 60, p. 101744, doi: [10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2018.08.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2018.08.008).
- Douglas, E.J. and Shepherd, D.A. (2002), "Self-employment as a career choice: attitudes, entrepreneurial intentions, and utility maximization", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 81-90.
- Dulebohn, J.H. and Hoch, J.E. (2017), "Virtual teams in organizations", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 569-574.
- Dunn, T. and Holtz-Eakin, D. (1996), "Financial capital, human capital, and the transition to self-employment: evidence from intergenerational links", *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 282-305, doi: [10.1086/209959](https://doi.org/10.1086/209959).
- Falco, P. and Haywood, L. (2016), "Entrepreneurship versus joblessness: explaining the rise in self-employment", *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 118, pp. 245-265.
- Fatoki, O. (2014), "The causes of the failure of new small and medium enterprises in South Africa", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 5 No. 20, pp. 922-922, doi: [10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n20p922](https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n20p922).
- Fernandez, D.R., Carlson, D.S., Stepina, L.P. and Nicholson, J.D. (1997), "Hofstede's country classification 25 years later", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 137 No. 1, pp. 43-54.

- Fransen, K., Alexander Haslam, S., Steffens, N.K., Vanbeselaere, N., De Cuyper, B. and Boen, F. (2015), "Believing in 'us': exploring leaders' capacity to enhance team confidence and performance by building a sense of shared social identity", *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 89-100.
- Gagné, M. and Deci, E.L. (2005), "Self-determination theory and work motivation", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 331-362.
- García Calvo, T., Cervelló, E., Jiménez, R., Iglesias, D. and Moreno Murcia, J.A. (2010), "Using self-determination theory to explain sport persistence and dropout in adolescent athletes", *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 677-684.
- Gindling, T.H. and Newhouse, D. (2014), "Self-employment in the developing world", *World Development*, Vol. 56, pp. 313-331.
- Gorgievski, M.J., Bakker, A.B. and Schaufeli, W.B. (2010), "Work engagement and workaholism: comparing the self-employed and salaried employees", *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 83-96.
- Gorgievski, M.J. and Stephan, U. (2016), "Advancing the psychology of entrepreneurship: a review of the psychological literature and an introduction", *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 65 No. 3, pp. 437-468.
- Goulet, L.R. and Singh, P. (2002), "Career commitment: a reexamination and an extension", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 61 No. 1, pp. 73-91.
- Greguras, G.J. and Diefendorff, J.M. (2009), "Different fits satisfy different needs: linking person-environment fit to employee commitment and performance using self-determination theory", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 94 No. 2, pp. 465-477.
- Hagqvist, E., Toivanen, S. and Bernhard-Oettel, C. (2018), "Balancing work and life when self-employed: the role of business characteristics, time demands, and gender contexts", *Social Sciences*, Vol. 7 No. 8, p. 139.
- Hair, J.F., Black, B., Babin, B., Anderson, R.E. and Tatham, R.L. (2006), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 6. Baski, Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Hall, D.T. (1996), "Careers of the 21st century", *Academy of Management Perspectives*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 8-16.
- Hamilton, B.H. (2000), "Does entrepreneurship pay? An empirical analysis of the returns to self-employment", *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 108 No. 3, pp. 604-631.
- Hanifzadeh, F., Talebi, K. and Sajadi, S.M. (2018), "The analysis of the effect of aspiration to the growth of managers for SMEs growth case study: exporting manufacturing SMEs in Iran", *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 277-301.
- Hayes, A.F. (2013), *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach*, The Guilford Press, New York, NY.
- Hayton, J.C. and Cacciotti, G. (2013), "Is there an entrepreneurial culture? A review of empirical research", *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 25 Nos 9/10, pp. 708-731.
- Hilbrecht, M. and Lero, D.S. (2014), "Self-employment and family life: constructing work-life balance when you're 'always on'", *Community, Work and Family*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 20-42.
- Hoffmann, F. and Lemieux, T. (2016), "Unemployment in the great recession: a comparison of Germany, Canada, and the United States", *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 34, pp. S95-S139, available at: www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/682424 (accessed 21 June 2017).
- Holland, J.L. (1997), *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments* (3rd ed.), Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Hsu, D.K., Shinnar, R.S., Powell, B.C. and Betty, C.S. (2017), "Intentions to reenter venture creation: the effect of entrepreneurial experience and organizational climate", *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 8, pp. 928-948.
- Hundley, G. (2001), "Why and when are the self-employed more satisfied with their work?", *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 293-316.

-
- Joona, P.A. (2017), "Are mothers of young children more likely to be self-employed? The case of Sweden", *Review of Economics of the Household*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 307-333.
- Kerr, G. and Armstrong-Stassen, M. (2011), "The bridge to retirement: older workers' engagement in post-career entrepreneurship and wage-and-salary employment", *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 55-76.
- Keyes, C.L.M., Shmotkin, D. and Ryff, C.D. (2002), "Optimizing well-being: the empirical encounter of two traditions", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 82 No. 6, pp. 1007-1022.
- Ko, W.H. (2012), "The relationships among professional competence, job satisfaction and career development confidence for chefs in Taiwan", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 1004-1011.
- Kottwitz, M.U., Hünefeld, L., Frank, B.P. and Otto, K. (2017), "The more, the better?! Multiple vs. single jobholders' job satisfaction as a matter of lacked information", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 8, pp. 1-11.
- Kozlowski, S.W.J. and Bell, B.S. (2012), "Workgroups and teams in organizations", *Handbook of Psychology*, 2nd ed., John Wiley and Sons, Hoboken, NJ, pp. 333-375.
- Krueger, N., Linan, F. and Nabi, G. (2013), "Introduction cultural values and entrepreneurship", *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 25 Nos 9/10, pp. 703-707.
- Kuhn, P. and Schuetze, H. (2001), "Self-employment dynamics and self-employment trends: a study of Canadian men and women, 1982-1998", *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue Canadienne d'Economie*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 760-784, available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/0008-4085.00098/abstract> (accessed 28 September 2016).
- Kumar, S. and Das, S. (2019), "An extended model of the theory of planned behavior", *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 369-391.
- Lange, T. (2012), "Job satisfaction and self-employment: autonomy or personality?", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 165-177.
- Lavigne, G.L., Vallerand, R.J. and Miquelon, P. (2007), "A motivational model of persistence in science education: a self-determination theory approach", *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 351-369.
- Lebert, F. and Voorpostel, M. (2016), "Turnover as a strategy to escape job insecurity: the role of family determinants in dual-earner couples", *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 407-421.
- Lee, S.H. and Jeong, D.Y. (2017), "Job insecurity and turnover intention: organizational commitment as a mediator, social behavior and personality", *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, Vol. 45 No. 4, pp. 529-536.
- Lewchuk, W. (2017), "Precarious jobs: where are they, and how do they affect well-being?", *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 402-419.
- Lumpkin, G.T., Coglisier, C.C. and Schneider, D.R. (2009), "Understanding and measuring autonomy: an entrepreneurial orientation perspective", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 47-69.
- Ma, V. and Schoeneman, T.J. (1997), "Individualism versus collectivism: a comparison of Kenyan and American self-concepts", *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 261-273.
- Mary, O., Ngozi, H., Michael, A. and Simon, C. (2015), "A review of entrepreneurship development in Japan, South Africa and Malaysia: lessons for Nigeria abstract", *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 129-135.
- Mattes, J. (2016), "The impact of transitions into wage-employment for satisfied and unsatisfied entrepreneurs: a Bayesian analysis", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 375-397.
- Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. (1991), "A three-component model conceptualization of organizational commitment", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 61-89.

-
- Millán, J.M., Hessels, J., Thurik, R. and Aguado, R. (2013), "Determinants of job satisfaction: European comparison of self-employed and paid employees", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 651-670.
- Miller, V.A., Reynolds, W.W., Ittenbach, R.F., Luce, M.F., Beauchamp, T.L. and Nelson, R.M. (2009), "Challenges in measuring a new construct: perception of voluntariness for research and treatment decision making", *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 21-31.
- Morrison, A. (2000), "Entrepreneurship: what triggers it?", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 59-71.
- Nikolaev, B., Boudreaux, C.J. and Wood, M. (2019), "Entrepreneurship and subjective well-being: the mediating role of psychological functioning", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, doi: [10.1177/1042258719830314](https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258719830314).
- Nunnally, J.C.J. (1978), *Psychometric Theory*, Mc Graw-Hill, Auflage, New York, NY.
- Otto, K., Baluku, M.M., Kikooma, J.F., Bantu, E. and Onderi, P. (2019), "Impact of personal cultural orientations and cultural intelligence on subjective success in self-employment in multi-ethnic societies", *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 8-30.
- Otto, K., Rigotti, T. and Mohr, G. (2013), "The psychological effects of restructuring", in Antoniou, A.S. G. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds), *The Psychology of the Recession on the Workplace*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, doi: [10.4337/9780857933843.00026](https://doi.org/10.4337/9780857933843.00026).
- Patel, P.C. and Thatcher, S.M.B. (2014), "Sticking it out: individual attributes and persistence in self-employment", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 40 No. 7, pp. 1932-1979.
- Rauch, A. and Frese, M. (2007), "Let's put the person back into entrepreneurship research: a meta-analysis on the relationship between business owners' personality traits, business creation, and success", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 353-385.
- Rona-Tas, A. and Sagi, M. (2005), "Entrepreneurship and self-employment in transition economies", *Research in the Sociology of Work*, Vol. 15, pp. 279-310.
- Ryan, R.M. (2009), "Self-determination theory and wellbeing", *Wellbeing in Developing Countries*, Vol. 84 No. 822, pp. 1-2.
- Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2000a), "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 68-78.
- Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2000b), "Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: classic definitions and new directions", *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 54-67.
- Ryan, R.M., Huta, V. and Deci, E.L. (2013), "Living well: a self-determination theory perspective on eudaimonia", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 139-170, doi: [10.1007/s10902-006-9023-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9023-4).
- Saarni, S.I., Saarni, E.S. and Saarni, H. (2008), "Quality of life, workability, and self-employment: a population survey of entrepreneurs, farmers, and salary earners", *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 65 No. 2, pp. 98-103.
- Samman, E. (2007), "Psychological and subjective well-being: a proposal for internationally comparable indicators", *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 459-486.
- Schneck, S. (2014), "Why the self-employed are happier: evidence from 25 European countries", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67 No. 6, pp. 1043-1048.
- Schölin, T., Broomé, P. and Ohlsson, H. (2016), "Self-employment", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 329-345.
- Shir, N., Nikolaev, B.N. and Wincent, J. (2018), "Entrepreneurship and well-being: the role of psychological autonomy, competence, and relatedness", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 34 No. 5, p. 105875, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.05.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.05.002).
- Skriabikova, O.J., Dohmen, T. and Kriechel, B. (2014), "New evidence on the relationship between risk attitudes and self-employment", *Labour Economics*, Vol. 30, pp. 176-184.

-
- Stam, K., Sieben, I., Verbakel, E. and de Graaf, P.M. (2016), "Employment status and subjective well-being: the role of the social norm to work", *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 309-333.
- Stam, E., Thurik, R. and van der Zwan, P. (2010), "Entrepreneurial exit in real and imagined markets", *Industrial and Corporate Change*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 1109-1139.
- Startienė, G., Remeikienė, R. and Dumčiuvienė, D. (2010), "Concept of self-employment", *Economics and Management*, Vol. 15, pp. 262-274.
- Studdard, N.L. and Munchus, G. (2009), "Entrepreneurial firms' acquisition of knowledge using proactive help-seeking behavior", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 242-261.
- Tammelin, M. (2019), "The solo self-employed person and intrinsic financial security: does the promotion of self-employment institutionalise dualisation?", *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 219-234.
- Thompson, B. (2007), "What future quantitative social science research could look like: confidence intervals for effect sizes", *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 25-32.
- Tran, H., Abbott, M. and Jin Yap, C. (2017), "How does working capital management affect the profitability of Vietnamese small- and medium-sized enterprises?", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 2-11.
- Uy, M.A., Foo, M.-D. and Song, Z. (2013), "Joint effects of prior start-up experience and coping strategies on entrepreneurs' psychological well-being", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 28 No. 5, pp. 583-597.
- Valliere, D. and Peterson, R. (2009), "Entrepreneurship and economic growth: evidence from emerging and developed countries", *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 459-480.
- van Gelderen, M. (2010), "Autonomy as the guiding aim of entrepreneurship education", *Education + Training*, Vol. 52 Nos 8/9, pp. 710-721.
- van Gelderen, M. (2016), "Entrepreneurial autonomy and its dynamics", *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 65 No. 3, pp. 541-567.
- Van Praag, C.M. and Versloot, P.H. (2008), "The economic benefits and costs of entrepreneurship: a review of the research", *Foundations and Trends® in Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 65-154.
- Venkataramani, V., Zhou, L., Wang, M., Liao, H. and Shi, J. (2016), "Social networks and employee voice: the influence of team members' and team leaders' social network positions on employee voice", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 132, pp. 37-48.
- Vogel, P. (2015b), *Generation Jobless?: Turning the Youth Unemployment Crisis into Opportunity*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, doi: [10.1057/9781137375940](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137375940).
- Vogel, P. (2015a), "Entrepreneurship: turning job seekers into job creators", *Generation Jobless?*, available at: http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137375940_4 (accessed 9 September 2017).
- Wallace, J.E. (1993), "Professional and organizational commitment: compatible or incompatible?", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 42 No. 3, pp. 333-349.
- Wang, L., Prieto, L., Hinrichs, K.T. and Milling, H.A. (2012), "A cross-cultural study of motivation for self-employment: comparing China, Mexico, and the USA", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, Vol. 18 No. 6, pp. 649-672.
- Warr, P. (2018), "Self-employment, personal values, and varieties of happiness-unhappiness", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 388-401.
- Welters, R., Mitchell, W. and Muysken, J. (2014), "Self-determination theory and employed job search", *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Vol. 44, pp. 34-44.
- Wolff, J. and Nivorozhkin, A. (2012), "Start me up: the effectiveness of a self-employment program for needy unemployed people in Germany", *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 499-518.

-
- Yao, X., Wu, X. and Long, D. (2016), "University students' entrepreneurial tendency in China: effect of students' perceived entrepreneurial environment", *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 60-81.
- Zgheib, P. (2018), "Multi-level framework of push-pull entrepreneurship: comparing American and Lebanese women", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 768-786.

Further reading

- Adams, N., Little, T.D. and Ryan, R.M. (2017), "Self-determination theory", *Development of Self-Determination Through the Life-Course*, Springer, Berlin, pp. 47-54.
- Ahn, T. (2016), "An analysis of employment dynamics in Korea: the role of temporary work and self-employment", *International Labour Review*, doi: [10.1111/ilr.12018](https://doi.org/10.1111/ilr.12018).
- Hambrick, D.C., Finkelstein, S., Cho, T.S. and Jackson, E.M. (2005), "Isomorphism in reverse: institutional theory as an explanation for recent increases in Intra-industry heterogeneity and Manag", *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26, pp. 307-350.
- Lasser, B.R. (1974), "Making vocational choices: a theory of careers", *Journal of School Psychology*, Vol. 12 No. 4, doi: [10.1016/0022-4405\(74\)90056-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-4405(74)90056-9).
- Martin, M.B., Julius, F.K. and Grace, M.K. (2016), "Does the personality of owners of micro-enterprises matter for the relationship between startup capital and entrepreneurial success?", *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 13-23.
- Peco, B., Sánchez, A.M. and Azcárate, F.M. (2006), "Abandonment in grazing systems: Consequences for vegetation and soil", *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment*, Vol. 113 Nos 1/4, pp. 284-294.
- Rozell, E.J., Meyer, K.E., Scroggins, W.A. and Guo, A. (2011), "Perceptions of the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs: an empirical study in China", *International Journal of Management*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 60-72.
- Serrano-Cinca, C., Fuertes-Callén, Y. and Mar-Molinero, C. (2005), "Measuring DEA efficiency in internet companies", *Decision Support Systems*, Vol. 38 No. 4, pp. 557-573.

About the authors

Martin Mabunda Baluku (PhD), is currently a Lecturer at Makerere University, Department of Educational, Organizational and Social Psychology. His current research interests are, namely, psychological attributes and entrepreneurship; career development; workplace deviant behavior; positive work/organizational behavior, employee assistance programs and psychological well-being and organizational politics and change. Martin Mabunda Baluku is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: mbalukul@gmail.com

Richard Balikooowa (MA), is a PhD student and Assistant Lecturer at Makerere University, Department of Educational, Organizational and Social Psychology. His current research interests are gender-based violence and psychological well-being in schools and workplaces.

Edward Bantu (PhD), is a senior lecturer at the Kisii University, Kenya and a practicing counselor. His research interests are career transitions, career development, human resources development and psychological well-being.

Kathleen Otto (PhD), is a Professor of Organizational and Work Psychology at Philipps Universität-Marburg, Germany. Her research interests are job insecurity; organizational justice; self-employment; and career success.

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com