

# Conceptual Framework for Growth Strategies of Self-Initiated Expatriates in the Global Workforce

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## Abstract

Self-initiated expatriation (SIE) has become a rising phenomenon and has drawn much attention from the academic field. Despite the growing attention drawn to SIE, the exploration of self-initiated expatriates on the corporate agenda is under-researched. This aims to identify growth strategies and understand how individual strategies of SIE affect the growing recognition and need for SIEs. Growth strategies of SIEs are identified by means of a systematic literature review. By combining the growth strategies and changing the behavioral rules, we propose a comprehensive conceptual framework by introducing both of the individual heterogeneously driven approaches. Based on empirical research, the paper provides a comprehensive picture of individual growth strategies for successful career management of SIEs and offers new impulses to manage SIEs. Expatriate growth in the global workforce provides a conceptual foundation for future empirical research. Moreover, regulatory focus theory has been used to illustrate the antecedents of growth strategies from the behavioral perspective, thereby making a theoretical contribution to the research field of international HRM, expatriate management, SIEs, and growth strategies for career management.

## Keywords

Self-Initiated Expatriate, Global Workforce, Skill Transferability, Work-Life Balance Efforts

## 1. Introduction

Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) represent a large and growing proportion of the global workforce, predominantly because of the immediate presence and high

demand for talent in developing and emerging countries (Yussuf, 2024). Their vast contributions, financial resilience, and innovative entrepreneurial behavior form a comprehensive event base for academic research and theoretical development. The aim is to determine the sequence and contribution of these events in the relatively complex and dynamic process of SIE growth. Furthermore, this study aims to examine whether the initial SIE training in the home country is sufficient to prepare them for the dramatically enhanced future work environment and additional, relatively strenuous demands. Alternatively, does the majority of future professional training occur on the job? Another objective of this study is to investigate the time lag for transformational events on each of these growth strategies. Finally, we aim to explore the measurement scales of each of these strategic growth resources and determine whether the initial training positively affects these strategic growth resources.

The initial theory will also quantitatively test components of existing and unexplored variables and their conceptual relationships to one another in this newly discovered and pioneering study (Hemsley-Brown, 2023). The results may encourage potential or future SIEs to expand their industry-specific network contacts and generate financial resources and competencies in their field directly to enhance their probability of achieving personal and professional satisfaction. Consequently, growth strategies for SIEs as a new, fresh, self-managed group of internationally motivated entrepreneurs will substantially contribute to success in the rapidly evolving world economy (Brown-Mason, 2021). Due to the lack of explanatory theories that correlate resources, measurement scales, and growth strategies of SIEs, this innovative study proposes to fill a significant gap in the academic research discipline.

Developing a conceptual framework for growth strategies of self-initiated expatriates in the global workforce is crucial and the main objective of this study. The framework was established to suggest five growth strategies, which integrate the individual, organizational, and societal perspectives of self-initiated expatriates. This will provide deep insights from the viewpoint of self-initiated expatriates, involving the self-initiatedness of the expatriates' growth and the social process of the expatriates' identity transition. Similarly, it will also provide holistic and co-creative realizations of the nature of self-initiated expatriates, social connections, and engagements.

This study focuses on self-initiated expatriates who have resided and worked in various host countries globally. Overall, the most significant purpose of self-initiated expatriate is related to the core values of establishing a more personally fulfilling lifestyle in pursuit of valued opportunities and activities, growth, and the assumption of control and responsibility in striving to achieve desired outcomes in their personal, family, and professional lives. A range of identity-related distinctions are evident from these stories, with the most manifest of these involving efforts to develop, reconstitute, or maintain an authentic self that enables purpose to be pursued. Moreover, participants attributed considerable importance to

activities that had a degree of meaning, often involving major investments in self-doubt. Such efforts not only created contentment but also served as a means of self-understanding, self-expression, and appreciation by others.

The remaining parts of the paper apart from this current section which provide the overview of the research are organized as follows: Section 2 presents the related work, where it discusses the previous research studies associated to self-initiated expatriate. Section 3 presents the theoretical framework of the research. Section 4 presents the conceptual framework and Section 5 provides the discussion of the research while Section 6 concludes the research.

## 2. Related Work

To establish the basis of the emerging field, we conducted the literature review and data collection according to the established procedures. By reviewing the focus of expatriate research across disciplines and incorporating key themes from labor market trends into job and field self-selection, we identify a set of six career mobility scenarios for those who have work experience or a professional career trajectory in their bio-data and are living or working abroad. Positioning the co-development of career capital in the global workforce as a realistic growth path for professional knowledge workers, self-initiated expatriates who are excelling in and contributing to their multicultural workplace are characterized as mobile talents from the collective human capital pool (Kubovcikova & van Bakel, 2022).

There are many previous research studies on self-initiated expatriates, crucial to this, is the work of Yussuf (2024) which uses a conceptual framework approach, drawing from existing literature on self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and global mobility. It analyzes factors like cultural adaptability, career motivation, and social support in expatriate success. The study highlights key motivators for SIEs, such as independence, professional development, and intercultural exposure. The findings emphasize the role of adaptability, cultural awareness, and networking in expatriate adjustment and success.

Kubovcikova & van Bakel (2022) employs qualitative interviews with self-initiated expatriates to explore how they gain social support abroad. Thematic analysis was used to identify the key sources and types of support within their networks. The study reveals that expatriates rely heavily on informal networks, such as friendships with fellow expatriates and local colleagues, for emotional and practical support. It also found that cultural openness and language skills positively impacted the ability to form supportive relationships.

Setti et al. (2022) enhanced expatriates' assignment success: The relationships between cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adaptation, and performance. The study utilizes a quantitative approach, gathering survey data from expatriates to examine the relationships between cultural intelligence, adaptation, and job performance. The findings suggest that cultural intelligence significantly enhances cross-cultural adaptation, which, in turn, positively influences job performance. High cultural intelligence aids expatriates in navigating cultural differences,

improving their adjustment and effectiveness.

Andresen et al. (2020) proposed a conceptual analysis to examine varying definitions and contexts of self-initiated expatriation, identifying key characteristics and distinctions from assigned expatriates. The study highlights significant diversity within SIE experiences based on context, motivation, and career orientation. The study calls for further research on contextual differences and recommends that organizations tailor support based on SIEs' unique characteristics.

Despotovic et al. (2022) conducted an interview with SIEs to understand their motivations for expatriation and how these motivations evolve over time. The study finds that initial motivations often focus on career and personal growth but may shift towards lifestyle and cultural immersion. The authors conclude that evolving motivations can impact expatriate satisfaction and retention.

Machado (2022) uses a bibliometric analysis and reviews the existing body of research on self-initiated expatriation, focusing on publication trends, authorship, and thematic clusters. The bibliometric analysis shows a growing academic interest in SIEs, highlighting key themes like career mobility, cultural adjustment, and organizational challenges. The study identifies gaps in research, particularly regarding SIEs' career outcomes.

Kai Liao et al. (2021) uses structural equation modeling to analyze survey data from expatriates in Taiwan region, examining the impact of emotional intelligence and cultural adaptability on cross-cultural adjustment and performance. The findings indicate that emotional intelligence and cultural adaptability positively influence cross-cultural adjustment, with cross-cultural competence acting as a mediator. Improved adjustment is linked to higher job performance among expatriates.

Tahir (2023) uses semi-structured interviews with Western women expatriates in the UAE to explore work-life balance challenges. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes. The study finds that work-life balance is a significant challenge for women SIEs, influenced by cultural expectations, job demands, and limited social support. The research highlights the need for tailored organizational policies to address these challenges.

Our review of the research streams has shed light on the salient research questions that are in need of collective effort both from the expatriation community and from blended functional domains in management and global career issues. To facilitate empirical work towards the pursuit of individual and collective aspirations, we provided the conceptual framework for the design and execution of a suggested multinational research context where self-initiated expatriates are engaging, as well as from the developed host countries. The fundamental research is designed under the supportive and surrounding influence of higher educational institutions. Our research scope is further guided to develop performance indicators for the theoretical repository that may be initiated by research questions and practical concerns by the global talent market.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The focus of this research is at the intersection of international HR/LD and

expatriation, specifically focusing on self-initiated expatriates. This section explains the theoretical framework. First, we provide a review of the multidisciplinary literature around the phenomenon of expatriation. It will be followed by a discussion about SIEs, the group that is the focus of the research. The global leadership development concept is the latest edition in international human resource development literature (Banmairuoy et al., 2022). While doing so, certain critics remind the experts of this literature that it is not just the expatriates but also the self-initiated expatriates, immigrants, and other transnational workers who, due to political, gender, structural, and educational reasons, are not able to access international work experience and are left out. Indeed, the most famous and well-cited expatriate motivation studies are just about company expatriates (Andresen et al., 2020).

The expatriation phenomenon resides at the intersection of areas such as international business, international HR management and development, and international migration. While discussing expatriation, the international human resource development literature and the international migration literature will be reviewed first (Hajro et al., 2023). Then, the group of interest in the study, who are self-initiated expatriates, will be mainly discussed to explain the gaps in the research. A few studies are done in different areas that were particularly reviewed by reflecting the contributions of those disciplines to the research as well. Then, a consistent definition of self-initiated expatriate and the study domain will be constructed (Andresen et al., 2020). The group of interest in the research, mostly working independently abroad, may also be referred to as transnational professionals and highly skilled workers by those discussing that research.

### 3.1. Human Capital Theory

The knowledge-based economy demands a capable workforce equipped with relevant skills. The role of human resources in the process of international research and development, marketing, management, production, and technology flow is much more than that in the traditional models of world trade (Muzam, 2023; Antoine et al., 2024). Advanced production, innovation, and support of other complex business processes require a special quality of labor, embodying highly specialized human capital, and education and training are essential inputs in the process of human resource accumulation. Higher-level knowledge, qualifications, and skills can raise the efficiency in using other factors of production, as well as transform and promote technological and other innovations (Saniuk et al., 2022). Overall, human resources ultimately determine the vitality and competitiveness of enterprises and economies.

Human capital determines both comprehensive and partial factors that reflect workers' domain-specific knowledge access. Skills contribute to the success of individual enterprises as well as provide the source of the service and industrial specialization driving the international division of labor (Ren et al., 2023). Earners with substantial human capital can often produce at a global higher wage.

Knowledge, either scientific or practical, is embedded in workers and is international due to the nature of scientists and engineers (Jackman & Moore, 2021). A theoretical model argues that globalization of labor markets encourages industry-targeted human capital accumulation and allocation (DeVaro & Norlander, 2022). In a globalized world, the endowment of workers with firm-specific knowledge affects the growth performance of economies. Competitive advantage and specialization at the industry level will depend on the availability of appropriate specialized human resources, and many multinational corporations have obtained a competitive edge in particular industries through their access to local human resources of production (Bergantino et al., 2023).

Human capital is more crucial for production in the advanced knowledge economy of the post-industrial era, which is characterized by rapid technological change, high mobility of international capital, and exceptional mobility of highly skilled human resources. As a result, highly skilled human resources will flow to jobs that offer the highest dividends (Sima et al., 2020). These flows resulting from global variations in the relative wages of the highly skilled and the unskilled are termed brain circulation. The mobility of employees helps to accelerate knowledge transfer across borders, especially through logistics, access to markets, use of technology resources, and financial support. Furthermore, employees' international experience can provide companies with insights into new technology trends and emerging markets, as well as influence deal-making and innovations in global markets. For these reasons, the appreciation of human resources is growing in the modern business environment (Kanungo, 2021). This phenomenon has been termed global talent appreciation and is providing a significant source of profit for host countries that have successfully attracted and cultivated international professionals.

### 3.2. Social Capital Theory

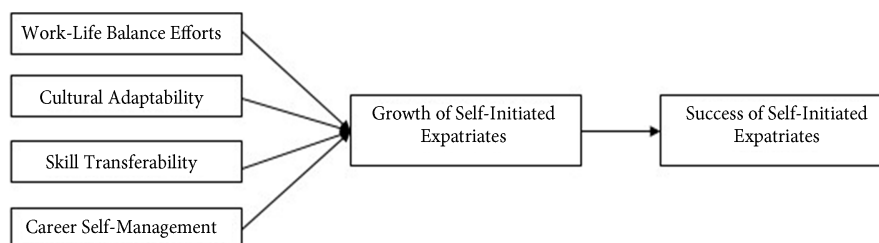
The starting point of our conceptualization rests on the Liberal Political School, which argues that relations between states are influenced by common culture, norms, and civilization (Dandashly & Noutcheva, 2022). Culture matters, and culture is significant for societies and state development. Culture is not a static phenomenon, and culture should not be seen as an obstacle to democracy and development. Rather, as a positive concept, culture is a variable phenomenon. Developed societies have cultures of pluralism, democracy, and markets. In short, institutionalizing the liberal cultural evolutionary path enhances the social conditions for economic development worldwide (Calvo et al., 2020; Yussuf, 2023). Following the logic of the Liberal Political School, the cultural changes in societies enhance the conditions for economic relationships, and economic prosperity, in turn, supports individuals and cultural and social groups with money—thereby enhancing socio-economic development.

Self-initiated expatriates possess important skills, knowledge, and talent to contribute to global development. Social Capital Theory is employed to organize these talented individuals so that pockets of development will flourish and the maturation

of these developing countries is facilitated (Machado, 2022). By living in diverse social settings, individuals develop complex business and social relationships. Individuals and networks of individuals facilitate and support global development through the integration of their societies of origin—the repatriation of successful individuals, skill and knowledge transfer, and financial assets and wealth creation—with the remitted ties that link the developing countries to the primary migrant workers. We suggest that economic prosperity initially provides people with the option to emigrate—either to support their families through the money that they send home—or to opt to return to their societies of origin—now or into the future—in diversified social networks or business ties to promote the development of their societies through social capital (De Haas, 2021).

#### 4. Conceptual Framework

This study has conceptualized six variables for developing a model. The independent variables are: “Work-Life Balance Efforts”, “Cultural Adaptability”, “Skill Transferability”, “Career Self-Management Skills”. While the first dependent variable is: “Growth of Self-Initiated Expatriates” and the last dependent variable is: “Success of Self-Initiated Expatriates” As a result, the proposed conceptual framework is presented in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** The proposed conceptual framework.

The formation mechanism of the variable system is based on adoption and modification. The research adopted independent variables from Yussuf's study (2024), and modified them. An understanding of the “Growth of SIE” is essential for comprehending the success resulting from this growth. The four independent variables are crucial. The independent variables are the adopted variables, while the dependent variable is proposed in this study.

##### 4.1. Independent Variables

The independent variables are “Work-Life Balance Efforts”, “Cultural Adaptability”, “Skill Transferability”, and “Career Self-Management Skills”. Work-Life Balance Efforts. are actions to rehabilitate out-of-work life after completing work-related efforts to balance the demands of work life with the individual's personal life (Oludayo & Omonijo, 2020). Work-life balance considerations are important factors for many international adult workers who have taken up employment abroad, despite taking their assignments as a combination of work and pleasure.

To create a holistic career, business leaders are advised to consider a work-life balance strategy. At the end of a long day, workers may be lured from their workstations by the idea of an evening snack (Ivana, 2020). Creating an environment that makes it easy for them to eat healthily while out on assignments would drastically reduce their contributions to all of those statistics on work-related health issues and weight problems and all the profits associated with them. Rather than making concessions or quitting, business managers need to learn to focus on creating an exclusive win zone for all stakeholders involved with the organization. For long-term enjoyment, employee well-being and engagement closely parallel the organization's well-being and longevity (Li & Lin, 2021).

Cultural appropriateness is how people fit into the culturally different surroundings they have experienced. The aim of adaptability is to make the expatriate more effective when doing business with people from other cultures. Expatriates are called to meet their goals in culturally challenging environments, like global business travelers (Liao et al., 2021). Cultural adaptability can be seen as evolving through three different emotional and cognitive levels. The root of our behavioral response patterns lies at the instinctual level, which is considered part of the emotional level. (Lindquist et al., 2022) An individual's culture, upon first contact with a foreign culture, is also the source of many of the cultural values that will be instrumental. Then emotions dictate those imagined prescriptions of ethics, prompting behavior when the imagined culture is more consonant than it really is. Since business operation is essentially a combination of formal and informal intercultural interactions when entering foreign business ventures, these values and sense of hospitality which must be constantly presented are a fundamental scheme (Igwe & Ochinanwata, 2022). Expatriate growth and effective multicultural leadership are two areas in which interrelation skills are becoming increasingly essential requirements.

#### **4.1.1. Work-Life Balance Efforts**

As SIEs move from family to a region with high expatriate populations, work-life balance tends to be the main issue. The social environment provides stronger support for long-term success: an environment with considerable internal cohesiveness; good linkage to start-ups or other large companies; and personal activities that are sought out in large numbers (Tahir, 2023). It is beneficial for SIEs to participate in international events and to regularly visit the host city for events organized for SIE/GD. A study of SIEs in a work-life balance framework found that married SIEs and their families suffered from a major change in life caused by relocation in very different ways than single SIEs (Yusuf, 2023). Therefore, understanding the diverse factors that affect work-life balance and lifestyle is important to ensure that family responsibilities are carefully prepared and balanced.

For SIEs and their families, the experience of the new culture is important both culturally and experientially. Therefore, it is expected that they will adapt their lives accordingly and facilitate the connection to work and personal time. It is also helpful to maintain a balanced lifestyle for international experience. Balancing family, work, technical, and personal life can help SIEs solve challenges. Spiritual

fulfillment or motivation is another aspect of work-life balance; as economic achievement does not necessarily equate to satisfaction. The difference in happiness affects the performance and long-term tenure of the international staff. Highly balanced employees have long-term satisfaction, higher workforce retention, and ultimately better business or organizational results. The appointment of a partner or spouse as the primary coordinator or supporter of this balance has several implications for expatriates.

#### **4.1.2. Cultural Adaptability**

Adaptability involves making appropriate and self-correcting responses to changes or newness. The ability to manage uncertainty, the unknown, creativity, and risk is essential to this competence. It involves assimilating, cooperating, and responding to different or changing behaviors, tasks, and responsibilities. All three groups of terms involve at least some slight, short-term increments of change, not necessarily the development of new job-related competencies (Howlett & Ramesh, 2023). There is an implication of time, if only to try out the new behavior, and an intention of displaying the new behavior and ceasing the previous behavior. Innovative behavior itself develops slowly; therefore, innovative behavior and adaptability are at different levels of abstraction.

Cultural adaptability is defined as the ability and the willingness to adjust to new cultures. A multilevel concept helps to better understand the dynamics of cultural adaptability of self-initiated expatriates. It is suggested to consider their attitudes and skills in two separate parts: the attitude of being open to international and cross-cultural experiences, which is defined as the cultural relativity disposition, and the skills of being able to adapt to new cultures, the cultural adaptability efficiency (Chen et al., 2021). Moreover, it is also suggested to differentiate between micro and macro level aspects (Yan, 2022). It is argued that, in the case of self-initiated expatriates, knowledge about the preferred traits of their home and host countries is important for the decision to migrate and is necessary for successful acculturation processes.

#### **4.1.3. Skill Development**

Self-initiated expatriates often acquire unique skills from their experiences abroad, but during their re-entry into their home countries, they face challenges related to skill transferability in their home labor market. If individuals are unable to transfer the skills and experiences that they have acquired abroad upon return into their home country labor market, the skills become underutilized or depreciate (Chwialkowska, 2020). Due to such challenges, self-initiated expatriates who return home can experience skill underemployment in jobs that do not require skills at their level of expertise. Employees on secondment are likely to return to an organization and their current job, which means that the institution can help the secondee to re-enter or resettle upon return. On the other hand, expatriates returning home from self-initiated assignments often face challenges related to skill transferability at re-entry (Alshahrani, 2024). A lack of organizational obligation

to the expatriate upon their return, as there was no formal repatriation process for self-initiated expatriates to begin with, can lead to communication breakdown upon the secondees' return, which ultimately has repercussions for job progression and a sense of belonging (Andresen et al., 2023).

#### **4.1.4. Career Self-Management Skills**

The participants have linked their effectiveness in their career development to their ability to navigate through cross-cultural employment experiences (Walsh & Cooney, 2023). This has been established as one of the most distinctive areas that uniquely contribute to the development of self-employment initiatives compared to traditional expatriates. The findings of this study contribute to the identification of career self-management skills. The experiences discussed by the participants showed that, as the career paths are diverse and non-linear, career self-management has played a more important role than traditional human resource management functions through the identification and acquisition of skills, adaptation to job functions, and learning processes (Abdelhady & Al Ariss, 2023). Their success and effectiveness in expatriation are largely dependent upon their career self-management strategies and skills. However, it was highlighted that local social networks did not contribute much to the career development of the participants, which is different from expatriates in multinational corporations, probably due to SEIs focusing more on general workforce employment rather than specific careers in specific companies.

## **4.2. Dependent Variables**

Self-initiated expatriates are self-motivated for undertaking international work experiences rather than being sent by their employers. They work without direct territorial support from their host employer, engaging in marketplace activities while employing more innovative job strategies, capturing opportunities, learning from the experiences and challenges of a foreign location, and being in charge of determining how to leverage the opportunities and challenges. Therefore, this paper develops two dependent variables, depicting different job strategies of self-initiated expatriates in their destination country and the growth of self-initiated expatriates in their international careers: growth of self-initiated expatriates and success of self-initiated expatriates.

The dependent variable measuring the growth of self-initiated expatriates assesses whether, over time, self-initiated expatriates participate to an increasing extent in market activities documented by: changes in institutional and territorial engagement of the job strategy of self-initiated expatriates; increasing activities in innovation, learning, and opportunity seeking documented by increasing use of paperwork, computer strategies, and instruction, or increasing past experience of skill factors by self-initiated expatriates.

### **4.2.1. Growth of Self-Initiated Expatriates**

This study examined the growth strategies of SIEs in the growth quadrant, which

were driven by their inner motivators and causes for growth. Most SIEs made a deliberate decision to assume international working experience, seeking and seizing opportunities for personal and professional growth, and to personally experience different cultures. The pursuit of new challenges, personal self-fulfillment, the need to learn and develop, the need for independence and autonomy, and the desire to gain new work experiences were benefits for personal and career development (Chen et al., 2024). Most SIEs wanted to prepare themselves to work effectively in a multidimensional workplace after the experience of international work because of their belief that international work was a significant advance in their career development.

Personal and professional growth remained the main factors that provided the motivation for SIEs to work abroad. They worked abroad in order to experience personal and career growth and to expose themselves to multifaceted problems and cultures. Factor scores elicited from the experience of living and working abroad showed that SIEs had interests in experiencing different countries and gaining the professional benefits of this international work experience. They pursued the opportunity to live in other countries in order to further benefit their careers and prepare themselves to face the pressures of the new workplace environment (Jannesari & Sullivan, 2019). However, personal needs were the main reasons for SIEs' desire for international work. Personal and professional growth were of high significance to them; as such, SIEs expressed concerns regarding achieving status and power from work.

#### **4.2.2. Success of Self-Initiated Expatriates**

Research has identified four main individual indicators for the success of self-initiated expatriates: career success, enjoyment of work, adjustment to the host country, and tackling all task requirements effectively. In his stimulus-focus-feedback model, identified the following five personal success factors for individual performance success as self-initiated expatriates (Alshahrani, 2024): stimulus, focus, feedback, capacity, and capability. For self-initiated expatriates within the multinational corporation, success is typically complex, having its roots in the organizational, task, national, and global levels. For these expatriates, certain personal characteristics and competencies are essential, such as being focused and task committed, having good job and personal adjustment, as well as an air of cultural sensitivity and recognizing and promoting their own potential.

There is a high variance in terms of expatriate career success in the sense of achieving rapid organizational advancement and long-term organizational attachment. None of the empirically tested determinants seem to be fully appropriate for predicting clear differences in career success (Howlett & Ramesh, 2023). The lack of comprehensive and valid measures of success makes the interpretation of the attitudinal and behavioral expatriate adjustment outcomes difficult. Researchers stress the importance of scientifically valid and sound theoretical foundations through conceptual frameworks. They acknowledge the high variance in terms of psychological and behavioral adjustment and potential moderators of the influence

patterns. They argue that external and individual situated factors can be moderating variables that influence the adaptability of expatriates while working and living in the host country.

## 5. Discussion

Research findings disclosed the following strategies utilized by self-initiated expatriates to grow professionally in the global workplace: education and training, job search, social networking, professional and work ethics, and adequate self-preparation, psychological readiness, behavior, and personal reasons. These components were further oriented around education and training, job search skills, and psychological readiness that were central or resulted in impacting the personal growth and knowledge enhancement experiences of development growth. Qualitative research findings of expert opinions substantiated the importance of higher education for global careers through international assignments and self-initiated expatriate experiences. An examination of the existing career management literature identified a number of strategies that can be utilized by self-initiated expatriates to enhance their opportunities for professional and personal growth from engaging in a global work experience. These findings can articulate the range of growth opportunities that these global workers can use to enhance their career prospects to fill the identified gap in our understanding.

This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, as well as inform future research directions, by addressing the identified knowledge gaps in relation to the growth strategies of a significant and yet neglected subset of individuals from the global workforce—individuals who migrate without firm support with the aim of developing their career capital and possibly becoming future valued resources for their hosts. It examines the growth strategies of these individuals across three work-related and three non-work-related life spheres and investigates how they use their agility, personal initiative, and relational skills to source opportunities to satisfy their growth needs in changing contexts tied to temporal and geographic global mobility, unattached to traditional expatriation setups.

In essence, this conceptual framework uncovers the individual mechanisms that support their growth and articulates the importance of growth-facilitating conditions in the workplace for individual learning and proactive behaviors of the “atypical” members of the global workforce estimated to thrive in future work conditions.

Self-initiated expatriates are individuals who work and live in a country other than their home country for a specified or unspecified period of time without being sent or supported by an organization. Through identifying the process and need for a conceptual framework for growth strategies of self-initiated expatriates in the global workforce, this study provides representatives of the global workforce, such as individuals, mentoring programs, and international human resource professionals, with valuable insights into enhanced performance. Increasing the awareness and utilization of the framework and methodologies proposed

in this study can aid further research, enhance the performance of self-initiated expatriates, and contribute to the supporting groups of the future. Career mobility across all career life cycles is the key to improved performance and mental comfort. In order to achieve such flexibility, it is essential that an individual sees themselves as the main source for career development. There are considerable personal and professional growth rewards addressed by the literature for the individual as well as for the organization. Reflecting on past experiences and adapting to future moves can offer balance in life and in the constantly changing work environment. Future researchers propose extensions related to a different group or age of expatriates and how others within the establishment can support different mobility options. An increasing number of people in the workforce have had international work experiences. The emphasis of research and practice throughout the incentive system may need to examine specific growth strategies to transform professional growth opportunities for employees in general and self-initiated expatriates in particular

## 6. Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to develop and present a conceptual framework for the identification and explanation of the potential types of growth strategies of self-initiated expatriates, especially aimed at guiding and developing it in all the different phases (orientation, destination, and return). This work contributes to the development of the issues surrounding internationally mobile individuals, both in academia, by identifying growth strategies and broadening the knowledge about self-initiated expatriates, and in practice, by providing strategic recommendations based not only on the results of this study.

Future research with self-initiated expatriates and other internationally mobile individuals would focus on the following points: to perform quantitative empirical research to investigate more situations that may concern self-initiated expatriates; a comparative study with organizationally sub-initiated expatriates to support the observation of whether growth strategies differ; and it would be interesting to adapt the transactional model of stress and coping to take more into account the aspects of growth.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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