

Anticipated job benefits, career aspiration, and generalized self-efficacy as predictors for migration decision-making



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 May 2014

Received in revised form 26 February 2015

Accepted 5 March 2015

Keywords:

Pre-migration period

Beliefs

Values

Expectations

Migration decision-making

International migration

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify person-level factors, rather than economic situations, that influence migration decision-making and actual migration. Building on the theory of planned behavior, this study investigated potential migrants' expectations and attitudes toward migration and career (i.e., anticipated job benefits of migration, career aspiration) as well as beliefs (i.e., generalized self-efficacy) as predictors of migration decision-making conceptualized in three phases: the pre-decisional, pre-actional, and actional phases. This was examined with cross-sectional pre-migration questionnaire data from 1163 potential migrants from Spain to Germany. We also examined whether the migration decision-making phases predicted actual migration with a subsample ($n=249$) which provided follow-up data within twelve months. For the cross-sectional sample, multinomial logistic regressions revealed that anticipated job benefits and career aspiration are predictive for all migration phases. Self-efficacy predicts the preactional (e.g., gathering information) and actional phases (e.g., making practical arrangements). Finally, for those with low self-efficacy, anticipated job benefits play a stronger role for taking action. For the longitudinal subsample, a logistic regression revealed that being in the preactional and actional phases at baseline is predictive of actual migration within twelve months. This study expands previous research on migration intentions and behaviors by focusing on expectations, values, and beliefs as person-level predictors for migration decision-making. With a longitudinal sample, it shows that international migration is a process that involves multiple phases.

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1. Introduction

Within the context of cross-cultural research, the migration process has been studied with psychological, social, and economic factors as important components (Berry, 1997, 2005; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Although most research has focused on acculturation and socio-cultural adaptation processes in the post-migration phase (see the following reviews Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Salant & Lauderdale, 2003; Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013), researchers have also considered the pre-migration phase in order to explore predictors for migration intentions and behaviors (De Jong, 2000; Kley, 2013). These pre-migration studies have primarily concentrated on economic and social factors that shape the decision to migrate. From an economic perspective, traditional theories on migration are based on the assumption that people migrate in order

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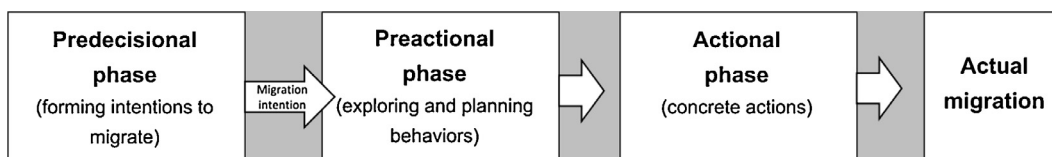


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

to improve financial and social standing (see Massey et al., 1993 for a review). Following this reasoning many studies have confirmed high unemployment as a predictor for migration (Kumpikaitė & Zickute, 2013; Mihi-Ramírez, Rudžionis, & Kumpikaitė, 2014; Neto & Mullet, 1998; Pissarides & Wadsworth, 1989). This economic perspective has been expanded to include social factors as important drivers of migration. It has been well documented that the existence of social networks of friends and family in the destination country increases the intention to migrate and actual migration behavior (Kritz & Zlotnik, 1992; Massey, 1999).

Yet, these economic and social factors do not fully explain why people migrate. For example, in a study of Dutch migrants, unemployment and social networks – though important predictors – were not the main drivers of actual migration (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2012, 2013). Therefore, researchers call for studies that consider person-level factors such as expectations, values, beliefs, and personality traits as predictors for migration decision-making (Boneva & Frieze, 2001; Tabor & Milfont, 2011). Boneva and Frieze (2001) claimed that those who intend to migrate differ from those who want to stay in their home country with regard to these person-level variables. Indeed, a few recent studies showed that migration is predicted by person-level factors, such as risk aversion and sensation seeking (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011; Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013), expectations for adaptation difficulties or discrimination (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Yijälä, 2011), and self-efficacy (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Yijälä, 2011; Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013). With the current study we expand this small body of research by investigating the combination of expectations, values, and beliefs as person-level predictors for migration decision-making with a sample of potential migrants from Spain to Germany during their pre-migration period.

Drawing on a migration decision-making framework that builds on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the Rubicon model (Gollwitzer, 1996; Heckhausen, 1991), this study investigates expectations (i.e., anticipated job benefits), values (i.e., career aspiration), and beliefs (i.e., generalized self-efficacy) along with other person-level, social, and economic predictors for migration decision-making. Furthermore, with a longitudinal sample, we explore how migration decision-making predicts actual migration. We argue that, in order to grasp the complexity of migration as a process, we must gain a better understanding of person-level predictors that shape migration intentions and behaviors.

1.1. Migration decision-making phases

Migration decision-making is a multi-phase process that begins well before the actual move to another country. One of the most frequently applied frameworks for explaining the migration process is De Jong's (2000) model on migration decision-making. Building on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which postulates that intentions are the primary factor influencing behavior, de Jong's model differentiates between migration *intention* and migration *behavior*, and asserts that migration intention is the best predictor for migration behavior. Intention is defined as a person's motivation and perceived likelihood to perform a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991) whereas behavior involves concrete actions. Several studies on international migration have provided empirical support for this two-phase model (e.g., Creighton, 2013; Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013). Despite the strong predictive power of intentions on actual behaviors, the literature on migration decision-making also reveals that intentions alone do not explain actual migration. For example, one study of Dutch residents reported that only 34% of respondents who had indicated a strong intention to migrate actually migrated within five years (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013).

The two-phase perspective of migration decision-making was expanded by Kley (2011) who drew on the *Rubicon model*, a motivational theory on decision-making (Gollwitzer, 1996; Heckhausen, 1991). The model divides the decision-making process into three instead of two phases: the predecisional, preactional, and actional phases. The predecisional phase corresponds with intentions in De Jong's model. It involves initial thoughts and considerations regarding migration, which often remain vague and do not involve preparatory actions. This phase terminates with the decision to migrate. Next, the model focuses on migration behaviors by dividing them into two distinct phases that both involve preparatory actions for migration: In the preactional phase a person begins to explore options for migrating by gathering information from friends, agencies, and organizations. These actions are still tentative and involve no obligation. Subsequently, the actional phase involves a very concrete and determined pursuit of goal completion such as making logistical arrangements for the move or accepting a job offer.

To investigate person-level factors as predictors of migration decision making, we build on Kley's three-phase model: (1) a predecisional phase (people express intentions to migrate, but have not taken any actions), (2) a preactional phase (people engage in exploring and planning behaviors), and (3) an actional phase (people take concrete actions for migrating) (see Fig. 1).

1.2. Predictors for migration decision-making

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) proposes that *outcome expectancies* are core predictors for intentions. Outcome expectancy is defined as “a person’s estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). In the context of migration, De Jong (2000) argues that outcome expectancies are formed by evaluating the chances of attaining a personal goal by moving to another country (e.g., finding a job or advancing one’s career) in comparison to staying in the home country. High expectations of attaining the goal after migration are likely to foster an intention to migrate. In addition, the *value* attached to this goal (e.g., aspiration to a career) is likely to affect the behavioral intention. Finally, Ajzen (1991) argued that people will invest more effort in performing a behavior when they have *behavioral control*. That is, a person’s perception of his or her abilities to perform a behavior is a core predictor for engaging in the actual behavior (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992).

In the following, we will discuss anticipated job benefits after migration as outcome expectancy, career aspiration as a value, and generalized self-efficacy as a behavioral control belief in the context of international labor migration among highly educated individuals. We consider these factors rooted in the person as predictors for the three phases of migration decision-making. As previous migration studies have documented the effects of unemployment (Kumpikaitė & Zickute, 2013; Mihi-Ramírez et al., 2014; Neto & Mullet, 1998; Pissarides & Wadsworth, 1989) and social networks (Kritz & Zlotnik, 1992; Massey, 1999) as drivers for migration, we will consider these contextual factors as additional predictors.

1.2.1. Anticipated job benefits

Within the context of international migration, expectations of better job prospects and better living conditions have been identified as predictive for migration intention (Bernardini-Zambrini, Barengo, Bardach, Hanna, & Macias Núñez, 2011; Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013). However, the literature also suggests that the prospect of finding employment or better living conditions alone may not sufficiently explain migration behaviors. A few studies on international migration between high income countries have revealed that anticipation of career advancement, rather than merely finding a job, also plays an important role. For example, in a study on potential Dutch migrants, prospects of career advancement predicted their intention to migrate along with expectations of finding a job (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2012). In the context of migration of highly skilled professionals, a study among Spanish medical students revealed that the main drivers of migration intentions are expectations of career advancement in addition to better working conditions and higher wages (Bernardini-Zambrini et al., 2011). In these studies, migration decision-making was measured by asking respondents whether they *expected* to work abroad within the next couple of years (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2012), or whether they *intended* to practice their profession outside of Spain (Bernardini-Zambrini et al., 2011), thus measuring intentions to migrate. Building on these studies, we assume that anticipation of job benefits is associated with the predecisional phase (i.e., people express intention to migrate, but have not taken any actions).

Concrete migration behaviors in terms of exploring or planning behaviors, concrete actions, or the actual move were not assessed in the previously mentioned studies. The job turnover literature provides some interesting insights, although it does not specifically focus on labor migration but more broadly on occupational mobility. For example, Klehe, Zikic, van Vianen, and De Pater (2011) showed that employees who reflect upon their career advancement options engage more actively in job search behaviors, such as contacting companies and employment agencies. These actions correspond with the preactional phase of migration-decision making (i.e., people engage in exploring and planning behaviors). The same study showed that employees who perceive better career advancement options elsewhere are also likely to accept a job offer from a different company. The action of accepting a job offer corresponds with the actional phase of migration decision-making (i.e., people taking concrete actions for migrating). In sum, these findings suggest that employees who anticipate job benefits outside their current job engage in exploring and planning behaviors (i.e., preactional phase) as well as concrete actions for taking a new job and leaving the current situation (i.e., actional phase). With regard to all three migration decision-making phases, we propose the following.

Hypothesis 1. Anticipated job benefits are positively associated with (a) first considerations regarding migration (predecisional phase), (b) exploring and planning behaviors (preactional phase), and (c) concrete actions for migration (actional phase).

1.2.2. Career aspiration

Anticipation of job benefits as described above relates to the expectations that a concrete behavior (i.e., migration) will lead to a desired outcome. In addition to these concrete expectations, people’s attitudes and values regarding their own career, such as career aspirations, are likely to affect migration intentions and behaviors. Career aspiration is defined as the “degree of commitment to a given career” (Gray & O’Brien, 2007, p. 318), a strong career orientation, and the extent to which people aspire to leadership positions and continued education within their career (Gray & O’Brien, 2007). The migration literature has shown that university students from Eastern Europe with a high career orientation and who value work as central in their lives are more likely to report intentions to migrate (Boneva & Frieze, 2001; Frieze et al., 2004). The authors also claim that a higher work orientation is associated with migration behaviors. We therefore hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2. Career aspiration is associated with (a) first considerations regarding migration (predecisional phase), (b) exploring and planning behaviors (preactional phase), and (c) concrete actions for migration (actional phase).

According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the interplay of expectations and values is predictive for intentions and behaviors. Following this reasoning, we expect that people who anticipate job benefits in a destination country (i.e., outcome expectancy) and who at the same time have a high career aspiration (i.e., value) are likely to show the strongest intentions to migrate as well as migration behaviors. Frieze et al. (2004) showed that Eastern European students who rate high on both seeking better job opportunities and striving for a career also have the highest migration intentions. Earlier we hypothesized main effects for anticipated job benefits and career aspiration on migration intentions and behaviors (Hypotheses 1 and 2); therefore, we propose that the interaction of the two predict the predecisional, preactional, and actional phases.

Hypothesis 3. Career aspiration moderates the effects of anticipated job benefits on (a) first considerations regarding migration (predecisional phase), (b) exploring and planning behaviors (preactional phase), and (c) concrete actions for migration (actional phase) such that the positive effect of anticipated job benefits is stronger when career aspiration is high.

1.2.3. Generalized self-efficacy

Self-efficacy has been originally defined as the belief in one's ability to perform a behavior in a given situation (Bandura, 2000) and closely relates to Ajzen's (1991) construct of behavioral control. With repeated experience of successful performance, one develops "a global belief regarding one's ability to perform a wide range of behaviors across a wide range of situations" (generalized self-efficacy, Contrada & Goyal, 2004). International migration is a complex and dynamic process that consists of a series of behaviors performed under a wide range of situations. Thus, feeling efficacious about international migration is better captured as generalized self-efficacy rather than behavior- and situation-specific self-efficacy.

Self-efficacious people are generally more willing to expose themselves to unfamiliar and new situations (Contrada & Goyal, 2004). Given that migration is a new and uncertain experience, they are more likely to expose themselves to this situation than less self-efficacious people because they are confident in their own abilities to master it. Accordingly, it is likely that self-efficacious people will more actively engage in planning behaviors and concrete actions for migration. A study on Dutch emigrants found a predictive effect of generalized self-efficacy on exploring and planning behaviors such as visiting the embassy of the destination country, approaching an emigration consultant, or attending meetings with other potential migrants (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007). We propose that generalized self-efficacy primarily affects behavior and therefore influences the phases of migration decision-making that involve actions.

Hypothesis 4. Generalized self-efficacy is positively associated with (a) exploring and planning behaviors (preactional phase) and (b) concrete actions for migration (actional phase).

We have hypothesized that both generalized self-efficacy and anticipated job benefits have predictive effects on engaging in planning behaviors and taking concrete actions for migration. We now propose that the effect of generalized self-efficacy depends on anticipated job benefits (outcome expectancy). Some studies, mainly those on health behavior change, have reported that the effect of self-efficacy on behavioral outcomes depends on outcome expectancy (Maddux & Rogers, 1983). When outcome expectancy is low, people do not mobilize their self-efficacy to engage in a specific behavior because even if they took the action, the desired outcome may not occur. On the other hand, when the behavior almost certainly brings about the desired outcome (i.e., high outcome expectancy), people with high self-efficacy are more likely to take action compared with those with low self-efficacy. We therefore propose that particularly people who anticipate high job benefits from migration will draw on their available resources, their generalized self-efficacy, and engage in migration-related behaviors, which will help them to reach their desired goal.

Hypothesis 5. Anticipated job benefits moderate the positive effect of generalized self-efficacy on (a) exploring and planning behaviors (preactional phase) and (b) concrete actions for migration (actional phase) such that the effect of generalized self-efficacy is stronger when anticipated job benefits are high.

1.3. Study background

Since the European financial crisis in late 2009, unemployment rates in Spain have increased dramatically, reaching over 50% among the youth (Eurostat, 2013). In contrast, Germany's economy has remained robust and has maintained a steady demand for skilled labor (Constant & Tien, 2011). These economic imbalances within the European Union (EU) along with active recruitment strategies by the German government for skilled Spaniards (Chamber of Industry and Commerce, 2012) have increased migration from Spain to Germany. In 2011, more than 16,000 Spaniards migrated to Germany, a 52% increase compared to 2010 (BAMF, 2013). In comparison, approximately 8000 Spaniards migrated to Germany annually before the financial crisis of 2009. The economic imbalance and open borders between Spain and Germany as well as the German government's conscious effort to recruit certain types of Spanish workers provide a unique context to study migration decision-making among educated Spaniards. In the following section, we present the methods and results for a cross-sectional sample (Study 1) and a smaller longitudinal study of a subsample (Study 2).

2. Study 1: A pre-migration cross-sectional study

2.1. Sample and data collection procedure

The participants were recruited through four German language schools in two major Spanish cities between April 2012 and August 2013. Approximately 1500 language students were informed by the study staff regarding the aim and scope of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of data handling. Following the recruitment and informed consent, the students completed the questionnaires in their classrooms. The study protocol was approved by the ethics committee of the Department of Psychology at Humboldt University Berlin.

A total of 1398 participants provided questionnaire data (participation rate = 93.2%). Of the 1398 participants 7 were excluded because most of the data were missing. As both students and graduates may consider migrating to Germany for work-related reasons both groups were included into sample. Only 15 retirees and 15 individuals who did not answer our dependent variables for migration decision-making were excluded. Of the remaining 1361 participants, 148 were considering migrating to a country other than Germany and 50 did not indicate a specific destination country. They were excluded because we asked about anticipated job benefits specifically related to Germany. This left 1163 participants for the analysis. Of the 1163 participants, 426 had not seriously considered migrating, 212 were in the predecisional phase, 337 were in the preactional phase, and 188 were in the actional phase (see section on migration decision-making for the categorization of participants into these phases).

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants in the four phases. Across all phases the participants were relatively young ($M = 29.93$ years old, $SD = 9.83$) and highly educated. Forty-nine percent were enrolled in a university. Among those who had completed their studies, 29% were unemployed. About half of the participants had previously lived abroad, and nearly half of them were in intermediate- to proficient-level German language courses. Only 11% had children.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Migration decision-making phases

First, we asked participants whether they had considered migrating (*yes/no*). Participants who answered this question with *no* were categorized as having “no intention to migrate” ($n = 426$). All participants who responded with *yes* were then asked to answer six questions on migration behaviors that were derived from six preliminary interviews with Spaniards in Spain and findings from Tabor and Milfont's (2011) qualitative study. Following Kley (2011), we categorized the behaviors into the predecisional, the preactional, and the actional phases. Those who had responded with *yes* to the question as to whether they had considered migrating and “(1) discussed the possibility of migration with family and friends” but had not taken any other actions were grouped into the predecisional phase ($n = 212$). The preactional phase ($n = 337$) consisted of those who had “(2) obtained information from those who had already migrated” and had “(3) contacted companies and employment agencies” but had not taken any other actions. According to Kley (2011), in this phase a person begins to actively explore options for migrating. Finally, participants who had taken concrete actions such as “(4) making logistical arrangements” (e.g., buying air ticket, renting an apartment”) or who “(5) had obtained and (6) accepted a job offer” were grouped into the actional phase ($n = 188$).

2.2.2. Anticipated job benefits

Anticipated job benefits were measured with four items that address expectations of career advancement and finding employment in Germany (i.e., “finding a promising job in my field”, “advancing my career for the future”, “receiving a good salary”, and “finding any kind of job”) (Fujishiro & Hoppe, 2015). In the questionnaire, we asked all participants, “Between Spain and Germany, what do you think your chances would be for [each of the four items]?” They had five response options: much better chances in Spain (=1), somewhat better chances in Spain (=2), about the same chances in both countries (=3), somewhat better chances in Germany (=4), and much better chances in Germany (=5). Thus, a higher score indicated higher outcome expectancy for moving to Germany. Cronbach's alpha was .75.

2.2.3. Career aspiration

Career aspiration was assessed with eight items of the career aspiration scale which comprises aspirations to leadership, training and managing others, and pursuing further education (Gray & O'Brien, 2007) (sample item: “I hope to become a leader in my career field.”). Participants indicated how true each statement was for them on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from not at all true for me (=0) to very true for me (=4). Cronbach's alpha was .75.

2.2.4. Generalized self-efficacy

Six items of the general self-efficacy scale from Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) were used to measure generalized self-efficacy (sample item: “Whatever comes my way in my life, I can usually handle it”). Participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Cronbach's alpha was .88.

Table 1
Sociodemographics by migration decision-making phase and by migration status.

Characteristic	Decision-making phase								Migration status in 12 months			
	No consideration ^a (<i>n</i> = 426)		Predecisional ^a (<i>n</i> = 212)		Preactional ^a (<i>n</i> = 337)		Actional ^a (<i>n</i> = 188)		Not migrated ^b (<i>n</i> = 204)		Migrated ^b (<i>n</i> = 45)	
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)/ <i>n</i> (%)		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)/ <i>n</i> (%)		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)/ <i>n</i> (%)		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)/ <i>n</i> (%)		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)/ <i>n</i> (%)		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)/ <i>n</i> (%)	
Age	32.73	(11.69)	27.32	(7.92)	29.22	(8.31)	27.93	(8.15)	31.17	(9.41)	25.89	(7.40)
Female	242	(57.3%)	119	(56.1%)	176	(52.5%)	111	(59.4%)	130	(64.0%)	32	(71.1%)
Education level												
High school or less	96	(23.1%)	76	(35.9%)	59	(17.8%)	51	(27.1%)	36	(17.7%)	12	(26.7%)
Bachelor's degree	206	(49.5%)	87	(41.0%)	167	(50.3%)	82	(43.6%)	106	(52.2%)	20	(44.4%)
Master's degree	97	(23.3%)	45	(21.2%)	100	(30.1%)	46	(24.5%)	54	(26.6%)	12	(26.7%)
PhD	17	(4.1%)	4	(1.9%)	6	(1.8%)	9	(4.8%)	7	(3.5%)	1	(2.2%)
Student	196	(46%)	106	(50%)	163	(48%)	100	(53%)	93	(45%)	26	(57%)
Unemployed	44	(10.4%)	32	(15.1%)	68	(20.2%)	31	(16.5%)	26	(12.7%)	3	(6.7%)
Lived abroad	165	(38.7%)	109	(51.4%)	171	(50.7%)	117	(62.2%)	102	(50.0%)	26	(57.8%)
German language skills ^c												
Not evaluated yet	31	(7.3%)	9	(4.3%)	21	(6.3%)	12	(6.4%)	7	(3.5%)	2	(4.4%)
A1: Beginner	95	(22.5%)	65	(31.1%)	87	(26.0%)	44	(23.4%)	40	(19.7%)	4	(8.9%)
A2: Elementary	94	(22.3%)	44	(21.1%)	78	(23.4%)	52	(27.7%)	50	(24.6%)	16	(35.6%)
B1: Intermediate	115	(27.3%)	59	(28.2%)	95	(28.4%)	54	(28.7%)	61	(30.0%)	14	(31.1%)
B2: Upper	57	(13.5%)	25	(12.0%)	41	(12.3%)	22	(11.7%)	35	(17.2%)	8	(17.8%)
C1: Advanced	22	(5.2%)	4	(1.9%)	8	(2.4%)	3	(1.6%)	4	(2.0%)	1	(2.2%)
C2: Proficient	8	(1.9%)	3	(1.4%)	4	(1.2%)	1	(0.5%)	6	(3.0%)	0	(0.0%)

^a Data refer to cross-sectional sample (*n* = 1163).

^b Data refer to longitudinal sample (*n* = 249).

^c Level evaluated by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2011).

Table 2
Zero-order correlations for Study 1 and Study 2.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	–	–.01	–.08	.04	–.18**	–.26***	–.11	–.06	–.15*	–.09	–.21**
2. German network	.02	–	.37***	–.04	.00	.06	.11	.15*	–.12	.22**	.20**
3. Spanish network	–.02	.36***	–	–.03	.01	.04	.09	.13*	–.05	.11	.11
4. Unemployed ^a	.08**	.00	–.05	–	.05	–.04	.01	–.06	.17**	–.02	–.10
5. Job benefits ^b	–.11***	–.03	.03	.09**	–	.14*	.00	.10	.07	.03	.03
6. Career aspiration ^b	–.26***	.02	.05	–.04	.10**	–	.36***	.04	.22**	.13*	.10
7. Self-efficacy ^b	–.02	.06	.08**	–.03	.00	.32***	–	.06	.10	.01	.03
8. Predecisional phase ^a	–.12***	–.01	–.04	.01	.07*	.03	–.01	–	–.31***	–.23***	–.18**
9. Preactional phase ^a	–.02	.02	.10***	.10**	.11***	.14***	.08**	–.31***	–	–.36***	.07
10. Actional phase ^a	–.09**	.13***	.12***	.02	.02	.14***	.09**	–.22***	–.29***	–	.40***
11. Migrated ^a	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Note. Study 1 sample ($n = 1163$) is presented below the diagonal and Study 2 sample ($n = 249$) is presented above the diagonal.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

^a 0 = no, 1 = yes.

^b Scales range from 1 to 5.

A confirmatory factor analysis showed a good fit to the data when treating anticipated job benefits, career aspiration, and generalized self-efficacy as independent but correlated factors ($\chi^2 = 828.23$, $df = 132$, $p = .00$, $CFI = .902$, $RMSEA = .069$ (90% CI: .065–.074), $SRMR = .048$).

2.2.5. Unemployment

Unemployment was measured with a single item: “Are you currently unemployed?” (0 = no; 1 = yes). Participants who were students enrolled at the university but who stated that they were unemployed were coded with 0.

2.2.6. Social networks in Germany

We assessed the size of German and Spanish social networks in Germany separately with two single items: “How many German/Spanish friends and relatives live in Germany?” Response options ranged from 1 (*none*) to 6 (*9 or more*).

2.2.7. Control variables

We included previous migration experiences, language skills, being a student, age, gender, education, and having children as control variables in this study as these variables have been identified as predictors for migration decision-making in previous studies (Fawcett, 1988). Previous migration experiences were assessed with a single item: “Have you lived abroad previously?” (0 = no; 1 = yes). Language skills were assessed objectively by the language schools using standardized German language evaluation tests (level of proficiency ranging from A1 [basic beginner level] to C2 [proficient]) (Council of Europe, 2011, see Table 1).

2.3. Data analysis

We conducted multinomial logistic regression analyses using IBM SPSS Version 22 to examine the extent to which each phase was predicted by our independent and control variables. The outcome variable has four levels that are ordinal in nature; thus we first explored the possibility of fitting proportional odds models. However, the preliminary analysis indicated that the equal-slope assumption was not met. Therefore, we fitted multinomial logistic models, which estimate the odds of the person belonging to each of the migration decision-making phases and compares it with the odds of the same person belonging to the “not considered” phase as a function of given independent variables. The magnitude of association between each independent variable and each of the migration decision phases is expressed as an odds ratio (OR). We first entered the control variables (i.e., age, gender, education, being a student, having children, having lived abroad, and language skills) into the model. None except for age were associated with any migration phase and therefore dropped from the subsequent analyses. To test our hypotheses, we entered age, Spanish and German social networks, unemployment, anticipated job benefits, career aspiration, and generalized self-efficacy into the model in step 1 (Model 1). Next, we added the interaction of anticipated job benefits with career aspiration and with generalized self-efficacy, respectively, in step 2 (Model 2). All variables were centered prior to building the interaction term. Across all variables, the percentage of missing data was less than 1%. Cox and Snell as well as Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2 were reported.

2.4. Results

Table 2 shows the zero-order correlations of all study variables using Pearson's correlation coefficient (see below the diagonal for Study 1 results).

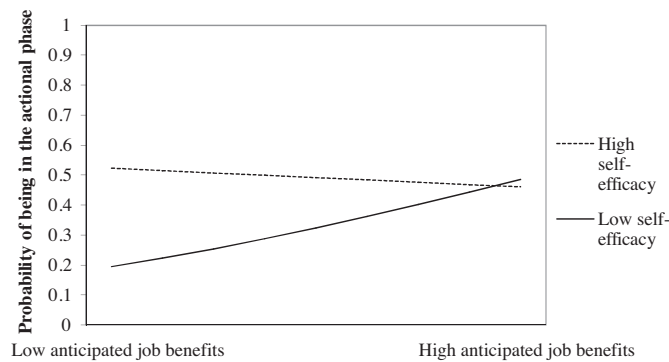


Fig. 2. Interaction of generalized self-efficacy and anticipated job benefits on the actional phase.

In the following, we present the findings of the multinomial logistic regression. Participants who are unemployed are more likely to be in the predecisional (OR = 2.20, CI: 1.29–3.77), preactional (OR = 3.18, CI: 1.98–5.11), and actional (OR = 2.68, CI: 1.52–4.72) phases than those who are employed (see Table 3). Social networks are not associated with the predecisional phase. However, we find that having Spanish social networks is associated with the preactional phase (OR = 1.48, CI: 1.25–1.76): People with Spanish friends and relatives in Germany are more likely to gather information or to contact companies. Next, having Spanish (OR = 1.49, CI: 1.24–1.80) and German (OR = 1.30, CI: 1.13–1.50) social networks is associated with the actional phase. Nagelkerke Pseudo R²s are at .20 for Model 1 and at .20 for Model 2.

2.4.1. Anticipated job benefits, career aspiration, and generalized self-efficacy

Anticipated job benefits are associated with all three migration decision-making phases, which supports Hypothesis 1. More specifically, for each unit increase in anticipated job benefits, the odds of belonging to the predecisional and preactional phases rather than the “not having considered migration” group increase by 58% and 59%, respectively (OR = 1.58, CI: 1.24–2.03; OR = 1.59, CI: 1.28–1.97). The odds of belonging to the actional phase increase by 33% (OR = 1.33, CI: 1.04–1.68) with each unit increase in anticipated job benefits.

Likewise, career aspiration is associated with all migration decision-making phases: the predecisional (OR = 1.56, CI: 1.18–2.07) the preactional (OR = 2.06, CI: 1.60–2.65), and the actional phases (OR = 2.29, CI: 1.69–3.11). In other words, participants with higher career aspirations are more likely to consider migration and to engage in exploring and planning behaviors as well as concrete preparatory actions. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported. As the interaction between job benefits and career aspiration is not significant for any phase, Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

As proposed, generalized self-efficacy is associated with phases that involve actions: the preactional phase (OR = 1.29, CI: 1.01–1.64) and the actional phase (OR = 1.37, CI: 1.02–1.86). Participants with higher generalized self-efficacy are more likely to engage in exploratory behaviors and concrete preparatory actions, which supports Hypothesis 4. Model 2 in Table 3 shows a significant interaction of anticipated job benefits with generalized self-efficacy on the actional phase. The interaction plot in Fig. 2 indicates that participants who rate high on generalized self-efficacy are more likely to be in the actional phase, regardless of the level of anticipated job benefits. People with low generalized self-efficacy who anticipate high job benefits in Germany are still very likely to be in the actional phase, whereas a combination of low generalized self-efficacy and low anticipated job benefits results in a lower likelihood of being in the actional phase. As the interaction between generalized self-efficacy and anticipated job benefits differs from what has been hypothesized (i.e., the effect of generalized self-efficacy is stronger when anticipated job benefits are high), Hypothesis 5 is not supported.

2.4.2. Control variables

The control variables gender, education, having children, being a student, having lived abroad previously, and language skills are not predictive for any migration decision-making phases and were therefore excluded from the multinomial regression analyses. For age, we find associations for the predecisional (OR = 0.96, CI: 0.94–0.98), the preactional (OR = 0.98, CI: 0.97–1.00), and the actional (OR = 0.96, CI: 0.94–0.98) phases. Younger participants are more likely to consider migration and to engage in migration behaviors.

2.5. Summary

The results of Study 1 revealed that anticipated job benefits and career aspiration are associated with all migration decision-making phases over and above unemployment, social networks, and age. In addition, we found that generalized self-efficacy is associated with planning behaviors and concrete preparations for migration. Furthermore, when anticipated job benefits are high, persons with low generalized self-efficacy still manage to take concrete actions for migration. These findings were from a cross-sectional sample of Spaniards in Spain. With reference to the theory of planned behavior, we claimed that migration intentions and preparatory behaviors predict actual migration. With a smaller subsample, which we

Table 3
Results of multinomial logistic regression predicting migration decision-making.

	Predecisional phase ^a				Preactional phase ^b				Actional phase ^c			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR
Age	−.05 (.01)	.96***	−.05 (.01)	.96***	−.02 (.01)	.98*	−.02 (.01)	.98*	−.04 (.01)	.96***	−.04 (.01)	.96***
German network	.12 (.08)	1.13	.12 (.08)	1.13	.09 (.07)	1.10	.09 (.07)	1.10	.26 (.07)	1.30***	.27 (.07)	1.30***
Spanish network	.16 (.10)	1.18	.16 (.10)	1.18	.40 (.09)	1.48***	.40 (.09)	1.48***	.40 (.10)	1.49***	.40 (.10)	1.49***
Unemployed ^d	.79 (.27)	2.20**	.80 (.28)	2.22**	1.16 (.24)	3.18***	1.16 (.24)	3.17***	.99 (.29)	2.68***	.98 (.29)	2.66***
Job benefits	.46 (.13)	1.58***	.49 (.13)	1.64***	.46 (.11)	1.59***	.45 (.11)	1.57***	.28 (.12)	1.33*	.37 (.14)	1.44**
Career aspiration	.45 (.14)	1.56**	.46 (.14)	1.59**	.72 (.13)	2.06***	.72 (.13)	2.06***	.83 (.16)	2.29***	.83 (.16)	2.30***
Self efficacy	.11 (.14)	1.12	.13 (.14)	1.14	.25 (.13)	1.29*	.22 (.13)	1.24	.32 (.15)	1.37*	.35 (.16)	1.42*
Job benefits × career aspiration			−.08 (.20)	.93			−.01 (.17)	.99			.19 (.20)	1.21
Job benefits × self efficacy			−.24 (.21)	.79			.11 (.18)	1.12			−.53 (.21)	.59*

Note. Reference group is “not having considered migration” ($n = 426$). *b* = unstandardized beta coefficient; SE = standard error; OR = odds ratio.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^a $n = 212$.

^b $n = 337$.

^c $n = 188$.

^d 0 = no, 1 = yes.

followed for twelve months after baseline data collection, we investigated whether the pre-migration phases predict actual migration.

3. Study 2: A pre- and post-migration longitudinal study

3.1. Sample, data collection procedure, and measures

To collect panel data, we contacted all participants who provided their email addresses and who agreed to participate in a follow-up study via email six and twelve months after baseline data collection and asked them about their whereabouts, “Where do you live at the moment?” with the response options: Spain (0 = *not migrated*), Germany (1 = *migrated*).

Baseline and follow-up responses were matched using an individually generated personal code. Of the 1163 baseline participants (see Study 1), 261 provided questionnaire data at follow-up (22% response rate at follow-up). Of these, 204 were still in Spain, 45 had migrated to Germany, and 12 had migrated to another country. As the predictor variable anticipated job benefits referred specifically to Germany, we dropped the 12 participants who had migrated to another country. Thus, our final sample for Study 2 consisted of 249 people.

The sample characteristics are displayed in Table 1. The distribution of sociodemographics is similar to Study 1 participants. Interestingly, only three participants who migrated were unemployed. To examine potential selection bias due to dropouts, we tested whether those who participated in the follow-up ($n = 249$) differed from the dropouts ($n = 914$) with regard to their baseline levels for the study variables. The results of chi-square and t -tests showed that the two samples did not differ with regard to any of the study variables (results are available from the authors).

3.2. Data analysis

We conducted logistic regressions using IBM SPSS Version 22 to examine whether the migration phases predicted actual migration, a binary variable. Following the same procedure as in Study 1, we first entered age and all predictor variables into the model. Second, we added the interaction term of anticipated job benefits with career aspiration and generalized self-efficacy, respectively. In a third step we entered three dummy variables representing the predecisional, preactional, and actional phases for migration decision-making. Persons in the respective phase at baseline were coded with 1 for each phase. Persons who had not considered migration served as the reference group (coded with 0).

3.3. Results

Cross tabulation of the migration decision-making phase at baseline with actual migration showed a clear positive association: only one (2%) of 42 respondents in the predecisional phase had migrated to Germany. However, 18 (22%) of 83 in the preactional phase and 24 (47%) of 51 in the actional phase migrated to Germany within twelve months.

Zero-order correlations for all study variables are displayed in Table 2 (above the diagonal). Young age, having German networks in Germany, and migration decision-making phases are the only variables associated with actual migration. The logistic regression revealed that being in the preactional ($\beta = 2.87, p < .01$) and actional ($\beta = 3.78, p < .001$) phases at baseline are the strongest predictors for having migrated at follow-up (see Table 4). Being in the predecisional phase at baseline does not predict actual migration. In addition, young age ($\beta = -.07, p < .05$) predicts actual migration.

4. Overall discussion

This study investigated how expectations, values, and beliefs affect migration decision-making among a sample of potential Spanish migrants to Germany. Building on the theory of planned behavior, this study contributed to the small body of literature that addresses both person-level and contextual factors as drivers for migration decision-making. As we hypothesized, the findings of our cross-sectional sample revealed that anticipated job benefits and career aspiration are associated with all migration decision-making phases: the predecisional, the preactional, and the actional phases. Generalized self-efficacy is associated with only the two latter phases that involve taking actions.

By relating these phases to actual migration, this is one of the few studies that combines pre- and post-migration phases. With a longitudinal sample, we found that pre-migration decision-making is highly predictive for actual migration within twelve months. More specifically, our data reveals that being in the preactional or actional phase at baseline predicts actual migration, whereas being in the predecisional phase does not. The actional phase, which consists of the concrete and determined pursuit of goal completion, such as making logistical arrangements for the move or accepting a job offer, is the most powerful predictor for migration. By disentangling the construct of intention into three phases this study contributes to the literature on migration decision-making that has only recently started to differentiate between various phases in the pre-migration period (see Kley, 2011; Tabor & Milfont, 2011).

In the following, we will first discuss the associations of anticipated job benefits, career aspiration, and generalized self-efficacy with the three migration decision-making phases before turning to the effects of unemployment, social networks, and socio-demographics.

Table 4
Results of logistic regression predicting migration.

	Migrated to Germany					
	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3	
	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR ^{**}	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR
Age	−.08 (.03)	.93 ^{**}	−.08 (.03)	.93 ^{**}	−.07 (.03)	.93 [*]
German network	.36 (.13)	1.43 ^{**}	.34 (.13)	1.40 [*]	.32 (.17)	1.38
Spanish network	.04 (.16)	1.04	.04 (.16)	1.04	.09 (.20)	1.10
Unemployed ^a	−.96 (.77)	.38	−1.01 (.78)	.36	−1.44 (.84)	.24
Job benefits	−.01 (.23)	.99	.04 (.24)	1.04	.07 (.28)	1.07
Career aspiration	.19 (.29)	1.20	.17 (.29)	1.19	−.21 (.35)	.81
Self-efficacy	−.18 (.33)	.83	−.17 (.33)	.85	−.05 (.36)	.96
Job benefits × career aspiration			−.11 (.41)	.90	−.61 (.51)	.54
Job benefits × self-efficacy			−.38 (.44)	.69	−.14 (.52)	.87
Predecisional phase ^b					−.33 (1.50)	.72
Preactional phase ^c					2.87 (1.08)	17.62 ^{**}
Actional phase ^d					3.78 (1.08)	43.59 ^{***}
Cox and Snell Pseudo R ²	.09	.10	.26			
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	.15	.16	.42			

Note. Reference group is “not migrated” (*n* = 204). *b* = unstandardized beta coefficient; SE = standard error; OR = odds ratio.

^{*} *p* < .05.

^{**} *p* < .01.

^{***} *p* < .001.

^a 0 = no, 1 = yes.

^b *n* = 42.

^c *n* = 83.

^d *n* = 51.

4.1. Anticipated job benefits, career aspiration, and generalized self-efficacy as drivers of migration decision-making

In accordance with the theory of planned behavior, our findings demonstrate that outcome expectancies and values play an important role for migration decision-making. We found that those who anticipate benefits for their job and career in Germany (outcome expectancy) and those who aspire to a career (value) are more likely to have initial thoughts regarding migration (predecisional phase). They are also more likely to gather information from companies and employment agencies (preactional phase) and to engage in concrete actions to prepare migration such as making logistical arrangements, accepting a job, or booking a flight (actional). Our findings show parallels to the expatriation literature. For example, a study of German expatriates (i.e., employees of multi-national companies who are sent to work overseas) found that employees who perceive job benefits from international assignments are more likely to take on such assignments (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). Our measure of anticipated job benefits involves both anticipation of finding a job and career advancement options in Germany. Accordingly, we conclude that Spaniards are motivated to migrate not only by the prospect of finding employment but also by the opportunity to advance their career.

Although anticipated job benefits and career aspiration were both positively associated with migration decision-making, we did not find an interaction effect between the two. In other words, the positive effect of envisioning job benefits on migration decision-making did not depend on the level of career aspiration. This finding is not in accordance with the theory of planned behavior, which postulates that the effect of outcome expectancy depends on the value placed on the outcome. In this study, career aspiration was measured as a general value toward one's career whereas anticipated job benefits were assessed more specifically in terms of the job benefits anticipated as a result of moving to Germany. This difference in specificity might have reduced the interaction suggested by the theory. Still, it is a strength of this study that job benefits were assessed specifically with regard to Germany because anticipations are closely connected to the ultimate behavior (i.e., moving to Germany) and thus there is less ambiguity in the link between the outcome expectancy and behavior. Yet, our empirical data clearly show that some potential migrants were considering multiple countries as their possible destinations: In fact 12 participants eventually migrated to countries other than Germany within 12 months. Therefore, future studies should combine country-specific measures as well as more general measures for outcome expectancies and values.

As hypothesized, generalized self-efficacy serves as a driver for engaging in migration behaviors. As argued above, self-efficacious people are more likely to expose themselves to unfamiliar situations and to follow-up on their ideas by taking action (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2012). In addition to main effects, the cross-sectional data revealed an interaction effect of generalized self-efficacy and anticipated job benefits on the actional phase: Respondents with high generalized self-efficacy were more likely to have taken concrete actions regardless of anticipated job benefits; in contrast, respondents with low generalized self-efficacy required high levels of anticipated job benefits in order to take concrete actions that lead to migration. The high likelihood of more self-efficacious people taking action, even if they do not have a particularly high outcome expectancy (i.e., anticipated job benefits), may indicate that these people are confident that they will be successful one way or another after migration. It has been proposed that self-efficacy and outcome expectancy are not independent

predictors but that they interact with one another (Maddux & Rogers, 1983; Maddux, Sherer, & Rogers, 1982). Williams (2010) went a step further by stating that outcome expectancy may also serve as a predictor for self-efficacy. Whether the anticipation of job benefits enhances self-efficacy over time and, in turn, causally affects migration-specific actions or migration itself should be of interest for future studies.

More advanced phases of migration decision-making (i.e., preactional and actional) were strong predictors of actual migration within 12 months; however, neither anticipated job benefits nor career aspiration and generalized self-efficacy predicted actual migration. This contradicts previous studies on international migration that have shown predictive effects for generalized self-efficacy (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013) and expectations of better living and working conditions on migration (Aiken, Buchan, Sochalski, Nichols, & Powell, 2004; Funkhouser, 2009). One possible explanation is that the time lag chosen for the follow-up (six to twelve months after baseline) was too short to clearly differentiate the actual migrants from those who only engaged in preparatory actions. Even for those who had high generalized self-efficacy and strong anticipation of job benefits, actual migration may not occur within the space of a few months because it is a major life event that needs to be well planned ahead of time. The Van Dalen and Henkens study (2013), which found effects of generalized self-efficacy on actual migration, used a five-year time lag and also had a much larger sample. Thus, in addition to the shorter time lag, our small sample size of migrants ($n=45$) may have limited our chances of finding effects.

Another possible explanation for the lack of effects on actual migration is that migration decision-making is not a linear process but rather a cyclical one. People with high career aspirations and high anticipation of job benefits may report at one time point that they have taken concrete preparatory actions. Yet other aspects of their lives may require them to stay in Spain, such as family responsibilities and romantic commitments. Interestingly, in our sample among those who had *not* migrated at follow-up were 27 Spaniards who had already taken concrete actions such as accepting a job offer or making logistical arrangements. Data are not available on the reasons for their continued residence in Spain. Yet, this discrepancy between having taken concrete actions and actual migration suggests that migration is neither a solely rationale nor truly linear process but that many contextual, social or personal factors interfere with what is planned and what occurs in reality.

4.2. Unemployment and social networks

With regard to contextual factors, we found that being unemployed is positively associated with all migration decision-making phases. Interestingly, although unemployment has a strong effect across the three phases, it does not predict actual migration. The literature provides a somewhat inconsistent picture with regard to unemployment in the context of migration. Whereas it has indeed been identified as a predictor for international migration from lower to higher income countries (Kumpikaitė & Zickute, 2013; Mihi-Ramírez et al., 2014), the few studies on migration between high-income countries have not always confirmed unemployment as a predictor (e.g., Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013). We need to acknowledge though that in this study unemployment was assessed with a single item. More sophisticated measures that consider the length of unemployment or activity on the labor market need to be applied in future studies.

Favell and Recchi (2009) explained that specifically within Europe the young and educated are strongly motivated to seek adventure and self-actualization and thus migrate for lifestyle rather than for economic reasons. Also, Benson (2009) reported that for British migrants in France the main reasons for migration were related to the different lifestyle (e.g., having a house in the countryside, better food, more respectful interaction with the elderly, etc.) and to a lesser extent economic reasons. Whereas the literature questions economic factors as the main driver of migration, it is important to note that lifestyle migration more commonly applies for migration from North to South (e.g., from Germany to Spain, Favell & Recchi, 2009) and that our study was conducted during the time of an economic crisis and high unemployment in Spain. Although unemployment was indeed a strong predictor for migration-decision making, of the 45 actual migrants in our sample only three persons were unemployed at baseline. For a more comprehensive picture, future studies on migration between high-income countries need to incorporate predictors that assess both lifestyle and economic factors as predictors for migration decision-making and actual migration.

Furthermore, social networks in Germany served as an important resource associated with migration-decision making phases. The migration literature states that having social networks in the country of settlement increases the likelihood of people actually migrating (e.g., Kritz & Zlotnik, 1992; Massey, 1999; Massey et al., 1993). Interestingly, we found somewhat different results for German versus Spanish social networks in Germany. Whereas both types of social networks are associated with the actional phase, only Spanish networks in Germany are associated with the preactional phase. Possibly, in this earlier phase it is easier to access information from people who speak the same language and who have already engaged in migration behaviors. Ajzen (1991) postulated in his theory of planned behavior that normative beliefs formed through one's social environment, for example through friends and family who approve of a specific behavior such as migration, shape the likelihood of a person acting accordingly. As Spanish friends or family are more likely to shape the normative beliefs of potential Spanish migrants and serve as the better reference group, they may facilitate first exploratory behaviors for potential Spanish migrants. To fully consider all components of the theory of planned behavior, future studies should assess normative beliefs of one's social environment regarding migration in addition to social networks and support systems in the home and host countries.

We did not find a predictive effect of social networks on actual migration. Yet, the bivariate correlations revealed that German social networks are positively associated with actual migration. In our sample German and Spanish networks are

highly correlated. Possibly having a network of Spanish friends in Germany helps to expand this network to Germans. Also, some participants may have built their social networks during previous visits to Germany, during which they are likely to have been in touch with both Germans and other Spaniards. This high correlation reduced the likelihood of identifying independent effects in the regression models due a large percentage of shared variance.

4.3. Sociodemographics

In our study, young age served as the most consistent predictor for migration decision-making and actual migration (see for example [Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013](#) for similar findings). Those who migrated are five years younger on average (mean age = 26 years) than those who did not migrate. At this age, people may have just completed their higher education and are at a very early stage of their careers. They might still be less settled in their lives and thus more open to changes and new challenges. It is surprising, however, that we did not find other sociodemographics to be associated with migration decision-making or actual migration. For example, the theory of planned behavior clearly states that past behaviors predict future behaviors. Yet, in our study, having lived abroad previously neither predicts migration decision-making nor actual migration. Also, gender, education, and having children are not associated with migration intentions or behaviors. Our sample does not represent the general Spanish population: 77% hold a Bachelor degree or higher, about 50% have lived abroad, and only 11% have children. This selective sample of highly educated and mobile young Spaniards has less variation on these variables than the less selective samples of previous studies.

4.4. Strengths, limitations, and avenues for future research

By investigating the combination of expectations, values, and beliefs as predictors for migration decision-making during the pre-migration stage, this study makes an important contribution to the small body of research on person-level predictors for migration.

Our results confirm the theory of planned behavior ([Ajzen, 1991](#)), but also show that differentiating between three phases of migration decision-making (as opposed to intentions and behaviors only) leads to a better understanding of who migrates and who does not. Also, identifying predictors for each phase provides insight into reasons for migrating. Yet, we acknowledge that this study did not consider other important person-level variables such as personality traits. [Boneva and Frieze \(2001\)](#) regard personality traits such as openness to experience as core predictors for migration apart from values and expectancies. Also, post-migration studies have shown that migrants differ in their personality from non-migrants (e.g., [Boski, 2013](#)). Finally, as personality traits have been identified as core variables for post-migration socio-cultural adaptation ([Wilson et al., 2013](#)), they need to be considered in future studies on migration decision-making. In addition, as stated above, we only assessed work-related outcome expectancies and values. Given that intra-European migration is likely to be driven by lifestyle factors ([Favell & Recchi, 2009](#)), it is important to incorporate lifestyle variables as predictors for migration and to assess possible costs related to migration such as family separation or loss of friends.

In this study we measured generalized self-efficacy rather than behavior- and situation-specific self-efficacy as we regard international migration as a complex process that consists of a variety of behaviors performed in various situations. Yet, previous studies on cultural adaptation have assessed behavior- and situation specific self-efficacy, for example, communication self-efficacy ([Peterson, Milstein, Chen, & Nakazawa, 2011](#)) and cultural self-efficacy ([Rania, Cardinali, Cifatte, & Migliorini, 2012](#)). While behavior- and situation-specific self-efficacy is a behavioral facilitator, generalized self-efficacy serves as a coping resource in the face of challenges ([Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002](#)), which may facilitate adaptation to a new cultural environment ([Harrison, Chadwick, & Scales, 1996](#)). Ideally, future studies on migration decision-making should pair generalized self-efficacy with more behavior-specific measures.

Finally, the political and economic context of the participants of this study needs to be considered when interpreting the study findings. The open borders within Europe and the fact that an EU citizen can work legally in any EU country makes intra-European migration quite different from other forms of international migration (e.g., from Latin American countries to the US or from Asian countries to Australia). Within Europe, migration involves relatively few risks, and thus the decision to migrate can be made on a temporary basis. Indeed, European migration has been discussed as a new form of mobility which is becoming more and more common especially among the young and educated ([Favell & Recchi, 2009](#)). Particularly within Europe circular and dynamic migration have been identified as new forms of migration where decisions to migrate or to stay in a destination country are rarely final but rather an ongoing process ([Constant & Zimmermann, 2012](#)).

This study focuses on migration between two high-income countries using a selective sample of educated and mobile young Spaniards. As data were collected in the context of an economic crisis and high unemployment, economic and work-related predictors may have played a stronger role than in better economic times. Finally, the theory of planned behavior is a highly rational approach for explaining human behavior and may therefore fit better to the conditions of highly educated people moving between two high-income countries. Although we believe that career advancement and career aspiration are important predictors particularly for educated people, these factors may have less effects for citizens of poorer countries whose individual career choices may be influenced by immediate economic pressure.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that anticipated job benefits and career aspiration along with unemployment and social networks in Germany are associated with intention to migrate, planning behaviors, and concrete actions that prepare for migration. In addition, generalized self-efficacy relates to taking preparatory actions for migration. Furthermore, Spaniards who engage in planning behaviors and concrete actions are likely to migrate to Germany within twelve months. The findings suggest that a combination of person-level, social, and economic factors need to be considered in order to understand what motivates people to migrate from one country to another. In addition, the predictive effects of the preactional and actional phases on actual migration confirm that migration is a process that involves various phases.

Acknowledgements

We thank Joan Carles López i Caballos for translating data collection materials and our students for contributing to the data collection process. Special thanks go to Lisa Dinkelborg. We also thank Emily Ahonen, Stephanie Saunders, the editor and three anonymous for their constructive critique on earlier version of this manuscript.

NIOSH disclaimer: The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

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