The motivation for the mobility – A comparison of the company assigned and self-initiated expatriates in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: This study explores the dominant motivational factors that govern the decision of a sample of 344 expatriates of diverse demographic to relocate from their home nations and move abroad to live and work in Saudi Arabia within the banking sector. These expatriates are grouped into two specific defined cohorts: self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and company-assigned expatriates (CAEs). A principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted to validate a pull-push model of motivations governing the decision to expatriate. Six push-pull motivational hypotheses derived from a comprehensive review of the extant literature were tested, employing logistic regression using a stepwise forward procedure. The primary argument centred on a contention that SIEs would be more highly motivated by push factors, pull factors, as well as host-home and family dynamics compared to CAEs, while CAEs may be more highly motivated by career considerations. The results of the study revealed that the push factor emerged as the strongest predictor in distinguishing between SIE and CAE motivations to migrate abroad. SIEs were found to be more strongly motivated by push factors than CAEs. In contrast, none of the pull motivational factors produced significant results for either SIEs or CAEs. Key differences between each cohort of expatriates arise based on their unique personal and professional motivational factors, not their status as either a SIE or CAE. The reasons for these results and possible limitations of the study design and its specific Saudi Arabian context are further discussed.

Subjects: Public Administration & Management; Business, Management and Accounting; Industry & Industrial Studies

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Dr Saeed Alshahrani is a Fulbright scholar, and his main research interest is around expatriation, cross-cultural management, IHRM, organizational behavior and international career. The motivational factors for self-initiated expatriates SIEs to travel and live abroad are very complicated due to their unique characteristics compared to the traditional sponsored expatriates. This study reveals that SIEs cohort is motivated to go abroad by push motives than by pull motives in Saudi Arabia.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
The study reveals the motivational factors that drive expatriates who travel independently to work and live in Saudi Arabia. The key issue and reason why independent expatriates who travel by themselves move to Saudi Arabia for work is related to problems in their home countries. For example, independent expatriates’ primary reason is being forced to move abroad due to push factors such as (political issues, environmental disruption, high unemployment in their countries). On the other hand, sponsored expatriates’ main motive to move abroad could be associated with the higher-paying salaries in Saudi or because of the support they received from their sponsors/employers abroad to work and live in Saudi Arabia.
Keywords: Push-pull factors; self-initiated expatriates; company-assigned expatriates; motivation; mobility; banking; Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction
There are a number of factors that distinguish self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) from company-assigned expatriates (CAEs). The fundamental motives for going abroad is the front factor. We have made significant advances in comprehending the similarities and differences of the SIEs and CAEs; this has been through the expatriates’ trips, experiences, and trajectories. However, there are several gaps in our knowledge concerning the expatriates. Several factors contribute to the knowledge gap. First, there is the lack of investigations on various expatriates, who are working, and living in non-Western contexts. Host countries such as Saudi Arabia are underrepresented in the expatriation literature that bases its argument on the motivation factors for the SIEs and CAEs. “Context is an essential variable in understanding research outcomes”. The assignment’s host location is one of the key motivational factors governing the expatriates’ decision to work and live in a particular country. However, most of the empirical findings so far concerning the host location specific motivational factors are drawn from sample populations travelling to or from popular international host locations in Europe, United States, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand.

Second, most of the theoretical and empirical studies that target SIEs have thus far tended to focus on single nationality samples (see, for example, Biemann & Andresen, 2010; Cerdin, 2013; Cerdin & Pargueux, 2010; Doherty et al., 2011, 2013; Tharenou, 2010b; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). This limits the scope for completing inter-cohort analyses and broader understandings of how various nationalities differ within each expatriate cohort accordingly.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to add to our understanding of CAEs and SIEs as differentiated expatriate types by reviewing their respective motivations for going abroad, and subsequently testing several hypotheses on expatriation’s motives among a cohort of CAEs and SIEs employed in the banking industry in Saudi Arabia. The study brings out the differences clearly looking into the simple factors that may cause the difference. It is not only specific to Saudi Arabia, but it also addresses factors which affect the expatriates’ motives across the globe. The study is different because it digs deep on the differences between the SIEs and the CAEs. The results enable there to be a better understanding of the different types of expatriates and their reasons for migrating by examining various pull and push motivational factors for expatriates moving abroad. The study’s main findings are that the differences between the cohorts of the expatriates are based on the personal and professional motivational factors, and not their status as the CAE and SIE. To find these differences, it is essential to look into the subgroups of the cohorts.

The paper systematically presents the major components of the study. Firstly, the theoretical background of expatriates in Saudi Arabia is explored. This indicates findings on the motivational factors that cause expatriates to move to abroad and outlines the factors of both SIEs and CAEs. The motivations for going abroad are classified into pull and push factors. This leads to the development of the push and pull hypothesis.

Secondly, this paper focuses on the methodology by examining how the demographic was selected and what the variables are, the procedure for collecting the data sample through the questionnaire measures employed, and the analytical procedure for testing the hypotheses.

Next, the sample study and analysis are discussed, which leads to the conclusion that the differences between the cohorts of expatriates are based on motivational factors, which are explored in depth, and not the expatriates’ status. Finally, the research is applied to the specific Saudi Arabian context and the potential impacts the research may have on this sector.
2. Theoretical background for SIEs

Empirical findings to date show that SIEs motivations for going abroad are a mix of the perceived value attached to foreign experience (Doherty et al., 2011), and an attractiveness attaching to the particular location chosen (Doherty et al., 2011; Tharenou, 2010b). In contrast, CAEs are generally driven by both organisational motives in combination with individual ones, which leads them to take on greater responsibilities in terms of balancing their personal needs with those of their employers prior to accepting an international posting (Doherty et al., 2011). For example, evidence from (Pinto et al., 2012) shows that CAEs may accept overseas assignments, even if they are unwilling to relocate, in order to maintain a good relationship with their employers’ parent company and perhaps improve their future career chances.

In addition, the destination of the foreign experience and the attractions of the host location are among the most significant factors that guide the expatriation decision-making behaviour of CAEs and SIEs. For example, some empirical studies show that SIEs tend to travel mostly to developed countries (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Tharenou, 2010a) as they seek more secure and stable host locations and a better lifestyle. This approach enables them to overcome the lack of external organisational support, which is provided to their CAE counterparts since they are travelling on their own (Cerdin & Pargneux, 2010). It is also evident from the literature, that the host context frequently presents certain attractive and acceptable key factors to expatriates. The findings from (Doherty et al., 2011) reveal that host location attraction, host reputation and home-host relations are among the most important factors that motivate expatriates to travel abroad.

Of the 34 motivational factors for travelling abroad explored by (Doherty et al., 2011), some 14 were related to the host country attractions, which included the perceived popularity of the host location, the reputation of the host country for providing attractive working opportunities and its openness to foreigners. From the arguments, the country-level initiatives, regulations and social patterns do not have a direct impact on the expatriates’ view of a country. However, they influence the expatriates’ decision to travel to that country. Similarly, Rodriguez and Scurry (2014) and Cooper and Rumford (2011), emphasise the role of regulatory regimes in many countries around the world in determining the opportunities that SIEs are able to pursue in these countries. Therefore among the factors that attract SIEs to certain destinations and organizations are the location, reputation and the opportunities available in the host countries (Thorn & Inkson, 2012). Saudi Arabia as context for this study is highlighted in the following section. Expatriates in Saudi Arabia

According to latest labour market report in 2013, there were more than nine million foreign labourers working in Saudi, which represents more than 30% of the total population (MOL, 2015).In some other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as UAE, expatriates account for 80% of the total population (Schoepf et al., 2010). The majority of expatriates in Saudi are low-skilled, working in the construction, service, manufacturing, agricultural and domestic sectors, whereas a smaller cohort of professional expatriates enjoy high incomes free of tax and benefits including transportation, accommodation, health insurance and free education, both for the individuals and for their dependents (Naithani & Jha, 2010; Rahman, 2011). Expatriates that are primarily hired through local and international recruiting agencies and business networks play a significant role in attracting professional workforces to Saudi (Rahman, 2011). The process of hiring new expatriates involves a variety of governmental bodies that include the Ministry of Labour (work permits), the Ministry of Interior (residence permits and security approvals) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (visas; USDC, 2012).

Expatriates’ life experiences are greatly influenced by their cultural backgrounds and, in some cases, the type of jobs they perform. A study on Western expatriates indicates they live in compounds in order to practise their normal lifestyle away from the strict cultural restrictions that exist outside of these compounds, whereas many other types of international workers live in more open compounds or in normal houses alongside locals. Empirical findings show that the
closed compounds’ rental charges are very high, while rental accommodation is difficult to secure due to high demand and limited supply. To control and limit foreign cultural influences, the Saudi government requires organizations with more than fifty expatriates to have a compound. The expatriates will be affordably accommodated within the compound.

Expatriates’ salaries and other fringe benefits vary significantly according to their countries of origin. For instance, most western expatriates working in the GCC countries enjoy high salaries and other benefits to a greater extent than their counterparts of different nationalities (Naithani & Jha, 2010). However, there is a wide variation in expatriates' salaries across the GCC countries. For example, expatriates who are working in the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar tend to receive higher salaries than their counterparts working in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman (Hertog, 2012). Recent data shows that inflation is surging across GCC countries and this is affecting expatriates' salaries in terms of increases in living expenses as well as fluctuations in the currency exchange markets (GOIBANK, 2013; Kim & Hammoudeh, 2013). This affects the salaries of the expatriates in these countries. On the other hand, the number of illegal workers in Saudi Arabia is not known and varies depending on the source provider. However, according to the General Department of Passports in Riyadh, more than 800,000 illegal workers have been deported between 2012 and 2013 alone (Carey, 2013).

To this end, the following section reviews the relevant literature related to CAEs and SIEs and, in particular, focuses on definitional aspects, underlying characteristics and whether they can be distinguished from each other, as well as from other international workforce cohorts.

3. Theories concerning expatriation
This study focuses on two cohorts: company-assigned expatriates (CAEs) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). There are a range of different terminologies and theories relevant to these types of expatriates and their migration patterns, including those defined below.

4. Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs)
The expatriation literature on self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) is still developing in terms of their definition, and with regard to the subgroups that may be identified within this highly diversified expatriate group (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014). Despite being characterised in the literature as highly qualified individuals who travel abroad individually without organisational support, the SIE definition remains very broad. Building on the demarcation model by Andresen et al. (2014), as well as the four criteria proposed by Cerdin and Selmer (2014), for the purpose of this study, an SIE may be defined as:

A skilled and professional individual who has a job offer/work visa in hand prior to his/her expatriation and who takes the decision to go abroad through self-funding and self-control to embark on a temporary work-related assignment.

In the field of management, the word “expatriate” is primarily used to refer to assigned expatriates. Researchers within this field use a variety of different terms to refer to organisational expatriates. These include traditional expatriates, conventional expatriates, company-backed expatriates, organisational expatriates, and company-assigned expatriates (CAEs). Despite the existence of multiple terms such as these, the key element that characterises the overall definition used in this study is the organisational affiliation between individuals and their corporate senders. To reduce confusion and for the purpose of this study, CAEs will be used to refer to individuals who have organisational affiliation.

For the purpose of this study, an CAE may be defined as:

A skilled and professional individual who has been sent abroad to accomplish organisational tasks within a particular timeframe, with on-going organisational support during the assignment and a plan regarding eventual repatriation when it ends.
5. Migrants
CAEs and SIEs can both be considered migrants, however, Andreason et al. (2014) suggests a theoretical demarcation model to clarify the definitions of CAEs, SIEs, and migrants. They argue that going abroad for work purposes and being legally employed are the most distinctive elements that differentiate expatriates from migrants. CAEs and SIEs are similar in terms of having the intention and motives to relocate and work abroad. Differences lie in the fact that CAEs receive and accept international job offers from their current employers in their home country, whereas SIEs apply personally for international vacancies and manage their relocation independently.

6. Diaspora
The theory of a diaspora is relevant to expatriates in the sense of people born in one country then living in another (Beine et al., 2011). Political science reflects on the diaspora and how they are treated in each jurisdiction, as well as sociological concerns about how these migrants behave and their reasons for migration (Borz, 2020). SIEs and CAEs are considered part of a wider diaspora by moving abroad for new opportunities. Asian expatriates working in the GCC represent the majority among all nationalities, including those coming from Arab countries. For example, in 2010 Saudi was the host for more than 1.14 million Bangladeshi, 1.42 million Indian and over 1 million Filipino migrant workers, which resulting in the largest Asian diaspora in the region (Rahman, 2011).

7. Transnational communities
Similarly, a transnational community is a group of people who migrate and reside in another nation state for a period of time while maintaining ties to their home nation, whether through formal legal means such as state regulations and laws regarding immigration and citizenship, or through social and cultural ties such as family or religion. SIEs and CAEs may maintain a relationship with their home nation after moving abroad, which is relevant to their motivations for migrating.

8. Motivations for going abroad among CAEs and SIEs
Expatriates’ motivations and expectations are changing. For example, “organisation recognition” and “the sense of vocation” were found to be significant motivational factors in early expatriation research). “Company man” behaviour was dominant, and the focus was from the company's point of view. Recent research reveals that motivational factors such as seeking personal challenge and accepting international assignments according to their geographic locations, were found to be significant, not only for SIEs, who have more freedom of choice in their decisions, but also for CAEs (Cerdin, 2013; Dickmann, 2012; Doherty et al., 2011). In this context, the focus of this study will be on the recent research into expatriates’ motives that focus on SIEs who are pursuing independent careers going beyond traditional employment structures and organisational borders. It is evident that researchers in this field investigate expatriates’ motives from three angles, namely: motives for going abroad (see for example, Cerdin, 2013; Doherty et al., 2011); motives for staying abroad and motives for repatriation to the homeland (see for example, Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

It is also evident that researchers employ various approaches to understand the motives underlying expatriation. One of these approaches is to examine the expatriates’ motives through the lens of “push-pull” factors. The factors govern their decision by evaluating the international attractions and rewards (pull factors) perceived by individuals in opposition to their home country/personal disadvantages and forces (push factors). Economic recession, high unemployment rates, and individual hardship in the home country have been identified as the dominant motivational factors that pushed expatriates out of their homelands (Doherty et al., 2011; Froese, 2011; Tharenou, 2010b).

On the other hand, the personal factors such as the expatriates’ willingness to travel, monetary gain, the international learning experience, and career advancement were identified as significant “pull” motivational factors in accepting the international assignment (Froese, 2011). In addition,
recent research explores expatriates’ motives by adopting a thematic approach. For example, Cerdin (2013), constructs 12 motivational factors based on previous research. Of these, the following ten “pull” motivational factors were identified:

- monetary considerations, family considerations (non-job related), normal career advancement patterns, professional development, personal challenge, importance of the job itself, future opportunities for advancement, encouragement from colleagues and superiors, encouragement from spouse or partner, and geographic host location of the assignment.

The two push motivational factors identified were: the desire to escape from a social or economic environment related to the home country, and the desire to escape from personal problems at home. In their work, Carr et al. (2005) propose five major motivational factors based on economic, political, cultural, family and career factors. As Carr et al. (2005) points out, economic and political factors represent the push factors that tend to impel individuals to escape their home countries. These two push factors reflect the social and economic aspects identified by Cerdin (2013) that lead individuals to seek to escape their home country. Carr et al. (2005) suggest that a cultural motivational factor works as a pull factor that attracts individuals to a specific host location, which is similar to the factor relating to the geographic host location of an assignment proposed by Cerdin (2013). In addition, in common with Cerdin (2013), Carr et al. (2005) suggest that career and family motivational factors are also significant pull factors in offering career development for individuals and opportunities for their family members to have a better life abroad. Therefore, host location-specific motivational factors, both economic and political, tend to constitute a positive pull attracting individuals towards particular countries that offer greater political and economic advantages. At the same time, they feel driven to escape from disadvantages in their homelands. On the other hand, Cerdin (2013) emphasizes, to a greater extent than Carr et al. (2005), personal motivational factors such as professional development, personal challenge, future opportunities for advancement and encouragement from colleagues and superiors, all of which represent pull factors while also supported by the push factor of the desire to escape personal problems at home. Both studies reveal the importance of a combination of career, host location and personal driving factors in assessing the extent to which expatriates are motivated, by either negative or positive forces, to go abroad.

Some research suggests seven motivational factors for expatriation that fit the “push-pull” model. The pull factors that they have identified encompass: Interest in internationalisation, desire for new experiences, professional development, career progression and economic benefits. They also identify motivational push factors as employer initiative and an unfavourable employment situation as the major ones. Similar to Carr et al. (2005) and Cerdin (2013) emphasize on the role of career and personal motivational factors; however, their study is silent on those motives that relate to the host location of the assignment.

In contrast, Doherty et al. (2011) highlight that motives relating to the host location of an assignment are significant motivational factors in driving individuals to relocate to a particular country. They propose that the seven “pull” components: host location, career, foreign experience, the host country, family benefits, host-home country relations, and personal relationships. Only a single component represents a “push” factor. Of the “pull” components, three are related to the host location of the assignment. They are host location, host country and host-home country relations. This indicates the importance of the target host location and, in particular, the country’s characteristics as primary “pull” motivational factors, that have a significant influence on the ultimate decision to work and live in a specific country. On the other hand, the push factor from the same study represents reasons for expatriates to escape some disadvantages in their home countries including poor employment and to distance themselves from personal problems. The motivational factors proposed by Doherty et al. (2011) were adopted from previous research conducted. We have summarized this push-pull nexus in Table 1 (see below):
Table 1. Summary of the “Push” and the “Pull” motivational factors experienced by expatriates. The bolded phrases are the push and pull factors as summarised by different scholars and researchers

| Study                        | Pull Motivational Factors                                                                 | Push Motivational Factors                                                                 |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cerdin (2013)                | (1) Monetary considerations, (2) family considerations (non-job related), (3) normal career advancement patterns, (4) professional development, (5) personal challenge, (6) importance of the job itself, (7) future opportunities for advancement, (8) encouragement from colleagues and superiors, (9) encouragement from spouse or partner and (10) geographic host location of the assignment. | (1) The desire to escape from a social or economic environment related to the home country and (2) the desire to escape from personal problems at home. |
| Carr et al. (2005)           | (1) Career factors, (2) family factors and (3) cultural factors.                          | (1) Economic factors and (2) political factors.                                           |
| Suutari and Brewster (2000)  | (1) Interest in internationalisation, (2) desire for new experiences, (3) professional development, (4) career progression and (5) economic benefits.                                                          | (1) Employer initiative and (2) an unfavourable employment situation.                   |
| Doherty et al. (2011)        | (1) Host location, (2) career, (3) foreign experience, (4) the host country, (5) family benefits, (6) host-home country relations and (7) personal relationships.                                            | (1) Poor employment and (2) to distance themselves from personal problems.            |

9. Most occurring themes

9.1. Development of push and pull hypotheses

Push factors refer to the negative conditions that impel individuals to escape dissatisfaction in their home country, which may be related to their personal or professional circumstances (Cerdin, 2013). SIEs tend to feel impelled to go abroad to a greater extent than their CAE counterparts when they are confronted with social or economic disadvantages, as well as by personal problems, at home. Unfavourable labour market conditions in the home country represent a very significant push factor that leads SIEs to seek work in other countries, even if they are not eager to relocate (Froese, 2011). Furthermore, the findings of Alonso-Garbayo and Maben (2009) reveal that low salaries in the home country represent a significant push factor for nurses travelling from the Philippines and India to work in countries such as Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

While push factors are found to be especially common as a root trajectory for expatriation among SIEs, some organisational practices may also be instrumental in the case of CAEs taking an assignment. These include the use of management power strategies over CAEs to compel them to accept international assignments even if they would prefer not to take on an international posting (Pinto et al., 2012). For example, findings reveal that over 60% of their CAE sample believed that they were compelled to accept the international assignment, even if they were unwilling to go abroad and they anticipated negative consequences from their employers if they rejected the assignment. Notwithstanding, we suggest push factors are more formative and central to the decision-making process of SIEs in arriving at the decision to go abroad. Therefore, we suggest:

Hypothesis 1: Push factors will be more dominant motivational factors among SIEs than among their CAE counterparts.

In contrast, pull factors are based on the positive motivations and expectations for the international assignment that literally pull or draw individuals towards expatriation, as opposed to pushing them to do so. The following section sets down the major pull factors derived from the extant literature, namely: host location, host-home relations, career, family and personal relationships considerations, and the desire for a foreign experience.
The host location of the international assignment is found to be a major influential factor in driving expatriation (see for example, Tharenou, 2010b; Thorn, 2009). The attraction of the particular host location is another significant factor in driving the decision to expatriate there. For example, Dickmann (2012) found in his study that SIEs were attracted by location specific motivational factors compared to their CAE counterparts. In addition, Ceric and Crawford (2016) suggest that location branding (originates from product branding in marketing) or offerings can have a large impact on SIEs' decision to travel not only to any country but to a specific city. Similarly, Doherty et al. (2011) findings reveal that the location of the international assignment was an influential motivational factor for SIEs'. To this end, each country/city has its unique attractions that influence expatriates' decisions to work and live in that particular context. Therefore, our second hypothesis reads as follows:

Hypothesis 2: SIEs will be more highly motivated by the host/location attractions than their CAE counterparts.

Beyond the importance of the assignment location, we also call to attention the role of the host-home relations as possible motivational factors which could influence CAEs and SIEs decisions to relocate and live around the globe. The literature on SIEs reveals that, there is a preference for expatriating to countries that have a culture, language and set of customs similar to their own (for example, Doherty et al., 2011; Myers, 2011). Such host-home relations manifest in the historical ties to former colonies, which are also another pull motivational factor for both CAEs and SIEs to work and live in some countries (Dickmann, 2012). According to Belot and Ederveen (2012), cultural proximity is a very significant factor when considering individual mobility between two countries and, moreover, it extends beyond economic differences (between sending and receiving countries) in terms of influence. In addition, the presence of cultural links, and a national community, functions as a means of networking in the host country and may increase its attractiveness (Alshahrani & Morley, 2015). For example, results from Danisman (2016) suggest that SIEs working in Turkey were found to be motivated to relocate by the cultural similarities between their homelands and Turkey. To this end, our third hypothesis reads:

Hypothesis 3: SIEs will be more highly motivated by the host-home relations dynamic than their CAE counterparts.

Similar to the host location of the assignment, an individual's career is also rated among the top motivational pull factors in expatriate mobility (Altman & Baruch, 2012; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009; Thorn, 2009). However, empirical findings indicate that prioritisation of career as a major motivational factor in expatriation varies among CAEs and SIEs. For example, findings from Doherty et al. (2011) reveal that career progression is a major reason for CAEs to expatriate, with financial considerations deemed as a secondary reason. On the other hand, some findings reveal that career is not a major motivational factor for SIEs, as they perceive their career to be part of their life trajectory rather than a major driver on its own (see for example, Doherty et al., 2011). One of the explanations for SIEs to be less motivated by their career is possibly as a result of travelling abroad for various reasons other than work and the fact that they have a more fluid understanding of what career means and how it is interpreted.

SIEs typically perceive jobs as temporary and believe that career development may be accumulated through broader cultural experience rather than simply the work abroad. In addition, Thorn (2009) investigates motives and sub-motives for mobility among SIEs travelling from New Zealand. The findings suggest that career and economics motives were more important to men compared to women. Women were motivated to travel abroad more due to the cultural and travel opportunities and relationships. It is also evident from the expatriation literature, that SIEs may be of a type who have encountered many employment and professional-based barriers in the host
country and as result, SIEs have been found to be working in unrelated professions or in lower-skilled jobs (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010). Therefore, our fourth hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 4: CAEs will be more highly motivated by career considerations than their SIE counterparts.

While the growth of an expatriate’s career is a significant motivational factor for going abroad, the expatriate’s family is another critical consideration for a suite of reasons, especially for career persons who are married or are in a committed relationship (Lazarova et al., 2010). A significant amount of research has also sought to unearth the cross-culture challenges confronting CAEs and the role of their families/spouses prior, during and after their moving abroad (see for example, Kraimer et al., 2016; Takeuchi, 2010). Similarly, SIEs perceive the international assignment as a highly risky decision for their accompanying family, especially in culturally distant contexts (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

In addition, findings from Selmer and Lauring (2010) reveal that considerations related to family and spouses are among the most significant motivational factors of SIEs deciding to go abroad. However, the role of SIEs’ families during the international assignment is under-researched. Despite, some findings reveal that SIEs adjust better to the host culture and have higher levels of interaction with host-country nationals than CAEs (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). What is clear is that SIEs have substantial responsibilities in terms of assessing both their professional and their family needs in deciding future international relocation, especially regarding novel and culturally distant contexts. Meanwhile, CAEs and their families often rely on the corporate sponsor to provide at least partial organisational support in relation to work and family issues. This leads to our fifth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: SIEs will be more highly motivated by family and personal considerations than their CAE counterparts.

The fundamental desire for foreign experience is another significant motivational factor as it offers expatriates many and varied opportunities such as adventure, career development, exploration, building of self-confidence and skills acquisition (Doherty et al., 2011; Mayrhofer et al., 2008). To clarify the difference between foreign experience and career as key motivators for expatriation, the first represents vital assets accumulated from work and non-work-related mobility, whereas the latter is typically associated with experiences gained from working abroad. As it is evident from the expatriation literature, such foreign experience helps expatriates to be more open-minded and improves their creative-thinking abilities (Fee & Gray, 2012) and acts as moderators to expatriates’ cross-culture adjustment.

In the context of CAEs, there is evidence that internationalism, which refers to “the state or process of being international” (Stevenson, 2010, p. 914), is an intrinsic motivational factor, leading individuals to accept international assignments because they believe that the foreign experience will have a positive impact on their personal and career objectives (Cerdin & Pargneux, 2010). In contrast, SIEs are found to be highly driven individually by strong intrinsic personal motivational factors (Froese, 2011). For example, findings from Doherty et al. (2011) indicate that SIEs are highly attracted to foreign experience by their personal motivational factors including their personal ability to explore the world and a confidence in their capacity to work and live abroad. On the other hand, CAEs perceive the foreign experience as a way of developing their individual and organisational careers (Doherty et al., 2011). In addition, Rahman (2011) found that the need to travel, seek adventure and pursue these changes, for the expatriate’s family, as a life experience and for personal learning are among the significant motivational factors for SIEs in expatriating. The findings also reveal that SIEs are more likely to demonstrate a stronger tendency to work in
foreign countries and be more willing to reside permanently in these countries compared to CAEs. Therefore, the final hypothesis we offer is:

Hypothesis 6: SIEs will be more highly motivated by the desire for foreign experience than their CAE counterparts.

10. Methodology

10.1. Procedure and sample

The sample in this study is based on a dataset that was collected in 2014 and published in (Alshahrani & Morley, 2015) This inter-cohort study involved the nine most commonly used banks in Saudi Arabia: National Commercial Bank, Riyadh Bank, Al Rajhi Banking Corporation, Samba Bank, Banque Fransi, the Saudi British Bank, National Bank of Bahrain, Muscat Bank, and Deutsche Bank.

These banks represent a third of the total banks currently licensed in Saudi Arabia. Hence simple random sampling A survey instrument was used and pilot-tested to obtain data through questionnaires that were administrated to CAEs and SIEs through their banks’ HR departments. In 2012, a total of 650 questionnaires were distributed by the HR departments of each bank to expatriates working in six local and three foreign banks operating in Saudi Arabia. Of these, 460 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 70% response rate. Subsequently, 42 responses were excluded as a result of being incomplete resulting in a final 418 usable questionnaires made up of 377 (90%) male and 41 (10%) female respondents. Among those respondents, 344 (82%) were SIEs and 74 (18%) were CAEs.

Table 2 presents the summary demographic data for all participants. The weighted mean age for all respondents is 39.6 years (n = 418). Data shows that the average ages for males and females in this study are 40.2 (n = 377) years and 33.4 (n = 41) years old respectively. The CAE group are slightly younger than their SIE counterpart as the weighted mean age is 37 years (n = 74) and 40 years (n = 344) respectively.

Participants comprise 27 nationalities. Indians are the largest group within the SIEs cohort, whereas British expatriates are the largest within the CAEs cohort. Table 2 also reveals that a majority of participants were married (77%, n = 418) with the remainder (23%) being single. However, most CAEs and SIEs were married, at 64% (n = 74) and 80% (n = 344) respectively. Some 58.1% of CAE’s and 43.9% of SIEs had prior foreign experience. P values represent the significance levels. The significance levels are decreasing, with lower significance levels the data is more significant to the null hypothesis. With the p values being greater, they have no effect on the data presented.

11. Measures

In order to overcome the ambiguity around the definitions of CAEs and SIEs, as highlighted in the literature review above, to determine their status as either SIEs or CAEs, participants were asked to answer the following question: “How did you get your first job in Saudi?” Listed options included: “I was sent by my employer overseas to work in Saudi Arabia,” “I was sent by my employer but I quit and I am on my own,” “I was seeking employment internationally of my own volition,” and, “If other, please specify.” Motivational factors were measured through eight interlinked elements. The motivational factors to go abroad for CAEs and SIEs were measured through adapting the eight components derived from Doherty et al.’s (2011) pull and push motivational factors model. Participants were asked to indicate how much influence each of the of factors had on their decision to work abroad. A seven-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from (1) “No influence” to (7) “Very great influence”.

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# Table 2. Demographic data summary (n = 418)

| Category                      | CAEs (n = 74) | SIEs (n = 344) | Total |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------|
| **Gender**                    |               |                |       |
| M                             | 70            | 307            | 377   |
| F                             | 4             | 11             | 15    |
| **Marital status**            |               |                |       |
| Married                       | 47            | 212            | 259   |
| Single                        | 27            | 20             | 47    |
| **Accompanying family**       |               |                |       |
| Yes                           | 35            | 212            | 247   |
| **With Children**             |               |                |       |
| Yes                           | 43            | 243            | 286   |
| **Spouses working**           |               |                |       |
| Yes                           | 7             | 36             | 43    |
| **Age**                       |               |                |       |
| (18–22)                       | 0             | 1              | 1     |
| (23–29)                       | 13            | 50             | 63    |
| (30–36)                       | 27            | 94             | 121   |
| (37–42)                       | 17            | 78             | 95    |
| (43–49)                       | 11            | 46             | 57    |
| (50–59)                       | 6             | 105            | 111   |
| (60+)                         | 0             | 30             | 30    |
| **Education**                 |               |                |       |
| Less than Bachelor            | 6             | 22             | 28    |
| Bachelor                      | 35            | 132            | 167   |
| Masters                       | 31            | 129            | 160   |
| Doctoral                      | 2             | 3              | 5     |
| **Cultural Background**       |               |                |       |
| Arab                          | 18            | 25             | 43    |
| Asian                         | 25            | 60             | 85    |
| Western                       | 33            | 82             | 115   |
| **Position**                  |               |                |       |
| Executive                     | 30            | 73             | 103   |
| Middle management             | 28            | 132            | 160   |
| **Occupation**                |               |                |       |
| Non-supervisory/ trainee      | 0             | 3              | 3     |
| Technical/ Specialist         | 11            | 31             | 42    |
| Management                    | 25            | 134            | 159   |
| Consultancy                   | 7             | 19             | 26    |
| Financial                     | 14            | 124            | 138   |
| Technical                     | 14            | 91             | 105   |
| Engineering                   | 14            | 50             | 64    |

(Continued)
|                                | CAEs (n = 74) | SIEs (n = 344) | Total  |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
|                                | n  | %  | n  | %  | N  | %  |
| **Gender**                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| F                              | 4  | 5  | 37 | 11 | 41 | 10 |
| **Working Experience in Saudi**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1 to 2 Years                   | 13 | 17.6 | 61 | 17.7 | 74 | 17.7 |
| 3 to 5 Years                   | 41 | 55.4 | 99 | 28.8 | 140 | 33.5 |
| 6 to 10 Years                  | 17 | 23 | 86 | 25 | 103 | 24.6 |
| 11 to 16                       | 3  | 4.1 | 98 | 28.5 | 101 | 24.2 |
| **Working for the same company**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 21.995**                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Yes                            | 65 | 87.8 | 203 | 59 | 268 | 64.1 |
| **Number of the companies worked for in Saudi**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 22.149**                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Single employer                | 65 | 87.8 | 203 | 59 | 268 | 64.1 |
| 2 to 5                         | 9  | 12.2 | 135 | 39.2 | 144 | 34.4 |
| 6 to 20                       | 0  | 0  | 6  | 1.7 | 6  | 1.4 |
| **Same industry since arrived**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 8.810**                   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Yes                            | 70 | 94.6 | 276 | 80.2 | 346 | 82.8 |
| **Previous international experience**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 4.966*                   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Yes                            | 43 | 58.1 | 131 | 39.2 | 174 | 44.4 |
| **Total years of previous international work-related experience**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 11063(3)                 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Median                         | 2.5 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 2.5 | 0   |
| **Number of the previous international employers**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 11069(5)                 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Median                         | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0   |
| **Number of countries visited for work**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 10576(3)                 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Median                         | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0   |
| **Have previous general non-work-related experience**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 12.008**                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Yes                            | 31 | 41.9 | 219 | 63.7 | 250 | 59.8 |
| **Age when first international exposure**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 23.565**                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Younger than 10 Years          | 8  | 10.8 | 121 | 35.2 | 129 | 30.9 |
| 10-19 Years                    | 9  | 12.2 | 34 | 9.9 | 43 | 10.3 |
| 20-29 Years                    | 14 | 18.9 | 47 | 13.7 | 61 | 14.6 |
| 30+                            | 0  | 0  | 16 | 4.7 | 16 | 3.8 |
| **Total years of previous international non-work-related experience**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 10576(5)                 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Median                         | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1   |
| **Have a guaranteed job/assignment upon completing job in Saudi**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 260333(3)**             |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Yes                            | 62 | 83.8 | 94 | 4.1 | 76 | 18.2 |
| **Have information about the future role/responsibility upon completing job in Saudi**|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| χ² = 72346**                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Yes                            | 22 | 29.7 | 7  | 2  | 29 | 6.9 |
The first of these eight components was host location, which comprised of seven items: Saudi culture; desire to live in Saudi; standard of living in Saudi; desire to live in host city/location; ability to adapt to Saudi; balance between work and social life; and the possibility of gaining permanent residency in Saudi. Career as a driving motivation was also measured. It comprised of seven items, namely: Having the relevant job skills; the job offered; potential for skills development; impact on career; maintaining work networks with home country; expected length of stay; and personal financial impact. Foreign experience as a source of motivation was also measured and it included five items: desire for adventure; to see the world; confidence in your ability to work/live abroad; professional challenge of working abroad; and the opportunity to improve your language skills. The importance of the host country (Saudi Arabia) as a motivational factor comprised of four items: superior career opportunities in Saudi; reputation of Saudi in your area of work; reputation of Saudi being open to foreigners; and prestige of working in Saudi. Family benefits as a motivational factor comprised of only two items: better opportunity for your family; and the ability to support your family better abroad. The sixth component was the significance of host-home relations and it contained three items: close ties of your country of origin with Saudi; pre-departure preparation; and the opportunities to network in Saudi. The seventh factor was personal relationships and it encompassed four items; maintaining personal networks; to be with/near a lover; successful previous experience in foreign environment; and willingness of family/partner to move. Finally, the eighth component related to the push factors that are associated with the disadvantages in a home country, which pushed participants to expatriate. These were measured with two items, namely: poor employment situation at home and desire to distance yourself from a problem.

Demographic variables including age, gender, marital status, job level, education, cultural backgrounds and previous work-related foreign experience were used in the model testing in order to control their potential influence on the empirical findings. With regard to age, previous research suggests that SIEs are found typically to be younger than their CAE counterparts (see for example, Biemann & Andresen, 2010; Cerdin & Pargneux, 2010). Findings from Myers (2011) reveal that participant age is a significant factor that influences the perceived career orientations of young and old individuals. With respect to job level, it is evident that CAEs typically work in managerial and executive positions in contrast to their SIE counterparts (Andresen et al., 2014). In addition, nationality and cultural background are found to be significant factors in diminishing expatriates’ motivations to travel and live in certain host locations (see for example, Alonso-Garbayo and Maben, 2009; Myers, 2011). The role of gender is also evident in the literature in relation to the factors driving female expatriates to travel to certain host locations (Carr, 2010; Tharenou, 2010a) and the pattern of female participation is higher among SIEs than among their CAE counterparts (Tharenou, 2010b; Thorn, 2009). Moreover, empirical findings reveal that marital status and family commitments in the home country are significant factors that influence SIEs’ decisions to go abroad. For example, the findings from Tharenou (2010a) reveal that SIEs often have a greater willingness to relocate and pursue an international career when they have small families and few relationship commitments in their home country. Furthermore, the literature suggests that the level of education among SIEs differs from CAEs; findings indicate that large number of SIEs often travel abroad after high school during their “gap year”. Finally, the literature suggests that previous work-related foreign experience plays a significant learning experience role among CAEs in terms of accruing knowledge and building their international career. However, the same literature also indicates that SIEs often embark on an international career without prior foreign career experience or they are motivated to go abroad by non-work purposes (Al Ariss & Ozbilgin, 2010; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014).

12. The analytical procedure for testing the hypotheses
This analysis seeks to explore whether the set of the motivational factors are helpful to predicting an individual to be either a CAE or SIE. The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the Principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to validate a pull-push model of motivations governing the decision to expatriate. Five factors (See, Table 3) emerged from the PCA. (The step-by-step PCA is available from the first author upon request)
12.1. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

The six hypotheses formulated were subsequently tested by means of logistic regression analysis using a forward stepwise procedure and the Wald coefficient to determine the significance level. The logistic regression obtains odds ratio where there is more than one explanatory variable. The variables include age, gender, marital status, position level, level of education and cultural background. Firstly, dichotomous coding was used to label the expatriate cohort types (CAEs = 0; SIEs = 1). Secondly, the control variables age, gender, marital status, position level, level of education, cultural background and previous work-related foreign experience were entered in block 1. Finally, the motivational factors/career orientations were entered in block 2, to test Hypotheses 1 through 6 on inter-group differences on motivations. Table 4 presents the inter-correlations of all ordinal variables in this study using Spearman’s rank (rho) correlation coefficient in order to explore the collinearity among the independent variables. All correlations coefficients between predictor variables are below 0.7 indicating that collinearity is not an issue (Dormann et al., 2013).

### Table 3. Motivational factors PCA

| Factor                                      | Component | Loading |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| **(F1) Location**                           |           |         |
| 1. Desire to live in Saudi                  |           | .629    |
| 2. Saudi culture                            |           | .755    |
| 3. Your ability to adapt to the            |           | .691    |
| 4. Standard of living in Saudi              |           | .797    |
| 5. Desire to live in host city/location     |           | .598    |
| 6. Balance between work and social life    |           | .614    |
| **Host**                                    |           |         |
| Expected length of stay                     |           | .551    |
| Reputation of Saudi being open to foreigners|           | .575    |
| Prestige of working in Saudi                |           | .683    |
| Opportunities to network in Saudi          |           | .559    |
| Close ties to your country of origin with Saudi | | .513 |
| **(F2) Family and Personal relationships** |           |         |
| Successful previous experience in a foreign environment | | .586 |
| Willingness of family/partner to move abroad | | .683 |
| Maintaining personal networks               |           | .698    |
| Maintaining work networks with the home country | | .684 |
| Pre-departure preparation                   |           | .580    |
| **(F3) Career**                             |           |         |
| Professional challenge of working abroad    |           | .619    |
| Impact on career                            |           | .781    |
| Potential for skills development            |           | .812    |
| **(F4) Push**                               |           |         |
| Poor employment situation at home           |           | .847    |
| To distance yourself from a problem         |           | .837    |
| The job you were offered                    |           | .516    |
| **(F5) Foreign Experience**                 |           |         |
| To see the world                            |           | .726    |
| Confidence in your ability to work/live abroad | | .551 |
| Desire for adventure                        |           | .688    |
The Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient is used for the table below.

The logistic regression has seven control variables in the first block. The five motivational factors produced by the PCA and set out in Table 3, namely, host location, push, family and personal relationships, career and foreign experience were entered in the second block. The Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients ($\chi^2 = 67.173$, $p < 0.001$) indicated that the model performed well after adding one motivational factor using the forward stepwise (Wald) method. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test indicated that the model yielded a good fit ($\chi^2 = 5.679$, $p = 0.683$). The model as a whole explained between 15% (Cox and Snell's R-square) and 25% (Nagelkerke R-square) of the variance with respect to expatriate type, namely whether CAE or SIE. It correctly classified 85% of cases, which indicates strong prediction value. Table 5 below presents the push factor test.

Age ($p = 0.027$), marital status ($B = 0.863$, $p = 0.019$) and position level ($B = -2.582$, $p < 0.001$) made significant contributions to the model. On the other hand, none of the remaining control variables made any unique contribution. Moreover, among the five motivational factors, the push variable ($B = 0.492$, $p = 0.002$) emerged as the strongest predictor of the expatriate cohort type (CAEs vs. SIEs) after controlling for age, gender, marital status, position level, level of education, cultural background and previous work-related foreign experience. The positive results of $B = 0.492$ and Odds Ratio (OR) of 1.64 at the 95% confidence interval (1.19, 2.24) reveal that push factors are more dominant motivational factors among SIEs than CAEs and therefore H1 is supported.

Table 6 reveals that none of the pull motivational factors, namely, host location, family and personal relationships, career and foreign experience, made any significant contribution to the model and, were not able to predict expatriate cohort type successfully. Therefore, the pull-related motivational factors explicated in H 2, 4, 5, and 6 respectively were not supported. Table 7 presents a summary of the hypotheses testing results for motivational factors among CAEs and SIEs.

### 13. Discussion

This study sought to investigate the motivational factors of SIEs and CAEs in travelling to and living in Saudi Arabia. It makes a significant conceptual and empirical contribution to the literature on SIEs' and CAE's motivations and career orientations and enables us to better understand the impact of the push and pull factors that are informing SIE and CAE expatriation decisions. A dominant finding of this study is that the motivational factors of both SIEs and CAEs are better explained by various personal and professional variables as opposed to their mere status as an expatriate.

In developing the argument underpinning this study, we reviewed the literature relating to expatriates' motivational factors for going abroad using the lens of the dominant “push-pull” factors, as proposed by Doherty et al. (2011), to formulate six hypotheses. In a first step, the analysis involved PCA to contextually validate the motivational factors proposed by Doherty et al. (2011). Five push factors emerged from this analysis, namely: host location, career, family and relationships, and the foreign experience. To test the impact of each motivational factor, a logistic regression analysis was then applied, while controlling for age, gender, marital status, position level, level of education, cultural background, and previous work-related foreign experience.

The results revealed that three control variables made significant contributions to the model namely: age, marital status and position level. This study makes an important methodological contribution to the literature on SIEs by not only providing insight into the lesser-researched Saudi Arabian context, but also utilizing data from a diverse sample population of cultures and demographics. This offers richer data than focusing on more homogenous populations, as it allows us to a diverse range of push-pull factors and where similarities and differences lie between sectors of the sample population.
Table 4. Correlations for all ordinal variables (n = 418)

| Variables                          | 1         | 2         | 3         | 4         | 5         | 6         | 7         | 8         | 9         |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 Age of participant               | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 2 Previous work-related international experience | .233**   | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 3 Level of position                | .184**    | .185**    | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 4 Level of Education               | .076      | .255**    | .269**    | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |
| 5 Location—Host Pull Factors       | .015      | −.168**   | −.098*    | −.117*    | 1         |           |           |           |           |
| 6 Family and Personal Relationships Pull Factors | −.065    | .043      | .036      | −.026     | .100*     | 1         |           |           |           |
| 7 Career Pull Factors              | −.128**   | .038      | .053      | −.024     | −.019     | .014      | 1         |           |           |
| 8 Push Factors                     | −.115*    | −.243**   | −.209**   | −.104*    | .103*     | .036      | −.011     | 1         |           |
| 9 Foreign Experience Pull Factors  | .017      | .029      | .080      | .065      | .035      | .041      | .010      | .054      | 1         |
On the other hand, this study examines a single profession and industry: banking. By focusing on one sector, the study offers a more targeted analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the perceived career orientations among SIEs in this area, while the diverse population enables us to better understand the range of perspectives within this sector.

The results revealed that the push factor was deemed to be the strongest motivational factor among the five factors in predicting the expatriate cohort type to be either CAE or SIE. The findings
from this inter-cohort study indicate support for the hypothesis that SIEs are more likely to be pushed to work abroad by negative factors in comparison with their CAE counterparts. Thus, given that the empirical findings from the literature presented above indicate that push factors such as the desire to escape personal, social or economic disadvantages in the home country are more prevalent among SIEs than CAEs (see for example, Cerdin, 2013). Findings from this study indicate support for the literature.

In relation to the pull motivational factors, namely host location, career, family and relationships, and the foreign experience, our inter-cohort analysis reveals interesting findings concerning the various motivational factors among CAEs and SIEs for working and living in Saudi Arabia. Of note, none of the pull motivational factors in this study could be used to predict expatriate type successfully, when controlling for other biographical characteristics. The push motivational factors variable is the strongest predictor.

“Previous research suggests that CAEs and SIEs can be distinguished based on a number of different pull motivational factors such as career (see for example, Doherty et al., 2011; Thorn, 2009), family and personal relationships (see for example, Vance & McNulty, 2014), host location (see, for example, Kim & Hammoudeh, 2013), and foreign experience (see for example, Froese, 2011). However, in this study none of these motivational factors emerged as significant in predicting either cohort. Two reasons may be suggested for these findings. First, the control variables in this study offer insights into the differences between participants in relation to their motivations, regardless of expatriate cohort type. The findings from the logistic regression analysis reveal that age, marital status, and seniority of the individual in their career made significant contributions to the motivational factors model; in that young, married participants and those who are working in more senior positions are more influenced by the motivational factors included in the model.

Secondly, given that much of the research on expatriates’ motives for mobility comes from a Western perspective, the context of this study presents unique characteristics such as employment-based opportunities and economic attractions that could be perceived as important pull motivational factors among individuals, regardless of their expatriate cohort type. The findings of this study emphasise the range of personal and professional factors that influence self-initiated expatriates’ migration. The Saudi Arabian context presents interesting challenges. Despite its cultural and religious restrictions, recent data show that the number of expatriates in Saudi Arabia is in fact increasing in response to it being an attractive location for certain economic and employment opportunities. Some empirical findings reveal that the majority of expatriates travelling to the Gulf Cooperation Council region, which includes Saudi Arabia, are attracted primarily by the job opportunities, free-tax environment and high salaries (Amblard et al., 2015; Scurry et al., 2013).” This suggests that a motivation for self-initiated expatriates globally can be purely economic at the expense of wider social or cultural attractiveness.

There is also a suggestion that concerns of security and stability could be a significant career orientation among SIEs specifically because of the socio-cultural framework of Saudi Arabia. This could be caused challenges in the host country, challenges in the SIE’s specific industry, as well as lack of external organisational support for SIEs.

The practical contribution of this study is found in the impact it could have on understanding of the motivational factors among CAEs and SIEs and their career orientations, which could enable organizations to more effectively attract and retain such talent. The context of this study places great pressure on managers dealing with CAEs and SIEs. For example, the findings from this research reveal that the pull dominant motivational factors among CAEs and SIEs in the current literature differ to some extent for expatriates living and working in the Saudi Arabian context. HR managers have considerable responsibility to explore these factors and understand the difference in managing these two cohorts. They must put in place human resource policies and management
tools that are able to distinguish between various expatriate cohort types, and to cater for their personal and professional needs accordingly.

14. Limitations and future research

First this study relies on a single survey carried out in 2013. It represents a snapshot of a highly complex phenomenon, especially in the case of knowledge concerning the workers and their motives behind the decision to go and live and work in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, this study draws its findings from data on expatriates only from the the banking sector, which could limit generalisation of its results to other sectors. Due to a range of barriers specific to the sector and the context, the size of the sample in this inter-cohort study remains small, particularly in the case of the sample of CAEs. It would be useful to target more than one sector to increase the sample of CAEs; however, this would limit our opportunity to investigate CAEs and SIEs working in a single sector. The reliance placed on Human Resource directors to distribute the study’s questionnaire is another limitation that requires acknowledgement in this research, but this was the only means available of reaching expatriates in the banking sector in Saudi Arabia.

The study also faced challenges directly related to its Saudi context. The lack of databases and repositories containing information about SIEs, especially within the banking industry, was a barrier for this research in Saudi Arabia. It is difficult to access information and there are no labor unions operating in the Kingdom that could be approached. Consequently, the research relied on participating banks, that agreed for their employees to be part of this research, to distribute and collect questionnaires for the target sample. This required negotiations with HR managers prior to research commencing concerning the number of questionnaires that the managers were able to distribute to participants and their willingness to participate. There was also an issue regarding digital security and certain banks not being comfortable about online completion of questionnaires in an industry that deals with sensitive financial and personal information.

A further matter related to the Saudi context that has affected this study is that migration by foreign expatriates to Saudi Arabia is limited to temporary work. The Kingdom has no immigration policies that allow individuals to immigrate permanently or for purposes other than work. For example, migration policies which attract highly qualified migrants to fill skill shortages in other countries, such as Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA, allow migrants to obtain permanent residency and citizenship are not available in Saudi Arabia. More research would be needed to explore the impact of this immigration policy on SIE and CAE motivations.

An additional limitation of this study is in respect of its methodology. The measures used to assess the motivational factors for SIEs travelling from different cultural backgrounds to countries such as Saudi Arabia should be redesigned to reflect the unique contextual issues and demographics. The model used in this study to collect data was primarily developed from a European perspective. Consequently, the motivational pull factors should be contextualised to reflect the specific characteristics and attractions of a particular country.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has presented the results and analysis of a comparative investigation of the motivational factors of conventional and self-initiated expatriates, of diverse demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, marital status) working in the banking sector in Saudi Arabia.

Following the collection and analysis of data based on questionnaires completed by study participants, the findings reveal that the motivations of each cohort, CAE as compared to SIE, can be distinguished by their motivational factors for migrating abroad. These factors are best explained by the personal and professional variables of each cohort, rather than their inherent status as an CAE or SIE. Echoing Scurry, Rodriguez & Bailouni, 2013, there is a call for researchers in this field to conduct within subgroup analyses of SIEs, rather than merely comparing and
contrasting this highly heterogenous cohort with conventional expatriates. The findings from this study illustrate the importance of conducting inter-cohort analyses that go beyond comparing and contrasting CAEs and SIEs to investigate relevant subgroups within these cohorts.

The most distinguishing aspects between CAE’s and SIEs is that the SIEs in this study were found to be promoted more heavily to move abroad by push factors compared with CAEs. This is in line with the literature that suggests that SEs tend to feel compelled to go abroad, and that this tends to be to a greater extent than their CE counterparts, when they are confronted by social or economic disadvantages or by personal problems at home. Interestingly, however, the study found that neither cohort was strongly motivated by pull factors for working and living in Saudi Arabia. This may be influenced by the control variables used in this study which may suggest that the demographics surveyed are more influenced by push motivational factors included in the model, as well as the specific Saudi context.

More research into potential pull factors, in addition to economic opportunities, that are related specifically to the Saudi context, such as religion, would broaden the results and enable a better understanding of why this may be the case, this study concludes that push motivational factors are the strongest predictor of SIE and CAE migration.

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