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*Careers in the
Cultural and
Creative Industries:
How Career
Differences
are Shaped by
Individual and Work
Characteristics*



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ABSTRACT

The importance of the cultural and creative industries (CCI), for instance for economic growth and innovation dynamics, is increasing globally. To foster the development of the CCI and the professional development of its entrepre-

neurs, insight into careers in the CCI is needed. Therefore, the current study investigates characteristics of careers in the CCI and linked this insight to motivational and behavioural aspects of professionals in the CCI and to characteristics of their work context. An online-survey with N=61 entrepreneurs working in the CCI in Germany is carried out (over a period of 8 months from October 2021 until June 2022). The mean age of the participating entrepreneurs was $M = 46.53$ years ($SD = 14.26$) and ranged from 23 years to 80 years. Concerning gender, 54.1% were female, 42.6% were male, and 1.6% were non-binary. A cluster analysis and an ANOVA are carried out to investigate how careers in the CCI differ regarding different career aspects and individual and work characteristics. The results indicate three clusters concerning the investigated career aspects 'proactive career behaviour', 'career success', 'career identity', and 'career aspirations': entrepreneurs with high values (close to sample average), entrepreneurs with very high values (above sample average) and entrepreneurs with moderate values (below sample average). These clusters differ concerning individual characteristics (particularly regarding innovative behaviour) and concerning work characteristics (particularly regarding job complexity). For practice, this study indicates the need to make entrepreneurs in the CCI aware of the importance of various individual and work characteristics for creating a successful career.

KEYWORDS: Career success, proactive career behaviour, career identity, career aspirations, innovative behaviour, informal learning

INTRODUCTION

The cultural and creative industries (CCI), which encompass 'enterprises that are mainly market-oriented and deal with the creation, production and/or dissemination through the media of cultural/creative goods and services' (Müller et al., 2011, p. 3), are an important contributor to the gross value, the economic growth, and the innovativeness of many countries (Chapain & Stryjakiewicz, 2017). For instance, in Germany, where the study was conducted, the total turnover increased by 25.20%, the gross value added increased by 35.56% equals an increase of 26,32% of the share of CCI in GDP) and the total workforce increased by 14.19% (cf. Benecke et al., 2023) during the last 10 years. Approximately, this is in accordance with Europe and North America as indicated by the share of CCI in GDP (Germany 2.9%, Europe 3.0% and North America 3.3%) (Lhermitte et al., 2015). This makes the CCI one of the most innovative sectors in the economy (Müller et al., 2009; Protogerou et al., 2017). The strong tendency towards creativity and innovation is a major difference to other industries (Mathieu, 2012; Pratt & Jeffcutt, 2009). In addition, what distinguishes the CCI from other sectors is its heterogeneity which is due to a broad spectrum of included branches, entrepreneurs from various backgrounds and with a variety of work tasks, and the high percentage of (solo-)self-employed professionals with short-term or project-based work contracts (cf. Birkel et al., 2021; Hartley et al., 2013; Matthieu, 2012). Entrepreneurs in the CCI are all persons who work in the CCI and make use of personal resources, such as individual creativity, skills, and talent to produce cultural and/or creative goods and services to generate revenue from cultural and creative activity (Anheier & Isar, 2008; Urb, 2019). Because of this high level of heterogeneity, the professionalization of the CCI as a sector and the professional development of its entrepreneurs are challenging. In this regard, an understanding of what characterises successful careers in the CCI and what characterises successful entrepreneurs in the CCI would be helpful (Schediwy et al., 2018). Because of the uniqueness of the CCI, the transferability of insight from other professional fields is of limited value (cf. Mathieu, 2012). In contrast to traditional views in career research expecting career progression in a single organization (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011), promotion in the CCI is often not secured by progression through organizational structures as in other sectors. Furthermore, the work of its entrepreneurs is foremost driven by their own values, their personal choices, and by commercializing their creative ideals or cultural work with a purpose for society (cf. Rae, 2007). In many cases, the aim of CCI entrepreneurs is to realise their cultural and creative aspirations to establish a positive social reputation through offering their creative professionalism (Albinsson, 2018).

Because of these differences of the CCI and its entrepreneurs compared to other sectors, special career aspects, individual characteristics of the entrepreneurs and work characteristics have to be taken into account when trying to fully depict careers of entrepreneurs in the CCI. With regard to career aspects, the current study thus focusses on career success (Dan et al., 2018; Li et al., 2014) to shed light on the current career situation as well as on career success (Dan et al., 2018; Li et al., 2014), proactive career behaviour, career identity, and career aspirations (Strauss et al., 2012) to shed light on entrepreneurs' future aspirations for proceeding career-wise. Furthermore, careers can be differentiated according to individual characteristics including motivational and behavioural aspects and work characteristics (cf. Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011). Both can influence career success, as previous research showed (e.g., Ballout, 2007; Dan et al., 2018). Due to the importance of innovation development in CCI the focus of the current study is on factors that can facilitate innovation development (Hammond et al., 2011). Thus, in the current for instance 'intrinsic task motivation' (Tierney et al., 1999) as a motivational aspect, 'innovative behaviour' (Messmann & Mulder, 2012) as a behavioural aspect as well as 'job complexity' (Zacher & Frese, 2011) and 'innovation climate' (De Jong, 2007) were selected as established facilitators of innovation processes.

In line with all these considerations, the aim of this study is to investigate what characterises successful careers and successful entrepreneurs in the CCI by means of taking a closer look at aspects of careers as well as individual and work characteristics that facilitate creative and innovative contributions. Therefore, our first research question will be: *(1) Which career types can be identified among entrepreneurs in the CCI?* In order to address this research question, a cluster analysis including all outlined career aspects will be performed. In a subsequent step, we will take a closer look at the identified clusters of career types by examining them with regard to the included individual and work characteristics to address our second research question: *(2) How do the identified career types differ with respect to individual characteristics work characteristics?*

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CAREER ASPECTS OF ENTREPRENEURS IN CCI

Career success can be described as a combination of positive mental feelings and actual achievements of individuals during their working life (Arthur et al., 2005). In this regard, it needs to be differentiated between objective and subjective career success (Abele et al., 2011; Heslin, 2005; Hughes, 1958).

Objective career success comprises indicators that are often seen as proxies for performance and that reflect socially shared norms, such as salary or status, which can be externally assessed through work records or by asking the employees (Abele et al., 2011; Heslin, 2005). However, objective measures may depict career success in the CCI inadequately because entrepreneurs in the CCI only partially seem to relate their success to their income or status (Paige & Littrell, 2002) but are rather interested in their creative outcome or social impact (Albinsson, 2018; Rae, 2007). Therefore, this study focuses on subjective career success. Subjective career success comprises entrepreneurs' satisfaction with their actual and anticipated career achievements over a longer time period and is oriented towards outcomes such as identity or competitiveness (Heslin, 2005).

Proactive career behaviour is widely acknowledged as essential for building a career and for facilitating positive career outcomes (Peng et al., 2021), particularly in a dynamic and unstable context such as the CCI where entrepreneurs need to manage their careers proactively. It includes different aspects of proactively managing one's future career, such as setting goals, developing work-relevant skills and abilities, building new networks, and seeking career advice (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998; Strauss et al., 2012). Claes and Ruiz-Quintanilla (1998) distinguished four proactive career behaviours: *Proactive career planning behaviour* comprises attempts of a person to explicitly make career changes (e.g., goal-setting, exploration of options), *proactive skill development behaviour* comprises the mastery of tasks relevant for one's job (e.g., increasing career-relevant skills and abilities, reputation building), *proactive consultation behaviour* comprises seeking help, support or advice from others, and *proactive network building* comprises initiatives to actively build interpersonal networks for help, advice, or support.

Career identity is closely connected to proactive career behaviour but focuses on the current career situation (Strauss et al., 2012). Meijers (1998) describes career identity as the continuously changing whole of identifying and idealizing social views about the self by exploring and experiencing the environment and by choosing specific values and norms that determine one's behaviour. These experiences are assimilated into relevant or useful flux structures of meanings in which individuals consciously establish links between their motivation and interests on the one hand, and their competencies and career roles on the other. As such, insight into career identity provides an understanding of how individuals deal with career concerns in their own way (Wendling & Sagas, 2022).

Career aspirations refer to the desire to select a specific career path and advance oneself within this career path (Gray & O'Brien, 2007; Khan & Sher-

wani, 2022; O'Brien, 1996). It can be described as a cluster of needs, motives, and behavioural intentions that individuals match with their aspired career field based on an assessment of their individual strengths and weaknesses and, thus, an estimation of the highest probability for attaining career success (Mayrhofer et al., 2005). Career aspirations were found to be a driver of proactive career behaviour by serving as an intrinsic motivator for enhancing one's own career (Khan & Sherwani, 2022).

THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND WORK CHARACTERISTICS FOR CAREERS IN THE CCI

As outlined above, the development of creative and innovative solutions plays a major role in the CCI. Therefore, based on research on creativity and innovation (e.g., Hammond et al., 2011) this chapter discusses the role of various relevant individual and work characteristics for driving the development of creative and innovative solutions in the CCI.

Intrinsic task motivation is a key factor for persistence at work (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022) and refers to individuals' inherent tendency to accomplish work tasks, for instance because they are enthusiastic or excited by their work itself (Amabile, 1988). Intrinsically motivated individuals do things out of interest, curiosity, enjoyment, and a desire to learn something regarding the work that is being performed (Amabile, 1988; Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is an important driver for creativity as it encourages individuals to focus primarily on ideas that are novel, original, and unique and display innovative behaviour without extrinsic incentives being present (Grant & Berry, 2011; Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006). This ultimately helps entrepreneurs in the CCI to seek creative solutions and develop innovative products and processes.

Psychological empowerment reflects an active orientation to one's work role and is described as a motivational construct manifested in the four cognitions meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). *Meaning* indicates to which degree individuals perceive their work as meaningful or significant. *Competence* indicates individuals' perceived level of work-related skills, abilities, and capabilities. *Self-determination* refers to individuals' perception of having choice and freedom concerning the accomplishment of their job. And *impact* refers to individuals' perception of how influential their work is for their organization, department, or field of work. Psychological empowerment results from positive individual experiences that are experienced by accomplishing work tasks successfully (Amor et al., 2021). As careers in CCI are often driven by entrepreneurs' values and personal choices (cf. Rae, 2007), psychological empowerment plays an important role for entrepreneurs' work engagement, their willingness to collaborate and to

champion their ideas, and ultimately their success in developing innovative outcomes (cf. Messmann & Mulder, 2012).

Innovative behaviour describes all physical and cognitive activities that are carried out during work in relation to the development of innovative outcomes (Messmann & Mulder, 2012). It considers both the creative phase as well as the implementation phase of innovation development and encompasses the exploration of innovation opportunities and the generation, promotion, and realization of innovative ideas (Messmann & Mulder, 2012; Thurlings et al., 2015;). Entrepreneurs that keep informed about their working field, resources and developments are more able to generate new ideas. If they promote those ideas and search for support to realise their ideas, the chance of innovative outcomes increases. In the CCI, innovative behaviour is particularly crucial for entrepreneurs as being creative and innovative are key elements for working successfully in this sector (cf. Chapain & Stryjakiewicz, 2017; Wohl, 2022).

Perspective taking refers to cognitive activities that individuals carry out in order to understand the viewpoints, preferences, values, and needs of others (Parker & Axtell, 2001). As such, it represents an individual's competence for building relationships with their peers (Ng et al., 2021). Engaging in perspective taking helps individuals to obtain a clearer and more integrative understanding of what types of ideas might be useful to clients, customers, or other stakeholders (Grant & Berry, 2011). Previous research indicates that perspective taking strengthens the association between intrinsic motivation and creativity (Grant & Berry, 2011) and facilitates helping behaviour and knowledge-sharing (Ciu & Li, 2021). Furthermore, research suggests that entrepreneurs who take various perspectives are able to assess ideas more appropriately with regard to the needs of others, which in turn can facilitate the promotion of an idea among colleagues and, consequently, the appropriate implementation and adoption of ideas (Somech & Khalaili, 2014).

Informal learning activities at work are cognitive activities as well as physical activities (which may again lead to cognitive activities) that are carried out, either individually or in social interaction, to facilitate the accomplishment of work tasks and that may lead to knowledge and/or competences. Informal learning activities occur at the workplace during daily work, in which learning and work processes are interwoven, and may be carried out deliberately or incidentally as well as individually or in social interaction (Mulder, 2013). Such activities have a low degree of structure, are initiated by the learner itself, and are independent of time and place (Kyndt et al., 2018; Watkins & Marsick, 1992; Mulder, 2013). Informal learning activities are crucial for high performance, professionalization and, consequently, for career success (de Grip, 2015). Previous

research also highlighted the importance of social learning activities for innovative behaviour and thus, the process of innovation development (Messmann et al., 2018; Widmann et al., 2019). This, in turn, implies that (solo-)self-employed entrepreneurs in the CCI must cooperate with colleagues in order to cover and coordinate the multiple interdependent tasks that need to be accomplished to successfully develop an innovative outcome (Widmann et al., 2019). For instance, by sharing knowledge with colleagues in their professional field, entrepreneurs can gain access to a broader knowledge-base and generate more ideas that may provide an opportunity to innovate. The current study thus focuses on social informal learning activities such as discussing, information sharing, and obtaining feedback, as these adequately reflect the outlined need of social interaction for innovation development and the importance of networks and collaboration for career success in the CCI (Lange, 2009; Pico-Saltos et al., 2021).

Job complexity is described as the extent to which work is difficult and, therefore, mentally demanding and requires a high skill level (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). In general, previous studies indicate that job complexity has positive effects on individuals' work outcomes (e.g., Hammond et al., 2011; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Jobs with complex tasks tend to be less characterised by routine tasks which increases the likelihood of innovation processes to occur (Nelson & Winter, 1982; Van der Vegt & Janssen, 2003). In addition, if entrepreneurs have to deal with a high level of job complexity on a daily basis this may enable them to focus more on work-related opportunities for challenging outdated routines through innovation development (Zacher & Frese, 2009). Furthermore, job complexity may foster career development because it tends to have a positive impact on individual resources such as an active life orientation, intellectual flexibility, mental health, and work motivation, all of which contribute to a more positive perception of work-related opportunities in the future (Zacher & Frese, 2011).

Innovation climate is defined as entrepreneurs' perception that their social work context encourages the development of innovations and provides a safe environment for innovative behaviour (De Jong, 2007). Innovation climate encompasses three dimensions (Anderson & West, 1998; De Jong, 2007): Participative safety refers to the perception to work in a non-threatening social work environment, *striving for excellence* describes the ambition among individuals to reach high task performance, and *support for innovation* refers to the mutual support of individuals for developing and introducing new things at work. As innovation development is a collaborative process, a supportive and safe climate is crucial for enabling individuals, such as entrepreneurs in the CCI, to contribute

to the generation, promotion, and implementation of innovative ideas (Hammond et al., 2011; Messmann & Mulder, 2020).

METHOD

SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

A cross-sectional online survey was carried out from October 2021 until June 2022. To gain access to professionals working in the CCI, the CCI associations of all German federal states were asked to distribute the questionnaire to their members and followers, for instance by e-mail. In addition, individuals that were listed in official registers of professionals working in the CCI (e.g. provided on communal homepages) were contacted personally by e-mail and asked for participation. Overall, $N = 61$ entrepreneurs in the CCI from Germany took place¹.

The mean age of the participating entrepreneurs was $M = 46.53$ years ($SD = 14.26$) and ranged from 23 years to 80 years². Concerning gender, 54.1% were female, 42.6% were male, and 1.6% were non-binary. Furthermore, 62.3% of the participants worked full-time (i.e., approximately 40 hours per week) and 36.7% worked part-time. Regarding their type of employment, 26.2% of the participants were employed in an organization, 38.3% were self-employed, and 35.0% worked as freelancers. Moreover, the participants worked in a variety of branches of the CCI (cf. Birkel et al., 2021), namely the music industry (18.3%), the book market (18.3%), the arts market (16.7%), the performing arts market (8.3%), the design industry (8.3%), the advertising market (6.7%), the architecture market (3.3%), the film industry (1.7%), the broadcasting industry (1.7%), the press market (1.7%), and others (15.0%).

INSTRUMENTS

Career success was measured with 8 items taken from Li et al. (2014). 5 items captured career satisfaction with actual and anticipated career attainments (e.g., 'I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career' Or 'I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my overall career goals'; Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$) and 3 items captured the perceived competitiveness within the CCI (e.g., 'There are many opportunities available for me in my work environment. '; = .69).

¹ The sample size (N) refers to the number of entrepreneurs that filled out the questionnaire.

² The mean (M) refers to the average value of a metric variable (i.e., age) within a sample; the corresponding standard deviation (SD) expresses how much individual values on average deviate from the sample mean.

³ Cronbach's Alpha (α) is a reliability coefficient that describes the overall consistency of a measure.

Proactive career behaviour was measured with a 13-item-instrument (Strauss et al., 2012) that captured activities relating to the management of one's future career. The instrument contains four sub-scales, that is, career planning (4 items, e.g., 'I engage in career path planning', = .90), skill development (3 items, e.g., 'I develop knowledge and skill in tasks critical to my future work life', = .82), career consultation (3 items, e.g., 'I make others aware of my work aspirations and goals', = .79), and network building (3 items, e.g., 'I am building a network of contacts or friendships I can call on for support', = .90).

Career identity was measured with a 4-item-scale (Strauss et al., 2012) that captured the extent to which entrepreneurs identify themselves with their career in the CCI (e.g., 'This career field has a great deal of personal meaning to me' or 'I strongly identify with my chosen career line', = .86).

Career aspirations was measured with a 5-item-scale (Strauss et al., 2012) that captured the desire of entrepreneurs to advance within their own career (e.g., 'I hope to become a leader in my career field' or 'I hope to move up through any organization or business I work in', = .85).

Intrinsic task motivation was measured with a 5-item-scale developed by Tierney et al. (1999) that captured the extent to which entrepreneurs enjoy solving problems and exploring new things at work (e.g., 'I enjoy creating new procedures for work tasks' or 'I enjoy finding solutions to complex problems', = .88).

Psychological empowerment was measured with a 12-item-scale developed by Spreitzer (1995) that captured entrepreneurs' work-related cognitions about meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (e.g., 'The work I do is very important to me', 'I am confident about my abilities to do my job', 'I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work' or 'My impact on what happens in my work environment is large', = .84).

Innovative behaviour was measured with 23 items adapted from Messmann and Mulder (2012) that captured physical and cognitive work activities that need to be carried out throughout the process of innovation development (e.g., 'Keeping up with structures and processes in the own work context', 'Discussing one's own ideas for changes with others' or 'Expressing new ideas on how to solve a problem at work', = .95).

Perspective taking was measured with a 4-item-scale developed by Grant and Berry (2011) that captured the extent to which entrepreneurs carry out activities to understand viewpoints of others (e.g., 'At work, I often imagine how other people are feeling' or 'On the job, I frequently try to take other people's perspectives', = .91).

Informal learning activities were measured with 8 items based on Luger

et al. (2012) and Decuyper et al. (2010). Respondents were asked to state how frequently they carried out a number of activities in collaboration with persons in their work-related network (e.g., giving feedback, discussing something critically, or sharing knowledge and information, = .93).

Job complexity was measured with a 4-item-scale developed by Zacher and Frese (2011) that captured the extent to which one's work is perceived as difficult and requires high-level skills (e.g., 'I often have to make very complicated decisions in my work' or 'I can use all my knowledge and skills in my work', = .79).

Innovation climate was measured with a 11-item-scale developed by De Jong (2007) that captured whether entrepreneurs felt stimulated and supported by their colleagues with respect to developing innovations (e.g., 'We provide each other with useful ideas to enable us to do a better job' or 'People I work with provide practical support for new ideas and their application', = .96).

The response options ranged from 1 = 'does not apply at all' to 6 = 'definitely applies' for career success, career identity, career aspirations, intrinsic task motivation, psychological empowerment, perspective taking, job complexity, and innovative climate and from 1 = 'never' to 6 = 'very often' for proactive career behaviour, innovative behaviour, and informal learning activities. A few items were adapted to fit the unique characteristics of the CCI. For instance, 'organization' was changed to 'work environment' and 'colleague(s)' and 'supervisor(s)' to 'others' as a more open term that captures the high percentage of self-employed entrepreneurs.

Based on previous research and the unique characteristics of the CCI, the following background variables were included. *Salary* was measured as an indicator of objective career success and contained response options from 1 = '0-500€' to 12 = 'more than 10.000€'. To consider the heterogeneity of the CCI, information about entrepreneurs' particular *branch* within the CCI (cf. Birkel et al., 2021), their *type of employment* ('employee'/'(solo-) self-employee'/'freelancer'), their *employment status* ('full-time'/'part-time'), and their *age* was gathered.

ANALYSES

For the identification of differences regarding careers in the CCI, a hierarchical cluster analysis⁴ including career success, proactive career behav-

⁴ A cluster analysis is a statistical test for grouping a set of subjects or objects in such a way that subjects/objects in the same group (called cluster) are more similar to each other (i.e., because they have some predefined characteristics in common) than to those subjects/objects in other groups (clusters). The single-linkage approach and the ward method are approaches that precisely determine how a cluster analysis is conducted:

our, career identity, career aspirations as cluster variables was conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (cf. Yim & Ramdeen, 2015). To eliminate statistical outliers, a single-linkage approach was used. The ward approach was used to allow for approximate clusters. In a next step, a latent class analysis (LCA)⁵ was performed in Mplus 8 (cf. Geiser et al., 2012) to validate the results of the hierarchical cluster analysis. Finally, an analysis of variance (ANOVA)⁶ was conducted at cluster level to compare the clusters concerning all included career aspects and, subsequently, regarding the individual and work characteristics that were included to enable a descriptive comparison of the clusters.

RESULTS

DIFFERENCES IN CAREER ASPECTS

The results of the cluster analysis indicated that a solution with three clusters, which differed significantly with regard to all included career aspects, was most adequate for distinguishing different types of careers in the CCI. With regard to the LCA, the bootstrapped likelihood ratio test⁷ also suggested that a three-cluster solution is most adequate (entropy⁸ = .97). The classification probabilities for the three-cluster solution ranged from .957 for cluster 1 to .998 for cluster 3. Figure 1 illustrates the cluster means for all career aspects (depicted in z-scores). In addition, Table 1 contains the results of the corresponding ANOVA showing that all clusters differed significantly from each other and that cluster 2 had the highest mean values regarding career aspects, followed by cluster 1 and cluster 3.

1) The single-linkage approach tends to produce long, thin clusters in which nearby elements of the same cluster have small distances.

2) The ward method minimizes the total within-cluster variance in order to identify the pair of clusters that leads to a minimum increase in total within-cluster variance after merging.

5) A latent class analysis (LCA) is a type of probabilistic cluster analysis. In contrast to other cluster analyses, which are typically used as a first step to identify clusters within the sample, LCA assigns probabilities to each individual subject/object for belonging to different clusters. This allows for a more detailed analysis of cluster membership.

6) An analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical test that is used to determine whether two or more sample means are equal or whether they significantly differ. The statistical parameters of an ANOVA are

1) The *F*-statistic is the ratio of the between group variation and the within group variation. A large *F*-value means the between-group variation is larger than your within-group variation.

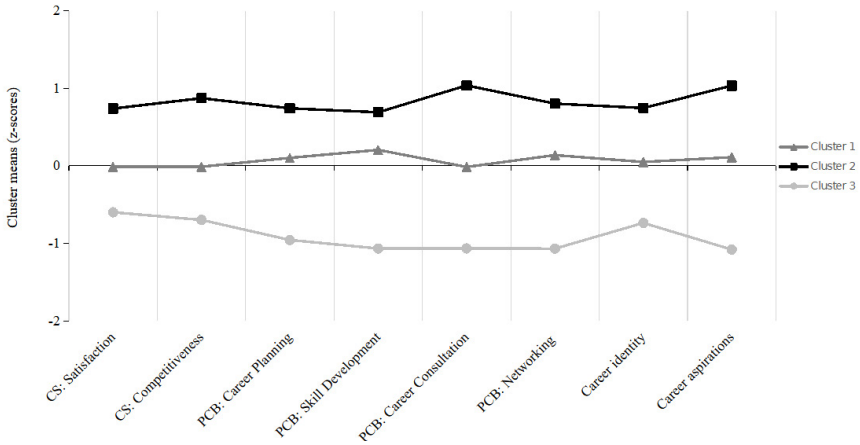
2) The *p*-value represents whether differences, such as those expressed by the *F*-value, are statistically significant at a predefined significance level.

3) Eta² describes the effect size of the analysis. A large eta² means a strong difference between the means.

7) The bootstrapped likelihood ratio test is a statistical test in the context of an LCA to analyse the difference between two competing cluster solutions (e.g., 4-cluster solution vs. 3-cluster solution).

8) The entropy is an indicator for the reliability of a classification in an LCA model. Values close to 1 indicate overall high confidence in the classification, while values close to 0 indicate high uncertainty.

Figure 1
Cluster profiles for careers of entrepreneurs in CCI



With regard to the emerging cluster profiles, cluster 1 ($n = 27$) entailed entrepreneurs with moderate to high values for all career aspects. Specifically, the entrepreneurs in cluster 1 had moderate to high values for career identity and career success but only moderate values for career aspirations. Regarding proactive career behaviour, entrepreneurs in cluster 1 had a focus on skill development and networking but were only moderately engaged in career planning and career consultation. With values ranging from $M = 3.36$ ($SD = 1.03$) to $M = 4.97$ ($SD = 0.90$), the means regarding career aspects in cluster 1 were similar to the overall sample means.

Cluster 2 ($n = 16$) entailed entrepreneurs with very high values for all career aspects. With values ranging from $M = 4.78$ ($SD = 0.74$) to $M = 5.73$ ($SD = 0.36$), the means regarding career aspects in cluster 2 were approximately one standard deviation above the overall sample means.

Cluster 3 ($n = 18$) entailed entrepreneurs with low to moderate values for all career aspects. Specifically, they had especially low values for career aspirations and moderate values for most other aspects, but rather high values for competitiveness (as a dimension of career success) and career identity. With values ranging from $M = 2.18$ ($SD = 0.69$) to $M = 4.11$ ($SD = 1.25$), the means regarding career aspects in cluster 3 were approximately one standard deviation below the overall sample means.

With respect to the included background variables, the three clusters did not differ concerning salary, employment status, and entrepreneurs' branch. The clusters, however, differed significantly regarding age with entrepreneurs in cluster 2 being the youngest, followed by entrepreneurs in cluster 1 and cluster 3 (see Table 1). Moreover, concerning type of employment the number

of freelancers, (solo-)self-employees, and employees was rather balanced in cluster 1, whereas in cluster 2 there were twice as many (solo-)self-employees than employees (and only 1 freelancer). And in cluster 3, the number of freelancers was the highest, while there was a lower number of (solo-)self-employed entrepreneurs and an even smaller number of employees.

Table 1
Results of ANOVA and descriptive statistics of career aspects

Variable			Cluster 1 (n=27)		Cluster 2 (n=16)		Cluster 3 (n=18)		
	F (2,57)	p	2	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Career success: Satisfaction	9.44	<.001	.25	3.91	.94	4.78	.74	3.23	1.34
Career success: Competitiveness	15.58	<.001	.35	4.60	.80	5.48	.56	3.93	1.00
PCB: career planning	21.61	<.001	.43	3.97	1.15	4.84	.93	2.54	.98
PCB: skill development	24.04	<.001	.45	4.65	.98	5.27	.90	3.03	1.07
PCB: career consultation	48.02	<.001	.62	3.36	1.03	4.79	.73	1.93	.62
PCB: Networking	31.21	<.001	.51	4.25	1.22	5.27	.64	2.39	1.19
Career identity	13.16	<.001	.08	4.97	.90	5.73	.36	4.11	1.25
Career aspirations	52.53	<.001	.64	3.95	1.07	5.31	.77	2.18	.69
Salary ¹	.496	.612	.02	3.77	1.34	4.21	1.76	3.47	1.96
Branch ¹	2.863	.067	.11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Type of employment ¹	4.092	.023	.15	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employment status ¹	.71	.496	.03	-	-	-	-	-	-
Age ¹	3.389	.042	.13	45.27	14.14	41.94	13.70	53.19	13.41

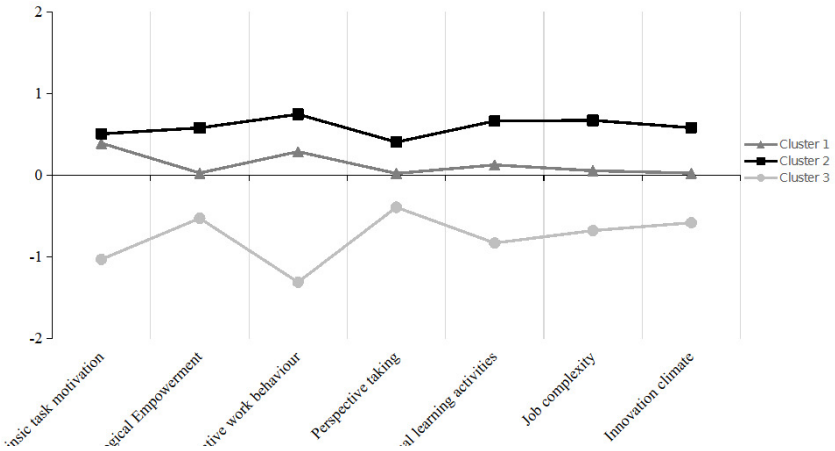
Note. PCB = proactive career behaviour. ¹df for controls = F (2,46); N for controls = 49 (13 in cluster 3, 14 in cluster 2 and 22 for cluster 1).

DIFFERENCES IN INDIVIDUAL AND WORK CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 2 shows the descriptive comparison between the three clusters regarding individual and work characteristics (z-scores of the cluster means are depicted). In addition, Table 2 contains the results of the correspond-

ing ANOVA showing in accordance with the results regarding career aspects that mean values in cluster 1 are similar to the overall sample means while the mean values in cluster 2 and cluster 3 were approximately one standard deviation above respectively below the overall sample means.

Figure 2
Cluster profiles for entrepreneurs' individual characteristics and work characteristics



The sample size (N) refers to the number of entrepreneurs that filled out the questionnaire.

² The mean (M) refers to the average value of a metric variable (i.e., age) within a sample; the corresponding standard deviation (SD) expresses how much individual values on average deviate from the sample mean.

³ Cronbach's Alpha (α) is a reliability coefficient that describes the overall consistency of a measure.

⁴ A cluster analysis is a statistical test for grouping a set of subjects or objects in such a way that subjects/objects in the same group (called cluster) are more similar to each other (i.e., because they have some predefined characteristics in common) than to those subjects/objects in other groups (clusters). The single-linkage approach and the ward method are approaches that precisely determine how a cluster analysis is conducted:

The single-linkage approach tends to produce long, thin clusters in which nearby elements of the same cluster have small distances.

The ward method minimizes the total within-cluster variance in order to identify the pair of clusters that leads to a minimum increase in total within-cluster variance after merging.

⁵ A latent class analysis (LCA) is a type of probabilistic cluster analysis. In contrast to other cluster analyses, which are typically used as a first step to identify clusters within the sample, LCA assigns probabilities to each individual subject/object for belonging to different clusters. This allows for a more detailed analysis of cluster membership.

⁶ An analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical test that is used to determine whether two or more sample means are equal or whether they significantly differ. The statistical parameters of an ANOVA are

The F -statistic is the ratio of the between group variation and the within group variation. A large F -value means the between-group variation is larger than your within-group variation.

The p -value represents whether differences, such as those expressed by the F -value, are statistically significant at a predefined significance level.

Eta² describes the effect size of the analysis. A large eta² means a strong difference between the means.

⁷The bootstrapped likelihood ratio test is a statistical test in the context of an LCA to analyse the difference between two competing cluster solutions (e.g., 4-cluster solution vs. 3-cluster solution).

⁸The entropy is an indicator for the reliability of a classification in an LCA model. Values close to 1 indicate overall high confidence in the classification, while values close to 0 indicate high uncertainty.

Individual Characteristics

Entrepreneurs in cluster 1 and cluster 2 were more intrinsically motivated explore new things at work than entrepreneurs in cluster 3. Entrepreneurs in cluster 1 and cluster 2 however did not differ significantly regarding their intrinsic task motivation ($F(1,41) = .48, p = .49$). **Furthermore, the results showed that the entrepreneurs in cluster 2 were significantly more psychologically empowered than entrepreneurs in cluster 1 as well as entrepreneurs in cluster 3, who felt significantly less psychologically empowered than entrepreneurs in the other two clusters. Moreover, entrepreneurs in cluster 2 had significantly higher levels of work engagement (as indicated by their levels of innovative behaviour, informal learning activities, and perspective taking) than entrepreneurs in cluster 1 as well as entrepreneurs in cluster 3 who showed significantly less work engagement than entrepreneurs in both cluster 1 and cluster 2.**

Work Characteristics

Differences were also found regarding the work environments of the entrepreneurs in the three clusters. That is, the jobs of entrepreneurs in cluster 2 were significantly more complex than of entrepreneurs in cluster 1 and cluster 3. Likewise, entrepreneurs in cluster 2 perceived their work climate as significantly more innovative compared to entrepreneurs in cluster 1 and cluster 3. Again, the levels of both job complexity and innovative climate were significantly lower in cluster 3 than in both other clusters.

Table 2

Results of ANOVA and descriptive statistics of individual characteristics and work characteristics

Variable			Cluster 1 (n=27)		Cluster 2 (n=16)		Cluster 3 (n=17)		
	F (2, 57)	p	2	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Intrinsic task motivation*	22.62	<.001	.44	5.36	.55	5.48	.53	3.87	1.16
Psychological empowerment	6.61	.003	.19	5.02	.55	5.40	.41	4.65	.86

Variable			Cluster 1 (n=27)		Cluster 2 (n=16)		Cluster 3 (n=17)		
Innovative behaviour	30.15	<.001	.51	4.62	.71	5.05	.42	3.11	1.00
Perspective taking	2.42	.116	.07	4.82	1.32	5.27	.68	4.35	1.09
Informal learning activities	12.51	<.001	.31	4.46	.89	5.11	.80	3.30	1.34
Job complexity	9.43	<.001	.25	4.61	1.04	5.27	.64	3.83	.97
Innovation climate	6.52	.003	.19	4.45	1.29	5.16	.95	3.66	1.24

Note. *No difference between cluster 1 and 2.

DISCUSSION

In the current study, we investigated how aspects of careers differ between entrepreneurs working in the CCI in Germany. Besides a range of career aspect, we investigated several individual characteristics and work characteristics to gain an in-depth understanding of how differences between careers may come about. By this means, we aimed to add to the understanding of how careers in CCI are characterised and what makes successful entrepreneurs in the CCI. These findings can be used to foster the professionalization of the CCI and the professional development of its entrepreneurs, for instance, by designing interventions that focus on fostering key individual characteristics, such as entrepreneurs' engagement in innovative behaviour or informal learning activities. Three types of clusters representing careers in the CCI were identified. While the first cluster had moderate to high levels for all investigated career aspects as well as the included individual and work characteristics, the values of the other two clusters were substantially lower or higher across all investigated variables. Beyond these broad differences in level, our results furthermore showed that the clusters significantly differed with regard to all career aspects and individual characteristics and, to a lesser extent, regarding work characteristics, which seem to be less important for explaining differences between careers in the CCI than are individual characteristics and career aspects. The strongest differences between types of careers were found concerning career aspirations and career consultation and networking as two proactive career behaviours. Regarding individual characteristics, the most substantial differences between the clusters were found for entrepreneurs' innovative behaviour. Regarding background variables, differences between the clusters were found for age as indirect indicator for work experience and type of employment.

Altogether, the findings suggested that differences in careers in the CCI may be more strongly due to differences in entrepreneurs' level of engage-

ment in proactive work behaviours such as innovative behaviour than due to their motivational dispositions, their work context, and their personal and professional background.

DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CAREERS OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CCI

A reason for the low career aspirations of entrepreneurs in cluster 3 could be the lower engagement in proactive career behaviours, as previous studies indicate (e.g., Strauss et al., 2012). In addition, their moderate engagement in work behaviours, such as innovative behaviour, could be explained by their low career aspirations which, in turn, may be due to the comparably high age of entrepreneurs in this cluster, as previous findings showed that career aspirations decrease with increasing age (Strauss et al., 2012). Furthermore, their comparably low engagement in innovative behaviour and, thus, in actively contributing to innovation development also matches their low perceptions of career success. Moreover, the comparably lower levels of perceived job complexity and innovation climate in cluster 3 may also be a reason for the lower levels of engagement in proactive work behaviours and the less favourable perception of career success in cluster 3.

The most entrepreneurs in this study belonged to cluster 1. They showed high values in individual characteristics and work characteristics as well as career aspects. It is noteworthy that with respect to intrinsic task motivation and innovative behaviour the entrepreneurs in cluster 1 even match the level of cluster 2, indicating that other factors may be even more important for distinguishing between high and very high perceptions of career success in the CCI. In this regard, our findings indicate that collaborative work behaviours, such as networking, social informal learning activities, and career consultation may be responsible for making the difference between high and very high levels of perceived career success in the CCI.

Finally, the entrepreneurs in cluster 2 showed high levels concerning all career aspects, individual characteristics, and work characteristics with career identity being the most pronounced characteristic of this cluster. That is, entrepreneurs in cluster 2 identified most strongly with the CCI as their field of work and with their career in this sector. Therefore, we may conclude that fostering the development of professional identity, for example by highlighting commonalities and putting less emphasis on heterogeneities, seems to be very important for entrepreneurs in the CCI. Furthermore, in contrast to the other clusters, entrepreneurs in cluster 2 reported to be very strongly engaged in their work, especially in behaviours that are characterised by collaboration with others, such as infor-

mal learning activities. This indicates the importance of networking in this industry, which is consistent with previous findings (cf. Birkel et al., 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2015). Among all investigated career aspects, career planning and career consultation were the least pronounced which may indicate that these entrepreneurs approach their career in a rather intuitive and carefree manner.

When comparing all three clusters, factors can be derived that enable successful careers in the CCI. Likewise, the identification of factors that are relatively low across all clusters in comparison to other professional fields may reveal weaknesses of the CCI and, in turn, leads to implications for the professional development of entrepreneurs in the CCI and for identity development and professionalization of the CCI as a sector. Three such streams may be identified: (1) Perspective taking seems to be an important aspect of work behaviour in the CCI as all clusters had similarly high levels of perspective taking. (2) The results suggest in accordance with previous theorizing (cf. Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011; Rae, 2007) that careers in the CCI are more value-driven and individual perception of success are less determined by objective indicators such as salary. (3) High perceptions of psychological empowerment across all three clusters indicate that perceptions of meaningfulness, self-determination, and influence as well as confidence in one's professional skills and abilities represent an important basis for working in the CCI. (4) Varying levels of innovative behaviour and of innovation climate, but also the rather moderate levels of career consultation may be an indication of a lack of opportunities for organizational and professional development as well as of a lack of awareness for corresponding development potentials. (5) In contrast to previous studies which show increases in professional and career development over time (cf. Greller & Richtermeyer, 2006; Messmann et al., 2018), the current findings point in the opposite direction, that is, entrepreneurs with the most favourable perceptions of their career tended to be the youngest while the oldest employees had less favourable career views. This finding may suggest that supporting the professional development of older entrepreneurs is a crucial aspect for the professionalization of the CCI as an industry. (6) Regarding type of employment, the results indicate that entrepreneurs in cluster 1, in which most entrepreneurs are self-employed, show higher values in all characteristics than entrepreneurs in cluster 3, in which most entrepreneurs are freelancer. These results lead to the assumption that self-employees have a more beneficial work context than freelancers who, in turn, seem to be somewhat limited in their professional development.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Despite the value of this study for the CCI and its entrepreneurs regarding identity development and professionalization, the study has some limitations. The limited sample size, the focus on the work context of the CCI in Germany, and the use of self-reports should be considered critically. The results should be transferred with caution to the CCI in other countries as there could be differences in other countries, such as the branches that are related to the CCI or the influence of political funding, etc., that could impact work characteristics and the work behaviour of entrepreneurs. Therefore, further international studies are needed to identify possible differences between countries. Furthermore, future studies should focus on differences between the various branches of the CCI, as the current study indicates that differences between branches exist. Nevertheless, this study provides a crucial first insight into the work and careers of entrepreneurs in the CCI. As the results of the current study are in many respects in line with previous studies on topics such as innovative behaviour or career success across various countries (e.g., Gonzalez et al., 2015; Hammond et al., 2011; Rae, 2007; Wohl, 2022), it can be used as a starting point for future (international) studies on professionalization of the CCI and its entrepreneurs' professional development.

A further limitation is that this study does not provide insights into processes, such as how innovation development takes place in detail or how informal learning activities are carried out. Although this was not the aim of this study, the results indicate that insights into processes would be crucial for an in-depth understanding of different career types. Therefore, as previous studies indicated the importance of how activities are carried out, studies are needed that zoom in such processes, for instance by using mixed-methods designs.

Finally, as this study is cross-sectional and focusses on differences between various individual characteristics and work characteristics across career-related clusters, it cannot provide insights into relationships between these variables or insights into development of characteristics over time. Therefore, future (longitudinal) studies should focus on relationships between individual and work characteristics and career aspects over time to identify unique causal patterns of the CCI. As the results also indicate the importance of entrepreneurs' personal and professional background for their careers, such studies could also focus on background characteristics regarding equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), such as ethnicity, or other background variables that could influence careers of entrepreneurs in CCI, such as work experience or entrepreneurs' (vocational) education.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Concerning practice, this study provides implications for supporting entrepreneurs in their professional development by designing training interventions as well as learning opportunities on the job. As the results indicate different potentials for professional development across the three clusters, the status quo of entrepreneurs' professional development should in this regard be considered as a first step. Likewise, entrepreneurs themselves need to be made aware of the importance of the various individual characteristics, work characteristics and different career aspects that are crucial for their professional development. By being aware of these characteristics, they are enabled to independently reflect on their weaknesses and counteract them or seek corresponding support.

Furthermore, training could focus on individual characteristics, such as innovative behaviour or perspective taking, and offer techniques for developing and implementing these behaviours in everyday work life. This seems especially important as the low level of career consultation across all entrepreneurs indicates a lack of interventions which, however, are crucial for the professional development of entrepreneurs (cf. Gast et al., 2017; Snell et al., 2013).

Finally, entrepreneurs may be supported by further strengthening their access and usage of networking platforms and by encouraging them to engage in joint learning activities such as giving each other feedback or sharing knowledge and experiences. As the results indicate the importance of career aspirations and career identity for entrepreneurs in the CCI, developing shared identity seems to be crucial for the professionalization of the CCI. This may for instance be attained by clearly highlighting the economical and societal importance of the CCI. In this way the CCI would receive more attention in the political arena which, in turn, may give access to resources for training and development in the CCI.

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Disclosure statement

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest. All the authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript.

Funding Acknowledgements

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on reasonable request from the corresponding author, [aw]. The data are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions.

Ethics approval

This study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Regensburg.