

Career Decisions in the Mediterranean: To Be or Not to Be an Entrepreneur?

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The significance of individual and family traits has been the main focus of recent studies on family business succession; nevertheless, regional effects have frequently been overlooked. Using individual level cross-country data, this study examines the effects of regional circumstances on the career choice intentions of family business heirs regarding employment, starting their own entrepreneurial venture, or family firm succession. By employing data from the 2018 GUESS survey and applying binominal logistic regression, we have discovered that two groups of several nations (European and non-European Mediterranean countries) have several differences. We also show that individual features in the family firm, and start-up time, are significant factors, even beyond conditions such as university environment, entrepreneurship in the curricula, entrepreneurial attitudes, locus of control, power distance and subjective norms. Policies regarding company succession and related firm survival should be particularly based on various macroeconomic and youth labour market factors in order to reduce succession failures.

Key Words: entrepreneurship, business succession, family business, career choice intention, Mediterranean region

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INTRODUCTION

The family context of businesses is typically included in the entrepreneurship study field, which has expanded over the past few decades from traditional studies of start-up operations and expand-

ing business concerns as a part of entrepreneurial dynamics through to its lifecycle. Consequently, within the conventional family company cycle, family business succession has recently been considered as a potential new venture cycle.

[222] This paper seeks to examine the problem of students' career decisions, which also includes family business succession as an option. Various inputs, both internal and external, contribute to the process' complexity, making its procedures difficult and demanding. However, before the Global University entrepreneurial Spirit Student's Survey (GUESSS) research was introduced in 2003, potential successors and their own positions were largely disregarded, depriving them of the chance to speak out on this, in their opinion, important issue.

As may be predicted, the first few decades of family business study were mostly carried out at US universities. A number of paradigms have been established for textbook thinking and university courses on family company management that are based on American business and living culture. These include traditional corporate governance norms and family values. The notion that family and family values are a very real foundation for operating a common interest in business has only lately been confirmed by studies in the sector that have been extended to other nations and cultures, beginning in Europe but quickly moving to other regions. As a result, conventional research paradigms have begun to focus more on the unique cultural characteristics of many nations and areas of the world, such as the Mediterranean, which has so far been a topic of common research in different socio-economic fields (Mongelli, Scardigno, and Merico 2012).

The state of the economy and whether it is growing or stagnating are topics of frequent discussion in national development programmes, politics, and among the general public. Economic scenario analyses have resulted in the development of a number of policy initiatives with the goal of boosting the economy and raising the average person's standard of living.

Additionally, it is well acknowledged that entrepreneurship is one of the primary global drivers of value creation, employment cre-



ation, innovation, and social change. In order to investigate the potential influence of circumstances on the profession choice intentions of family business heirs, a new study framework has been developed. The overall dearth of research linking the diverse categories and taxonomies of entrepreneurial endeavours, including the various family business succession models, to the activity and development of the economy in a given region, served as the impetus for writing this article.

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A clear geographic division characterises the economy of the Mediterranean region. According to (Glassmann 2016), government modernisation initiatives in some areas gave rise to the ‘family welfare model,’ which was based on labour contracts from big businesses or the civil service, and provided substantial welfare benefits. In some areas, the ‘family business model’ is prevalent. This model developed as a result of the male breadwinner sacrificing social rights in favour of less protected employment alternatives (small firms).

On the other hand, family members that make this decision are more likely to pursue formal employment and higher educational goals, which may improve economic performance compared to areas where the ‘family welfare model’ is still prevalent. In accordance with these findings, the motivation emerged to verify the broader data set model, focused on the geographical area of the Mediterranean with its specific cultural, economic and historical characteristics.

In order to provide a theoretical framework and context for the research, we begin with a review of the pertinent research literature. In this chapter, hypotheses are also derived for empirical investigation. The next chapter presents and explains the field study conducted in some countries of the Mediterranean region that provided the primary data, along with the methods, sampling and data collection procedures. Results from applying multinomial regression to the data are shown in order to help determine whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected. We examine the results and their implications for potential real-world applications in the final section.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES
DEVELOPMENT

Finding a Job Or Self-employment

[224] Finding a job or pursuing self-employment is a significant aspect of individuals' lives, and it has implications for various factors such as health, mental wellbeing, career development, and economic benefits. Several studies have explored these topics and shed light on the benefits and challenges associated with finding a job or engaging in self-employment.

A study that examined the barriers and benefits of self-employment on health found that self-employment can have both positive and negative effects, suggesting that further research is needed to understand this complex relationship (Rietveld, van Kippersluis, and Thurik 2015). Career development is an essential aspect of finding a job or pursuing self-employment. A recent study proposed a conceptual model for evaluating the professional development of women. The model can be applied to various fields and provides insights into the factors influencing career advancement (Magrane et al. 2012).

The role of public policies in promoting self-employment is also a topic of interest. Kumar (2012) developed a model of self-employment that incorporates transitions between unemployment and self-employment. The model can inform policymakers in designing effective strategies to support individuals in their entrepreneurial endeavours (Kumar 2012). Furthermore, the impact of unemployment insurance benefits on self-employment has been investigated. A study which examined the relationship between social security and self-employment suggests that more self-employment is created when more social security is provided (Camarero Garcia and Hansch 2020).

Creativity and innovation are also crucial for entrepreneurship development, especially among young people. Juliana et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship development. The study highlighted the positive impact of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurship (Juliana et al. 2021).



Finding a job or pursuing self-employment has implications for individuals' lives, especially at the beginning of their careers. For this reason, it is essential to know the factors that shape young people's career decisions as precisely as possible, especially among the student population. In this regard, today's demanding socio-political environment is even more unforgiving towards both the individual and society, which pays insufficient attention to this issue.

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Mediterranean Countries

Differences between European and non-European Mediterranean countries can be observed in various aspects, including economic systems, healthcare, societal quality, cultural background, and tourism.

Regarding economic systems, Mediterranean countries are characterised by a higher concentration of savings at the top and consumption at the bottom of the income ranking compared to Northern European countries (Ranaldi 2020). This finding suggests that there may be greater income inequality in Mediterranean countries.

Societal quality is another aspect that differs between European and non-European Mediterranean countries. A study analysing the societal quality of Southern European Mediterranean countries (Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece) found that these countries have lower societal quality than other European countries (Bericat and Martín-Gimeno 2020). This suggests that there may be differences in governance, social cohesion, and other societal factors. Cultural background also influences the differences between European and non-European Mediterranean regions. Several studies have observed cultural disparities, with Greece as an example (Petrakis 2011). These cultural differences may influence economic development indicators, other aspects of society, and individuals' career choices. These differences highlight the diverse nature of the Mediterranean region and the need for tailored approaches to address the specific challenges and opportunities faced by different countries within this region.

H1 *There is a difference in students' career intention influencing fac-*

tors between European and non-European Mediterranean regions.

University Environment

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Environmental factors can strongly influence the entrepreneurial process (Kolvereid and Isaksen 2012). Individuals would not decide to start a company that is not embedded in the environment, instead preferring to consult their immediate environment, and are thus influenced by others, their intentions and decisions (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986).

Thus, researchers list two important predictors of entrepreneurial intention for the student environment. One of them is the supportive university environment. If the university provides knowledge and inspiration for entrepreneurship, the possibility of choosing an entrepreneurial career will increase (Turker and Selcuk 2009). In a susceptible period, the university environment plays an important, if not one of the key roles in students' lives. At that time, students are expected to make a career decision after their studies. Existing surveys among students from different countries have shown that career preferences are influenced by the reputation of entrepreneurship and the support of the university environment (Autio et al. 2001).

Research has confirmed that encouraging the entrepreneur is critical to promoting economic growth. Indeed, cultural and institutional frameworks influence entrepreneurship (Wennekers and Thurik 1999).

University education affects the career choice of students so that universities can be a potential source of entrepreneurs (Turker and Selcuk 2009). The probability of starting a business is statistically greatest between the ages of 25 and 44 (Wortman 1985). This is exactly why it is so essential to research the student population in this context.

H2 *The more a student perceives support for entrepreneurship in the university environment, the more likely they are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.*



Entrepreneurship in the Curriculum

Several studies have explored the relationship between university education and students' career decisions and found that entrepreneurship education programmes and university business incubators play a crucial role in shaping students' career choices (Guerrero, Urbano, and Gajón 2020). These programmes provide students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and opportunities to pursue entrepreneurial ventures and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, the same programmes also enhance students' employability options and increase their confidence in areas such as communication, collaboration, opportunity recognition, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Rodríguez and Lieber 2020).

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Entrepreneurship education has been found to positively impact students' attitudes towards entrepreneurial careers (Khalid, Islam, and Lee 2019). It increases students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which is their belief in the ability to succeed as entrepreneurs. This self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and entrepreneurial interests influence students' career choices (Uskuri and Sesen 2022). Furthermore, entrepreneurship education enhances students' entrepreneurial skills, influencing the decision to become entrepreneurs (Windiarti, Pulungan, and Adnyana 2022). The impact of entrepreneurship education on career decisions is not limited to undergraduate students. It has also been found to influence secondary students' career readiness. Education helps students develop an entrepreneurial mindset and increases their confidence in communication, collaboration, and critical thinking (Rodríguez and Lieber 2020). All mentioned skills are transferable and valuable in various career paths, not just entrepreneurship.

The influence of entrepreneurship education on career decisions is not only limited to the education system, but also extends to the broader ecosystem. Entrepreneurial university ecosystems, which include entrepreneurship education programmes and university business incubators, provide students with the necessary support and resources to pursue entrepreneurial careers (Guerrero, Urbano, and Gajón 2020). These ecosystems facilitate employability options for graduates, including academic entrepreneurship.

It has been proven that entrepreneurial university education has a significant influence on the career decisions of students. It equips students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and opportunities to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Entrepreneurship education programmes and university business incubators heavily influence students' career choices and enhance their employability options. University programmes and ecosystems also increase students' self-confidence. We ground our third hypothesis on this basis.

H3 *The more entrepreneurially rich the curriculum, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.*

Entrepreneurial Attitude

The influence of entrepreneurial attitude on students' career decisions is a topic of great interest in entrepreneurship and education. Several studies have explored the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and career decisions, shedding light on the factors influencing students' choices.

A recent study found that college students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly and positively affects entrepreneurial attitude and intention. The study also revealed that entrepreneurial attitude is partially intermediary in the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention (Liu et al. 2019). It is suggested that students with a solid entrepreneurial attitude are more likely to consider entrepreneurship a career option.

Another study focused on Hungarian students found that a positive entrepreneurial attitude increases the chances of choosing an entrepreneurial career (Gubik 2021). The finding supports the idea that entrepreneurial attitude plays a crucial role in career decision-making among students.

Moreover, the role of entrepreneurial mindset in career decisions has been explored in several studies. Burnette et al. (2020) conducted a growth mindset intervention to enhance students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy and found that this intervention predicted career development. So, cultivating an entrepreneurial mind-



set can positively impact students' career decisions and outcomes.

Overall, the literature suggests that entrepreneurial attitude, self-efficacy, and mindset are important factors that influence students' career decisions. Fostering a positive entrepreneurial attitude, enhancing self-efficacy, and cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset can contribute to students' consideration of entrepreneurship as a viable career option. These findings form the basis of our fourth hypothesis.

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H4 *The higher the level of entrepreneurial attitude, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.*

Entrepreneurial Skills

Several studies have explored the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and career choices, shedding light on the factors influencing individuals' decisions to pursue entrepreneurial careers.

Callanan and Zimmerman discussed the career decision-making process of entrepreneurs and highlighted the need for comprehensive models that consider both endogenous and exogenous influences. While existing models provide insights into the factors influencing entrepreneurial career selection, they do not capture the full complexity of the decision-making process (Callanan and Zimmerman 2016). Further research is needed to understand the influence of entrepreneurial skills on career decisions fully.

Overall, the literature suggests that entrepreneurial skills, such as a growth mindset, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial passion can positively influence individuals' career decisions (Burnette et al. 2020). However, the decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career is complex and influenced by various factors, including job satisfaction, cultural values, and career stage (Blaese, Noemi, and Brigitte 2021).

Therefore, further research is needed to understand the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and career intention among the younger generations.

H5 *The higher the level of self-assessed entrepreneurial skills, the*

more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.

Locus of Control

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The influence of locus of control on career decisions has been extensively studied in psychology. Locus of control refers to an individual's belief about how much he or she has control over his/her life and the outcomes experienced (Lyons, Schweitzer, and Ng 2015). Research has shown that locus of control is positively related to career decision-making, career self-efficacy, and career maturity. Individuals with a high internal locus of control, who believe they have control over their actions and outcomes, tend to be more decisive and proactive in making career choices (Kim and Lee 2018; Siregar 2021; Sholikhah 2021; Zellweger, Sieger, and Halter 2011). Those individuals have higher levels of career self-efficacy, which is the belief in one's ability to perform career-related tasks and make effective career decisions successfully (Kim and Lee 2018; Turan 2021). Self-efficacy, in turn, leads to higher levels of career maturity, which is the ability to make informed and realistic career choices (Kırdök and Harman 2018). On the other hand, individuals with an external locus of control, who believe that external factors or luck determine their outcomes, may experience difficulties in making career decisions. They may feel less confident in their ability to make effective career choices and may rely more on external sources of guidance and decision-making (Kim and Lee 2018; Al-Bahrani et al. 2021). This can lead to lower career self-efficacy and maturity levels (Harman and Kırdök 2018). Additionally, research has shown that locus of control is related to other factors that influence career decisions, such as personality traits, career orientations, and socio-economic status (Lyons, Schweitzer, and Ng 2015).

Understanding an individual's locus of control can provide valuable insights into their career decision-making process and inform interventions and support strategies to enhance career self-efficacy and maturity.

H6 *The higher the internal locus of control, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.*



Power Distance

Power distance, which refers to the extent to which individuals in a society accept and expect power inequalities, has been found to influence career decisions significantly. Several studies have explored the relationship between power distance and various aspects of career decision-making, including career proactivity, career success, career intentions, and career exploration behaviour.

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Smale et al. (2018) examined the moderating role of national culture, including power distance, on the relationship between proactive career behaviours and subjective career success. The authors suggested that cultural differences in power distance could affect the meanings attached to career proactivity and subsequently influence career behaviours and outcomes). In another study, Yang and Chau (2016) investigated the relationship between proactive personality, career success, and power distance orientation. The findings indicated that the extent to which leader-member exchange mediates the relationship between assertive personality and career success depends on power distance orientation.

Dalci and Özyapici (2018) explored the influence of cultural values, including collectivism and power distance, on students' intentions when choosing an accounting career. The results revealed that collectivism and considerable power distance were associated with a significant relationship between parental and peers' influence and students' intentions of choosing an accounting career (Dalci and Özyapici 2018). Moon and Choi examined the impact of career management on organisational commitment, with the mediating role of subjective career success. The study found that proactive career behaviours, such as career transition and job change, were less common in high-power-distance cultures (Moon and Choi 2017).

Existing studies suggest that power distance can shape individuals' career decisions and behaviours. In cultures with high power distance, individuals may be less likely to engage in proactive career behaviours and may have different career intentions than in cultures with low power distance. The cultural meanings attached to career proactivity and the influence of power distance on career success and exploration behaviour highlight the importance of considering power distance in understanding career decisions.

- H7 *The higher the level of perceived centralisation of society, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.*

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Subjective Norms

Subjective norms play a significant role in career decision-making. Several studies have explored the influence of subjective norms on career decisions and have found that they can have both positive and negative effects (Zellweger, Sieger, and Halter 2011; Vadnjaj and Ljubotina 2016).

Muzika et al. (2019) examined the relationship between subjective social status and career decision-making self-efficacy. The study found that a higher personal social level predicted lower career indecision and greater career decision-making self-efficacy. The study concluded that individuals with higher subjective norms are more confident in their career decisions. Amalia, Mayasari, and Ogundajo (2021) found that internship experiences positively affected subjective norms, attitude toward behaviour, and perceived behaviour control, which influenced career intentions. Consequently, positive internship experiences can shape individuals' subjective norms and influence their career decisions.

Overall, studies confirmed that subjective norms significantly influence career decisions. Understanding these influences on young people can help individuals make more informed and authentic career choices in different societies and regions.

- H8 *The higher the level of perceived subjective norms, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.*

Entrepreneurial Parent

The influence of parental factors on career decisions has been extensively studied. Research consistently shows that parents significantly impact shaping their children's career choices. A study conducted on a sample of young people aged 14–18 years old found that parents exert the most significant influence on their child's career



choice compared to other social factors and pressures (Stritch and Christensen 2016). This highlights the crucial role of parental influence in career decision-making.

Moreover, studies have explored the relationship between family influences and career choices across cultural contexts. For instance, a survey of Asian Americans revealed that family influences, such as parental attachment and individualism-collectivism, are associated with career decision-making self-efficacy (Kwong 2018). Cultural factors may therefore, interact with parental influence when shaping career choices. Parental expectations and perceptions of career choices also play a significant role in influencing their children's decisions. Students' perception of parental expectations is an essential factor in career choice as a parental influence (Agarwal, Kumar, and D'Souza 2016). Similarly, parental encouragement, providing information about specific careers, and encouraging consideration of various education and career options significantly influence career choices among students (Okesina 2022).

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Specifically, entrepreneurial parents have been found to impact their children's career decisions. A study examining the entrepreneurial intentions and willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option revealed that children are influenced by their parents' entrepreneurial background (Costa, Caetano, and Santos 2016). Accordingly, growing up in an entrepreneurial family can shape individuals' attitudes and aspirations towards entrepreneurship as a career path.

The influence of entrepreneurial parents on students' career decisions is a complex and multifaceted topic. Parents significantly impact their children's career choices while cultural factors, parental expectations, and personal predispositions can mediate this influence. Understanding the role of parental influence in career decision-making under different societal conditions can provide valuable insights for career counselling and guidance programmes.

H9 *Students with entrepreneurial parents are more likely to choose an entrepreneurial career path compared to their peers from non-entrepreneurial families.*

METHODS

Participants and Procedures

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With the research, we wanted to investigate students' career intentions in the Mediterranean countries, namely in the context of entrepreneurial intentions. We explored particular factors and how they shape students' career intentions. For this purpose, we used the data collected in the framework of GUESSS 2018 (Global University Entrepreneurship Spirit Student Survey) in the research. More than 208,000 valid survey questionnaires from 54 countries were collected as part of the research. We collected data from Mediterranean countries and divided them into two groups for our research. Our goal was to compare European countries (Albania, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain) with non-European countries (Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey).

The identification-based GUESSS survey presented multiple responses and was conducted using the online questionnaire from September 2018 to January 2019. The survey allowed students to remain anonymous. To our knowledge, it is the largest global study of students' career intentions. At the same time, the study focuses precisely on the aspiration levels of entrepreneurship as a career option. The research has been carried out since 2006, every two years. Each implementation is improved based on past experience. The 2018 study already includes a wide range of sociological and personality traits that potentially shape a young person's career intention. Each factor is measured using repeatedly verified instruments that have been proven to be reliable in high-profile research so far. The collected data thus offer wide possibilities for studying correlations between individual factors as well as comparing different geographically or otherwise defined groups of young people.

Students who have already established their own companies are excluded from the analysis to allow a prospective view and avoid so-called survivor bias, from which retrospective studies might suffer when interviewing entrepreneurs about motives after starting a firm (Gartner 1989). Since we focused on students who can already define their career goals immediately after completing their studies, we excluded undefined respondents from the survey. After fil-



tering the data, there were 33,970 respondents from European countries, while the non-European group consisted of 2,839 respondents. 36,806 students are included in the research, of which 38.7% are men and 61.3% are women. Among the respondents, 31% come from entrepreneurial families. As such, we considered families in which at least one parent is self-employed or is the majority owner of the company. In doing so, we relied on one of the definitions of a family business (Barnes and Hershon 1976). Respondents were assured strict confidentiality to avoid the influence of social desirability concerns (Podsakoff et al. 2003).

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Measures

Dependent Variable

We asked students about their career decision (employee or entrepreneur) immediately after completing their studies and five years thereafter. With the second question, the time span was limited to five years after the studies according to the observation that typical entrepreneurs work elsewhere before starting their business (Brockhaus 1987).

Table 1 illustrates the career intention in both observed groups, i.e., for the period immediately after the studies and five years thereafter. We can understand that in both regions, the relationships change significantly over a period of five years, which is in line with previous studies, according to which an individual gains experience as an employee elsewhere before starting his or her entrepreneurial career. From the above results, it can be seen that a small number of students realise their potential entrepreneurial intention immediately after their studies. For this study, we focused on group compar-

TABLE 1 Career Intent in European and Non-European Mediterranean Countries

	European		Non European	
	After study	5 years later	After study	5 years later
Employee	96.20	66.20	92.30	65.90
Entrepreneur	3.80	26.20	7.70	24.40
Do not know	0.00	7.50	0.00	9.70

ison (European and non-European Mediterranean countries) in the period which follows immediately after study. Our dependent variable is therefore, categorical and can take two values: (1) employee or (2) entrepreneur.

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Independent Variables

Seven factors were included among the independent variables, measured using a 7-point Likert scale. We measured the university environment's support for entrepreneurship with three items (Franke and Lüthje 2004). The degree of inclusion of entrepreneurial content in the curriculum was captured by five items (Souitaris, Zerbinati, and Al-Laham 2007). Five items were used to measure entrepreneurial attitude (Liñán and Chen 2009) and seven items for self-assessed mastery of entrepreneurial skills (Zhao 2005). The internal locus of control level is also measured with three scientifically verified items (Levenson 1973). The perception of power distance in society is covered with three items taken from the GLOBE survey (House et al. 2004). Three additional items also cover subjective norms (Liñán and Chen 2009).

In addition to the mentioned variables, we included a categorical variable in the analysis, which was used to define whether the student comes from an entrepreneurial family. It is a potentially important factor that can shape a student's career intention, as evidenced by existing research (Zellweger, Sieger, and Halter 2011).

RESULTS

Since we compared two independent samples, a *t*-test was used with the intention of comparing the mean values for individual variables. The results of the *t*-test are given in table 2, from which we can see the observed groups of countries differ in a highly statistically significant way, namely in all the observed factors.

We can understand that students in the European part of the Mediterranean feel greater support for entrepreneurial thinking in their university environment. In this group of students, it is perceived that a greater importance is attributed to subjective norms in connection with their career purposes. The picture is different



TABLE 2 T-Test between Groups (Non-European versus European Mediterranean Countries)

Variable	<i>t</i>	DF	Sig.	MD
University support for entrepreneurship	-3.915	3110.81	0.000	-0.402
Entrepreneurship in the curriculum	8.896	36198.00	0.000	1.356
Entrepreneurial attitude	25.070	3223.42	0.000	3.938
Entrepreneurial skills level	9.364	35968.00	0.000	1.783
Level of internal locus of control	6.255	3096.72	0.000	0.493
Perc. level of power distance in the society	11.730	36649.00	0.000	1.124
Subjective norms	-9.628	3121.10	0.000	-0.773

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for the other observed factors, where higher average values are observed in the group of non-European Mediterranean countries. In these countries, the study curriculum contains more entrepreneurial content. We also measured a significantly higher level of inclination towards entrepreneurship and self-assessment of entrepreneurial skills. The same applies to the degree of internal locus of control and to the perceived degree of centralisation of society. The results of the *t*-test thus confirm hypothesis H1 with a high degree of statistical significance.

Since the perceived differences between the observed regions are highly statistically significant, with the intention of gaining deeper insight into the relationships between the variables, we continued the analysis with a regression model. A regression model is developed for each of the two regions, thus enabling the comparison of regression coefficients between the two models. Therefore, all hypotheses from H2 to H9 are tested in each of the two groups and results are compared. Since our dependent variable is categorical and can take only two values (employee or entrepreneur), logistic regression is the most appropriate method.

After constructing and testing our logistic regression models, we found that chi-square tests are highly significant ($p = 0,000$), which shows that our models are significantly upgrading the null-model (intercept only model). A statistically non-significant Hosmer and Lemeshow test additionally confirms that we have a good model fit in both groups (European: $p = 0.667$, non-European: $p = 0.909$). The

TABLE 3 Logistic Regression Models

Group	Variable	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Non European	University support	-0.031	0.105	0.970
	Entrepreneurial curriculum	0.005	0.701	1.005
	Entrepreneurial attitude	0.072	0.000	1.074
	Entrepreneurial skills	0.012	0.294	1.012
	Locus of control	-0.046	0.070	0.955
	Power distance	-0.004	0.818	0.996
	Subjective norms	-0.065	0.002	0.937
	Parents entrepreneurs	0.179	0.268	1.196
	Constant	-2.869	0.000	0.057
European	University support	-0.026	0.005	0.974
	Entrepreneurial curriculum	0.009	0.142	1.009
	Entrepreneurial attitude	0.124	0.000	1.132
	Entrepreneurial skills	0.013	0.006	1.013
	Locus of control	-0.031	0.004	0.970
	Power distance	-0.002	0.781	0.998
	Subjective norms	-0.035	0.000	0.965
	Parents entrepreneurs	0.727	0.000	2.070
	Constant	-5.794	0.000	0.003

[238]

results of both regression models are shown in table 3. University support turns out to be an important factor in the European part of the Mediterranean, where higher support statistically and significantly lowers the probability of deciding on an entrepreneurial career immediately after completing studies. It is an interesting finding, which would certainly be worthy of in-depth research with the aim of finding the reasons for such a result. In the non-European part of the Mediterranean, we did not detect statistically significant influential support from the university environment in relation to the probability of an entrepreneurial career. Our hypothesis H2 is rejected in both regions, although it is worth bearing in mind that in the European part, we detected significant results, but contrary to expectations.

We must also reject hypothesis H3 in both regions, as our sample measurements do not contradict the null hypothesis. Thus, we did



not perceive that the amount of entrepreneurial content in the curriculum would affect the probability of choosing an entrepreneurial career path immediately after completing studies. The finding applies to the entire Mediterranean area.

Hypothesis H4 can be confirmed for the entire Mediterranean area. A more recognised individual's entrepreneurial tendencies increase the probability of choosing an entrepreneurial career compared to employment. The regression coefficients indicate a slightly more pronounced influence in the European part of the Mediterranean, where an increase in the inclination towards entrepreneurship by one degree increases the probability of deciding on an entrepreneurial career immediately after study by 1.132 times. In the Non-European part of the Mediterranean, this factor is 1.074.

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Hypothesis H5 can be confirmed in the European part of the Mediterranean, where a higher self-assessment of entrepreneurial skills significantly increases the probability of an entrepreneurial career after studying. We did not detect a statistically significant impact in non-European regions.

A similar finding was also detected in the analysis of the influence of the internal locus of control. In the non-European part of the Mediterranean, the degree of internal locus of control does not significantly affect the probability of deciding on an entrepreneurial career. Hypothesis H6 is thus rejected in this group. In the European Mediterranean countries, the picture is different. Hypothesis H6 cannot be confirmed, but the observed results are statistically significant. A higher level of internal behavioural control reduces the probability of deciding on an entrepreneurial path immediately after completing studies.

In the analysis of the impact of the centralisation of society, despite the known differences in the socio-political environment of the observed two regions, we did not detect statistically significant impacts on the probability of choosing an entrepreneurial career among students in any region. Hypothesis H7 is therefore rejected for the entire Mediterranean area.

Subjective norms are an important factor in both observed regions. In both cases, a higher level of subjective norms reduces

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the probability of a student's decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career path. The aforementioned applies, of course, to the period immediately after the end of studies. The more importance a student attaches to the opinions of those close to him/her, the less likely he/she is to pursue an entrepreneurial career after completing his/her studies. Here too, the reasons for such results should definitely be investigated more deeply. One could speculate that students want to maintain the positive opinion of those close to them and therefore, find it more difficult to embark on a risky entrepreneurial career path without prior experience.

We detected a greater difference between the groups in the influence of entrepreneurial parents. Parental entrepreneurs in the non-European part of the Mediterranean do not significantly influence their offspring's decision about career paths immediately after completing their studies. It is entirely different in the European part of the Mediterranean, where this factor strongly influences the probability of choosing an entrepreneurial career after completing studies, increasing the said probability by more than two times ($\exp(B) = 2.07$).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Students with a familial background in business face a unique dilemma when choosing their career route. Their selection is more complicated and sets them apart from their peers due to the possibility of taking over the family business. Previous research has examined the psychological, emotional, and societal components of this profession choice dilemma. Our study adds to a better understanding of the broader career choice intention perspective by examining the impact of regional cultural issues. The presented work may be seen in part as exploratory, because there are few studies that link the cultural issues of the Mediterranean region to the career choice intentions of young people, particularly when focusing on a specific set of students with a background in family enterprises.

The countries under investigation are fundamentally and extremely different in terms of their economic circumstances and political systems. Some nations were far from western democracy-



based societies at some point in the distant past. Young students might anticipate different job and professional development opportunities in such circumstances. These circumstances have changed or are continuing to change quickly over the past few decades. However, several nations operate stable market economies. Despite spanning such a wide range of European economies, our substantial regression results imply that it may be possible to generalise the findings in other parts of the globe. Table 4 compares our model results from the two set of countries the research observed for debate and implications.

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There are several important findings which can be derived from the table 4. Interestingly and somehow disappointingly, is the fact that according to the analysis of hypothesis H3, which was rejected in the both groups, the inclusion of entrepreneurship in curricula does not have much impact on entrepreneurial decisions in the studied areas. Similarly, the level of perceived centralisation of a society (hypothesis H7) seems not to have any significant meaning for the decision of an entrepreneurial path.

On the other hand, for the whole studied sample, two hypotheses are confirmed for the both sub-samples. These were expected: (i) the importance of the entrepreneurial attitude (hypothesis H4) and (ii) the level of subjective norms (hypothesis H8), which were confirmed with an opposite logic. For both hypotheses, we can find consistent support in previous research. Another study found that a positive entrepreneurial attitude increases (hypothesis H4) the chances of choosing an entrepreneurial career (Gubik 2021). Additionally, another study found that a higher personal social level predicted lower career indecision and greater career decision-making self-efficacy, suggesting that individuals with higher subjective norms are more confident in their career decisions (Muzika et al. 2019).

There are four pairs of hypotheses confirmed only for the European Mediterranean countries and rejected for those outside Europe. First, is the perception of entrepreneurship support in the university environment (hypothesis H2), which can lead to the interpretation that universities of non-European Mediterranean countries do have several challenges in securing the more supportive

TABLE 4 Hypotheses Confirmation for Both Sets of Countries

Hypothesis	(1)	(2)
H2 The more a student perceives support for entrepreneurship in the university environment, the more likely they are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.	No	Yes-
H3 The more entrepreneurially rich the curriculum, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.	No	No
H4 The higher the level of entrepreneurial attitude, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.	Yes	Yes
H5 The higher the level of self-assessed entrepreneurial skills, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.	No	Yes
H6 The higher the internal locus of control, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.	No	Yes-
H7 The higher the level of perceived centralization of society, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.	No	No
H8 The higher the level of perceived subjective norms, the more likely students are to choose an entrepreneurial career right after their studies.	Yes-	Yes-
H9 Students with entrepreneurial parents are more likely to choose an entrepreneurial career path compared to their peers from non-entrepreneurial families.	No	Yes

NOTES (1) non-European, (2) European. No – non significant result, yes – significant result, yes- – significant, but opposite logic than hypothesised. Result significance < 0.05.

university environment for future promotion and assistance in the career paths of students, which is also consistent with the recommendations from previous research (Turker and Selcuk 2009). Second, is the perception that self-assessed entrepreneurial skills are not linked to a higher attitude towards entrepreneurship in the non-European countries (hypothesis H5), which may be interpreted with a lower level of awareness about the importance of entrepreneurial skills in these countries. This finding is coherent with the proposition that the decision to pursue an entrepreneurial career is com-

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plex and influenced by various factors, including job satisfaction, cultural values, and career stage (Blaese, Noemi, and Brigitte 2021). Third, the higher level of internal locus of control (hypothesis H6) does not lead to a higher level of entrepreneurial attitudes in the non-European countries. This seems to be consistent with previous pieces of research that have shown the locus of control is related to other factors that influence career decisions, such as personality traits, career orientations, and socio-economic status (Lyons, Schweitzer, and Ng 2015). Fourth, the role of entrepreneurial parents (H9) does not seem to play an important role in non-European countries, which is hard to explain, but is probably due to cultural differences; however, this may be consistent with the suggestion that growing up in an entrepreneurial family can shape individuals' attitudes and aspirations towards entrepreneurship as a career path (Costa, Caetano, and Santos 2016).

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Limitations of the Study

Cross-sectional data from the GUESSS 2018 survey were used, as observational research at one particular point in time, providing a result. Conversely, the regional landscape of the Mediterranean is subject to vast fluctuations and societal changes that may have an impact on our survey participants. Although a longer study would better address the problem, it would also be more complex and expensive. The potential selection causation bias has been mitigated by removing students who are self-employed.

Possibilities for Future Research

Research on the intended career path of family business heirs is still lacking. Our findings point to the necessity and significance of evaluating the regional impact factors and the profession choice of family business heirs. It would be beneficial to repeat the study and incorporate more countries from both sides of the Mediterranean, as well as a larger sample size of nations. In order to compare with studies that are similar to ours in terms of career choice intention, future longitudinal research ought to focus on actual job choice as well.

By incorporating additional environmental and human data into

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the model, explanatory models with a higher level of complexity can be constructed. Studying in a field that offers diverse career options outside of family enterprises in a volatile labour market at a particular moment should be given more weight when evaluating personal characteristics. In comparable geographical and circumstances, this might also affect the heir's intended career choice. Investigating why various factors affect target group job decision intention is possible through qualitative research. Building a more predictive multilevel quantitative model that takes into account various geographic and cultural factors could be aided by preliminary qualitative research. The outcomes of these upcoming research projects could serve as crucial benchmarks for policy, curriculum, and employment.

CONCLUSIONS

Our research establishes a connection between family business succession aspirations and the cultural dimension of different countries of the Mediterranean region. The presence of statistically significant associations is a promising avenue for improving the study models pertaining to the career choice intention of family business heirs. More complex models may be employed in order to provide a better explanation of the correlation between various factors (personal, social, and environmental) and career decision intention, as suggested by statistically significant regression coefficients for control variables and earlier research (Zellweger, Sieger, and Halter 2011). As a result, our study makes a significant contribution to the literature on family business succession.

Our accomplishment of the study's primary objective, which was confirming the relationship between succession intention and the nation's regional position within the Mediterranean, has opened the door to a more thorough examination of the causal relationships between economic conditions and students' career aspirations.

Every young person must choose his/her profession, and students are almost certainly very close to beginning their own careers after completing their education. Students from families that own and operate businesses make up a very distinct, although increasingly significant, group of young people, and they have a major re-



sponsibility for the future viability of family enterprises. Their career decision is highly significant on a national level, as small and medium-sized family-owned enterprises account for the majority of all companies in each country's market, while it is highly complex on a personal and family level. In today's cultures, when family companies play a major role in ensuring economic stability and prosperity, it is imperative to grasp the intention behind their job decision.

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