Evolution of the Intellectual Structure of Expatriate Studies in the Last Five Decades: Themes and Relationships

Tang-Ting Wang  
Department of Business Administration, Kun Shan University

Yuan-Duen Lee  
Graduate School of Business and Operations Management, Chang Jung Christian University

Yender McLee  
Graduate School of Business and Operations Management, Chang Jung Christian University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the evolution of the intellectual structure of expatriate. Bibliometric techniques and social network analysis were used to trace the development path of expatriate research. By analyzing 22,487 citations of 840 articles published in SCI and SSCI journals in the expatriate field between 1959 and 2008, this study maps the intellectual structure of expatriate studies. This study divided the development of research on expatriate management into three stages: initialing stage (1959-1989), forming stage (1990-1999), and development stage (2000-2008). The results of this study suggest that future expatriate research will be organized into four different areas of interest: a new construct of expatriate adjustment, the dynamic process of expatriate adjustment, repatriation issues, and global staffing. Future expatriate studies will probably continue to center on these topics; specifically, studies on cross-cultural adjustment, global management, and the role of global managers. This study provides researchers with a new way of profiling key themes and their relationships in expatriate studies and to provide important insights and implications with regard to current and future research paradigms for management scholars and practitioners.

Keywords: expatriate management, intellectual structure, network of knowledge, bibliometric techniques, social network analysis

Received Date: April 14, 2013; Accepted Date: October 26, 2013
Corresponding Author: Tang-Ting Wang (Department of Business Administration, Kun Shan University)  
Address: No. 949, Dawan Rd., Yongkang Dist., Tainan City 710, Taiwan, R.O.C.  
Tel: +886-6-272-7175  
E-mail: tanting.wang@msa.hinet.net