

Understanding Expatriates' Well-Being

A meta-analysis of 24 empirical studies to identify
factors influencing expatriates' well-being



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1. Purpose and Scope

The study separates work-related vs. non-work-related antecedents, and positive vs. negative indicators of well-being

Work-related well-being (WWB)

- e.g., job satisfaction, engagement, burnout, stress

General well-being (GWB)

- e.g., life satisfaction, mental health, anxiety, depression
-

Theoretical Framework: **Conservation of Resources**

Resources = valued elements people strive to obtain (time, support, autonomy, etc.)

Resource loss (e.g., job strain, family conflict) has stronger negative effects than resource gain has positive ones



Work resources → affect Work Well-Being (WWB)



Non-work resources → affect General Well-Being (GWB)

2. Highlights



Strongest positive predictor:

Organizational support → Positive Work Well-being



Strongest negative predictor:

Job factors → Negative Work Well-being



Most wide-ranging factor:

Work-family interference affects both work and general well-being



While organizational support generally improves expatriates' well-being, the study highlights a paradox: **too much support may reduce learning opportunities and hinder long-term work adjustment.**

3. Theoretical Implications

Matching Principle:

- Work antecedents → Work well-being
- Non-work antecedents → General well-being

Spillover Effect:

- Experiences in one life sphere (family/work) influence the other

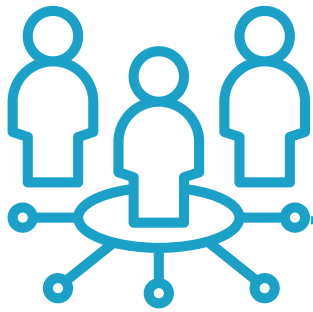
Resource Loss–Gain Spiral:

- Job strain and family conflict cause cumulative losses
- Organizational support and work adjustment trigger gain cycles

Negative factors:

- Losses have stronger impact than gains

4. Practical Implications



For Organizations

- Provide both emotional and structural support (mentoring, family relocation aid, flexible work policies)
- Minimize role ambiguity and conflict
- Create feedback and communication channels for expatriates' needs



For expatriates and families

- Discuss challenges openly to reduce family stress
- Prepare for new job roles in advance (e.g., training or mentoring)
- Seek social and spousal support actively.



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Work and non-work-related antecedents of expatriates' well-being: A meta-analysis

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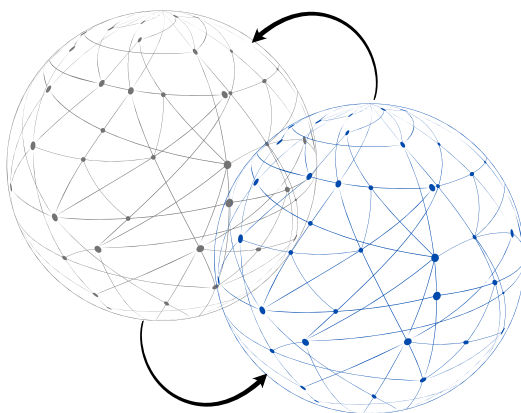
Expatriate

Work well-being

General well-being

ABSTRACT

Studies show a reduction in expatriates' well-being while abroad which entails a risk of low performance or even termination of the assignment abroad. To extend the knowledge of antecedents of expatriates' well-being, this meta-analytic review combines the empirical results from 24 studies. Concerning the conservation of resources theory, we distinguish between work-related and non-work-related antecedents (resources) and expose their relationship with expatriates' work well-being and general well-being. The meta-analysis shows that work well-being is positively antecedent by organizational support, work adjustment, and spousal support, whereas job factors and work-family interference are associated with decreased work well-being. General well-being negatively relates to work-family interference factors. The antecedents with the highest relative effect size are job factors on the negative side (resource loss) and organizational support on the positive side (resource gain). Work-family interference has the broadest impact on both work well-being and general well-being.



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