

Research Project

Sociocultural Adjustment and Well-being in Third Culture Kids and their Families: A Longitudinal Study

Project funded by own resources

Project title Sociocultural Adjustment and Well-being in Third Culture Kids and their Families: A Longitudinal Study

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Third Culture Kids (TCK) refer to children who travel with expatriate parents and spend significant part of their developmental years in cultures other than their parents' or passport cultures (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Increased in globalization has made TCK more common in recent years.

Very often, TCK are confronted with new challenges such as struggling with a sense of belonging, identity formation, adapting to new school, and making new friends. It also allows TCK to experience acculturation, a dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups (Berry, 2005). By living in different cultures, TCK have the opportunities to develop skills to manage and adapt to changes, to be more open

and accepting to different cultures and experiences (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock, 2017). The ability to successfully adjust to this new environment can enrich TCK's lives (Kempen et al., 2015), while failure to manage these challenges can result in psychological well-being consequences (Brown, 2008). On the other hand, within the human resources literature, the most frequently reported reason for failed expatriate relocation was the inability/unwillingness of a partner (e.g., the parent of TCK) to adapt to the foreign environment and giving up their careers (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; Lazarova et al., 2015), resulting in increased psychosocial distress (Silbiger & Pines, 2014), depression (Magdol, 2002), and lower marriage satisfaction (Lazarova et al., 2015). As such, it is important to examine factors that may promote positive well-being and adjustment in TCK and their families.

Our longitudinal study comprises a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative design to answer the following questions:

1. What are the roles of emotion regulation, self-esteem, resilience, and negative self-thoughts in changes to TCK's well-being and sociocultural adjustment over time?
2. What are the roles of cultural intelligence and acculturative stress in changes to TCK's wellbeing and sociocultural adjustment over time?
3. What are the roles of family functioning, parents' stress and couple satisfaction in changes to TCK's well-being and sociocultural adjustment over time?

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