

An aerial photograph showing a large blue lake on the left, a marina with many small boats, and a green island in the middle. On the right, a modern university campus with several buildings and green spaces is visible. The sky is clear and blue.

Career capital development in global work: The roles of job scope, career adaptability, and gender dynamics

Rodrigo Mello
Vesa Suutari
Samu Kemppinen



Why this study on career capital in global work matters (Mello et al., 2023)







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Taking stock of expatriates' career success after international assignments: A review and future research agenda

Rodrigo Mello ^a  , Vesa Suutari ^a , Michael Dickmann ^b 



Vaasan yliopisto
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA



Why this study on career capital in global work matters (Mello et al., 2023)

- Existing research often treats expatriates as a uniform group, overlooking the variation in job scope among different global roles.
- Global work uniquely shapes career capital through intense and varied experiences across national boundaries.
- Understanding how expatriate roles impact competency development helps explain diverse career outcomes.
- Growing importance of individual agency (career adaptability) and contextual factors (job scope) in career development.
- Addresses a critical need to understand the gender-specific experiences in global careers, where women may perceive career growth differently.



Research gap & objectives: Examining how work context and individual agency shape career capital

Research Questions:

How do *job scope* and *career adaptability* influence *perceived career capital development* (PCCD) among expatriates, and how does *gender* moderate the relationship between job scope and PCCD?





Theoretical framework: Framing the study

Career Capital

Career capital (Intelligent Career Framework, Arthur et al., 1995):

→ Refers to the collection of knowledge, skills, networks, and motivations that individuals accumulate to support their career development (Inkson & Arthur, 2001; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994).

Three dimensions of career capital:

Knowing-How:

→ Skills and expertise necessary to perform professional tasks effectively.

→ Example: Technical, managerial, intercultural skills (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2018; Jokinen et al., 2008).

Knowing-Whom:

→ Networks and relationships that provide career opportunities and professional support.

→ Example: Connections with mentors, colleagues, international peers (Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Dickmann et al., 2018).

Knowing-Why:

→ Motivations, values, and aspirations that drive career choices and persistence.

→ Example: Personal career goals, commitment to global careers (Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007; Dickmann & Cerdin, 2018).

Importance:

→ Strong stocks of career capital are critical for career success, especially in complex global environments (Mello et al., 2023)





Theoretical framework: Framing the study

Why we combine the job characteristics model and career construction theory

Global work is diverse: Not all expatriate roles have the same level of complexity (job density varies across positions).

Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976):

- Helps explain how job scope (e.g., skill variety, autonomy, task significance) influences career capital development.
- Captures the job-related factors shaping career development.

Career Construction Theory (Career Adaptability, Savickas, 2005):

- Highlights how individuals' career adaptability (concern, control, curiosity, confidence) enables them to respond to varying global work challenges.
- Captures the internal agency needed to navigate complex environments.

Research Gap Addressed:

- Previous research focused either on the job demands or on individual adaptability — rarely both together.
- No clear evidence on how the interaction between job scope and individual adaptability affects perceived career capital development (PCCD) abroad.

Our Contribution:

- By integrating both theories, we offer a more complete understanding of how global work shapes career capital development across different roles and individuals.



Theoretical framework: Framing the study

Why gender moderates the impact of job scope on career capital development

Gender underrepresentation in global roles (Brookfield, 2016; Bader et al., 2023):

→ Women in international careers are less common, making their achievements more visible when they occupy high-scope roles.

Social Comparison and Frog-Pond Model (Davis, 1966; Festinger, 1954):

→ Individuals evaluate their achievements relative to peers, not in isolation.

→ Visibility and comparison shape perceptions of career success.

Moderation Effect:

→ Job scope and career capital development relationship might be stronger for women than for men because of social comparison dynamics.





Hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 1:** The job scope of global work is positively related to individuals' perceived development of a) knowing-how career capital, b) knowing-whom career capital, and c) knowing-why career capital.
- **Hypothesis 2:** The career adaptability of individuals engaged in global work is positively related to their perceived development of a) knowing-how career capital, b) knowing-whom career capital, and c) knowing-why career capital.
- **Hypothesis 3:** Gender moderates the relationship between job scope and the perceived development of (a) knowing-how career capital, (b) knowing-whom career capital, and (c) knowing-why career capital.
 - *Specifically, the positive association between job scope and the perceived development of these career capital dimensions is expected to be stronger for women than for men in a global work environment.*





Methodology: Sample

Target Group:

Expatriate members and of two Finnish trade unions (Business School Graduates and TEK).

Data Collection:

Online survey conducted in 2020.

Sample Size: 327 expatriates.

Representativeness:

Because union membership is common in Finland, Finnish expatriates with business and engineering backgrounds are well represented (Suutari et al., 2018).





Methodology: Measures and variables

Main Variables

Dependent Variable

Independent Variables

Moderator

Control Variables

Details

- PCCD (Dickmann et al., 2018)
- Knowing-How ($\alpha = .930$)
- Knowing-Whom ($\alpha = .905$)
- Knowing-Why ($\alpha = .864$)
- Job Scope (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; $\alpha = .853$)
- Career Adaptability (CAAS-SF; Maggiori et al., 2017; $\alpha = .706$)
- Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female)
- Age
- Expatriate type (AE/SIE)
- Children living at home
- Duration of expatriation (years)
- Field of study (Business/Engineering)





Methodology: Sample

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

Good model fit (CFI = .90, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .048, SRMR = .064).
Discriminant validity confirmed.

Common Method Bias (CMB) Test:

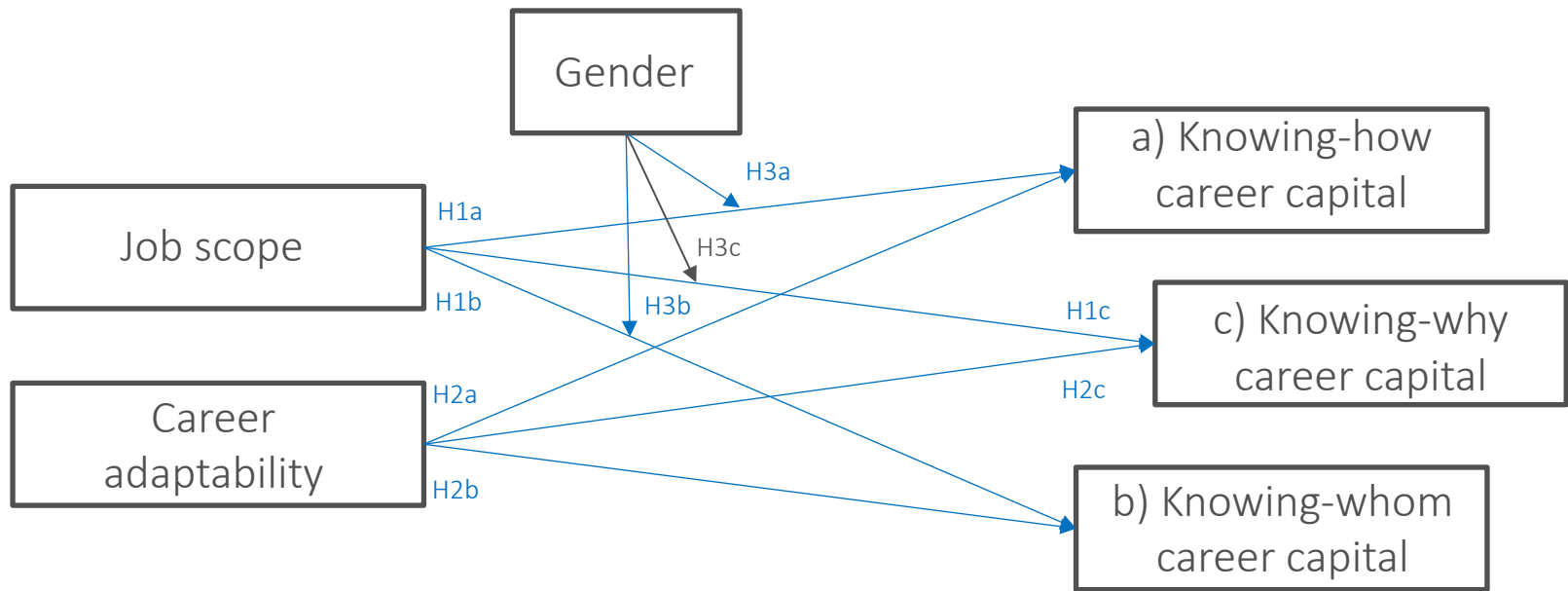
Marker variable approach (Simmering et al., 2015).
No significant CMB issues detected.

Regression Analysis:

OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) multiple regression using composite standardized scores.
Chosen due to sample size and model complexity.
Tools: MPlus 8.6 for CFA/CMB, R 4.3.1 for regressions.



Findings



Blue arrows indicate the significant relationships





Findings

- Job scope was positively related to the development of **knowing-how** ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < .001$), **knowing-whom** ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < .001$), and **knowing-why** ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$) career capital, supporting Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c.
- Career adaptability was positively related to the development of **knowing-how** ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < .001$), **knowing-whom** ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < .001$), and **knowing-why** ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < .001$) career capital, supporting Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c.
- Gender moderated the relationship between **job scope and the development of knowing-how** ($\beta = 0.28$, $p = .01$) **and knowing-whom** ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .01$) **career capital**, but not knowing-why ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.11$).



How gender and job scope influence knowing-how career capital

- At low job scope, women reported less growth in knowing-how CC than men.
- As job scope increases, women's growth in knowing-how CC rises faster than men's.
- At high job scope, women catch up and even surpass men in knowing-how CC development.

So what?

The more complex and broader the job, the more women boost their professional skills — even more than men.

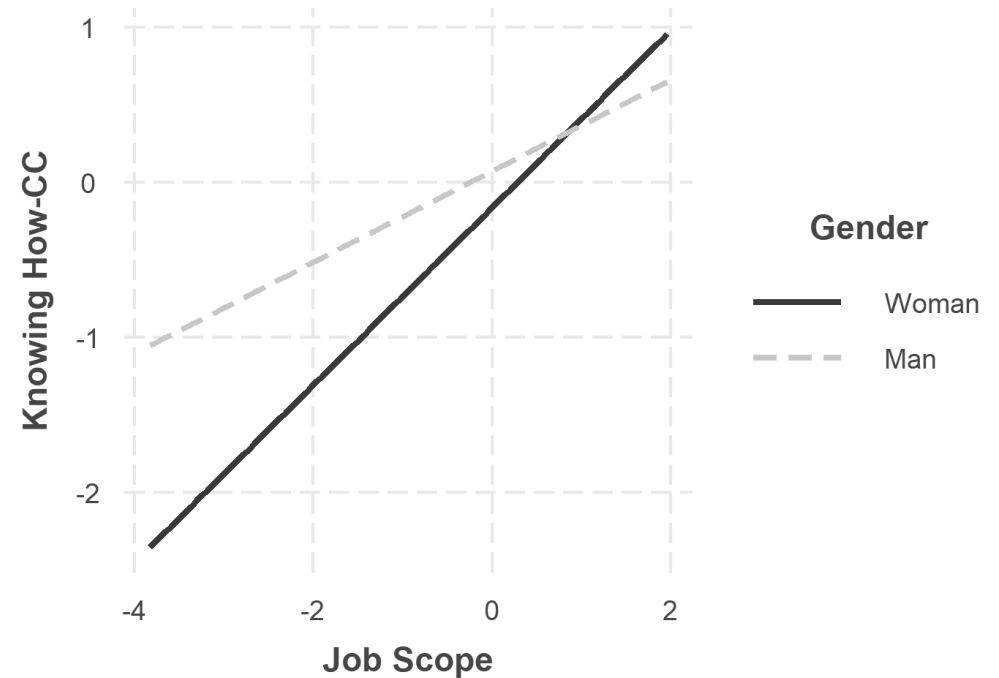


Figure 2. Interaction effect of job scope of expatriate jobs and gender on knowing-how career capital

How gender and job scope influence knowing-whom career capital

- At low job scope, women reported fewer important professional connections than men.
- As job scope increases, women's ability to build networks grows faster than men's.
- At high job scope, women create more career networks than men.

So what?

In more complex and broader job scope abroad, women expand their professional networks faster and further than men.

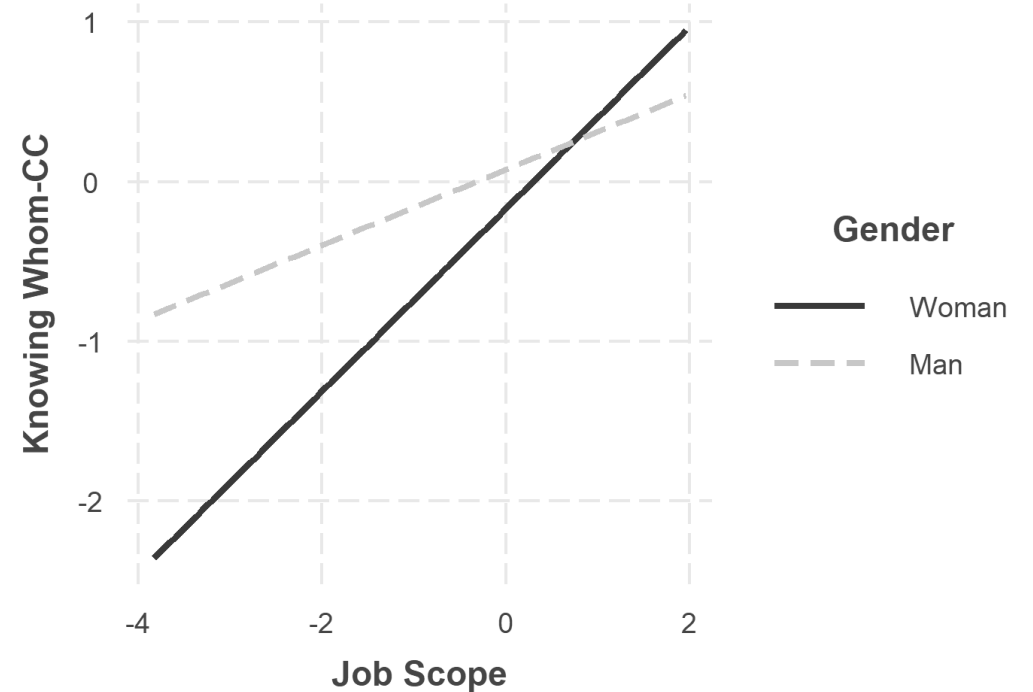


Figure 3. Interaction effect of job scope of expatriate jobs and gender on knowing-whom career capital



Main contributions

Job Scope and Career Capital

- First study to apply the JCM to analyze career capital development in global work.
- Highlights how variations in job scope shape expatriates' PCCD.

Career Adaptability as Key to CC Development

- Extends Career Construction Theory to global work contexts.
- Shows that career adaptability is crucial for developing the 3 ways of knowing abroad.

Gender Dynamics in Global Careers

- Integrates the Frog-Pond Model to explain gender differences in CC development.
- Reveals that women outperform men in PCCD at high job scope levels.





Main contributions

Expatriates job

Moves beyond treating expatriates as a homogeneous group — emphasizes the diversity of global roles.

Practical Implications

Individuals:

→ Seek high-scope roles to maximize career development, especially important for women.

Organizations:

→ Assign more challenging international roles to women.

→ Provide career adaptability training for all expatriates.

→ Develop mentoring and support programs tailored to gender-specific needs.





Main contributions

Broader impact

The message is clear: it's not just about encouraging women to go abroad—it's about designing international roles that empower growth. When given meaningful, high-scope assignments, women not only catch up—they can even surpass their male peers in building global career capital.



The fix isn't just more seats—it's better roles. Design international jobs that stretch women's potential, and the gender gap starts to close itself.







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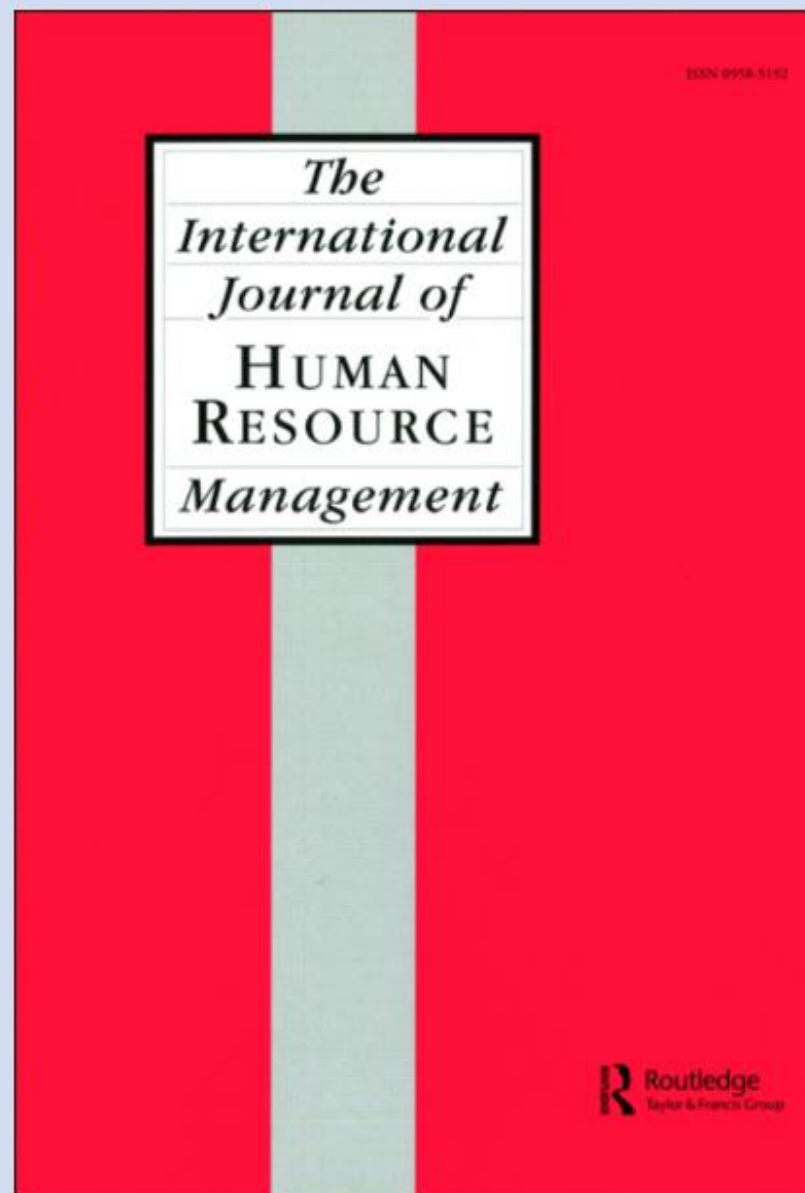


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Special Issue Editor(s)

Vesa Suutari, *University of Vaasa*
vsu@uwasa.fi

Michael Dickmann, *Cranfield University*
m.dickmann@cranfield.ac.uk

Rodrigo Mello, *University of Vaasa*
rodrigo.mello@uwasa.fi

Shaofang Zong, *University of Vaasa*
shaofang.zong@uwasa.fi

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