

An extended abstract of:

**What makes them want to leave? An empirical investigation
of expatriate and spouse's premature return intention**

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ABSTRACT

The expatriate and spouse's inability to adjust to the uncertainties and demands of living in the host country are major influences on the expatriate's premature return intention. Yet, knowledge on what drives not only the expatriate but also the spouse's premature return intention is still missing. At the same time, findings with regard to the effect of satisfaction on the expatriate's premature return intention are inconsistent thus far. Building on stress theory this study therefore investigates the premature return intention of expatriates and spouses. Utilizing structural equation modeling, the results show that the inability to adjust to the host country conditions does not directly affect their premature return intention. Instead, the relationship between general adjustment and their premature return intention is mediated by their general satisfaction with the international assignment. While the general satisfaction also mediated the relationship between interaction adjustment and premature return intention for expatriates, for spouses interaction adjustment does not appear to be relevant. Implications for theory and practice are derived.

Keywords: Expatriation, spouse, stakeholder, premature return intention, stress theory