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**Abstract**

In contrast to previous studies, this investigation aims to get deeper insights into the causes of the intention to study abroad by using an experimental approach. Although international experience is often considered as important, many students at German universities do not even consider abroad. Referring to the Theory of Rational Choice (RCT) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the intention to study abroad is shaped by student's evaluation of expected benefits from studying abroad, resources and restrictions regarding its realization, and normative aspects. In a factorial survey experiment, hypothetical study abroad descriptions with varying attributes were presented to students of economics and engineering of a German university. The experimental design allows for more nuanced operationalizations and for diminished endogeneity biases through systematic variation and randomization. Thus, a more direct test of the assumptions about educational decision-making is possible. A comparison of the unbiased predictor weights clearly indicates that students prioritize conditions when considering study abroad. They seem to not ponder about beneficial outcomes of

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studying abroad, such as own personality development and being in a desired host country, as long as the realization of the stay is not substantially guaranteed by related foreign language skills, sufficient financing, and a supportive host university. Further facilitations through an exchange program and exchange in a group, as well as expectations of family and friends are of secondary importance. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Petzold, Knut@ku.de