

# **The emigration intent of university students: An empirical study**

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## **Abstract:**

Emigration of highly qualified individuals from a high-income country like Germany has been debated so far within the discussion of a possible “brain drain” from industrialized countries. The existing research has mainly focused on economically motivated out-migration after the completion of academic education without considering the individual characteristics which might influence the intention of university students to leave their country. Our study examines the emigration intent of German university students by building on the theory of planned behavior. We extend the framework by examining the Big Five personality traits and their influence on the emigration intent. We test our model using a sample of more than 500 German university students. Our results show that sensation seeking, networks abroad, perceived self-efficacy, uncertainty tolerance, and cultural intelligence are the main driving factors which influence the emigration intent and that those factors are influenced by the personality of the individual.