



Expectations and outcomes of study in France : some first results

L. Lima & A. Fernex
Laboratoire des Sciences de l'Éducation
Université de Grenoble, France

AG Hochschulforschung + FREREF Réseau Uni 21
Expansion of Higher Education. New students, more problems?
VIII. International Workshop at the University of Konstanz
October 15th–17th2015

Some results of The Students' Life Conditions 2013 survey of the French Student Life Observatory (OVE).

Four interests:

- **A representative sample** of the French higher education (50000 respondents, 41000 questionnaires fully completed, 20,5% responses rate)
- **all the field of the higher education system**: a lot for more diversified than 30 years (increase of engineering schools number, business schools, creation of professional Bachelor's degrees);
- **A survey repeated every 3 years**, in relatively constant terms, what allows to produce diachronic analyses;
- The issues which are rather wide (course of study, motivations and choice, organization of the studies, expectations and projects).

Two limits :

- We do not participate in the questionnaire construction;
- A long questionnaire which concerns the living conditions of students and which is more basic on other dimensions.

An online survey

8 general themes:

- Studies (field of studies, institution...);
 - Students paths;
 - Organization of the studies and timetables;
 - Projects et perspectives ;
 - Study conditions;
 - Material conditions of study;
 - Life conditions (housing, transports...);
 - Relationship with the family.
- And some personal variables: social and cultural origins, age, previous school performances...

We have the access to this database recently and we begin to deal with it.

We have been solicited By the OVE to redact two chapters based on the analysis of students' time allocation;

- **important to study the temporal behavior (academic work, leisure activities, transport) of diverse students.**
- **students in a same field of study (and the same year) have very different allocation time practices;**
- **But we are going to show you some results on topics linked with the object of this Workshop. Therefore, these results are very general and still exploratory one.**

Two main interesting groups of results

- **Reasons for studies engagement:** looking in the weight of certain parameters, at the time of the registration;
- **Expectations:** what is considered important or not important for :
 - success in the studies
 - Future integration in the job market
 - degree of satisfaction regarding the current studies.

An analysis by:

large fields of study

types of higher education institutions

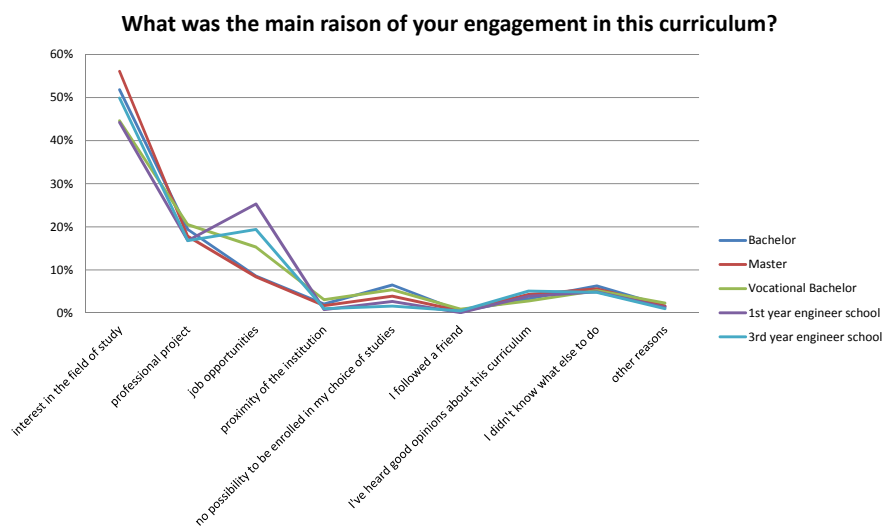
An analysis for : **Last year Bachelor students and last year Master students**

1.

The reasons for the engagement in the studies

Two interesting questions

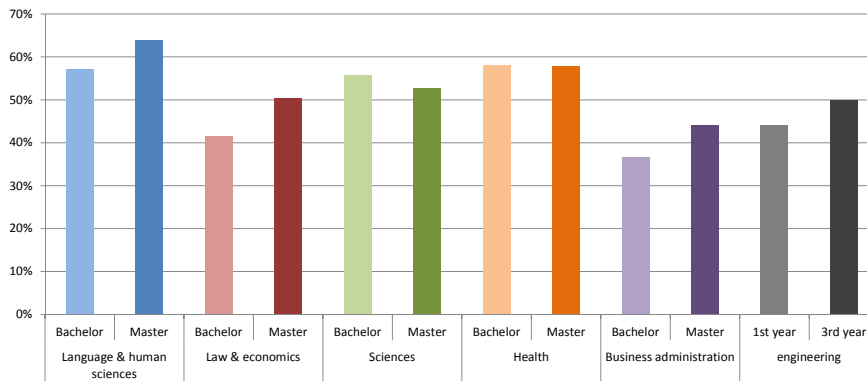
- Reasons for the choice of the field of study and the institution
- Importance given, at the time of the choice, to two dimensions of the studies:
 - the possible contribution to the intellectual development
 - the possible job opportunities.
- Possible bias:
 - Students are questioned about the reasons of their choices while they are already moved forward in their studies. Therefore, we are obliged to consider that these reasons are not the ones which really determined the choice (Bergson, Schütz), and that they are influenced by the course of studies. It is the reason why we observe if the reasons vary a lot in the last year of Bachelor and in the last year of Master.



The interest for the discipline dominates very widely.

Job opportunities offered by the programs are very differently assessed by students. The selective and technical sectors value them more.

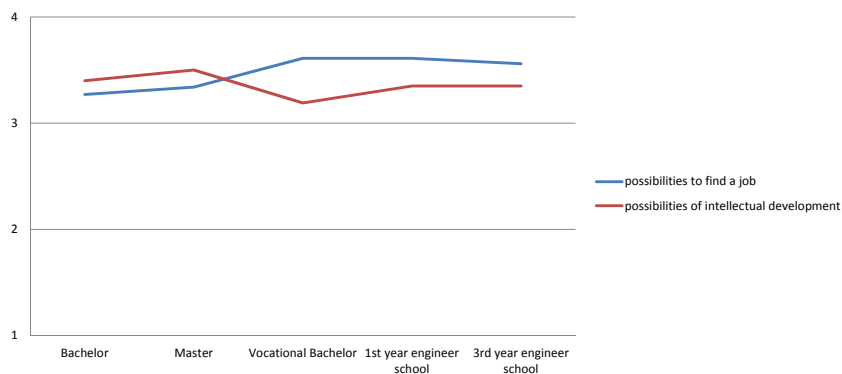
What was the main reason for your engagement in this program? interest in the field of study



- A reason of the choice generally more valued by university students than by students of the technical sectors.
- *A posteriori*, more advanced students of the university (Master's degree) value more this reason. It is true for the Humanities and Law & Eco, but not for the scientists;

Another more precise question

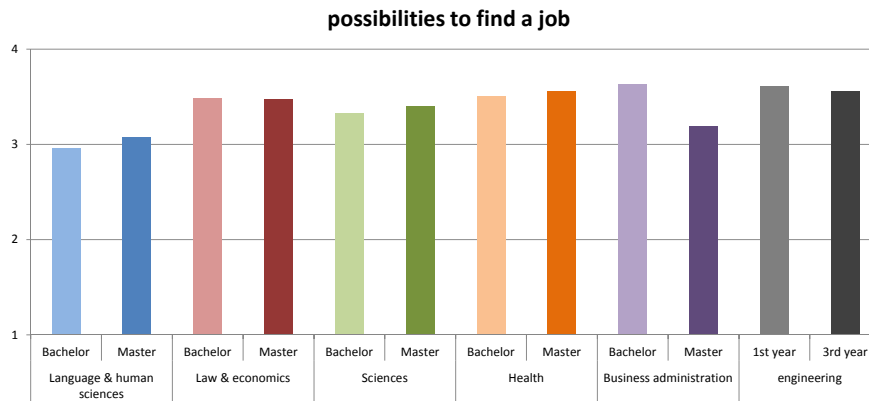
in the initial choice of your current studies, what was the importance of (1=not important at all, 4 very important)



Both proposals are considered important by students and seem to have been determining in choices.

Students of the technical sectors proposed an inverse hierarchy compared to university students

What was the main reason for your engagement in this program?



- Important differences between the fields of study (in particular in the humanities)
- Very similar responses according to the level of study (Bachelor/Master).

2.

Studies outcomes, success in the studies criteria,
judgments on studies

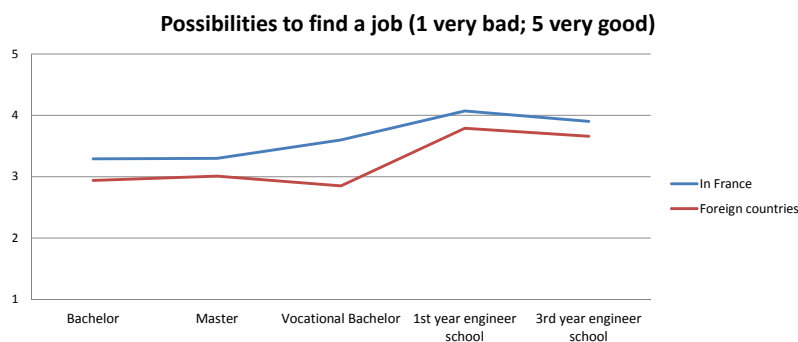
Questions about employment perspectives in France or in another country:

- The question does not concern the conditions of the job integration (stable job, in the field of the training, at the expected level);
- The survey contains relatively few questions on professional perspectives and anticipations;
- Another question completes the previous one. It is relative to the economic and social situation anticipated with regard to that of the parents

We are also going to examine the answers to a question concerning criteria of success (and to estimate the importance which they have for students).

We are finally going to present some results on the course of studies.

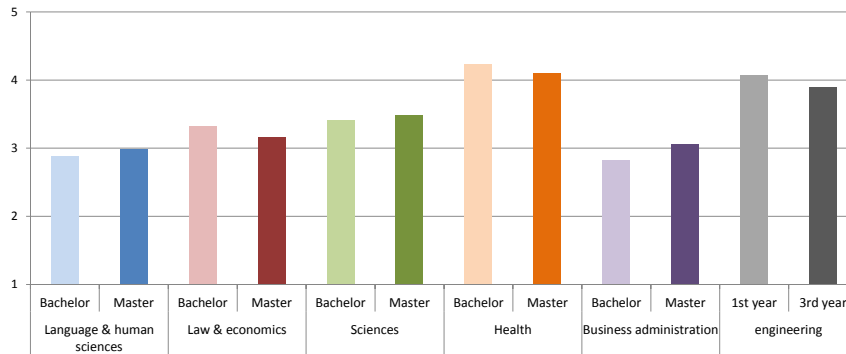
chances of getting a job at the end of their studies



- Chances are more weakly estimated by the University students (bachelor and Master). A little better by the students of the professional bachelor degree which have to enter directly in the labor market (pessimistic on the chances get a job abroad);
- We can be surprised by the relative pessimism of the students of Master's degree;
- Students of selectives institutions (engineering schools) are more confident;

chances of getting a job at the end of the studies

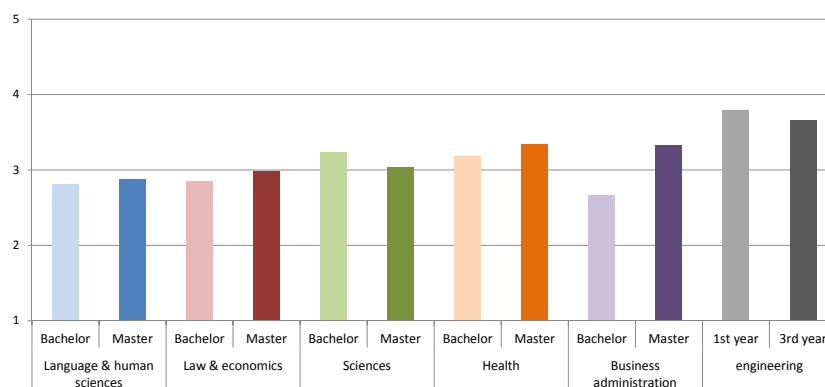
In France



- We can see that this evaluation is less favorable for the student's of humanities, and that it does not change according to the level;
- It is surprising to see the Master's degree students less confident than Bachelor's degree students in Law & Economics

Chances of getting a job at the end of the studies

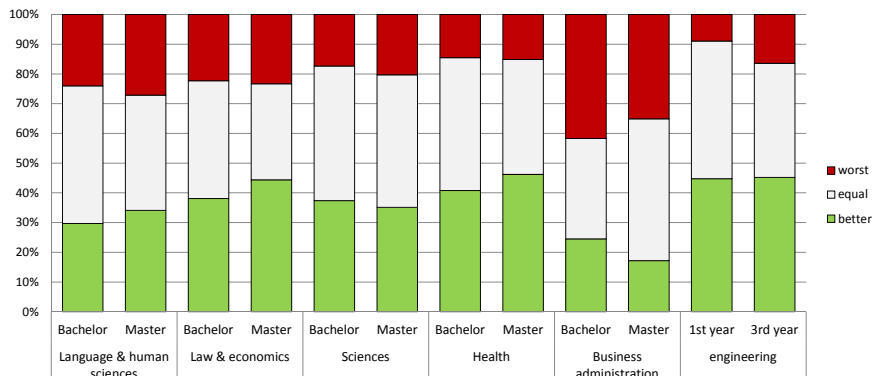
Foreign countries



- We can see that this evaluation is generally less favorable for all the students.
- Only engineering schools students are more optimistic but these schools integrated training courses abroad into their program.

Students future situation compared with that of their parents

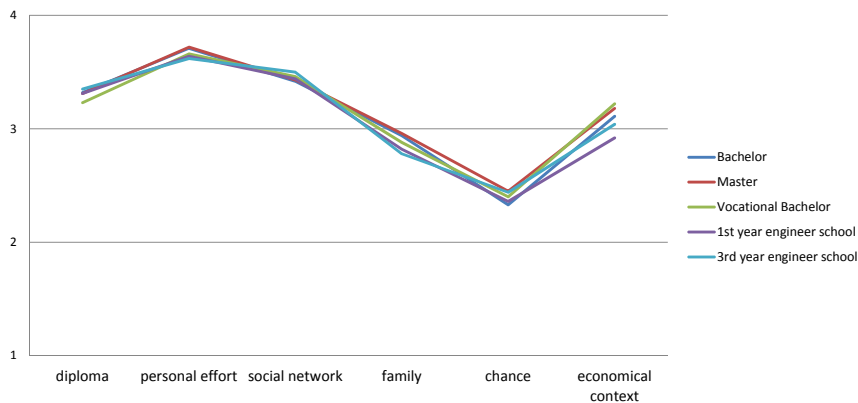
Compared to your parents, your future will be...



- Vision of a better life seems to progress with the level of diploma (exception made by the students of the scientific sectors);
- The feeling of a degraded future represents the vision of more than 20 % of the students;
- It will be necessary to develop analyses and to look to what extent the results are very different according to the social origin (Boudon)

Factors which could have effects on success

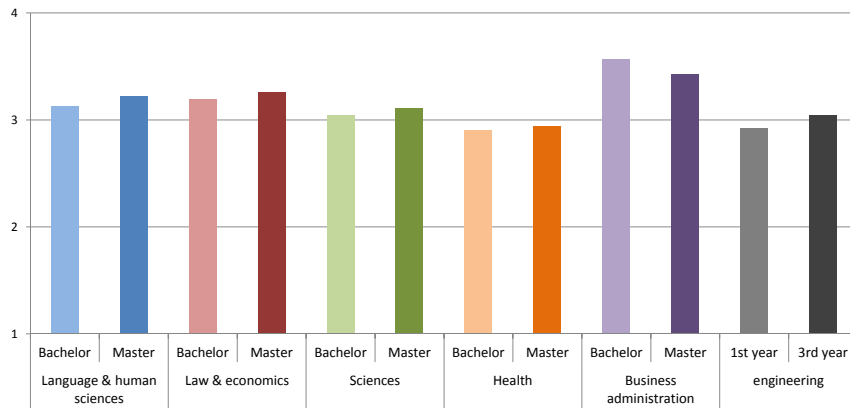
Conditions for success (1= not important at all, 4= very important)



- Some factors are considered as very important (diploma, making efforts, social networks);
- Answers are very similar for all fields of study or the institutions

Factors which could have effects on success

Economical context

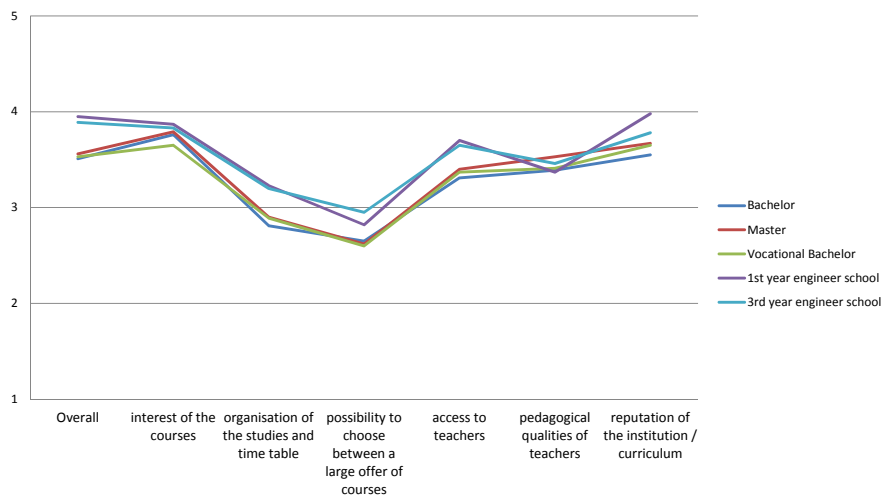


- Law & Economics Students are more sensitive to the economic situation.
- Students from Health attach relatively less importance for this factor (the average is nevertheless close to 3)

Satisfaction with the field of studies

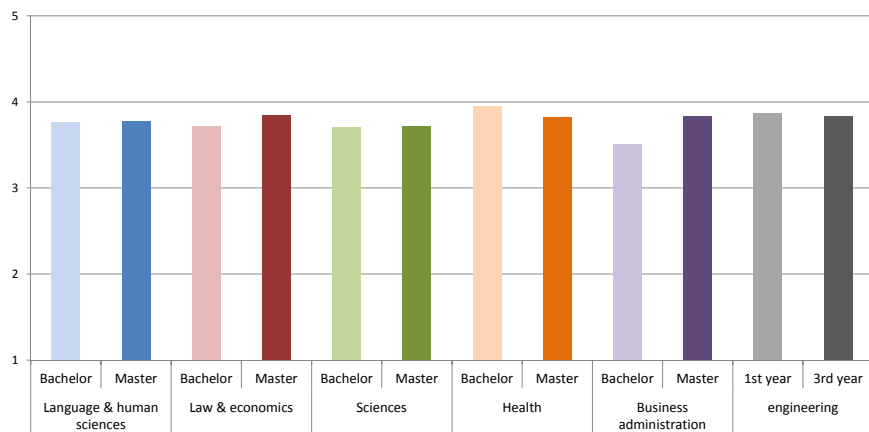
important to observe because it is likely to act on their labor market anticipations

Are you satisfied with your current studies (1= not at all satisfied, 5=totally satisfied)



Satisfaction with the field of studies

Interest of the courses

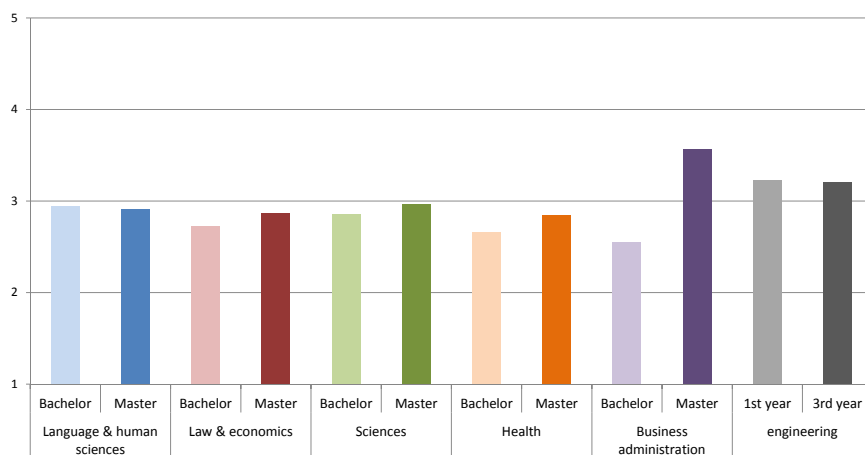


A very big uniformity in the degree of satisfaction about the interest of teachings and courses

Some problems could be connected to the number of Bachelor students but do not improve when number of students is less important (Master's degree).

Even the selective sectors with reduced number of students seem little successful in the domain of the organization of the studies.

Organization of the studies and time table



On the question of organization of the studies & timetables, our work on students time allocation show that :

- All students express the desire to be able to spend more time to paid work and leisure activities. In other words, students wish higher quantity of paid work (who allows to reach consumer goods) and leisure activities;
- But all students also indicate that this increase does not have to reduce academics times;
- On the contrary, in several university sectors (Humanities and some scientific disciplines), students wish to be able to spent more time to the autonomous academic work;
- The question of time allocation by students to several activities is significant. **And a relative contradiction could be observed.**

Conclusion

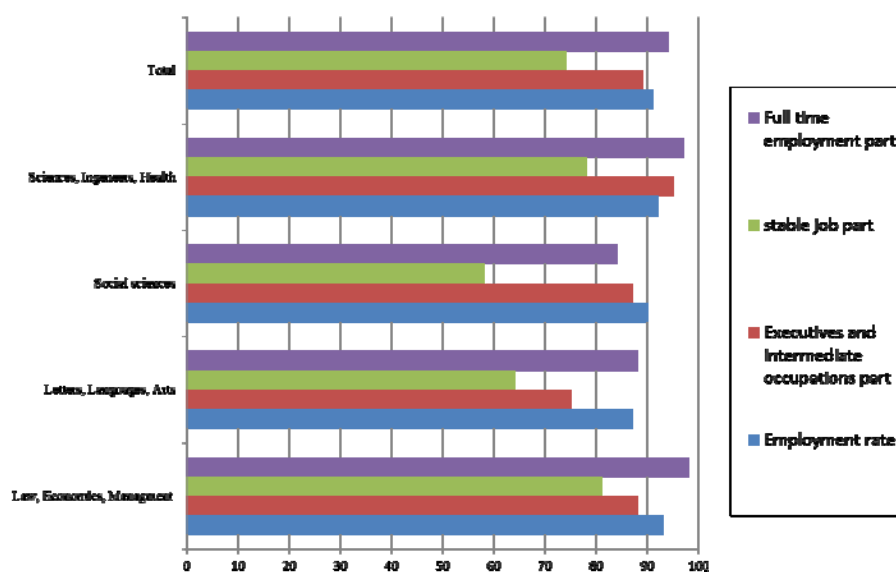
What about their real job market access?

Optimistic or pessimistic anticipations

Job situation of Master's degree graduates in France (DEPP, 2012)

	Number of Master's degree graduates	Foreign students (%)	Only for french students		
			Complementary training (%)	Continuation of studies (%)	Directly entered on the labor market (%)
Law, Economics, Management	41 807	25	16	41	37
Letters, Languages, Arts	8 598	24	16	51	30
Social sciences	17 466	14	22	39	40
Sciences, Ingeneers, Health	25 724	25	8	38	42
Total	93 595	23	15	40	38

Directly entered on the labor market after master graduation (only french students)



Several remarks relative to the job market access:

- Only a minority of the master students fit immediately with the labor market (38 %). This result is surprising and shows a new phenomenon which is the project to go to the market with an upper diploma or several diplomas (Job market signaling, (Spence, Arrow));
- Rather favorable access conditions for those who enter directly;
- But a very variable part of long term contract according to the field of study (much lower for Humanities and the Social sciences). Much more part time jobs or insecure jobs in these fields.

An additional remark:

- Labor market seems to be less favorable for students with low economic and social background (an effect of social capital?)

