



Research about the wishes and expectations of the first academic generation Law Bachelor students.

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1. Research goals and headlines

Project goals

- To reduce the amount of student drop-outs.
- To stimulate study success.
- To invest in talent of the different groups of students.

Research headline

- Encouraging study success and stimulating talent through diversity.



2. Research question

What are the wishes and expectations of the first generation academic students regarding Law Studies at the University of Utrecht?





3 sub-questions

1. Which factors influence the study choice of first generation academic students?
 - The role of the direct environment.
 - The expectations of students and their direct environment about Law studies.
2. What is their opinion about the information material of Law Studies?
 1. In which way can we adjust the information material to realize a match between the study and the first generation academic students?



4. The research context

University of Utrecht

- Top university in the Netherlands: Number 1.
- The 12th in Europe.
- The 48th internationally according to the Shanghai Ranging list.
- Total amount of students: circa 30.000.
- Yearly 6.500 new students.

Department Law Studies

- Total amount of Bachelor students circa 3500.
- Yearly 750 new students (numerus fixus).



Study succes

→ Same success level between majority and minority students.

Cohort	Graduated after			
	3 year	4 year	5 year	6 year
2004 (majority)	17%	49%	59%	
Non-western minorities	16%	40%	51%	
2005	19%	56%		
	18%	47%		
2006	22%			
	25%			



Perspective on diversity

- Individual perspective.
- Diversity is visible and non-visible.
- The starting point is the social and economical class and not ethnicity.
- Diversity is looking to the strength of the different groups of students.
- Diversity is about accepting differences and exploring communality.



Research method

Qualitative research based on:

Interviews with experts to compose the topic list of the focus groups.

Focus groups

- Two Law students focus-groups (first academic generation).
- Two groups of potential students of two secondary schools in Utrecht (first academic generation).
- One control focus-group (second and third generation).



4. Research results

1. The profile of first academic generation students
2. The process of study choice.
3. Expectation of choosing Law studies.
4. Expectations of the future.
5. Lack of information material in the perception of the first academic generation students.



Profile: first academic generation.

- Fighters!
- Ambitious (make the difference)
- Especially interested in building a better world.
- Have a rich life experience.
- Do not have the networks they need during/after their study career.



The process of study choice (1).

First academic generation

- Making the choice was a quite stressful activity, the fear to make the wrong decision.
- The frame of reference is limited; no role models or live examples from their direct context.
- They need as much as possible concrete and realistic information from the university to be able to make the right choice.



Conclusion 1: The process of study choice (2)

- They prefer to get information through an older brother, sister or friends.
→ They don't trust the information of the university.
- A huge group of the respondents reach the university level by starting at MBO (Hauptschule) and after that HBO (Realschule) → fighters with high ambition.
- Interest in the social component of Law studies.
- The emotional support of the parents is still very essential; even though they miss the coaching role of their parents in their career.



The process of study choice (3)

Second or third academic generation:

- The parents were very supportive and guide them through that process.
- The examples of potential Law jobs (network of the parents).
- It wasn't an easy process, but there was no stress to reach a decision.



First academic generation



“I really had no clue about what to choose. It was a quite tough process for me”.



First academic generation



“Making the study choice was a stressful process. I had to overcome a lot of obstacles to finally be able to take the decision”.



Second/third academic generation



“ Together with my parents we did in-depth research about my study choice. Their support was essential in making the right decision on the right time”.



Second/third academic generation



“My parents have always coached me during the decision making process, which feels safe and fine. It gave me a lot of peace”.



Future expectations

- Law studies should offer more possibilities than being a lawyer or a judge.
 - Special interest in international work opportunities.
- They need more information from the department about the other future possibilities.



Recommendations

1. Develop a new college program for students with this profile:
 - The path to university is different from the usual life experience should be taken very serious!
 - More international perspective on Law in the education.
 - They need more information and coaching.
2. Adjust the information material according to their needs.