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A Study of College Admission: The Case of Taiwan and France

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中華民國 105 年 9 月

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摘要

隨著高等教育的大眾化發展，臺灣與法國的大學招生制度經過幾次變革，以期滿足招生需求。大學學位不僅是學歷的一紙證明，更是臺灣與法國高等教育標準化歷程的體現。從高中過渡到大學，是每個學生學術生涯中關鍵且費神的階段，並與未來的成功息息相關。因此，無論在臺灣或法國，學生高中階段的學術能力測驗至關重要，可謂從青春期的過渡到成年期的重要指標。學術能力測驗成績影響著絕大多數畢業生的大學申請和錄取機會。雖然臺灣和法國有不少關於兩國大學教育的研究，但對於高中學生進入大學前的學術能力測驗甚少探討。本研究旨在探討臺、法國大學申請的入學先決條件和要求，以期進一步瞭解大學入學機制。本研究透過對臺灣和法國大學系統中錄取要求，如臺灣的先修課程測驗和法國的一般入學要求等規定進行對比分析，找出各自的優缺點。研究方法包括文獻綜述，以及對兩國高中生進行問卷調查和深度訪談。研究發現，目前兩國的大學入學系統的主要難題之一是缺乏相應的學術指導機制。臺灣方面在於過分強調大學入學考試測驗，法國則與之相反，學生因為過高的升學率而缺乏學習動機。本研究建議，今後臺法兩國如何面對高教入學機會中重新出現的不公與文憑貶值等新挑戰，是雙方大學入學體系需要解決的共同問題。

關鍵字：高等教育大眾化，大學招生，大學學科能力測驗，先修課程測驗，法國一般入學資格，臺灣的大學學測

Abstract

With the massification of their higher education systems, Taiwan and France have experienced several changes in their college admission processes in order to meet the increasing demand of enrollment into higher education. A university degree has become more than just a certificate of academic achievement but a normalized process in Taiwan and France. The transition from high school to university has become a pivotal yet nerve-racking period in a student's academic career and is considered as one of the most crucial factor of the student's future success. In Taiwan and France, the academic abilities of students tested during the senior high school are the most important and significant indicators of students' transition from adolescence to adulthood. It leads a vast majority of graduates to apply to university and to undertake college admission process. Although several studies have been done in Taiwan and France, only few have previously analyzed a student's journey through the college admission process in the two countries. The current study intends to investigate the prerequisites and requirements that college applicants in Taiwan and France are required to meet in order to access the college and university systems. By comparing and analyzing the massification of the two systems, as well as Taiwan and France college admission's requirements such as the Scholastic Ability Test and the Advanced Subjects Test in Taiwan, and the French General Baccalaureate; the study seeks to identify the crucial pro and cons that arise in each system in order to give recommendations on improvements that can be made. Data has been collected through literature reviews, in-depth interviews as well as surveys among former senior high school students in both countries. The results of the present study show that one of the main dilemmas of today's education systems is the lack of academic guidance. While one of the main problems of Taiwanese education is its emphasis on testing, France education, on the contrary, is facing issues due to its excessive accessibility of universities which leads students to enroll in degrees without real motivations behind their choice. The shift of inequalities in educational opportunities is also one of the new concerns that Taiwanese and French education systems are facing as well as the depreciation of diplomas.

Keywords: massification of higher education, college admission process, Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT), Advanced Subjects Test (AST), French General Baccalaureate, Taiwan, France.



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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide the reader with an overview of the research. It provides the background of the study and presents an overview of senior high school transition to college and university in Taiwan and France. It also highlights the research motivation and rationale for conducting this research. The chapter will then, provide the proposed methodology and the definitions of the key terms used.

1.1 Background of the Study

Education must be a way to give children as well as adults the opportunity to become active members of the societies they live in. As a process of living, higher education is expected to give tools and prepare students to deal with the arduous obstacles of adulthood. Senior high school graduation became over the years an important transition representative of many years of hard work. The whole idea of a transition is to move from one period of life to another. Graduation then marks a significant change in the development of a student. The college or university the student gains admission to becomes a source of social capital. Where once a high school diploma opened the job market to a young adult, the importance and necessity of a higher education degree runs supreme and has been normalized within Taiwan and France. This has un-tern heightened the completion levels among students and has created two systems that are based on inclusion and exclusion of resources.

In Taiwan and France, the academic qualification taken at the end of senior high school is the most important and significant step of students' transition from adolescence to adulthood. In France, the number of students attending higher education has increased by eight times in 50 years and is likely to continue to grow over the next decade.¹ Student number in university increased from 215,000 in 1960 to 1,500,000 in 2013 and is set to

¹ Higher education & research in France, facts and figures. (2015, November). Retrieved March, 2016, from <http://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/8EN/info.php> This work is published by the French Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research (Ministère de l'Education nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche)

exceed 1,661,000 in 2020 if current trends regarding the pursuit of studies into university continue.² Taiwan has also experienced increases in the number of student attending college, with 1,092,102 students in 2000 and 1,339,849 in 2014; an increase of 22,7% of student number in 14 years.³ Taiwan and France education systems have certainly experienced an increase in higher education; allowing more pupils to Access University or college.

1.1.1 Taiwanese College Admission.

According to the Ministry of Education (Republic of China; Taiwan), “The education system should help children develop their potential and others’ well-being.” By promoting the development of children and adolescents with the integration of its strengths through three areas – educational vitality, athletic vitality, and youthful vitality⁴, Taiwan’s Ministry of Education has extended national fundamental education to twelve years at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. (In August 2014, the government added three years of non-compulsory education in order to form the 12-year fundamental program.)⁵ According to the MOE, in 2014 more than 99 percent of junior secondary school students were attending senior high school, with 44 percent of them following the academic track. Taiwanese students are offered to follow a total of three tracks after junior secondary school:

- The regular program is an academic path for higher education which prepares students for college entry examinations and lasts three years.
- The vocational program is a practical journey which offers technical training in different fields such as “industry, technology, commerce, marine products,

² Higher education & research in France, facts and figures. (2015, November). Retrieved March, 2016, from <http://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/8EN/info.php> This work is published by the French Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research (Ministère de l'Education nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche)

³ MOE Ministry of Education Republic Of China (Taiwan) 2015 Education Statistical Indicators

⁴ "Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan)." Web. 30 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://english.moe.gov.tw/>

⁵ "The Republic of China Yearbook 2015." The Republic of China Yearbook 2015. The Executive Yuan, Nov. 2015. Web. 30 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://yearbook.multimedia.ey.gov.tw/enebook/2015yearbook/index.html>

agriculture, nursing and midwifery, home economics, opera and the arts”⁶. This program lasts three years and leads to the college entrance examination.

- The comprehensive program offers both vocational and academic curricula which include both specialized and semiprofessional training. (five-year junior college)⁷

In 2014, 1,339,849 students were registered in university including more than three-quarters (1,136,332) of the university population enrolled in an undergraduate program, master’s students represents thirteen percent (172,968) of this population while the remaining were doctoral students (30,549)⁸. According to education reforms in 2001, admission to higher education was exclusively based on the Joint University Entrance Examination (JUEE) which was also called the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE). As a result of several criticisms on its emphasis on rote memorization which was seen as a “major impediment to creative and independent thinking”⁹, the JUEE was replaced in 2002 by the GSAT.¹⁰ During their third year of senior high school, students can attend two examinations in order to apply for universities. These tests are not compulsory for their senior high school’s graduation and are only necessary if the students are expecting to attend college.

- The General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT, 学科能力测验)¹¹, offered every year in January, assesses students’ knowledge based on their first and second years of high school. The GSAT is a requirement for students planning to participate in the Stars program (recommendation process) or the personal application. The General

⁶ Nick Clark. (2010). Education in Taiwan - WENR. Retrieved from <http://wenr.wes.org/2010/05/wenr-may-2010-feature>

⁷ Education in Taiwan - WENR. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://wenr.wes.org/2010/05/wenr-may-2010-feature/>

⁸ "Statistics (Chinese/English) - Ministry of Education ..." 30 Jan. 2016. Web. 27 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://english.moe.gov.tw/lp.asp?ctNode=11432&CtUnit=1348&BaseDSD=16>

⁹ Taiwan - Secondary Education - College, School, Junior ... (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1496/Taiwan-SECONDARY-EDUCATION.html>

¹⁰ History and Key Events. (n.d.). Retrieved March, 2016, from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E04History.aspx>

¹¹ "The College Admission Process in Taiwan." 財團法人大學入學考試中心/認識中心/英文版簡介. Web. 27 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E07Process.aspx>

Scholastic Ability Test includes Chinese, English, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Sciences.

- The Advanced Subjects Test (AST, 指定科目考試) is for students planning to participate in the Admission by examination and placement. This process is for students who did not take part either in the Stars program neither in the personal application process, who failed to gain admission or who were dissatisfied of their score. The Advanced Subjects Test includes ten subjects (students must take a minimum of three items): Chinese, English, Mathematics I (for sciences and engineering majors), Mathematics II (for humanities and social science majors), Geography, History, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Civics.¹²

1.1.2 French College Admission

French education system has long been recognized as one of the best in the world and still has the reputation of being one of the most thorough systems in the world. It is “the duty of the state to provide free, compulsory, secular education at all levels”,¹³ states the French constitution.¹⁴ (« La Nation garantit l'égal accès de l'enfant et de l'adulte à l'instruction, à la formation professionnelle et à la culture. L'organisation de l'enseignement public gratuit et laïque à tous les degrés est un devoir de l'Etat. »¹⁵) Founded on general principles that were inspired by the 1789 revolution, the French education system has devoted significant attention to the respect of this five fundamental principles : academic

¹² "The College Admission Process in Taiwan." 財團法人大學入學考試中心/認識中心/英文版簡介. Web. 27 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E07Process.aspx>

¹³ School Education in France (2013) retrieved from <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid50379/l-enseignement-scolaire-en-france.html>

¹⁴ "Texte Intégral De La Constitution Du 4 Octobre 1958 En Vigueur." Texte Intégral De La Constitution Du 4 Octobre 1958 En Vigueur. 4 Oct. 1958. Web. 23 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/la-constitution/la-constitution-du-4-octobre-1958/texte-integral-de-la-constitution-du-4-octobre-1958-en-vigueur.5074.html> (Full text of the French constitution of October 4th, 1958)

¹⁵ "Légifrance, Le Service Public De L'accès Au Droit - Accueil." Préambule De La Constitution Du 27 Octobre 1946 / Constitution / Droit Français / Accueil. 27 Oct. 1946. Web. 23 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/Droit-francais/Constitution/Preambule-de-la-Constitution-du-27-octobre-1946> (Preamble Of The French Constitution of October 27th, 1946)

freedom, free provision, neutrality, secularism and compulsory schooling¹⁶. French students are offered to follow three tracks after junior high school (le collège)¹⁷:

- General senior high school (the lycée général). It prepares students for the general Baccalaureate and the pursuit of higher education studies, mostly university or preparatory classes. This program lasts three years leading to two or more years of post-baccalaureate studies.
- Technological high school (le lycée technologique). It prepares students for the technological Baccalaureate. This program lasts three years leading to short-term studies.
- The Vocational high school (The lycée professionnel). It is a vocational school which provide students with skills, knowledge, and expertise in a professional field. Its purpose is social and vocational integration which lasts three years and leads directly to a specific career.

In January 2015, 1,531,300 students were registered in French universities, within the 306,400 first year students, roughly 84% of them possessed the Baccalaureate¹⁸. Considered as the most important examination in France, the Baccalaureate introduced in 1808¹⁹ through a decree by Napoléon Bonaparte and commonly known as “le bac” is a test undergone by all high school students in their final year, in order to advance from secondary education to tertiary education. This diploma has the double feature to put an

¹⁶ "Les Grands Principes Du Système éducatif." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. May 2015. Web. 13 Mar. 2016 retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid162/les-grands-principes.html> ("Great Principles of the education system" Ministry of National Education, Higher Education And Research.)

¹⁷ "Que Faire Après La Troisième ?" Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. July 2015. Web. 11 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid23974/que-faire-apres-la-troisieme.html> . ("What are the possibilities after junior high school?" Ministry of National Education, Higher Education And Research.)

¹⁸ "Repères Et Références Statistiques Sur Les Enseignements, La Formation Et La Recherche." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. Aug. 2015. Web. 27 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid57096/reperes-et-references-statistiques.html> (Statistical references on teaching, training and research. Ministry Of National Education, Higher Education And Research)

¹⁹ Marchand, Philippe. Le Baccalauréat. Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Revue Du Nord, 2010. Print. (The Baccalaureate)

end to senior secondary education and to open access to tertiary education (as it is considered to be the first university diploma). Unlike to some U.S. high school diplomas, the Baccalaureate is not only a senior high school completion exam but a necessary examination that is by law an assessment to qualify students for entrance into higher education institutions²⁰. The senior high school completion certificate is commonly known as “Certificat de fin d’études secondaires” (Secondary school leaving certificate). It can be obtained with a baccalaureate’s grade of 8 to 10 of 20 and certify that the students possess “an equivalence to the baccalaureate level”²¹ (ONISEP). Students who fail to obtain a grade superior to 8 out of 20, are not granted either the secondary school leaving certificate or the baccalaureate diploma, and they have to repeat the last year of senior high school as well as re-sit the baccalaureate to obtain one of the two certificates. Success in the baccalaureate exam gives an automatic entry into university. There is three main types of baccalaureate²² offered to students:

- The general academic baccalaureate (le baccalauréat général) which includes three different streams²³:
 - L, Baccalaureate in Literature. It involves analytical skills as well as a strong interest for literature, languages, history, geography, and arts. Its objective is to deepen students’ cultural litterature understanding based on

²⁰ "Le Baccalauréat, Premier Grade Universitaire." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. Nov. 2015. Web. 25 Mar. 2016. <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid143/le-baccalaureat-premier-grade-universitaire.html> ("The Baccalaureate, first university diploma." Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research)

²¹ "Que Faire Sans Le Bac?" Onisep. July 2014. Web. 13 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.onisep.fr/Mes-infos-regionales/Martinique/Dossiers/Que-faire-sans-le-bac/Que-faire-sans-le-bac> (National Office for information on education and professions)

²² "Voies De Formation Et Diplômes." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. Web. 25 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid24238/voies-de-formation-et-diplomes.html> (Formations and Diplomas. Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research.)

²³ "Le Baccalauréat Général." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. June 2015. Web. 11 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid145/le-baccalaureat-general.html> (The General Baccalaureate. Ministry of National Education, Higher Education And Research.)

analysis and to develop argumentation skills, as well as to gain critical reflection skills.

- S, Baccalaureate in Sciences. The scientific Baccalaureate involves abstraction capacities, thoroughness, reasoning and an interest in experimentation. Its objective is to develop a real understanding of science based on knowledge and experimental approach to science.
 - ES, Baccalaureate in Economics and Social Sciences is a multidisciplinary Baccalaureate. The economic and social stream involves a particular attention to the socio-economic environment and current events as well as a strong taste for history, geography, and mathematics. Its objective is to deepen students' economic knowledge and awareness.
- The technological Baccalaureate (le baccalauréat technologique) prepares students to further studies rather than immediate employment. Students who obtain the technological Baccalaureate mostly head to specialized higher technicians' studies for their technological training, and eventually to professional programs and beyond. This Baccalaureate includes eight different specializations ²⁴:
- STMG, Sciences and Technology of Management and Administration.
 - STD2A, Sciences and Technology of Design and Applied Arts.
 - SSTD2I, Industrial Sciences and Technology.
 - STI, Laboratory Sciences.
 - ST2S, Health and Social Care.
 - STAV, Agronomy.
 - TMD, Baccalaureate of music and dance.
 - Hostelry, Technological Baccalaureate for hotel management.

²⁴ "Le Baccalauréat Technologique." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. June 2015. Web. 11 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid147/le-baccalaureat-technologique.html> (Technological Baccalaureate. "Ministry of National Education, Higher Education And Research.)

- The professional Baccalaureate or vocational Baccalaureate (le Baccalauréat professionnel) is prepared in three years after junior high school and offers to students nearly 100 specialties such as aerospace, trade, and accounting;²⁵ It is mainly for young people who do not wish to undergo long studies but want to learn a profession and be quickly operational. It cultivates professional workers, technicians and highly qualified employees.

1.2 Research Motivation and Rationale

In recent years, the French Baccalaureate has faced numerous criticisms losing much of its prestige due to an increase of cheating scandals from both students and examiners²⁶. In 2014, 515 candidates were caught in the process of cheating during the Baccalaureate, a figure increasing by 9.81% compared to 2013 (386 in 2013)²⁷. Citizens complained about the examination becoming too simple allowing 87.8 % of the students in 2015 ²⁸ to pass what is considered to be a rigorous and challenging test. According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, only 39% of new entrants into university in 2016 succeeded in getting admittance into the second year. One critic, Marie de Fournas, states²⁹, for example, that too many students earn the Baccalaureate nowadays thus reducing its

²⁵ "Bac PRO." Le Parisien Etudiant. 14 Apr. 2014. Web. 25 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://etudiant.aujourd'hui.fr/etudiant/info/bac-pro.html> ("Professional Baccalaureate")

²⁶ "Un Prof Et Un élève écopent De Prison Avec Sursis Pour Une Fraude Au Bac." Le Monde.fr. 26 June 2012. Web. 25 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/06/26/un-prof-et-un-eleve-ecopent-de-prison-avec-sursis-pour-une-fraude-au-bac_1724817_3224.html (A teacher gives the corrected test to a student in June 2011)

²⁷ Eric Nunès, and Matteo Maillard. "Candidats, Fraude, Réussite... Le Bac 2015 En Chiffres." Le Monde.fr. 12 June 2015. Web. 13 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from http://www.lemonde.fr/bac-lycee/article/2015/06/12/candidats-fraude-reussite-le-bac-2015-en-chiffres_4652906_4401499.html ("Candidates, Fraud, Success ... 2015 Baccalaureate.")

²⁸ "Le Baccalauréat 2015 - Session De Juin." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. Feb. 2016. Web. 13 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid56455/le-baccalaureat-2015-session-de-juin.html> ("The Baccalaureate 2015 - June Session "Ministry Of National Education, Higher Education And Research.)

²⁹ Marie De Fournas. (2016, June 14). Bac 2016 : Le diplôme est-il vraiment utile ? Retrieved from <http://www.rtl.fr/actu/societe-faits-divers/bac-2016-le-diplome-est-il-vraiment-utile-7783283259> (Is the Baccalaureate useful ?)

value and the opportunities to find a job. A university degree has become increasingly necessary to enter the job market.

Similarly, Taiwan General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT) also faced criticisms in the last few years. Many critics have criticized the significant emphasis on rote memorization, where the students are forced to learn a tremendous amount of knowledge that they'll then use during the examination and forget afterward³⁰. The 2016 essay topic for the Chinese test also took many students by surprise, questioning them on their opinion on the pair of mailboxes that were damaged by Typhoon Soudelor in August 2015; this led to criticisms from numerous test takers because they felt that their studies did not prepare them for such creative essay writing, and this topic felt obscure and pointless.³¹ Although Taiwan and France college admission systems have apparently improved over the years; they are still suffering from either being too simple (as in the case with France), or too difficult, focusing on an impossible wide range of topics that require memorization (as in the case with Taiwan).

In writing this thesis; there is a widely accepted opinion that college admission systems in Taiwan and France are as important as they are different from each other. The research tends to analyze both higher education systems in terms of massification, process and students' perceptions. The purpose of this study is two-fold:

1. To analyze the prerequisites and requirements that students in Taiwan and France need to use in order to access university and to understand how and why it differs.
2. To propose potential improvements for college admission process, by comparing Taiwan and France college admission requirements and by

³⁰ Taiwan Country Study Guide Strategic Information and Developments. Intl Business Pubns USA, 2012. Print.

³¹ Chou Christine (2016, January 24). English test attendance rates record low in college entrance examinations. Retrieved from <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2016/01/24/456897/English-test.htm> The China Post

identifying the challenges and difficulties encountered by students in the process of college admission.

The researcher has endeavored to give a clear analysis of Taiwanese college admission system, with regard to students' perception and experience. This will determine whether the college admission process in Taiwan is too complex. This study also attempts to determine whether the French Baccalaureate has become too easy resulting in a depreciation of its value and allowing unmotivated and unexperienced students to enroll in university.

Although a large amount of research has been done on Taiwan and France education systems, only some have previously compared the two systems. This research is motivated by exciting challenges and barriers to the implementation of successful education and the components that differentiate Taiwan and France college admission systems.

1.3 Research Method

In hopes of answering the questions and addressing the above-stated goals; this thesis comprises a literature review which offers an introduction to the massification of higher education in Taiwan and France and includes an analysis of requirement and college admission's systems. The thesis is also supplemented by surveys and in-depth interviews as well as email interviews and Skype interviews in the case of French respondents. The paper presents college admission system as an important and complicated process for former high school students. In order to provide a detailed understanding and to enable us to reflect on how the two systems are different, this research will concentrate on general senior high schools, the French general academic Baccalaureate, the GSAT, the AST, universities and university entrance examinations. In attempting to investigate factors which may account for the fulfillment of senior high schools' graduation in both countries

as well as college admission requirements, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

Research Questions

- **RQ1:** What are the qualifications and testing requirements needed to fulfill senior high school graduation and college admission?
- **RQ2:** In what ways can graduates apply for college entrance?
- **RQ3:** How do the college admission processes work?
- **RQ4:** What matters most in college admission decisions?
- **RQ5:** What are the challenges and difficulties encountered by students in the process of college admission?
- **RQ6:** In what ways do the college admission systems differ between Taiwan and France?
- **RQ7:** How can the college admission systems be improved?
- **RQ8:** How can the two countries learn from each other?

The scope of this research encompasses the college admission system, prerequisites, requirements and qualifications necessary to access to university, the challenges posed by those requirements, grading standards, students' performances, university entrance examinations, and evaluation process.

1.4 Scope and Delimitation

This study is delimited to the college admission procedure in the case of students wishing to enroll in university. Only public and private universities as well as university institutes of technology in Taiwan and France are taken into account. This research is then delimited to current students and former students who enrolled in university in the last four

years in Taiwan and in France. Implications discussed in this study will be valuable to future similar research because it highlights the specific areas that will need to be improved.

1.5 Definition of Terms

For a clearer understanding of the terms used in this study, their meaning is defined below.

College admission is defined as the process by which students enroll into higher education, in the case of this study “the process through which students enroll into university.”

College admission testing requirements are interpreted as the examinations that university candidates have to pass. Candidates do not have to undergo all the available tests and are able to in certain cases, choose the test they want to take such as the Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT) and the Advanced Subjects Test (AST) in Taiwan and all forms of Baccalaureate in France. In the case of this study only the Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT), the Advanced Subjects Test (AST) and the French Baccalaureate will be taken into account.

Finally, the definition of the massification of higher education used in this study is the action of bringing education to a world audience³²; this is the process of shifting the education from an elite-centered to a mass-centered, to open the access to higher education to all students from diverse backgrounds without any social discriminations.

³² Yuzer, T. V., & Kurubacak, G. (n.d.). Handbook of research on emerging priorities and trends in distance education: Communication, pedagogy, and technology.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a succinct introduction to the massification of higher education in Taiwan and France. The reader is also presented with a general overview of how former high school students apply for college entrance and how they achieve their goal. The purpose of this chapter is to present Taiwanese and French educational systems in order to get a better understanding of college admission systems as we know it nowadays. These countries' college admission systems may differ in the way that students apply to higher education as well as in the different pathways that are offered to them at the end of senior secondary school. This chapter is divided into three sections and will provide a complete picture of Taiwanese and France higher education.

2.1 Massification of Higher Education

The massification of higher education, which has emerged from the terms globalization and internationalism, resulted mostly from the evaluation of social/cultural, economic and political trends in the 20th and 21st centuries.³³ Challenges and opportunities are emerging from the growth and evolution of these higher education systems which has to evolve to keep fitting our world. Martin Trow, famous contemporary educational sociologists divided the massification of higher education into three stages based on gross enrollment rates: the stage of elite education, the stage of masse education and the stage of universal education.

2.1.1 Massification of Higher Education in Taiwan.

In Taiwan, the lifting of the Martial Law proclaimed on July 14th 1987 by President Chiang Ching-Kuo (蔣經國) was the starting point of Taiwan's higher education expansion.

³³ Altbach, Philip G., Liz Reisberg, and Laura E. Rumbley. "Tracking a Global Academic Revolution." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 42.2 (2010): 30-39. Web.

With the end of the authoritarian regime that had lasted four decades (May 19th 1949 – July 14th 1987)³⁴, Taiwanese society was able to slowly become more diverse and democratic. The society Taiwanese society was able to slowly diversify and democratize itself in order to meet the demands of economic transformation and cultural expectation by opening the university to the public, this allowed people from different backgrounds to enroll into higher education, and it lead to a shift from an elite centered education to a mass-centered one. In his chapter “Centralization and Decentralization in Educational Governance in Taiwan”³⁵, Professor Fwu Yuan Weng explains that the decentralization of Taiwan’s education is the primary aspect of educational reforms. This includes the ease of government control over textbooks, the empowerment of local education authorities, schools and teachers, the supply of teaching certificates for private senior vocational high schools and public as well as private kindergartens, and the freedom of education market. Weng F.Y identified two main stages to the decentralization of Taiwanese education:

- *“The period of 1987 to 1993 which represents the development of Taiwan consciousness by removing the “Greater China” political ideology from the textbooks, by allowing the production of textbooks by the private sector and by enhancing university’s autonomy”*. (Fwu, 2004, p. 39)
- *“The period of 1994 to present day. The objectives of this stage is the empowerment of teachers and schools at all levels and local educational authorities, their autonomy, the establishment of a local division of the central educational authority, the implementation of reforms in college and university entrance systems, and the pluralization of the initial teacher training system”*. (Fwu, 2004, p. 39)

On April 10th, 1994, Taiwan’s middle class organized a mass demonstration requesting educational reforms. Its main purpose was to remove all the unreasonable controls imposed on education by the authoritarian government and to return to the student-centered

³⁴ Frank S.T. Hsiao, and Mei-chu W. Hsiao. "Economic Liberalization and Development. The Case of Lifting Martial Law in Taiwan." University of Colorado Boulder. N.p., n.d. Web.

³⁵ Ka-Ho, M., & Yuan Weng, F. (2003). Centralization and decentralization: Educational reforms and changing governance in Chinese societies (Vol. 13, CERC Studies in Comparative Education). Hong Kong: Springer Netherlands. pp 39-58

educational liberation movement, with a shift from “decentralization” to “individualization.”³⁶ Reforms in the educational system in Taiwan were necessary to match the sudden transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one. The Taiwanese perception of their identity instantaneously changed social values and ideas, the people questioned Taiwan’s education that used to be bound by China centered ideology and they increased their demands for revisions. The decentralization of education was then justified by four main factors: the public demand for decentralization, increased demand for autonomy in the Taiwanese society, the pursuit of subjectivity, and the parents’ desire to participate in educational matters. (Weng F.Y 2004)

At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, Taiwan’s Ministry of Education finally extended national fundamental education to twelve years. (in August 2014; the government added three years of non-compulsory education in order to form the 12-year fundamental program.)³⁷

Initiated in 1954, the Joint University Entrance Examination (JUEE) was until 2002 the exclusive factor in higher education’s admittance decision.³⁸ After being the subject of various criticisms denouncing its emphasis on rote memorization which was seen as “a major impediment to creative and independent thinking”,³⁹ and also because of the increase of demands for educational reforms, this examination was replaced in 2002 by a multi-channel admission process. This multi-channel admission process allows students to gain admittance in higher education by two different ways. The first one is through the personal application process which was introduced in 1998 and expanded in 2000⁴⁰, which requires students to take the General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT, which was

³⁶ Tu Cheng-sheng 杜正勝 (2007, January 10). Taiwan’ s Educational Reform and the Future of Taiwan. Lecture presented in London School of Economics and Political Science.

³⁷ "The Republic of China Yearbook 2015." The Republic of China Yearbook 2015. The Executive Yuan, Nov. 2015. Web. 30 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from <http://yearbook.multimedia.ey.gov.tw/enebook/2015yearbook/index.html>

³⁸ Hsieh, P. J. (n.d.). Education in East Asia.

³⁹ Taiwan - Secondary Education - College, School, Junior ... (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1496/Taiwan-SECONDARY-EDUCATION.html>

⁴⁰ 大考中心首頁, ceec, College entrance examination center /. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/>

implemented in 1994), or as before through the examination and placement process by taking the Advanced Subject Test (AST).

2.1.2 Massification of Higher Education in France.

In France, the massification of higher education is a confusing term because of its polysemous aspect. On the one hand, it refers to the massification of the access to higher education during the twentieth century, especially during the post-war and under the effect of the baby boom (an increase of birth rate from 1945 to 1975)⁴¹. "The massification of higher education in France precedes May 1968. It is one of the movement's ingredients. The total number of pupils increased so universities' premises weren't sufficient anymore and lecture halls were too crowded which leads to a logistical crisis," explains Jean-Philippe Legois, Director of the Archives Center on The Student Movements (CAARME; Centre of Animation, Archives and Research on Student Movements) to the Agence France-Presse (AFP), an international news agency headquartered in Paris, France. "The period of May 1968 was then an accelerant: the government puts more resources, recruited teachers, built schools, in such a way as to allow the total number of pupils to continue its rise even more sharply in the post-1968" (Jean-Philippe Legois).

This first aspect of the French democratization of higher education involves a democratization in terms of numbers.⁴² The aim was to facilitate the access to education to a greater number of students. On the other hand, it also means a transformation of the educational institution and the university, in which correlation between the academic qualifications of students and their social origin (known as social determinism) weakens. The democratization of education also means a wider access to academic knowledge. The democratization of education can then also be interpreted as a desire to reduce inequalities

⁴¹ Robert, André D. *L'École En France De 1945 à Nos Jours*. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, n.d. Print. Education in France from 1945 to nowadays.

⁴² Lazin, F. A., Evans, M., & Jayaram, N. (2010). *Higher education and equality of opportunities: Cross-national perspectives*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

between individuals by offering them common access to education. Authors such as Stéphane Beau, Pierre Merle, and Louis-André Vallet insist on the need to distinguish these two schools of thought. Therefore, we can approach the democratization of higher education in France in both a quantitative and qualitative manner.

Higher education in France experienced a significant quantitative growth from the early 1960s until the late 1990s. In the space of thirty years, the number of registered students increased fivefold, from 310,000 students enrolled in higher education in 1960 to over 1,7 million in 1990.⁴³ This shift from an education for the elite to a mass education has not only been seen in France. It mainly involves developed countries in the twentieth century such as the United States and European countries. In all these countries, this opening couldn't have been accomplished without any reforms of the educational institution.

In May and June 1968, France experienced the biggest general strike in the history of their social class struggle. With the assimilation of a university crisis, a political crisis, and social crisis, this strike was the subject of different interpretations as Philippe Bénéton, and Jean Touchard detailed in their article "Les interprétations de la crise de Mai-Juin 1968" (The interpretations of the May-June 1968 crisis)⁴⁴. They distinguished eight different interpretations of the crisis: an enterprise of subversion, a university crisis, a youth revolt, a spiritual revolt, a crisis of civilization, a social class conflict, a political crisis, and a chain of circumstances.

The interpretation of a university crisis is the one that we are the most interested in, as this led higher education to various reforms which contributed to the creation of the higher education system as it is known today. Students, parents, teachers, non-teaching personnel and the school management denounced "the inertia of fixed structures subjected

⁴³ "Changes in Higher Education over the Last 50 Years: Growth and Diversification." Higher Education & Research in France, Facts and Figures 8th Edition. N.p., June 2015. Web. Apr. 2016. Retrieved from: <http://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/8EN/EESR8EN_ES_08-changes_in_higher_education_over_the_last_50_years_growth_and_diversification.php>.

⁴⁴ Beneton, P., & Touchard, J. (1970). Les interprétations de la crise de mai-juin 1968. *Rfsp Revue Française De Science Politique*, 20(3), 503-544. doi:10.3406/rfsp.1970.393237 The interpretations of the May-June 1968 crisis ; French Review of Political Science.

to a suffocating centralism”.⁴⁵ Centralism is perceived as the uniformity, the paralyzing control and the lack of university autonomy in higher education (Bredin 1968). The strike movement (the student revolt) grew from May 3rd to May 13th followed by the social crisis (also known as the general strike) and was quickly tied to a political crisis from May 27th to May 30th.⁴⁶ The contestation shook France, especially the higher education system. For almost two months France had been in chaos, the country was paralyzed for nearly two weeks starting from May 20th 1968. There were between seven and nine million strikers, more than half of the employees at the time. More than four million workers have been on strike three weeks and more than two million during a month. It is only at the end of June, that the crisis was finally over, resolved by increasing the wage of strikers and promising students reforms in higher education.

Two major reforms have marked the evolution of higher education: The Orientation Act of Higher Education and The Savary Law. On November 12th 1968, five months after the May-June crisis, Edgar Faure, Minister of National Education, introduced the “Orientation Act of Higher Education” that was adopted by the General Assembly and the Senate. It was applied on June 1st 1969, and its purpose was to remodel the French higher education system.⁴⁷ It included both students and teachers’ requests and was built on three innovative principles: participation, autonomy and multidisciplinary.

The Orientation Act of Higher Education also known as the Faure Law and can be summarized in seven points⁴⁸. The establishment of universities as public scientific, cultural or professional establishments (EPSC, établissement public à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel), the creation of unity of teaching and research (UER, Unité

⁴⁵ Bredin, Jean-Denis (7-8 september 1968). L'application de la loi d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur. Le Monde. The implementation of the Higher Education orientation act published in the french newspaper Le Monde.

⁴⁶ Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne - événements de mai 1968. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/evénements_de_mai_1968/131140 Larousse Encyclopedia online - events of May 1968. The three crises of the French May, the student revolt, the general strike, the political crisis.

⁴⁷ Legifrance - Le service public de l'accès au droit. (1968, November 13). Retrieved from <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000693185> The Orientation Act of Higher Education drafted by Edgar Faure

⁴⁸ Loi Faure. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.pde.fr/enseignement-superieur/les-lois-esr/loi-faure> Promotion and defense of students, explanation of the orientation act of higher education.

d'enseignement et de recherche), the creation of the National Council of Higher Education and Research (CNESER, Conseil National de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche), the establishment of a joint management in university governance, the beginning of institutions' autonomy (administrative, pedagogical and financial independence), the establishment of two new universities in Paris-Dauphine and Vincennes, and the overhaul of some universities (for example the establishment of Paris VI and Paris VII for the University of Sciences in Paris). In brief, it was an effort to answer the significant demand for the joint management of universities by students and faculty members, and its purpose was to resolve difficulties generated by the administrative centralism of universities.

In January 26th 1984, a second major law was passed, the Savary law, named after the minister in charge of higher education at the time, Alain Savary. In the same line as the Faure law, this law pursued the reform in higher education. While the 1969 law created universities, the Savary law was concerned with all establishments and post-baccalaureate courses. The Savary Law created the concept of "higher education's public service," a concept that was intended to facilitate matches between different institutions and courses (universities, the grandes écoles, short-term academic courses and so on). This law launched four missions for the university: initial and continuing training, scientific research, the diffusion of the culture and information on sciences and technology, and international cooperation. The Savary Law's main features include: the opening of higher education through the cooperation of all institutions of higher education under the authority of the Ministry of Education on the basis of departmental, regional, and national institutions; the opening of the university to a wider audience as well as the development of lifelong learning; and finally the expansion of research and participation in the economic development of the country. The 1984 Act then gives the university the mission of "spreading the culture and information on sciences and technology"⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Minot, Jacques. Les universités après la loi sur l'enseignement supérieur du 26 janvier 1984. Bulletin des bibliothèques de France (BBF), n° 3-4, 1985, p. 337-338. Disponible sur le Web : <http://bbf.enssib.fr/consulter/bbf-1985-03-0337-011>. ISSN 1292-8399.
"Universities after the January 26th 1984 law on higher education."

As defined by the Savary Law, universities in France are divided into scientific, cultural, and professional public institutions. Technological university institutes (IUT) created in 1966 are universities' internal institutions with the mission to dispense technical and short-term training.

2.2 Education system

This second section seeks to provide an overview and introduction to the educational systems in Taiwan and France.

2.2.1 Taiwanese Education System

Taiwan (臺灣) commonly known as the Republic of China (中華民國) is a sovereign state of East Asia, whose territory now covers the island of Taiwan and other neighboring islands, including Kinmen, Matsu and the Pescadores Islands. As noted on its official website (MOE), all educational programs are regulated by the Ministry of Education which is in charge of national academic and educational administration. This includes education policy planning, legislation, and supervision of educational matters throughout Taiwan. In Taiwan, education is compulsory for girls and boys from primary school (6 years old) until junior high school (15 years old) since 1968. Most of the Taiwanese children attend kindergarten from the age of 3 to 6; this is a non-compulsory pre-school education which provides free education to children in financially disadvantaged families. The Taiwanese education system comprises of basic education which is compulsory (twelve years), senior high school (three years) and tertiary education (four-year undergraduate degrees, two years graduate studies and so on). Compulsory education includes primary school and junior high school, while senior secondary education covers senior vocational schools and senior high schools. Finally, higher education includes colleges, universities, institutes of technology as well as graduate schools and postgraduate programs.

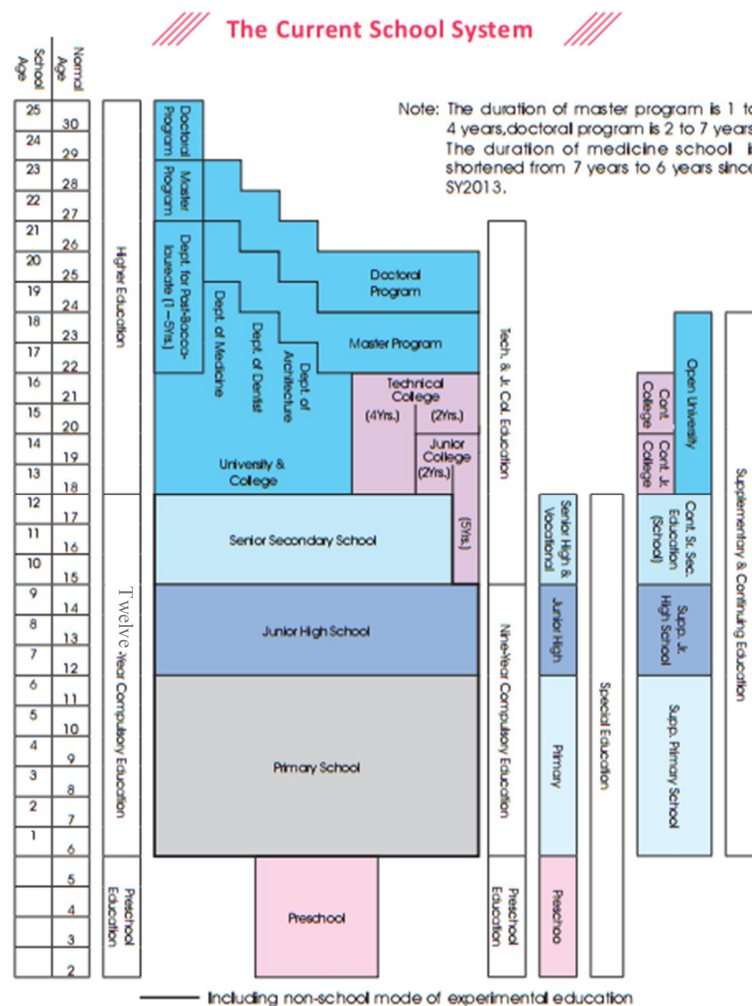
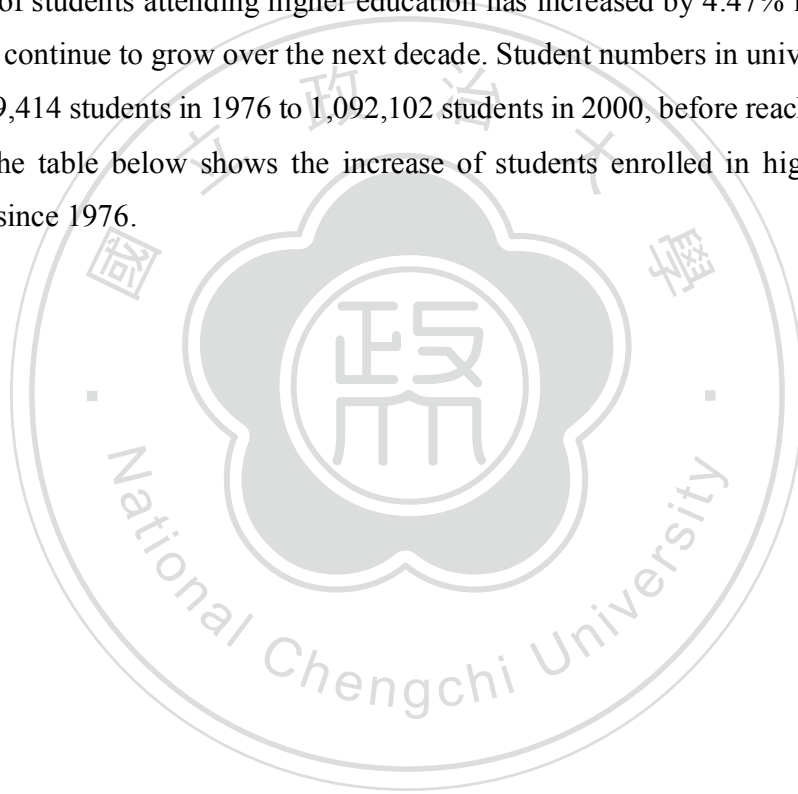


Figure 2.1 Taiwanese Education System.

Reprinted from *Education in Taiwan* by The Ministry of Education Republic of China, 2015-2016, Retrieved from http://www.studyintaiwan.org/album/v4_publications/55fbd7943aa41.pdf Copyright (August 2015) by Se Hwa Hu.

Taiwan has experienced a rapid expansion of its higher education over the past 25 years,⁵⁰ catching up with its European and American fellows. This expansion is characterized by four several achievements: the increase of enrollments into tertiary education, the implementation of a multi-channel process which offers all students with equal opportunity to gain admittance into college, the enhancement of university administration and autonomy, and a significant decrease of pressure to attend tertiary education.⁵¹ All of these achievements testify to a successful massification of higher education in Taiwan. According to the MOE 2016 Education Statistical Indicators⁵², the number of students attending higher education has increased by 4.47% in 38 years and is likely to continue to grow over the next decade. Student numbers in universities increased from 299,414 students in 1976 to 1,092,102 students in 2000, before reaching 1,339,849 in 2014. The table below shows the increase of students enrolled in higher education in Taiwan since 1976.



⁵⁰ Chuang Prudence Chou. (n.d.). Who benefits from Taiwan's Mass Higher Education? Singapore: Springer. Chapter 14. In Shin, Jung Cheol, Postiglione, Gerard A., Huang, Futao (Eds.). Mass Higher Education Development in East Asia. Strategy, Quality, and Challenges.

⁵¹ Chan, Sheng-Ju, and Liang-Wen Lin. "Massification of Higher Education in Taiwan: Shifting Pressure from Admission to Employment." Higher Education Policy High Educ Policy 28.S1 (2015): 17-33. Web.

⁵² 2016 Education Statistical Indicators. (2016). Retrieved from <http://english.moe.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=14504&CtNode=11430&mp=1>

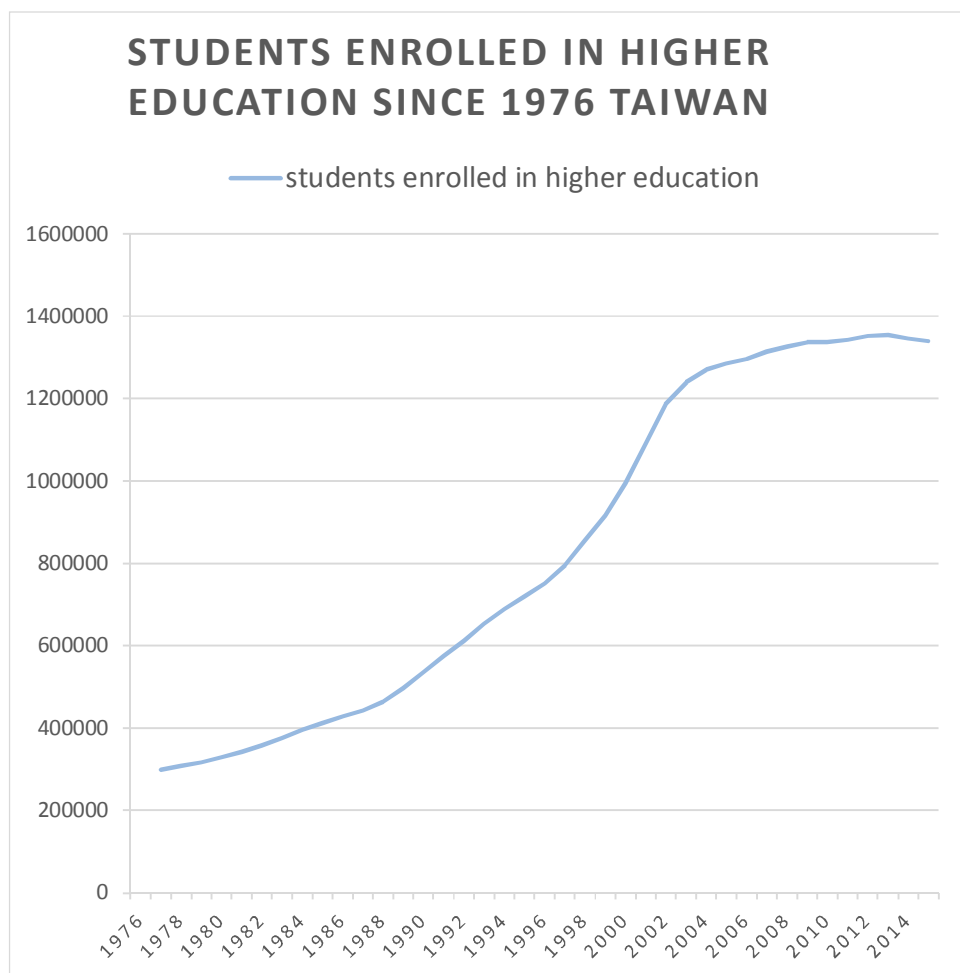


Figure 2.2 *Students enrolled in higher education since 1976 Taiwan*

Adapted from *2016 Education Statistical Indicators*, by The Ministry of Education, Republic of China, Retrieved from <http://english.moe.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=14504&CtNode=11430&mp=1>
Copyright (2016) by MOE.

2.2.2 French Education System

The French Republic (La République Française) commonly known as France is a sovereign state which includes territory in western Europe and several overseas regions and territories. France spans 632,834 square kilometers according to the INSEE (2008) and has a total population of 66,627,602 people⁵³. As stated on its official website; all educational programs are regulated by the Ministry of National Education, officially called “Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Jeunesse et de la Vie associative.” Yet, the administrative responsibility for education is present in every region and every department: it is undergone by the Ministry of Education's decentralized services. Its organization is structured around 17 academic areas, 30 academies and 97 institutions of departmental services of Education.⁵⁴ From January 1st, 2016, 17 academic areas were in place to respond to the new regional framework created by the January 16th, 2015 law. As stated in the French Ministry of Education official website, a rector is appointed for each academic area, and guarantees the unity and the coherence of the State's directives, especially in the fields of shared competences with the regional community. This category of organization enables the Ministry of National Education to maintain a coherent framework adapted to the management of the State's first public service.

⁵³ Demographic Record "Bilan Démographique 2015." Insee. Jan. 2016. Web. 10 Apr. 2016. Retrieved from http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/detail.asp?ref_id=bilan-demo

⁵⁴ "Les Régions Académiques, Académies Et Services Départementaux De L'Éducation Nationale." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. Mar. 2016. Web. 11 Apr. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid3/les-regions-academiques-academies-et-services-departementaux-de-l-education-nationale.html>

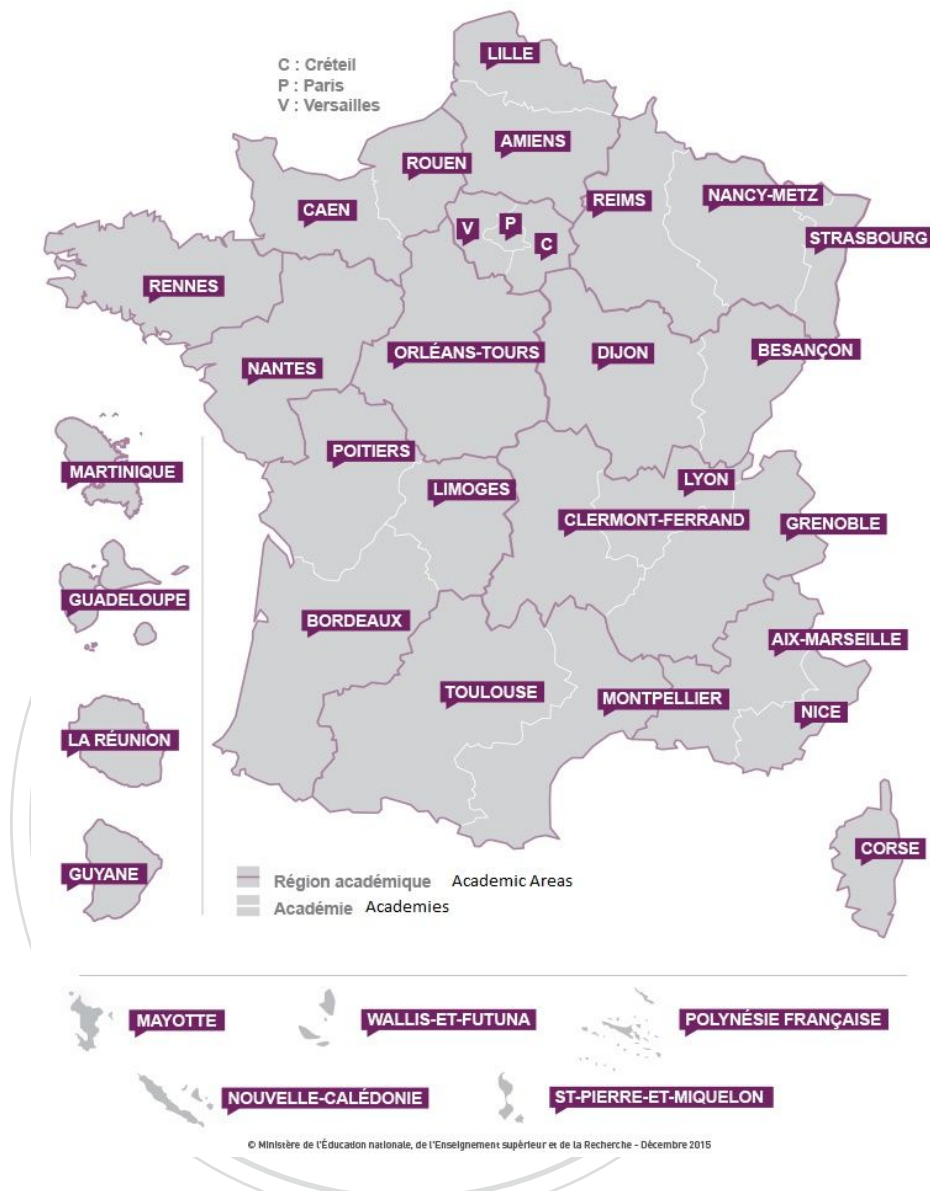


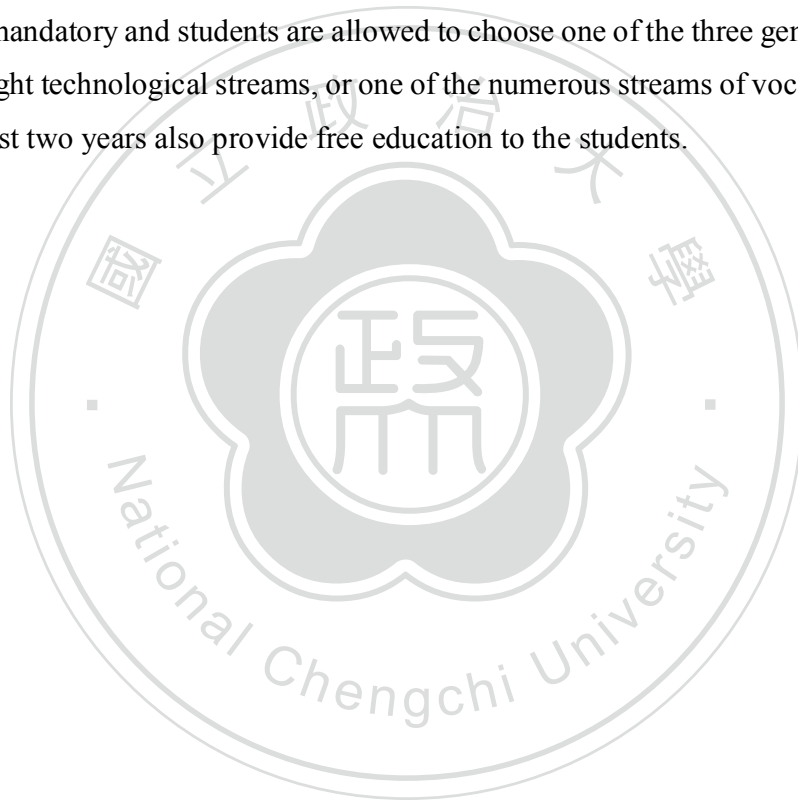
Figure 2.3 Map of academic areas and academies in France.

Reprinted from *The French Ministry of Higher Education and Research*, 2016, Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid3/les-rectorats-services-departementaux-education-nationale.html>. Copyright (June 2016) by *French Ministry of Higher Education and Research*.

Standardized testing is administrated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Community Life, which is considered as the awarding organization for national qualifications at primary and secondary level. Higher education is managed by the Ministry

of National Education, Higher Education and Research, MENESR (le Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche).

In France, education is compulsory for girls and boys aged 6 to 16 years old (since January 6th, 1959)⁵⁵ residing in French territory, regardless of their nationality. Most French children attend kindergarten (La maternelle) from the age of 3 to 6; this is a non-compulsory pre-school education that provides free education to young students.⁵⁶ Contrary to the first year (la seconde) of senior high school which is considered a compulsory general cycle and offers a similar syllabus for all students, the last two years are not mandatory and students are allowed to choose one of the three general streams; one of the eight technological streams, or one of the numerous streams of vocational programs. These last two years also provide free education to the students.



⁵⁵ "Les Grands Principes Du Système éducatif." Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale, De L'Enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche. May 2015. Web. 11 Apr. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid162/les-grands-principes.html>

⁵⁶ "Principe De Gratuité." Principes Généraux De L'éducation. Web. 11 Apr. 2016. Retrieved from <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid48578/principe-de-gratuite.html>

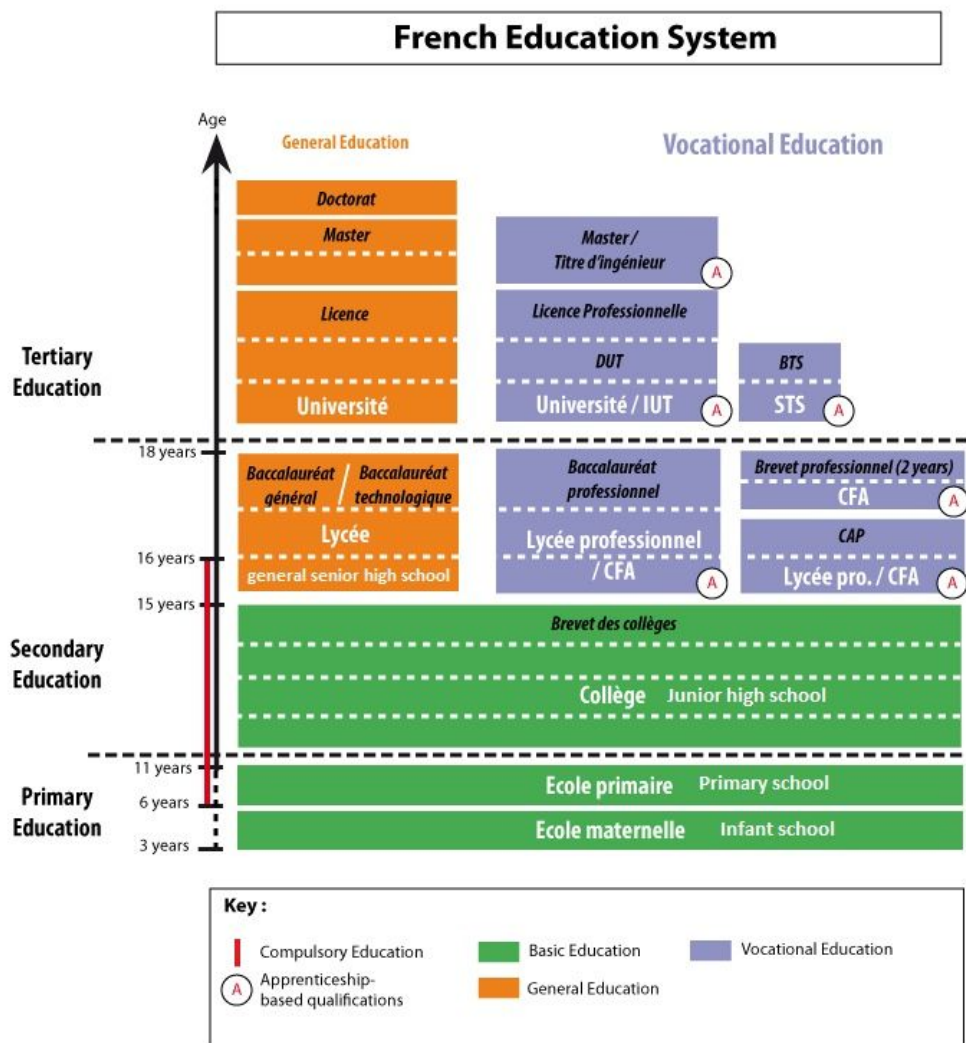


Figure 2.4 French Education System.

Reprinted from Onisep, 2013, Retrieved from <http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr/en/initial-vocational-education-and-training-in-europe/france/> Copyright (2013) by Onisep.

France has experienced a slow but successful massification of its higher education over the past 40 years, closing the gap that it had with many OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries such as the United States, in regards

to its population's educational attainment⁵⁷. The French education system can then count its achievements as: a significant rise in the proportion of young citizens graduating from secondary school, a successful mass expansion of higher education enrollments in the past 40 years, the creation of University Institutes of Technology (IUT) in 1966, and the development of higher education curricular pathways and grandes écoles.⁵⁸

In France, the most crucial aspect of this change has been the creation and development of teaching courses for professional purposes. The IUT (University Technology Institute) created in 1966, welcomed 117,400 students in 2015-2016⁵⁹. The University Institutes of Technology are part of the university system in France. According to their official website, there are 113 IUTs, attached to 80 universities. The IUTs offer students with the opportunity to prepare a two-year undergraduate technical diploma called a "Diplôme universitaire de technologie" or DUT. After being awarded their DUT, students have several possibilities, such as to enter the job market, to do a one-year professional degree, or to further their studies in a university or "école". In France, the number of students attending higher education has increased eightfold in 50 years and is likely to continue to grow over the next decade. The number of students enrolled in higher education rose from 310,000 in 1960 to 2,430,000 in 2013 and is forecasted to rise 2,600,000 by 2020 if current trends regarding the pursuit of studies in university continue⁶⁰. Similarly, the number of students enrolling in University Technology of Institute (IUT) created in 1960 has reached a number of 116,000 in 2013. The table below shows the increase of students enrolled in higher education in France since 1960.

⁵⁷ Education at a Glance 2014 retrieved from : <https://www.oecd.org/edu/France-EAG2014-Country-Note.pdf>

⁵⁸ Education at a Glance 2014 retrieved from : <https://www.oecd.org/edu/France-EAG2014-Country-Note.pdf>

⁵⁹ Les effectifs universitaires en 2015-2016 - ESR : Enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr. (2016, May). Retrieved May, 2016, from <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid102275/les-effectifs-universitaires-en-2015-2016.html>

University enrollment in 2015-2016, Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research

⁶⁰ Laurence Dauphin. (2015, November). Higher education and research in France, Facts and Figure. Retrieved from http://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/8EN/EESR8EN_ES_08-changes_in_higher_education_over_the_last_50_years_growth_and_diversification.php.

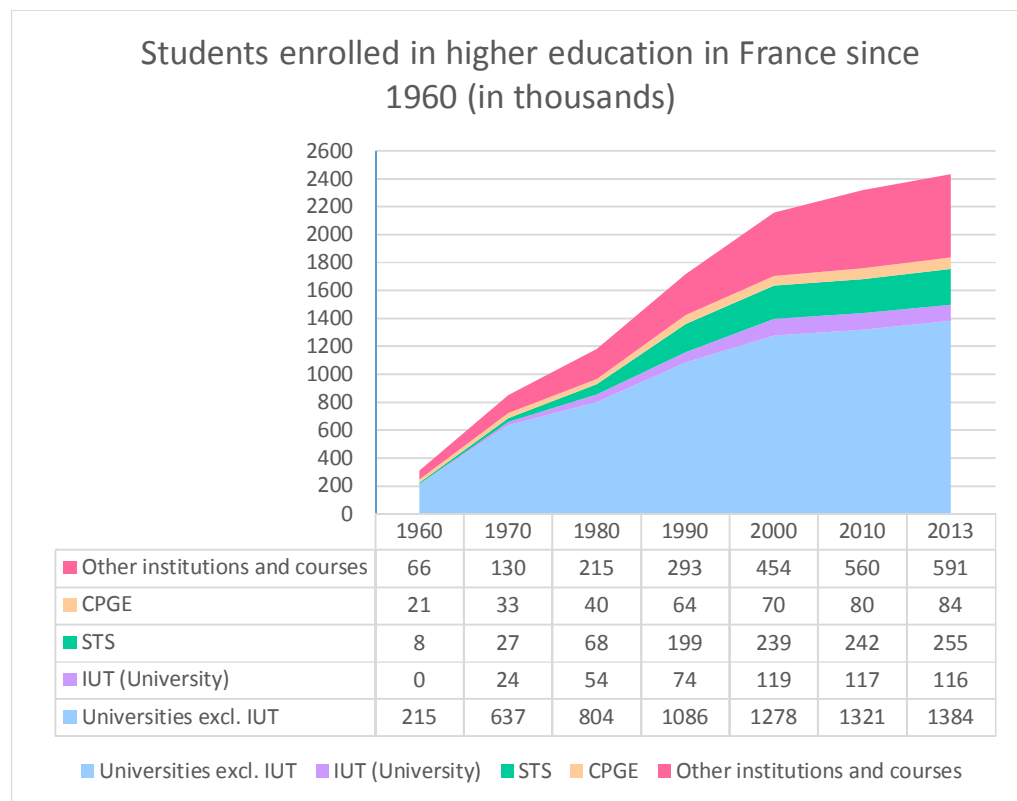


Figure 2.5 *Students enrolled in higher education since 1960 France.*

Adapted from Higher education and research in France, Facts and Figure, by Laurence Dauphin, November 2015, Retrieved from http://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/8EN/EESR8EN_ES_08-changes_in_higher_education_over_the_last_50_years_growth_and_diversification.php.

The Grandes écoles are, as stated by the French Ministry of National Education, "higher education institutions that recruits their students by a rigorous selection procedure and provides high level training". The Grandes Écoles are higher education establishments outside the main framework of the French university system. Selection to the Grandes Écoles are made through competitive written and oral examinations and are based on national ranking. On the contrary of universities, the Grandes Écoles do not have the obligation to accept every baccalaureate holders and are able to select students according to their own criteria. Candidates who successfully pass the examinations may enter the preparatory classes. Candidates to the national exams have usually completed two years of preparatory classes. The preparatory classes are accessible to baccalaureate holders and

acceptance is made according to baccalaureate score, senior high school grades and a portfolio (sometimes interviews are also required). In spite of it, some Grandes Écoles also offers an admission process to university students. The figure below briefly presents the process from the Baccalaureate to the Grandes Ecoles.

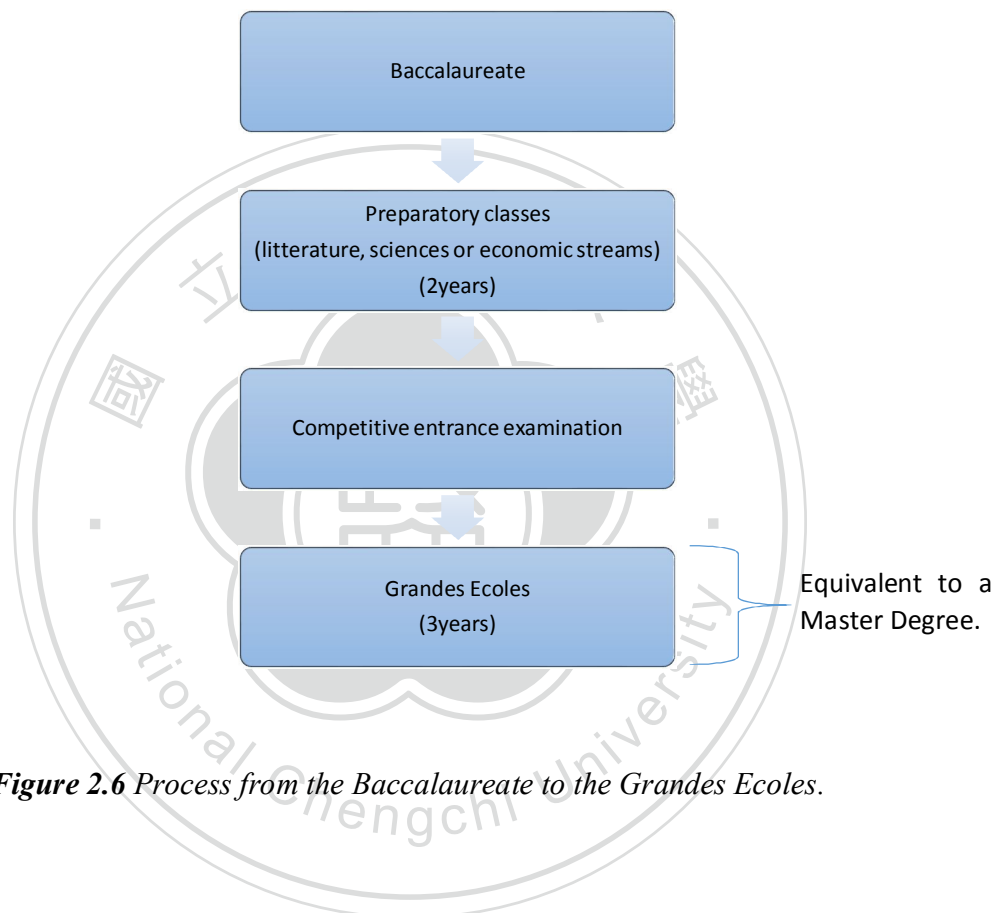


Figure 2.6 *Process from the Baccalaureate to the Grandes Ecoles.*

2.3 Secondary Education to Tertiary Education

2.3.1 Taiwan's transition from senior high school to higher education

The abolishment of the principle “One examination determines your whole life” (一試定終身) has opened the doors to a more accessible higher education system, starting with the implementation of a new system in 1994: “Admission through recommendation”

(CEEC). This system consisted on the recommendation of students by their senior high school, students failing to gain admittance through recommendation were then able later on to sit the Joint University Entrance Examination (JUEE) in order to enroll into higher education. With the aim of decreasing the emphasis on grades, in 2002 the Ministry of Education in Taiwan implemented a multiple pathway for college admission, allowing students to apply into college through three different processes.⁶¹ As a result of several reforms, students are currently able to apply through The Stars Program (繁星推薦), The Personal Application (個人申請), and The Admission by Examination and Placement (登記分發) (CEEC). The figure below gives a clear picture of College Admission System in Taiwan.

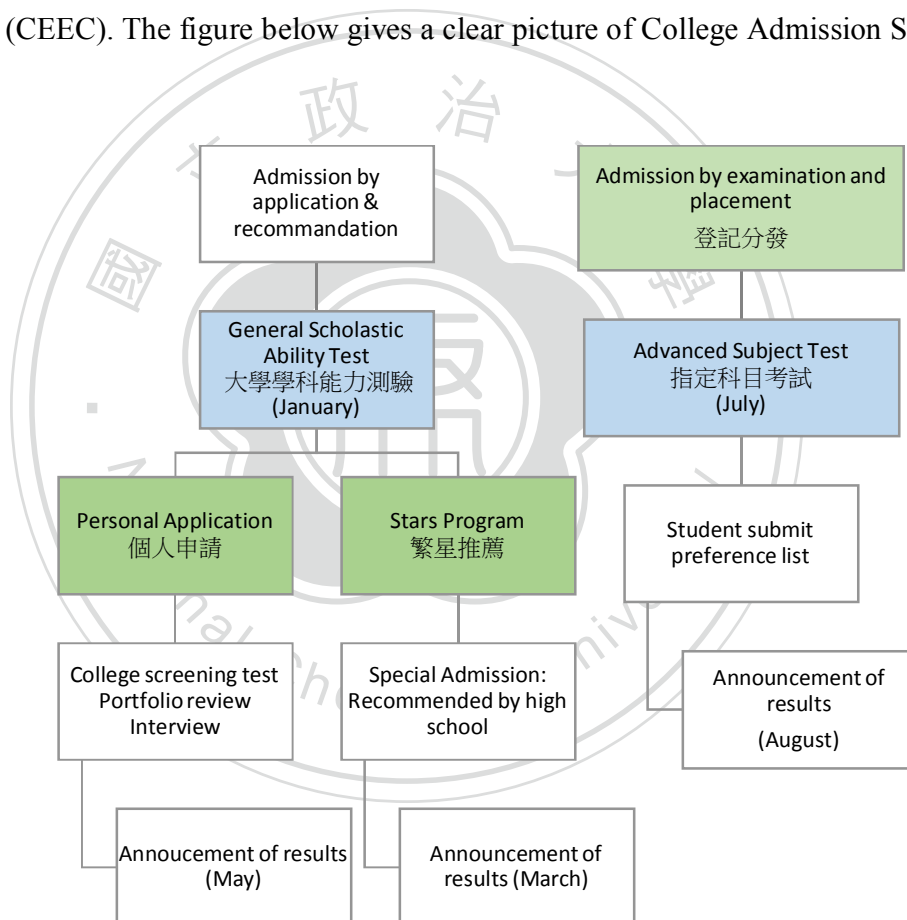


Figure 2.7 *The College Admission Process in Taiwan.*

Adapted from College Entrance Examination Center,

Retrieved from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E07Process.aspx>.

⁶¹ The College Admission Process in Taiwan. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E07Process.aspx>

As shown in the figure above, the college entrance examination center offers all students with the possibility to sit two examinations, which are the GSAT and the AST. This mechanism not only allows students to choose which procedure they wish to undergo but also offers them the opportunity to sit a second examination (AST) if they failed the first examination (GSAT). Applicant may take the GSAT in the second semester of the third year of senior high school (January every year)⁶². This examination tests students' knowledge in the following topics: English, Chinese, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Humanities through different types of assessment such as: multiple choice questions, writing questions, essay writing, and translation tasks (CEEC). Students are graded on a scale of 0 to 15 for each subject which creates a maximum total score of 75.⁶³ Total score of students will determine their eligibility to enroll in a specific university, in addition to college screening test or recommendation by high school.

Non-attendance in the admission by application and recommendation, failure to gain admittance into college, or dissatisfaction regarding the GSAT score are three reasons as to why the students sit for the AST in July. The table below shows the GSAT two-day exam schedule.

Table 2.1 GSAT two-day examination schedule. (January 22nd and 23rd).

January 22nd	Chinese 9:20 am – 11:20 am	Mathematics 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Social Sciences 3:20 pm – 5 pm
January 23rd	English 9 am – 11 am	Natural Sciences 1 pm – 2:40 pm	

Adapted from 大學學科能力測驗, by Wikipedia, 2016, Retrieved from <https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/大學學科能力測驗>

⁶² The College Admission Process in Taiwan. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E07Process.aspx>

Students who sit the GSAT are able to pursue two processes in order to enroll in university. The Stars Program (繁星推薦) introduced in 2007 addresses the gap between urban and rural areas and supports disadvantaged students from remote areas.⁶⁴ According to the college entrance examination center, the Stars Program uses grade point average from the first two years of high school as the admission criteria in addition to the GSAT score that is required by the college the student wishes to enroll in. A quota is established for high schools who wish to recommend their students, only few students can then undergo this procedure, and then be a part of this program.

Admission by application was introduced in 1998 and expanded in 2000 (CEEC) in view of providing all students with the opportunity to apply to the university of their choice. Students' eligibility is determined by their performance in the GSAT which guides them to apply for specific colleges through portfolios, interviews and additional examinations.⁶⁵

The second examination offered to students is the AST, which is provided to students who failed to gain admittance through the aforesaid process. There are several topics within this examination, but students are allowed to decide which topics they wish to test according to the requirements of colleges they are interested in. Topics as referred by the CEEC website are: "Chinese, English, Mathematics (for science and engineering majors), Mathematics II (for humanities and social science majors), Geography, History, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Civics." In opposition to the GSAT, each AST subject's tests are worth 100 points and include multiple choice questions, short answers questions, problem-solving, response writing, essay writing, and translation tasks.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Education in Taiwan 2013-2014. (2013, September). Retrieved from https://stats.moe.gov.tw/files/ebook/Education_in_Taiwan/2013-2014_Education_in_Taiwan.pdf

⁶⁵ The College Admission Process in Taiwan. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E07Process.aspx>

⁶⁶ Advanced Subjects Test (AST). (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.ceec.edu.tw/CeecEnglishWeb/E07Process_AST.aspx

As explained above, the admission by examination and placement process is offered to students who failed to gain admission through the Stars program or the application process. But not only, this program is also provided to students who didn't or couldn't take part in the GSAT or more often who were dissatisfied by their GSAT score. Students taking part to the admission by examination and placement process must take the AST. The AST score is the sole factor of students' distribution into colleges and departments. Still, they can fill out a preference list where they indicate their desire and preferences.

2.3.2 French College Admission Process

It was Napoleon Bonaparte (Emperor of the French from 1804 until 1814, and again in 1815) who created the Baccalaureate that we know today.⁶⁷ In 1808, Napoleon re-established the old-regime universities that the Revolution had abolished (Theology, Law, and Medicine) and created two new faculties (Arts and Sciences). By decree of March 17th 1808⁶⁸, he restored the "Master of Arts" which he called "The Baccalaureate." It was the first university degree which allowed students over sixteen years old to pass oral examinations on Greek and Latin authors, rhetoric, history, geography, and philosophy. The first session was held the following year and had 31 graduates, mostly from the "bourgeoisie." The Bachelor of Sciences was then created in 1852.⁶⁹

Contrary to the GSAT and the AST, the Baccalaureate has the double feature to put an end to high school studies and to open access to higher education (as it is considered to

⁶⁷ Napoléon, fondateur du baccalauréat. (2014, May 4). Retrieved from <http://www.napoleon1er.fr/2014/05/napoleon-fondateur-du-baccalaureat/> Napoleon, founder of the baccalaureate.

⁶⁸ 17 mars 1808: Organisation de l'Université impériale. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.canalacademie.com/ida2883-17-mars-1808-organisation-de-l-Universite-imperiale.html> March 17, 1808: organization of the Imperial University

⁶⁹ Virginie Rivière. (2013, June 14). Bac : Histoire, origines, réformes... Ce qu'il faut savoir. Retrieved from <http://www.linternaute.com/actualite/education/bac-histoire-origines-reformes.shtml> Baccalaureate: History, Origins and Reforms.

be the first university diploma)⁷⁰. Success in this examination (average of 10/20) is almost mandatory to access higher education. The Baccalaureate is considered in France as the first university degree while the graduation certificate is an academic qualification awarded for the completion of high school. By obtaining this graduation certificate, students are deemed to have completed their basic schooling. The French secondary school graduation certificate (CFES – Le Certificat de fin d'études secondaires) can only be obtained by taking the Baccalaureate and being awarded a minimum total score of 8⁷¹. Students who fail to acquire this score have to repeat their last year of senior high school and to re-sit the Baccalaureate.

The French higher education system only possesses a single admission channel which is called the Admission Post Bac⁷². Students who wish to enroll into higher education must go through this procedure. The APB process begins every year at the end of January (this year; January 20th 2016) and ends every year at the end of March (this year; March 20th 2016). According to the Ministry of Higher Education, the APB is a mandatory step in the university admission process.

This procedure expects students to apply to college in regards to their aspirations since a preference list is solicited to distribute students into institutions that might fit both their academic knowledge and ambition. Admittance into public universities of all holders of the Baccalaureate is an obligation imposed by the law, in principle, any selection is strictly banned but in practice, this is not entirely accurate.⁷³ The restriction of available places into some colleges make it hard for universities to keep up with this obligation. If

⁷⁰ Le baccalauréat : Repères historiques. (2007, June). Retrieved from <http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/47/8/5478.pdf> The baccalaureate: historical references

⁷¹ Que faire sans le bac ? (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.onisep.fr/Mes-infos-regionales/Martinique/Dossiers/Que-faire-sans-le-bac/Que-faire-sans-le-bac> Secondary school leaving certificate

⁷² « Admission Post-Bac » c'est quoi ? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.admission-postbac.fr/index.php?desc=quoi> What is the APB ?

⁷³ Jean-Claude Lewandowski. (2013, October 25). La sélection à l'université, encore un mythe qui s'écroule. Retrieved from <http://focuscampus.blog.lemonde.fr/2013/10/25/la-selection-a-luniversite-encore-un-mythe-qui-secr/> University's selection, the collapse of another myth

students applying to a regional university are assured a place, this is not the case when students try to cross the borders of their regions.⁷⁴

Several colleges are limited because of institutions' restricted capacity (they do not have enough space to welcome as many students that apply or they do not have enough teachers, and they tend to favor quality over quantity). Usually, a draw is performed to determine students outside of the academic sector to be accepted into the college. Some colleges require students to provide additional documents and tests to perform a selection of eligible applicants. It is one of the reasons why students are required to fill their preference list with a minimum of ten choices in case their first or second choice is rejected.⁷⁵ According to the APB website, students can only get one admittance offer in order to avoid blocking available places in different colleges. This offer is made in regards to students' preference list and their academic record. For example, if a student applied for ten universities and gained admittance to the college ranked first in his preference list, then all the other choices would be canceled. When an acceptance proposal is made to students, the choices they have filed after this one, are automatically canceled. The purpose of this system is to offer all students the opportunity to enroll in a college of their choice.

Students on a waiting list might sometimes wait until late August before getting informed of their admittance or refusal. This situation only occurs in the case of selective programs such as the degree in foreign languages (English and Korean) in The University of La Rochelle which only welcomes thirty new students every year (students from the academic sector of Poitiers have the priority) or the University Institutes of Technology in La Rochelle. The APB procedure has six phases⁷⁶:

- The registration and choice selection: from January 20th to March 20th.
- The deadline for choice confirmation and sending application forms: April 2nd

⁷⁴ Caroline Beyer. (2013, October 18). How the university organizes the selection of its students? Retrieved from <http://etudiant.lefigaro.fr/les-news/actu/detail/article/comment-l-universite-organise-la-selection-3142/>

⁷⁵ Natacha Lefauconnier. (2014, February 25). Admission post bac: Is it true that for some licenses, APB assigns places by drawing lots? Retrieved from <http://www.letudiant.fr/etudes/apb/admission-postbac-est-il-exact-que-pour-certaines-licences-apb-attribue-les-places-par-tirage-au-sort.html>

⁷⁶ « Admission Post-Bac » c'est quoi? (n.d.). Retrieved 2016, from <http://www.admission-postbac.fr/index.php?desc=quoi> Admission Post-Bac; Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research

- The checking of application form's reception by the institutions: May 3rd to May 6th
- Changing choice order: January 20th to May 31st
- Second admission phase and applicants' responses: June 23rd to June 28th
- Complementary procedure and choice selection: June 24th to September 9th

The table below gives a clear picture of the college admission procedure including the APB process.

Table 2.2 *The College Admission Process in France*

French Baccalaureate – anticipated tests (second year of senior high school, June)
Admission by application through post-bac (third year of senior high school. January 20th to March 20th)
Confirmation of vows and personal application (April 2nd)
French Baccalaureate (June 15th to June 22nd)
College admission results (subject to changes depending on the obtention of the baccalaureate) June 8th
Baccalaureate Results (July 5th)
Rattrapage examination (July 5th to July 8th)

Adapted from *Post Bac Admission*, by the French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, 2016, Retrieved from <https://www.admission-postbac.fr/>.

Once students are in the possession of their Baccalaureate results and have completed the APB procedure, they can then proceed to their official registration in the

university. No further examinations will be required by students who already gained admittance into a college.

The purpose of this review was to view the evolution of higher education within the past sixty years and see how enrollment into university is performed by students in Taiwan and France. It is clear from the research reviewed that college admission systems in the two countries have widely improved and currently offer diversified opportunities to enroll in higher education. More research and testing is required to gain a better understanding of students experiences in the college admission procedure and to identify the challenges and struggles they might encounter.



CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

3.1 Methodology

To provide a reliable analysis of college admission systems in Taiwan and France, it is crucial to explore the university prerequisites and requirements that candidates in this two countries must fulfill, and to understand how and why they differ. Individual's experience, preferences, and understanding of the college admission system require further analysis to determine the challenges and difficulties encountered by candidates. Secondly, this research needs to understand the factors determining the acceptance of candidates into universities. Thus the research framework for this research is as follows:

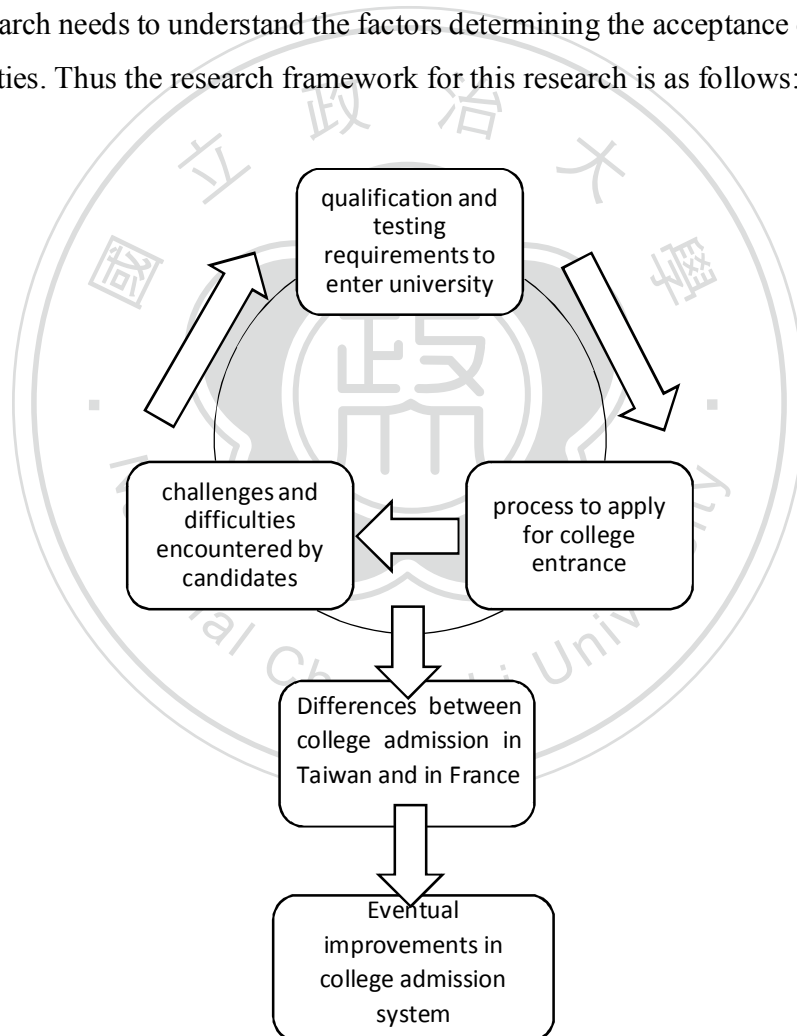


Figure 3.1 Research Framework

As observed in the diagram, it is the researcher's belief that the combination of the three elements will help provide an understanding of college admission systems; the research framework allows us to determine the differences between college admission in Taiwan and France as well as the potential improvements in college admission. The figure below presents the conceptual framework of this research.

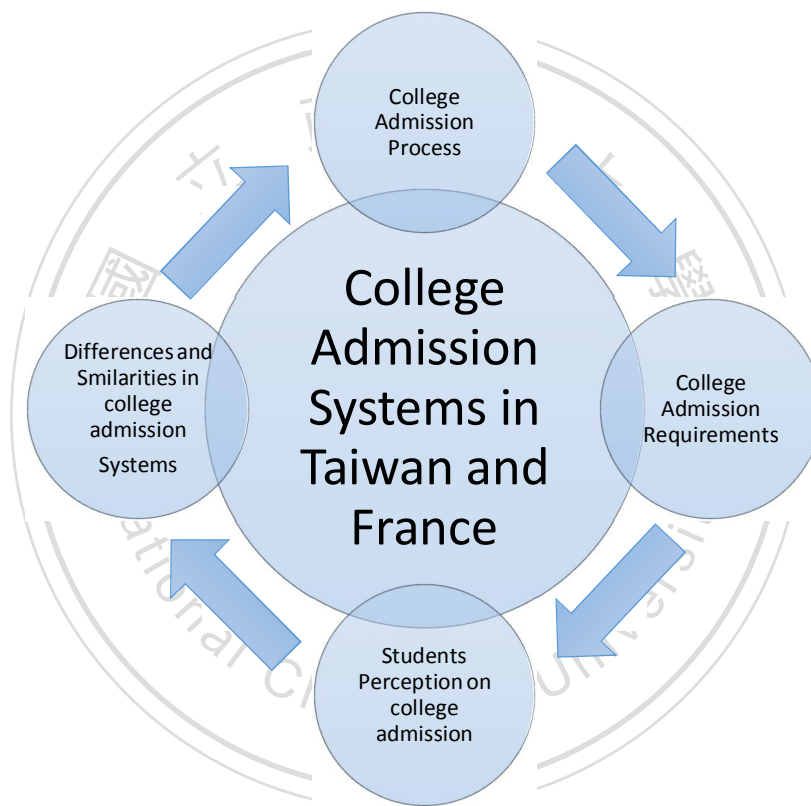


Figure 3.2 *Conceptual Framework*

Surveys

To determine former high school students and candidate's perspective on college admission systems, an on-line survey through social media (Facebook) was conducted to gather primary source data from former high school students. As we are comparing the present college admission system in Taiwan and France, our surveys have been provided to former high school students who enrolled in university in the last four years. The survey research method has been chosen to determine the requirements and qualifications needed for the admission of graduates into college, and the questionnaire format uses open and close ended questions. Participants were asked to answer questions about their perception of college admission requirements and qualifications based on their own experience. The survey includes questions on students' backgrounds, students' performances, grading standards, challenges posed by the admission requirements and qualifications, college admission systems experienced by students, and the type of assessments undergone by the students.

The elaboration of this survey was implemented in order to get a better understanding of the two different college admission systems through a Taiwanese and a French lens. Two surveys with different sets of questions were be provided to the respondents, one particular for Taiwanese and another one for French respondents according to the literature review findings. This survey has been administered to roughly 140 university students in Taiwan mostly studying in Public (National Chengchi University) and Private (Tamkang University) Universities using traditional Chinese. The French survey was administered to roughly 140 students in France mainly from non-selective universities ("L'Université de la Rochelle" – The University of La Rochelle) and selective universities (The University Institute of Technology) have been provided in French. An English version of the surveys will also be added to this research.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews have also been implemented in order to get further analysis. In-depth interviews were provided to four university students in Taiwan and France to

determine their paths towards college, what emerges from their experience, and what requirements and prerequisites matter the most in their perspective. Students are current and former university students from National Chengchi University and Tamkang University in Taiwan; and from “L’Université de La Rochelle” in France in order to have a more professional point of view on college admission requirements and qualifications and how college admission system could eventually improve. Nine open-ended questions were provided to the respondents according to the survey’s questions, this includes three questions on student’s background, three questions on senior secondary school, and four questions on college admission procedure and higher education.

Sampling

To gauge Taiwanese and French university students’ response and experience in college admission system, the researcher has chosen a purposefully sampling technique of students based off of three main criteria: type of university, overall grade point average in senior high school, and future prospects. Type of university is divided into two groups according to each country: private and public universities in Taiwan and selective and non-selective institutions in France. This research also hopes to explore the differences and similarities in candidates’ perception of higher education and the factors influencing their choice of university. The second criteria will be based on their overall grade point average in senior high school with the hopes to get a wider representation of student’s repartition into university. Finally, the third criteria is based on students’ future prospects with the hopes to assess differences between the two countries and the different institutions as well as to get a better understanding of students’ hope while attending higher education. This research will poll Taiwanese students in both public and private universities and French students in both selective and non-selective institutions. These ranges in institutions’ type and overall grade point average in senior high school will hopefully provide a complete analysis of college admission system in Taiwan and France.

3.2 Instruments

The survey used in this study addresses two purposes. The first purpose is to examine the perceptions of Taiwanese and French students regarding college admission process. The second objective is to determine the possible differences between Taiwanese and French college admission systems.

For this study, the researcher will use a survey technique mixing both open-ended questions and multiple choice questions. The survey is divided into two main parts: background of the person (age, gender, university), and 12 open and multiple choice questions divided up between the research questions. The Taiwanese survey and the French survey are balanced with roughly the same categories of items to make the results as comparable as possible. The questions are also translated into Mandarin Chinese and French to avoid any issues to arise from a language barrier.

In this survey, there are three categories of questions: background of the candidates where the respondent is asked questions about age, gender, grade level and University; senior secondary education, where the respondent is asked questions about his performances, experience of the transition from senior high school to tertiary education; and college admission process which provide questions on factors influencing students' admittance into colleges and students' prospects. The distribution of questions according to the three categories is presented in **Appendix 1**.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Surveys including close-ended questions served as the primary data collection tool for this study. Close-ended questions in the survey consisted of multiple choice, semantic differential, and check boxes questions type. Current university students from Taiwan and France were recruited through social media (Facebook) and were invited to complete the survey online (Google form).

The survey totaled 366 respondents from Taiwan and France, out of this number 280 were valid considering that some participants left items blank on the questionnaire or didn't fit the requirements which include:

- An undergraduate student
- From a public or private university in Taiwan
- Or a public university in France
- Or a university institute of technology in France

In addition to the survey, four students were interviewed in order to have a deeper understanding of their perspectives of the college admission process. Fourteen open-ended questions that were a continuation of the survey topics were provided to the respondents (**Appendix 2**). Interviews were conducted among current and former university students in both Taiwan and France and were summarized from notes taken during scheduled appointments. The shortest interview was timed at over 50 minutes while the longest at nearly 80 minutes. Findings and data analysis are presented in the next chapter.

In the qualitative data analysis process, the researcher attempts to identify factors that are common or different between the respondents based on responses to both close-ended and open-ended questions (survey and interviews). In this study, the survey respondents were able to leave comments after completing the online survey, this then allowed the researcher to analyze close-ended responses in addition to both comments and interviews responses. Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the data from this survey. Analysis of the survey's answers and interviews includes descriptive statistics.

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the research methodology of this study by providing a description of the sample selection, an explanation of the procedure used in designing the instrument and collecting the data, and an explanation on how the data would be analyzed.

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, results and analysis of the data are explored. The chapter covers three parts: the first section provides an overview of descriptive statistic which is used to analyze the essential features of the data as well as responses to the items in the survey; this part is divided in three sections: senior secondary education, college admission process and future prospect. The second section presents the interviews' data to support the survey's data and to make assumptions regarding differences that might appear between the two systems. Finally, the third and final section presents a summary of the findings and discussion of the results according to the research questions of this thesis.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

This research consisted of conducting a survey of university students from Taiwan and France with different backgrounds to gain a deeper understanding of college admission system and students' feelings and perceptions about this process. In an attempt to collect relevant data to support this thesis, the survey was conducted through social media (Facebook) from June 6th, 2016 to June 20th, 2016. The survey totaled 366 respondents from Taiwan and France, out of this number 280 were valid because some participants left items blank on the questionnaire or didn't fit the requirements of the surveys(which is to be a university student for the case of France; and not a student from business school or other institutions that are not considered as universities). As we compare the present college admission systems in Taiwan and France, our surveys were provided to former high school students who enrolled in a university in the last four years. Taiwanese respondents are from both public and private universities more specifically from National Chengchi University; NCCU (國立政治大學) and Tamkang University TKU (淡江大學). Respondents from France are students from public universities and university institutes of technology (The University of La Rochelle ; "L'Université de la Rochelle" ; The National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations, Paris-Sorbonne University "INALCO, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales" ; The University Institutes of

Technology ; Marketing Techniques ; University of La Rochelle, “Institut Universitaire de Technologie de La Rochelle” ; Paris-Diderot University and Aix-Marseille University). This sample size represents nearly 0.01% of the total number of French university students (including IUT students) according to the French Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Research, and also 0.01% of the total number of Taiwanese university students according to the Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan).

The research method was chosen to determine the requirements and qualifications needed for the admission of graduates into college, and the questionnaire format uses open and close ended questions. Participants were asked to answer questions about their perception of college admission requirements and qualifications based on their experience. Apart from collecting basic information on age, grade level and university, the survey also includes questions which determine the participants' educational path, their plans after completing their undergraduate degree, and how they valued the importance of different factors in gaining admission to higher education. Upon completion of the survey, participants were asked to provide additional comments on the college admission system and ways to improve it. Out of 280 participants, more than a half of them submitted answers. Surveys were provided in Mandarin and French languages.

The demographic characteristics were analyzed to provide a minimal background of participants based on age, gender, school year and type of institutions. Below is a chart of these demographic characteristics:

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency		Percent	
	Taiwan	France	Taiwan	France
Gender				
Female	106	117	75.7%	83.6%
Male	34	23	24.3%	16.4%
Total	140	140		
Age				
17-19	36	34	25.7%	24.3%
20-22	93	72	66.4%	51.4%
23-25	11	29	7.9%	20.7%
25+	0	5	0%	3.6%
College Year				
1	23	46	16.4%	32.9%
2	44	25	31.5%	17.8%
3	36	48	25.7%	34.3%
4 +	37	21	26.4%	15%
Type of institutions				
Public University (Taiwan)	70		50%	
Private University (Taiwan)	70		50%	
Selective University (France)		118		84.3%
Non-Selective University (France)		22		15.7%

As predicted, the majority of participants claimed to be undergraduate students, with most respondents falling between the 20-22-year age group (average age of the participants in France: 21 years old; average age of the participants in Taiwan: 21 years old). Most respondents in France stated that they had been rewarded the General Baccalaureate (80.7%) with an almost equal distribution in the three different tracks (Literature 43%; Economics and Social Sciences 31.6% and Sciences 25.4%). The figure bellow shows the distribution of respondents according to the French Baccalaureate.

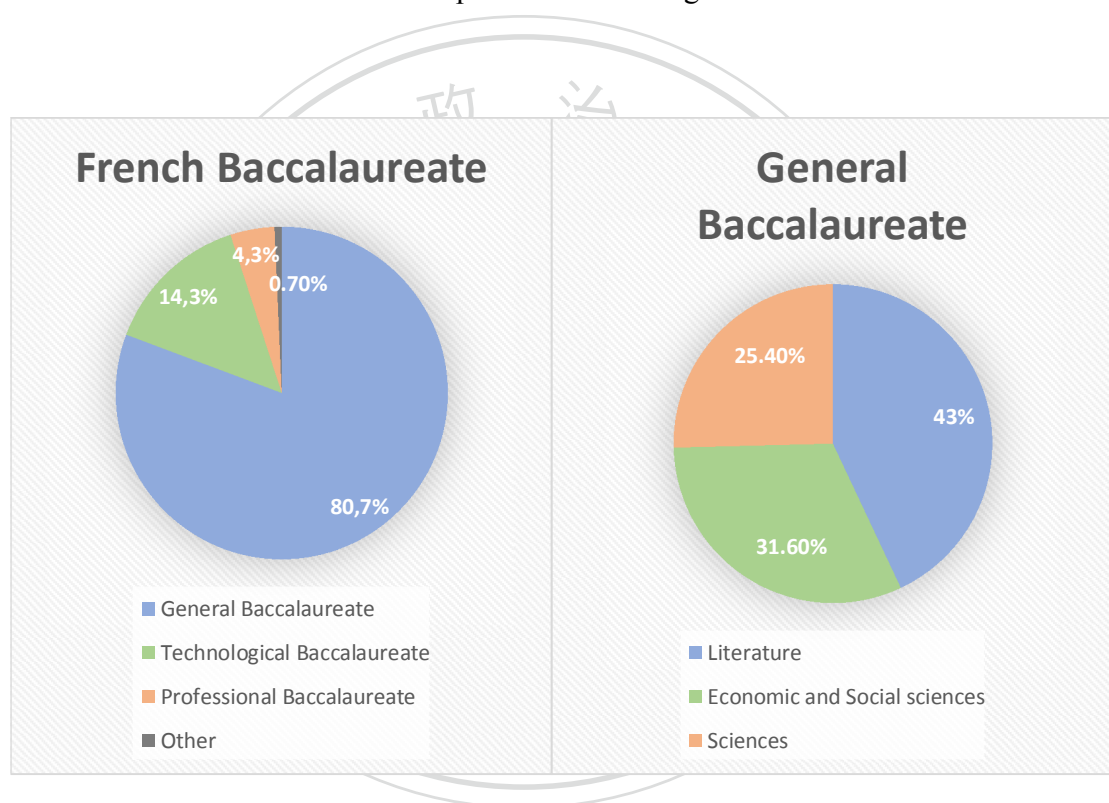


Figure 4.1 French Baccalaureate distribution.

With an equal number of respondents from Taiwanese public universities and private universities, this thesis also offers a quick overview of some differences that were found between the two institutions. While most respondents from Tamkang University which is a private university claimed to have undergone both the GSAT and The AST (56%), respondents from National Chengchi University, one of the public university in

Taipei, claimed for the majority of them (56%) to have been rewarding the General Scholastic Ability Test without having to take the AST. Below is a table showing the distribution of college entrance examinations according to respondents from Tamkang University and National Chengchi University.

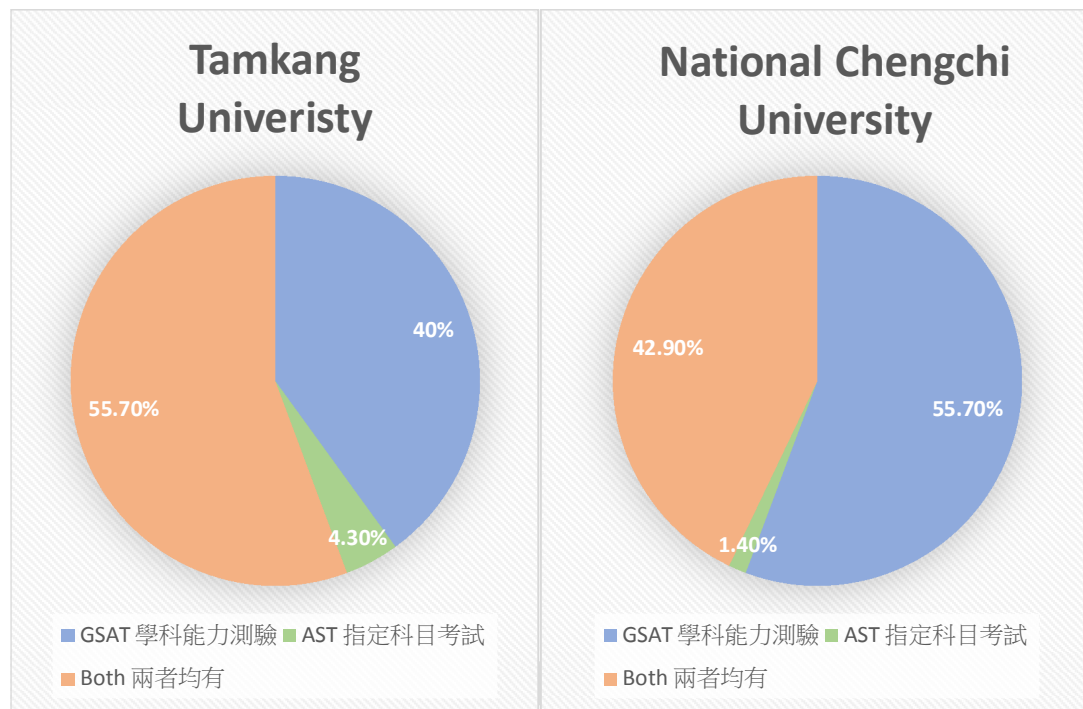


Figure 4.2 College Entrance Examinations distribution in Tamkang University and National Chengchi University.

As stated by the College Entrance Examination Center (CEEC), reasons why students do take the Advanced Subject Test (AST) are: failure to gain admission to colleges through the personal application or the Stars program; students did not participate in the GSAT or students were dissatisfied by their GSAT score. To get a clear picture of college admission in Taiwan, respondents who took the AST were asked the reasons why they attended the examination and placement process. Both students from Tamkang University and National Chengchi University mostly claimed that they were dissatisfied by their GSAT score (77.1 % in the case of NCCU and 66% in the case of Tamkang University).

The second reason appears to be the failure to get admittance to college through the admission by application and recommendation (22.9% in the case of NCCU and 28% in the case of Tamkang).

The researcher also took a glance at the educational background of students' family with the hope to identify specific features that could eventually help us to differentiate Taiwanese and French university students, and to get a better understanding of the reasons behind students' choice of institutions. To the question: What is the highest level of education obtained by each of your parents (guardians)? Most of the Taiwanese respondents claimed that at least one of their parents graduated from high school (56.4%) or obtained a diploma from a community/junior college (43.6%); while the majority of French respondents claimed that at least one of their parents obtained a diploma from a technological or professional training (62.1%) or have less than an high school level of education (54.3%). It is important to keep in mind that each respondent was able to select two answers to assess both parents' educational backgrounds. In Taiwan, 38.6% of the interviewees claimed that one of their parents obtained a bachelor's degree and 28.6% a Graduate degree (master or doctorate), a number relatively small in the case of French with 18.6% for a bachelor's degree and 12.9% for a doctorate degree. This results clearly show that, at the time, it was more common to have a high school diploma or a certificate from professional training than a bachelor or a graduate degree. The researcher discovered that there is a stark difference in parental educational backgrounds between private and public schooling in Taiwan, while no such difference exists in parental educational backgrounds in France. The table below illustrates the percentage of student's parents highest level of education according to whether respondents are in a public university of a private university.

Table 4.2 *Highest level of education obtained by Taiwanese respondents' parents.*

	Tamkang University	National Chengchi University
Less than high school	17.9% 25	8.6% 12
High school graduate	40% 56	16.4% 23
Some college (community/junior)	16.4% 23	27.1% 38
College graduate	17.1% 24	21.4% 30
Graduate degree (master/doctorate)	4.3% 6	24.3% 34
Do not know	4.3% 6	2.2% 3

A majority of respondents from Tamkang University claimed that at least one of their parents obtained a high school diploma, and a majority of students from National Chengchi University claimed that at least one of their parents received a university diploma (45.7%); this research shows a potential correlation of student's choice of college based on their family educational background.

Finally, respondents were asked how many of their siblings if they had any, were attending university or were college graduates. In France, 52.1% of the interviewees claimed that none of their siblings were enrolled in higher education while 50% of Taiwanese students claimed that one of their siblings were enrolled in higher education (47.1% in the case of Private University and 52.9% in the case of Public University).

Differences and similarities shown in this section will help the researcher to elaborate on a clearer picture of college admission systems in the two countries based not

only on theories but also on students' experiences. The following section will introduce the data collected on the senior secondary education part of the surveys.

(i) Senior Secondary Education

To further determine the qualifications required to access public and private universities as well as selective and non-selective institutions in Taiwan and France, participants in the survey were also asked questions about their performances in senior high school, the time they spent doing diverse activities while in senior high school, and their opinion on how it has prepared them to succeed in higher education work. Grading systems in Taiwan and France are different, while Taiwan uses a numerical grading system on a scale of 0 to 100 with 60 as the passing grade at both the secondary and tertiary levels; France also maintains a numerical grading system but on a different scale of 0 to 20 with 10 as the passing grade at both secondary and tertiary levels. To have a better picture of both grading systems, the researcher will present their equivalence in letter grade; which will allow us to perform a clearer comparison. Below is a chart of these grade equivalencies:

Table 4.3 *Grade Equivalencies*

A	90-100	14-20
B	80-89	12-14
C	70-79	10-12
D	60-69	
F (fail)	0-59	0-10

The following table displays students' performances in senior high school according to the university they are currently attending.

Table 4.4 *Students' performances in senior high school*

	Public University (Taiwan)	Private University (Taiwan)	Selective University (France)	Non-Selective University (France)
A	10%	2.9%	9.1%	25.4%
B	72.9%	35.7%	72.7%	33%
C	17.1%	50%	18.2%	39%
D	0%	11.4%	0%	0%
F	0%	0%	0%	2.6%

Most respondents from public universities in Taiwan and selective universities in France claimed to have been awarded an overall grade point average of B in senior high school with less than 20% of the respondents having a grade inferior of B. Most of the students from private universities in Taiwan and non-selective universities in France declared to have been awarded an overall grade point average of C in senior high school.

Students were asked questions about the time they spent doing diverse activities while in senior high school and their opinion on how secondary education has prepared them to succeed in higher education work. The aim of these questions was to determine whether there are any differences in student's personal experience in senior high school in Taiwan and France, which could eventually lead us to make recommendations on possible improvements.

According to the surveys, 87.1% of French respondents claimed to have spent less than ten hours per week studying and doing their homework in contrast to their Taiwanese peers, where 55% of them spent more than ten hours per week studying; with 36.4% of them claiming to have been studying more than fifteen hours a week while they were in senior high school. This difference is explained by the percentage of students attending cram school in both countries. While 81.4% of French respondents claimed to never have been to cram school or attended any remedial programs, Taiwanese respondents, in comparison, showed that 62.9% attended cram school during senior high school with 14.2% of them more than ten hours a week.

When asked about the time they spent on hobbies such as socializing with friends or performing sports, results were almost similar for Taiwanese and French students, with 67% of Taiwanese students socializing with friends less than ten hours a week and 65.7% of French students. 75.7% of Taiwanese respondents claimed to perform sports up to five hours a week while they were in senior high school, 58% in the case of French respondents.

When it comes to the time spent on extracurricular activities (volunteer work and student club) and on time spent having conversations with relatives (parents, teachers or friends) about their future prospects (higher education, work), a percentage increase was seen in both countries. 71% of Taiwanese respondents claim to have never participated in extracurricular activities and 82% in the case of French respondents. Moreover, 86% of Taiwanese respondents admitted having spent less than five hours a week on conversations about higher education, work, or future prospects, the percentage was even higher in the case of French respondents with 92.9%.

Students' performances in senior high school seem to be a major factor determining students' distribution into higher education. Still, it is necessary to know whether senior secondary school truly helps students to get admittance in university and other institutions. For this reason, respondents of the surveys were requested to measure how well high school had prepared them to get admittance in higher education, to succeed in college level work, and to get a job. Below is the table summarizing students' opinions on the subject.

Table 4.5 Measurement on how well senior high school prepares students for higher education and work.

	Extremely well		Somewhat well		Not well		Not sure	
	Taiwan	France	Taiwan	France	Taiwan	France	Taiwan	France
To gain admission to public universities	34.3%	32.1%	50.7%	36.5%	9.3%	31.4%	5.7%	0%
To gain admission to private universities	5.7%	5.7%	45.7%	20.7%	31.4%	40.7%	17.2%	32.9%
To gain admission to the college of your choice	20%	23.6%	42.1%	31.4%	33.6%	42.9%	4.3%	2.1%
To succeed in college level work	7.1%	10.7%	30%	27.1%	50%	58.6%	12.9%	3.6%
To get a job	7.9%	7.1%	38.6%	5.7%	37.1%	74.3%	16.4%	12.9%
To get admission in IUT (University Technology of Institute)		15%		23.6%		25.7%		35.7%

Both Taiwanese and French respondents mostly agreed that senior high school had prepared them well (extremely well and somewhat well) to gain admittance in public universities and in the college of their choice; which is not the case when it comes to preparing them for college-level work, where more than a half of the respondents claimed that senior high school hadn't prepared them (50% in Taiwan and 58,6% in France). When it comes to private universities, almost half of Taiwanese respondents claimed that it somewhat prepared them well to get admittance, which isn't comparable to the results of French respondents as private universities in France are religious universities. That explains why 32.9% of French respondents weren't sure about their answer. 74.3% of French respondents claimed that senior high school had not prepared them to get a job, a significant percentage in comparison to their Taiwanese fellows who seem quite divided on the question with 38.6% of respondents who declared it had somewhat well prepared them well and 37.1% of respondents who claimed it had not prepared them to find a job.

Finally, French respondents were asked how well senior high school had prepared them to gain admittance to University Technology of Institute which is known to be selective, 38.6% declared that it had prepared them well and 25.7% thought it had not prepared them well. The 35.7% of respondents who answered unsure is believed by the researcher to be students who have not applied to University Technology of Institute and might not know much about it. It is crucial to note that both Taiwanese and French students have similar opinions when it comes senior high school preparing them well to get admittance into public universities and college of their choice and when it comes to senior high school not preparing them for college-level work. Differences in respondents' opinions on how well secondary education prepared them to find a job might need further analyses in order to understand the reasons behind it.

This section showed a few differences and similarities in respondent's personal experience while in senior high school which will help us to understand some of the challenges they have encountered in the process of college admission.

(ii) College Admission Process

College admission process as introduced in the literature review clearly showed us that there are differences between Taiwan and France. While Taiwan offers a multi-channel admission process to students, French respondents on the contrary only have one process to enroll in higher education which is: to take the French Baccalaureate and to undergo the APB process. This section aims to investigate the college admission process further through the lens of university students. In this part of the surveys, respondents were asked questions on the requirements they were requested after undergoing the Baccalaureate examination. In the case of French respondents; how respondents value the importance of different factors in gaining admittance in higher education, what are the factors which have influenced their choice of university, and what are the most complicated part of college admission process.

As French universities are open to all students owning the baccalaureate, few requirements are requested apart from the Baccalaureate diploma. French public universities are required to offer the same opportunity to all students as long as they own the Baccalaureate. However, while some degree courses are open to all students (social sciences, arts and literature, geography and so on); some degree courses are usually only open to students who own a scientific Baccalaureate and on some rare occasions, some degree courses in arts are also only open to students who own a literature Baccalaureate due to limited resources. As an example, we can find the degree in foreign languages (English and Korean) in The University of La Rochelle which only welcomes thirty new students every year (students from the academic sector of Poitiers have the priority). To get a deeper understanding of requirements that French students might have to provide after the obtaining of the Baccalaureate, the researcher decided to devote a question to the French respondents. Below is a figure showing the requirements that French respondents had provided while applying to universities.

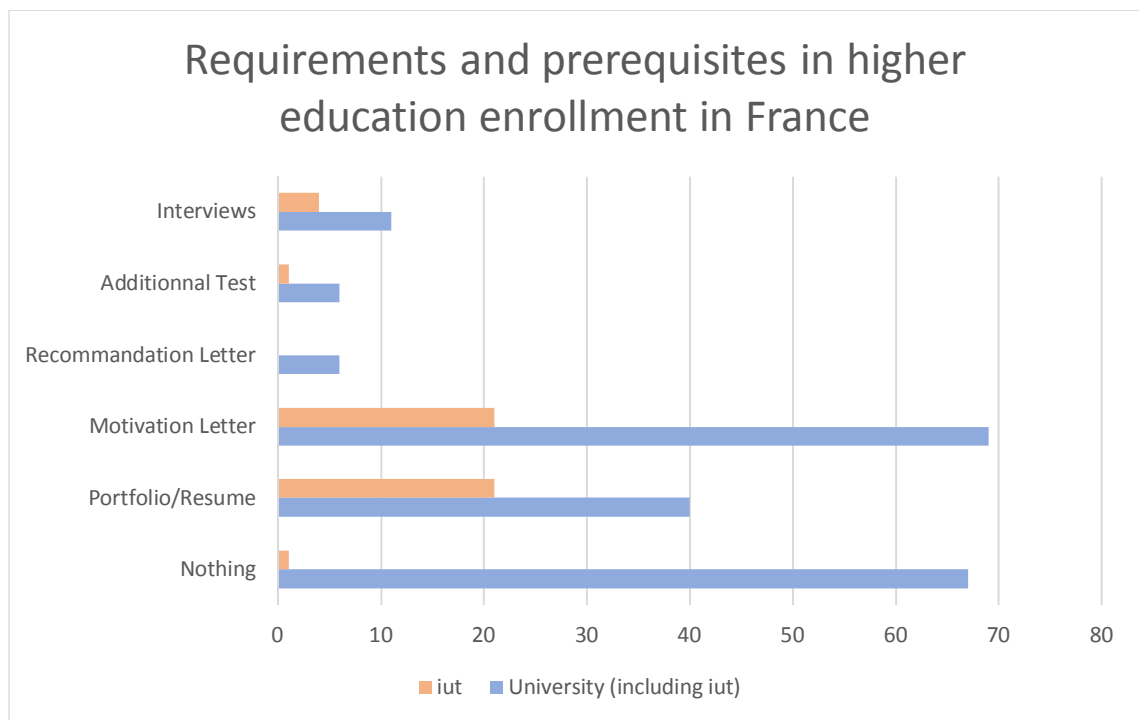


Figure 4.3 Requirements and prerequisites in higher education enrollment in France (apart from the Baccalaureate diploma).

According to the figure above, 67 out of 140 respondents did not have to provide any other requirements to enroll in university, which totals 47.9%. Motivation letters, known as one of the requirements of the APB process for some courses (selective and non-selective), represents 94.5% for the rest of the respondents (69 respondents for 73 if we subtract the 67 respondents who did not have to provide any requirements from the total of 140), this includes 21 respondents from University Technology Institute (95,5% of them). 40 students claimed to have provided a portfolio or a resume (with 19 from IUT), and only 11 claimed to have been to an interview with the college they applied to (4 respondents from the IUT). Additional tests and recommendation letters seem to be less required as only six students had to provide those. In sum, most of the respondents did not have to provide anything while the rest had to provide a motivation letter. Portfolios and Motivation letters seem to be requirements when it comes to students applying to

University Technology Institute. The interview conducted in this study with an IUT's student will, later on, support this theory.

With a multi-channel admission process, Taiwanese students can apply to university through three different processes. Personal application and the Stars program are available to all students who took the GSAT, and the separate examination and placement process depends on students' participation in the AST. As seen in the first section, we already have a clear image of respondents' distribution through the two examinations, (**Figure 4.2**) the figure below shows the processes that respondents had **successfully** undergone according to the university they were currently enrolled in. It is important to keep in mind that some students might have been through the personal application without getting admittance to the college of their choice.

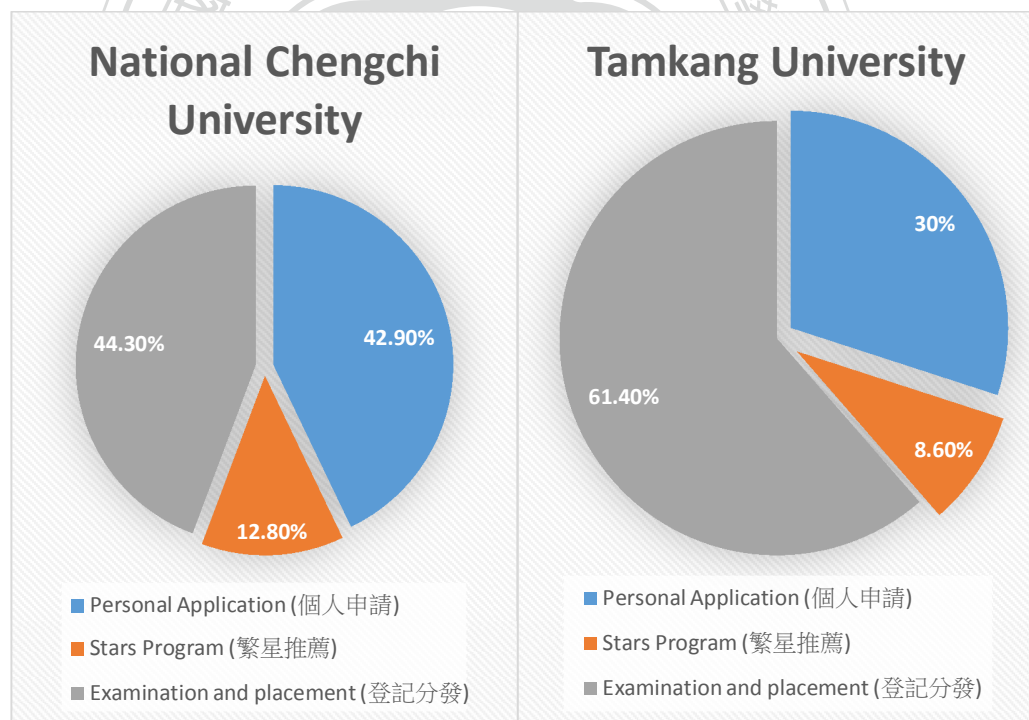


Figure 4.4 College Admission processes' distribution in Tamkang University and National Chengchi University.

This figure highlights the unusual aspect of the Stars Program; recently introduced to provide equal opportunities to attend college, this program still has a specified quota of students who can enter higher education through the recommendation of their high school. Due to this limited quota, it is then considered normal to find more respondents applying through personal application and examination/placement process. As we can see in the figure above, respondents going through the personal application and the examination/placement process in National Chengchi University represent almost the same percentage, which shows an almost equal distribution of respondents getting admittance in NCCU after taking the GSAT or the AST. In contrary, Tamkang University respondents shows a higher percentage in favor to the examination and placement process which is not surprising as 60% of the respondents from this university took the AST (**Figure 4.2**).

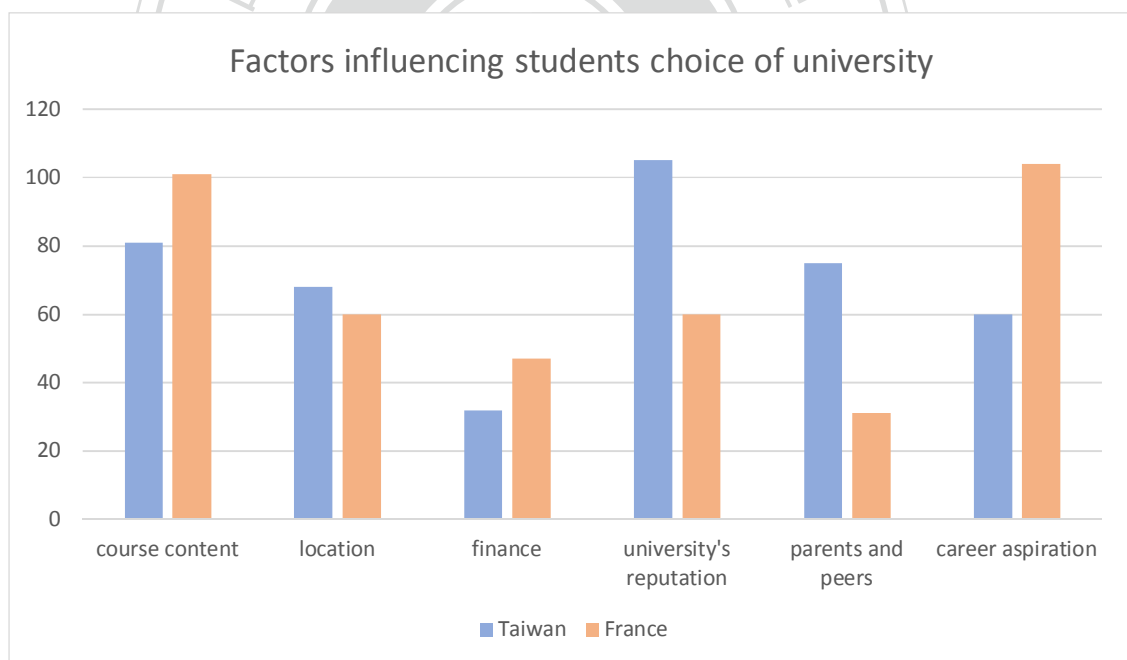


Figure 4.5 Factors influencing students' choice of university

The figure above displays the factors influencing students' choice of university in Taiwan and France. Determining the reasons behind students' choice of university is important in order to get a clearer image of students' perception of higher education and college admission systems. In this figure, disparities between Taiwanese and French students' perceptions on higher education seems more distinct and might eventually give us a clear picture of Taiwanese and French society. Course content appeared to be factor No. 2 for both Taiwanese (57.8%) and French (72.1%) students, but it is the only factor with a similar ranking for the two. While the university's reputation ranking first in the case of Taiwanese respondents with a percentage of 75%, career aspiration mostly determines French students' choices (74.3%), university's reputation only ranked as No.3 equal to the location.

Table 4.6 *Ranking of factors influencing students' choice of university*

	Taiwan	France
No.1	University's reputation	Career aspiration
No.2	Course content	Course content
No.3	Parents and peers	University's reputation/Location
No.4	Localization	Finance
No.5	Career aspiration	Parents and peers
No.6	Finance	

Several disparities appear in this table. We can clearly see that Taiwanese and French students have a different approach when it comes to choosing the university they want to apply to. Taiwanese respondents' approach seems to be less personal than French respondents. While the factors influencing Taiwanese respondents' choice is based mostly on the university's reputation (75%) which totals 105 respondents out of 140, and the advice of their parents and peers (56,3%), French respondents tend to adopt a more personal approach focusing mostly on career aspiration (74,3%) and course content

(72.1%), parents and peers' advice appearing to be the last factor that might influence their choice. Interviews conducted in this study will allow us to have a deeper understanding of students' perception of the importance of some factors in their choice of university.

Both students in Taiwan and in France are offered the right to choose colleges they want to apply to as long as they are eligible. Taiwanese students can decide which universities to apply to, through the personal application process and according to their GSAT's score, for students who undergo the admission by examination and placement, they must fill in a preference list which will help to distribute students into universities. French students are offered, similarly to their Taiwanese peers, to fill in a preference list during the APB process which will allow them to be distributed into a university of their choice. Respondents of these surveys were asked how many colleges they applied to to determine whether they were showing a particular interest in a single university or if they were more open when it came to enrolling in higher education.

Respondents from universities and University Technology Institutes in France mostly claimed to have applied to two to three colleges which is the average requested by senior high school teachers. 42.9% of National Chengchi University students claimed to have only applied to one college which is the total opposite of Tamkang University students who claimed at 48.6% to had applied to five or more colleges. This can be explained by the different processes undergone by the students. Contrary with students who apply through the personal application process, students applying for the admission by examination and placement do not have their results before filling a preference list which could explain why they choose different colleges in the case they do not get admittance into any college.

Table 4.7 *Toughest part of the college admission process*

	Taiwan	France
No 1	Taking the Taiwan General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT) or the Advanced Subjects Test (AST)	Choosing schools to apply
No 2	Choosing schools to apply	Registration in college and application for financial aid.
No 3	Taking college entrance examinations such as essays; interviews, portfolio ...	Taking college entrance examinations such as essays; interviews, portfolio ...
No 4	Registration in college and application for financial aid.	Taking the Baccalaureate.

One of the aims of this thesis is to determine the challenges and difficulties encountered by students in the process of college admission. The table above ranks the toughest part of college admission process according to the respondent's experience. In Taiwan, 53.6% of the interviewees stated that taking the General Scholastic Ability Test or the Advanced Subject Test was the toughest part of college admission process, which is literally opposite of French respondents, where only 7.9% claimed that taking the Baccalaureate was the hardest part. Making a decision about the university they want to enroll in seems to be the most difficult part for French respondents with a percentage of 40.7% which is closely followed by the administrative part of the registration process in college and the application for financial aid. In terms of the overall complexity of applying to college, both Taiwanese and French respondents ranked it at a complexity level of 3

(complexity level from 1 to 5. 1 = very simple and 5 = very hard) with only 4.2% of Taiwanese students who found it difficult, and 2.9% of the French respondents.

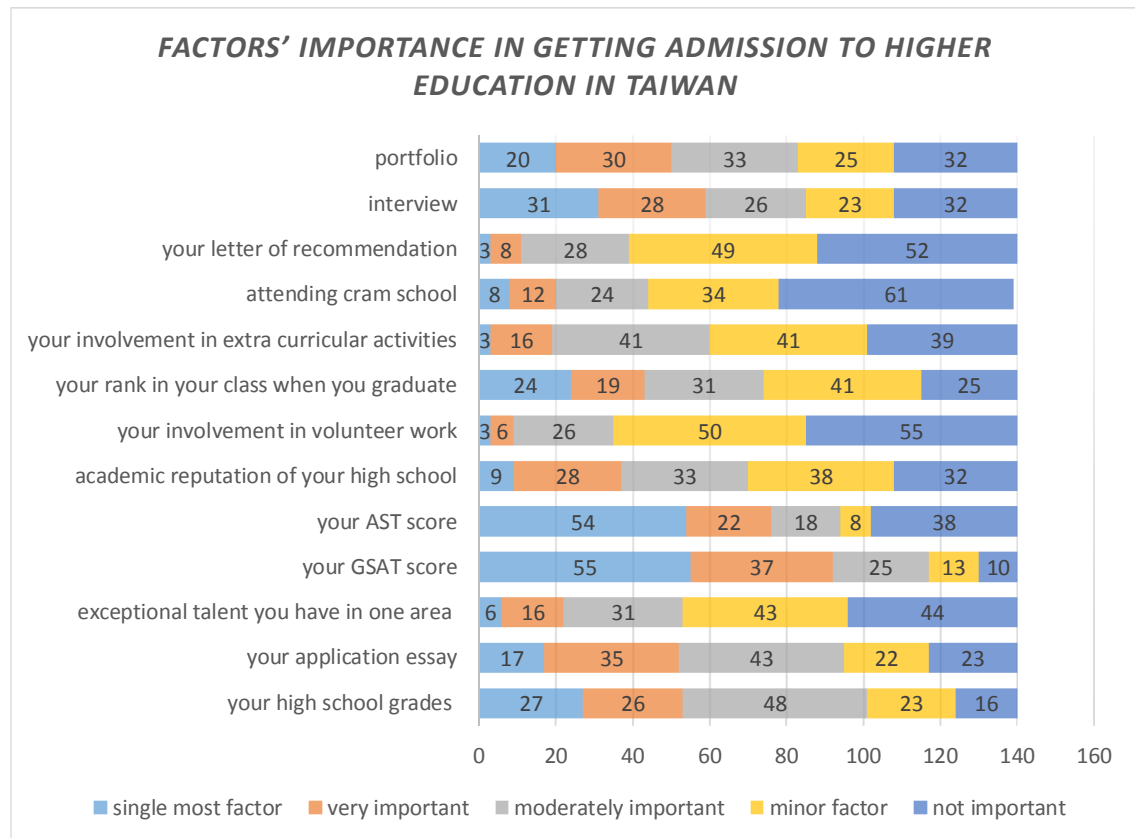


Figure 4.6 Deciding factors in college admittance in Taiwan

The figure above offers a clear picture of Taiwanese respondents perception on the importance of several factors in getting admission to higher education. While this is clear that the AST and GSAT scores are the main factors of admission into university, respondents seem to be quite perplexed when it comes to measuring the importance of other factors such as high school grades, application essay, portfolio, and interview. Judging by the uncertainty of respondents in their answers and the almost equal repartition of the answers in some categories, it is assumed that because of the emphasis on testing,

students do not consider carefully factors outside testing at it might be perceived as minor factors in getting admittance into higher education.

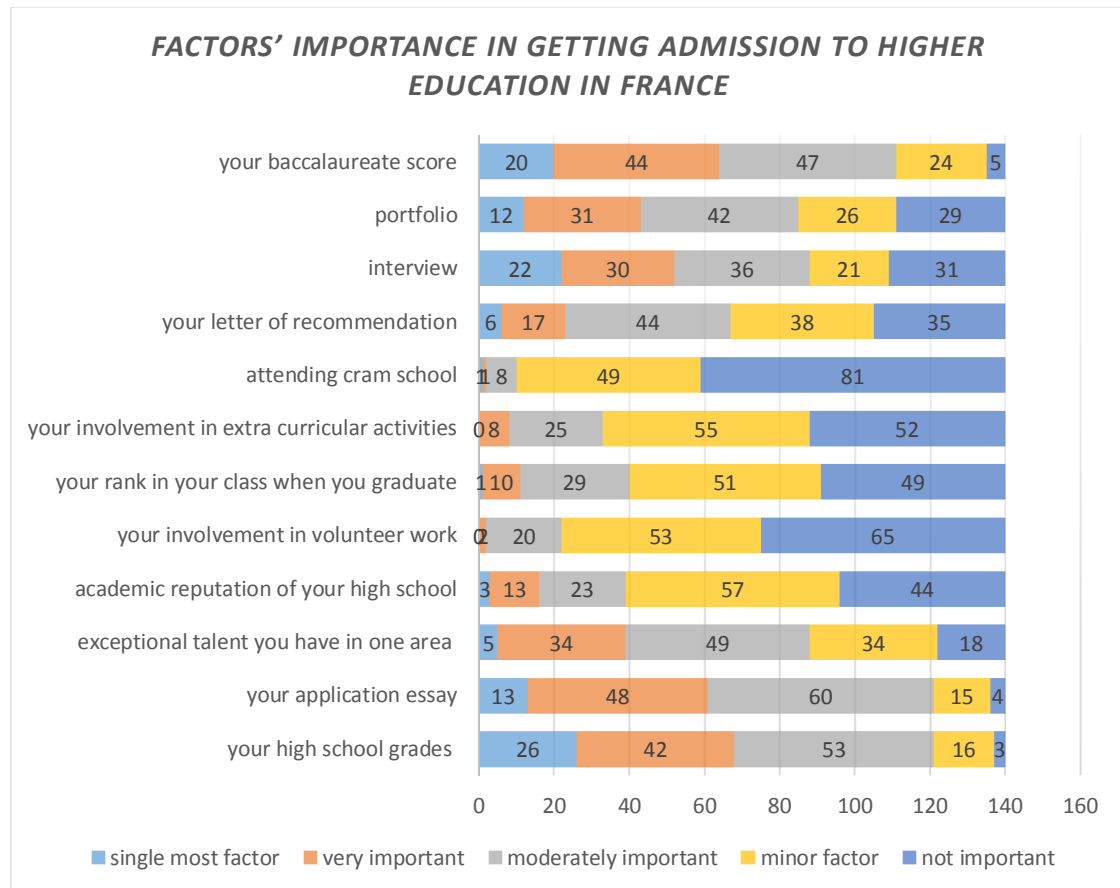


Figure 4.7 Deciding factors in college admittance in France.

Unlike Taiwanese respondents and as we can see in the figure above, French respondents are really aware of the factors that do matter in getting admission to higher education. Attending cram school, rank in high school, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, and academic reputation of high school aren't important factors in the process of getting admission into universities. Baccalaureate score isn't perceived as the single most factor, probably because the obtaining of the Baccalaureate within a particular score, guarantee immediately the admission into university.

This section gave us a distinct picture of student's perceptions on college admission process, how they had experienced it and in which ways it is different between Taiwan and France. The next and last section provide a glance into respondents' future prospect.

(iii) Students future prospects

Where once a high school diploma opened the job market to a young adult, the importance and necessity of a higher education degree has become supreme and has been normalized within Taiwan and France. In this section, respondents were questioned about their plans after completing their undergraduate degree whereas they were planning to apply for a graduate degree or find a job. The table below shows respondents' plans after completing their undergraduate degree.

Table 4.8 Students' plans after completing their undergraduate degree.

	Taiwan	France
Work	43.5%	8.6%
Graduate degree	29.4%	55%
Another undergraduate degree or technological/professional training	0%	10%
Join military	3.6%	0%
Undecided	23.5%	26.4%

This section gave us a distinct picture of student's plans after completing their undergraduate degree which are considerably different from one country to another. Most of the Taiwanese respondents claimed that they plan to integrate the workplace after the obtaining of their undergraduate degree which is not the case of the majority of French respondents, clearly more attracted by the opportunity to continue their studies into a graduate degree.

4.2 Interviews

From June 15th, 2016 to June 30th, 2016, four interviews were conducted and they consisted of face-to-face and Skype interviews. Interviews were carried out among current and former university students in both Taiwan and France and were summarized from notes taken during scheduled appointments. The shortest interview was timed at over 50 minutes while the longest at nearly 80 minutes. The interviews conducted with Taiwanese and French students as well as respondents' comments in the surveys supported the assertion that both Taiwanese and French educational systems provide all students with an equal opportunity to attend college. However, this apparently does not mean that students are provided an equal opportunity to attend specific colleges. Equality lies in the opportunity to access higher education, not in the choice of a particular degree or university.

Qualitative research seeks to gather an in-depth understanding of the problem and the reasons behind it in a more intricate way than generalized quantitative data can provide. This chapter of the study was conducted through individual interviews. The information collected is presented in a narrative form including data's description and analysis. This section reflects on the results of the four interviews conducted among former and current Taiwanese and French students. The aim was to find how students feel about college admission system in their home country. Topic discussed during the interviews included the following questions.

- a) Why did you want to go to college? Why this one in particular? Was it your first choice? (if not what was your first choice?)**

All the respondents indicated unanimously that the struggle to find employment without an academic degree was the main factor influencing their enrollment decision. Taiwanese interviewees pointed out their lack of aspiration for higher education and

acknowledged their enrollment into college as a default choice. Tiffany, a Taiwanese student from a public university (The University of Taipei - 臺北市立大學) testified that she didn't have interest in graduate studies but felt the necessity to enroll into a university in order to enter the job market. Respondents from France agreed that the enrollment into higher education has become common and that they have never considered to enter the job market immediately after senior high school.

Most of the interviewees revealed that their current university wasn't their first choice. Taiwanese respondents declared that they made their choice mostly based on the reputation of the university. Course content has been found to be the main factor influencing French respondents' enrollment decision into a specific university, which is supported by Rebecca, former student of L'Université Paris Diderot, whose first choice offered the same curriculum as her second choice in which she gained admittance.

b) Was it your own desire to attend university? What were the main factors influencing your choice of attending this specific university? (location, course content, finance, reputation, parents&peers, career aspiration ...)

The society and peer pressure is seen as a major motive of enrollment decision for the two Taiwanese interviewees who stated that the reputation of the university and their peers' advices were the main factors influencing their choice of attending a specific university, closely followed by course content. Respondents in France, claimed that they have personally chosen their university regarding to their career aspiration and the curriculum and course content offered by the college. It is necessary to denote the importance of the society in students' enrollment decision. Even if French students' decisions are not principally motivated by the society and their peers, they acknowledge the fact that the enrollment into higher education has increasingly become necessary to enter the job market in France.

c) How would you describe your high school experience?

From the discussions, the researcher observed that respondents described their high school experience as stressful regarding the stake of secondary education completion in getting admittance into higher education. The amount of emphasis put on grades appeared to be a real cause of anxiety for students. One of the Taiwanese respondents explained that this grade's emphasis led to a competitive atmosphere among students from the same class and between different classes. *"We had a class' ranking to determine the best students and teachers would get upset every time our grades weren't sufficient."*

French respondents argued that it was only stressful because they had to sit the Baccalaureate and they were afraid to fail and re-sit a year. To them, the priority was to obtain a sufficiently good grade to succeed in the Baccalaureate examination, since this diploma opens the doors of higher education.

d) What do you plan to do after graduation?

When asked about their prospects after graduation, three out of the four respondents expressed their desire to pursue a master degree in order to expand their knowledge in a specific field so as to obtain greater employment opportunities. The fourth interviewee which is a Taiwanese student, explained that he had neither the motivation nor the capacity to enroll into a master degree, he also added that a bachelor degree was sufficient to find a job. It supports Table 4.8 wherein nearly half of the Taiwanese respondents indicated that they planned to enter the job market after graduation and more than a half of French respondents claimed that they planned to pursue a master degree.

e) What did you find the most challenging during college admission process?

The application process appears to be the most challenging aspect of college admission process for the two Taiwanese students interviewed. They both explained, that they did not know how to write a motivation letter, how to put themselves forward during

interviews, or how to build a portfolio. This demonstrates that apart from testing, Taiwanese students do not feel comfortable with personal thinking and redaction tasks. This contradicts table 4.7 wherein 53,6% of the respondents declared that the toughest part of college admission process was taking the GSAT or the AST.

Interviewees from France declared that they did not find anything especially challenging in the process of college admission as the only possession of the Baccalaureate ensures them admittance into higher education.

f) What is/are the process(es) you've undergone to enter university.

Interviewees from Taiwan, both passed the GSAT and followed the application procedure. Motivation letter, portfolio, interviews and additional examinations were required for students to enroll in the university they were eligible to apply to. Additional examinations consisted of tests based on their academic major. In the case of Tin, who enrolled in the department of philosophy at National Chengchi University, a dissertation on the following topic was requested: *“When you are in a specific situation what will be your reaction? Imagine that you and your group of friends got captured by a cannibal tribe while travelling in Africa. If you kill one person in your group you don't have to die; if you don't, you will die. What is your choice and why?”* The respondent explained the difficulty of this examination by his lack of critical thinking which made it hard to demonstrate his choice. He also denounced the lack of preparation for this kind of examination while in senior high school. Tiffany, the second respondents declared that she had to take a drawing test as she was applying for the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Taipei. In contrary to the other respondent, she felt prepared for this test as she went to a specific cram school while in senior high school.

Many subjects did not perceive any challenges in college admission process in France as the Baccalaureate commonly opens access into higher education. However, Fabien, a student in the IUT of La Rochelle declared that the Baccalaureate was not sufficient to enroll in his college and that he was required to provide a portfolio and a motivation letter. Yet, he felt that his academic record was the primary factor of admittance

and that additional requirements only allowed colleges to make a decision between eligible candidates.

g) How can college admission system be improved?

There seems to be a significant difference in students' perception on college admission system in Taiwan and France. Taiwanese respondents stated unanimously that the first step to improving the college admission system is to change mentality and attitudes toward higher education in order to diminish the value of grades and to put an end to students' distribution into colleges. Interviewees expressed a strong desire of being able to choose a university according to their aspiration rather than academic grade or school reputation. On the contrary, French respondents denounced the easy access of university and the lack of academic guidance which led to university dropout or students' failure to get admittance in the second year of their studies. Respondents recommendations consists of improving academic guidance in senior high school and reinforcing post Baccalaureate requirements in order to accompany students towards a field of study that fit both their knowledge and aspirations.

From the discussions held with the interviewees, the researcher is able to deduce that students' perception on college admission is as different as the two processes. For both respondents, it is undeniable that senior high school diploma does not open the job market anymore, thereby pushing students to undertake higher studies. Nations around the world face the same challenge, while the massification of higher education was once a global demand, the demand for better opportunities in higher education is now the students' current request. This can be achieved by emphasizing the significance of educational aspirations in pursuing tertiary education. The results reveal that higher education has become an indispensable step towards the job market and that some students may feel like they are "failing society" if they do not enroll in university.

4.3 Summary of Findings

This section will summarize the data collected throughout the surveys and interviews in relation to the research questions and objectives of this study. Throughout this chapter, the researcher has given evidence that all students are provided equal opportunity to enroll in university but that improvements are essential in order to keep up with trends in higher education.

(i) What are the qualifications and testing requirements needed to fulfill senior high school graduation and college admission?

Taiwan and France education systems both reward students who completely fulfill their three years of senior secondary education with a senior high school graduation certificate. While the only requirement to be awarded the senior high school graduation certificate in Taiwan is to have fulfilled three years in senior secondary school, this is another story for France. Participation in the Baccalaureate examination and a minimum grade point average of 8 to 20 are the requirements for students who wish to obtain their senior high school leaving certificate, even if they are not planning to enroll in higher education. Failure to meet those requirements will result in the necessity for students to re-sit the Baccalaureate

Under the Taiwanese school system, students wishing to enroll in college must sit the General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT) in January which is a two-day examination. (Table 2.1) It tests students' ability in Chinese, English, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences. For each area, the score ranges from 0 to 15, with a maximum total score of 75.

Results to the GSAT will determine whether the students undergo the Stars program or the application process to get admittance in higher education. Students who fail in getting admittance or who are dissatisfied with their results, can sit for AST in July where they will be tested on a minimum of three subjects of their choice among Chinese, English, Mathematics I (for sciences and engineering majors), Mathematics II (for humanities and social sciences majors), geography, history physics, chemistry, biology, and civics.

Unlike the GSAT in Taiwan, under the French higher education system, the Baccalaureate is the sole factor that determines students' graduation from senior high school. Anyone who has obtained their Baccalaureate diploma is then, able to enroll at a public university without any further examinations. Instead of a two days testing process like the GSAT, the Baccalaureate is a weeklong process (**Table 2.2**) that includes written and oral tests in mathematics, philosophy, sciences, social sciences, geography and history, French literature, languages (English, German, Spanish and sometimes Chinese).

The transition from the first year to the second year of undergraduate studies might, however, be more competitive for some degrees due to a limited number of places. For example, in medical universities where students will choose their specialization during the second year, admittance will depend on their grades in their first year. Motivation letter is also commonly requested during the APB process for both selective and non-selective degrees as it has been demonstrated in the surveys. University institutes of technology are more selective due to limited places (400 places per year at the university institutes of technology in La Rochelle) and might request students to provide both motivation letter and portfolio, in some cases, interviews are also needed to select students who are eligible to enroll in the program. The following section will discuss the different processes offered to students who plan to enroll in college.

(ii) In what ways can graduates apply for college entrance? And how college admission process works?

As it has been explained in both the literature review and the first section of this chapter, senior high school graduates in Taiwan can apply for college entrance through a multi-channel admission process which includes an admission by application and recommendation, and admission by examination and placement. Taking the General Scholastic Ability Test or the Advanced Subject Test is a necessity to anyone who wish to apply to colleges. Additional tests and requirements (motivation letter, portfolio, interviews) are required to students who take the application process, students undergoing the Stars program are recommended by their high school based on their grade point average from the first two years of senior high school in conjunction with their GSAT's score. Finally, students taking the admission by examination and placement will be assigned to a college according to their AST's score and their preference list. **(Figure 2.6)** In Taiwan, The College Entrance Examination Center (CEEC) founded in 1989, is in charge of administering college entrance examinations.

In France, higher education is managed by the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research; MENESR (le Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche). Application to higher education must be made through the APB process which is the only process for a senior high school student to apply to colleges; this procedure is intended to be easy to access and to facilitate application to the university. **(Figure 2.7)**

The following section will discuss the factors influencing students' admittance into higher education according to the data collected in this study.

(iii) What matters most in college admission decisions?

Academic record as the only prism of selection into higher education?

In France, the Baccalaureate is perceived as the only objective way to distinguish the value of students. The Baccalaureate is considered to provide all senior high school students with an equal opportunity to attend college. Holders of the Baccalaureate are then guaranteed a place in the university. Additional requirements and tests might enter into account if students apply to selective colleges. Selective colleges and IUT select their students according to their academic area then to their academic record (grades in senior high school and Baccalaureate score) portfolio and motivation letter are often required as well as interviews. Additional tests are more unusual but still can be required for degrees with a limited number of places. Grades in the Baccalaureate are then perceived to influence students' admittance into selective universities and preparatory classes, grades in universities to influence admittance in graduate degrees, grades in preparatory classes to influence admittance into "grandes écoles" and so on.

Similar to France, Taiwan college admission system continues to place tremendous emphasis on the GSAT and AST score, but it was able to improve by providing more opportunities to students with the multi-channel admission process. This process offers to students the chance to emphasize their motivations, skills, and qualifications through the application process by providing to colleges a portfolio, motivation letters and so on.

Tests' scores aren't the sole criteria used to determine students' acceptance into higher education and are often evaluated in conjunction with additional criteria, still tests' scores and academic records tell a lot about students' overall ability to succeed in tertiary education which explains why they remain relevant. Obviously, test scores and academic records seem to be the most prominent aspect of college admission in both Taiwan and France. Few requirements are still being looked at closely when it comes to making a decision, particularly in the case of selective programs in France or the application process in Taiwan. Motivation letters, portfolio (including extra-curricular activities) interviews,

essays, additional tests and recommendation letters are elements that might influence college admissions process.

(iv) What are the challenges and difficulties encountered by candidates in the process of college admission?

As analyzed in the data, most of the Taiwanese respondents are struggling when it comes to taking the GSAT or the AST because of its significant influence on students' admittance into higher education. Preparation for entrance examinations is the primary cause of anxiety for senior high school students who spend a considerable amount of time studying to get a grade that will guarantee them a place in what they consider as a good university (based on university's reputation and course content). Deemed to be superior to private universities regarding the quality of the faculty and students' selectivity, public universities in Taiwan are in high demand by students. Profoundly influenced by Chinese culture, Taiwanese attitudes towards the pursuit of knowledge is often criticized for putting pressure on students and focusing on examination and memorization rather than personal thinking and creativity. Similar to French students, Taiwanese students struggle to find out which career pathways fit them, and they tend to move towards degrees with no real interest.

What stands out most in this study is that French students do not especially struggle when it comes to getting admittance into universities but do encounter difficulties in being oriented into higher education. According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, only 39% of new entrants into college in 2016, succeeded to get admittance into the second year. As highlighted by the survey's responses, French students do not think that senior high school prepares them for college level work (58,6%). The ease to enroll in higher education in France: Is it a double-edged sword?

(v) In what ways does college admission system differ between Taiwan and France?

Several disparities appear between Taiwanese and France college admission systems. Firstly, it is important to keep in mind that Taiwanese higher education institutions are divided into two tracks: one track for the academic orientation and one track for the occupational training. Universities in Taiwan fall into public and private universities which differ regarding reputation, history, accommodation capacity, objectives, faculty and so on. They also vary in cost; the private university is more expensive than the public one. On the contrary, French Higher education institutions are divided into three tracks: one for the university, one for the occupational training and one for the “grandes écoles”. Universities in France are mostly public as there are only seven private universities which are religious institutions (Catholic). For this reasons French private universities were not compared to French public universities either to public and private universities in Taiwan as they do not meet the same characteristics. The main difference between college admission system between Taiwan and France is the existence of a multi-channel process in Taiwan (**Figure 2.6**) which do not exist in France. France only holds one process which consists of taking the Baccalaureate and applying to universities through the APB process (**Figure 2.7**).

Secondly, public university admission process in France and the examination and placement in Taiwan (**Figure 2.6**) are very much alike. Students take a test then fill in a preference list. Apart from occupational training, “grandes écoles” and selective degrees, French students do not have to provide any additional documents and, in comparison to their Taiwanese peers, score in the Baccalaureate did not influence students’ admittance into non-selective universities as long as they hold the Baccalaureate. Admittance in IUT is a little more complicated as these degrees are selective, and places are limited. Requirements can then go from motivation letter and portfolio to interviews and additional tests, in this case, selective degrees and IUT admission process are more similar to the admission by the application in Taiwan. It confirms the assumptions that there are similarities between public universities in France and private universities in Taiwan, and public universities in Taiwan and IUT and selective degrees in France. For example, as seen in the surveys’ descriptive analysis, students attending public school in Taiwan and

IUT or selective degrees in France tend to have better overall grade point average while in senior high school than students in private universities in Taiwan and public universities in France.

Thirdly and finally, mentality, social norms, and social expectations seem to be some of the main differences between students from Taiwan and France who undergo the process of college admission. The lack of orientation in senior high school is a significant concern in both Taiwan and France. Several students testified to the difficulty of choosing a university to enroll in due to an uncertainty regarding their professional prospects, while Taiwanese students wanted to enroll in a university according to its reputation, course content or family and peers' advice, French students adopt a more personal approach focusing on their career aspiration, course content, and location. Disparities are also found in student's perceptions on the outcome of their undergraduate studies. Most of the Taiwanese respondents do not plan to pursue graduate studies, immediate employment being the head of their objectives after graduating from an undergraduate degree while most of the French respondents do plan to pursue graduate studies. As claimed by some French respondents, the ease of access in undergraduate studies makes it common, and less valuable when it comes to finding a job; a graduate degree is becoming more and more necessary to stand out in the job market.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This research explored the process of college admissions in Taiwan and France by examining four key areas : reforms in the expansion of higher education that have shaped present higher education systems in both Taiwan and France; social and cultural expectations that are diverging from one country to another one; differences between Taiwanese and French college admission systems; requirements that students are subject to; and students feelings toward the transition between secondary education and higher education. One of the primary goals of this study was to better understand college admission systems in Taiwan and France to show that there are both similarities and differences between them and that social and cultural expectations might be some of the major differences between Taiwan and France. The argument was built upon firstly that higher education has been subject to massification in the 20th century in both countries increasing the notion of “academic freedom” by offering more autonomy to institutions, administrations, and professors; as well as the decrease of inequalities between individuals by providing them a common access to education. But education is in perpetual need of improvements and so is college admission system in Taiwan and France.

Higher education in the world is in constant search for improvements. Taiwan and France have successfully expanded their higher education systems in the last decades; providing all students with an equal opportunity to attend college and widely increasing students’ enrollment in higher education (**Figure 2.4 – 2.5**). A comprehensive college admission system could be defined by a system which benefits to the mass. According to this definition, both Taiwanese and French education systems can be considered as comprehensive systems. The objective of this form of massification is the opening of all

levels of education to all students. However, in today's global economy which has been shaped by the market, it is important to train individual element qualified in fields adapted to their ability, knowledge, and ambition.

One of the main dilemmas of today's education systems is the lack of academic guidance. At the end of secondary school, students rarely know which career path to choose from, which leads to a misdirection of students into college according to factors independent of them. With the multi-channel admission process, students are offered different opportunities to apply to college, but still is, once they have to make the decision, most of them will choose the most renowned university among those they are eligible in. In the case of France, this lack of academic guidance also leads to a misdirection of students into college. The excessive accessibility of universities leads students to enroll in degrees without real motivations behind their choice. Students enroll in universities according to course content and career prospect before realizing that they are not qualified or that these degrees finally didn't fit their expectations. Academic guidance is then necessary to prevent failure and misdirection.

Despite its emphasis on testing, college admission system in Taiwan do offer an equal opportunity to access higher education, candidates being required to pass the same tests and provide similar requirements, which is not the case of college admission system in France. Whereas university admission system in France offers an equal opportunity to all baccalaureate holders, this is clearly not the case when it comes out of the university framework. The Grandes Ecoles is then seen as a higher education for the elite, an institution who only accept prodigies. At that point, French college admission appears to be more elitist than Taiwanese college admission system.

It is important to understand that children can struggle with learning and so do senior high school students. In France, it has been normalized to enroll in university after senior high school graduation and few students know that they also have the opportunity to enroll in preparatory classes to attend "Les grandes écoles" and in some selective degrees that could be more suitable for them. Taking a risk and allowing students to apply to higher education according to their motivation, portfolio and interviews could be a good way to

encourage students to follow their aspiration. In this context, it would be interesting for France to follow the example of their Taiwanese counterparts in offering all students with a multi-channel admission process for them to find a degree both suitable to their qualifications and aspiration. In comparison, it would be interesting for Taiwan college admission system to reduce the significance of the GSAT score and the AST score in the distribution of students into colleges.

The difficulty in the improvement of higher education lies in the combination of both quality and quantity of education. The shift of inequalities in higher education is one of the new concerns that Taiwanese and French education systems are facing as well as the depreciation of diplomas. This concern could eventually be the subject of future research.

5.2

Limitations

This research of College Admission Systems in Taiwan and France is only but a piece of the puzzle surrounding the issue of higher education systems in both countries. Investigating into Taiwanese and French college admission systems and student's perspective on it is a relatively complicated process as the researcher had to adopt an objective attitude towards this study not to glamorize their country to the detriment of the second one. Analyzing the two systems on the same basis is important. Limitations of this study include sample limitations, restriction of the study to universities, and data collection. The overall sample size is a notable limitation of this study. It may not be a good representative of the general population. Because respondents from Taiwan were only students from National Chengchi University and Tamkang University which can't fully represents public and private universities. A larger sample size from different universities in Taiwan may be more representative of the differences between public and private universities.

Firstly, the relatively small sample size can only serve to provide a glance into the population of college students in Taiwan and France as a whole, as there are not enough

respondents present for each demographic background to make general assertions. This study used purposeful sampling focusing mostly on the similar type of institutions to gauge differences between college admission system in Taiwan and France. Purposeful sampling of university students was conducted from public and private universities in Taiwan, and public universities in France (selective and non-selective), as French private universities are religious institutions which can't be served as an element of comparison with Taiwanese private universities. Within the sample tested, there was also a significant portion that had a neutral opinion or wasn't sure about the answers, which also limited the amount of analysis that have been conducted on the responses.

Secondly, this research only focused on one type of higher educational institution: university. This study then did not take into account the Grandes Ecoles, Specialist Schools and Technical Establishments in France, as well as Junior Colleges and Technical Institutes in Taiwan. If this were included, they could eventually support the argument of the existence of inequalities in college admission system based on the type of higher educational institutions students are applying to. Therefore, this study only provides a focus on college admission process with an overview of senior secondary education. It would have been interesting to take a look at students' satisfaction after their undergraduate studies, whether they feel they have made the right choice during college admission process by selecting the university they enrolled in or not, to measure their level of satisfaction according to diverse factors and to conduct assumptions of correlation coefficient. This study did, however, provide some pieces of the puzzle: showing how students perceive college admission process; how college admission process works in Taiwan and France, as well as how it differs and how senior secondary education influences students transition into higher education. Thus future research could build upon these findings by focusing on different factors such as students' background and the type of institutions.

Thirdly and finally, a collection of the data was made through social media (Facebook) which was a real success with the French respondents, but not with the Taiwanese respondents. Request to join university groups on social media to provide students from public and private universities with the Chinese survey were often rejected (approximately six universities' groups dismissed the researcher request). Interviewees'

comments were sometimes ambiguous, and some respondents challenged the significance of this study and were somehow reluctant to the comparison between Taiwanese and French college admission systems. A better explanation of the aim of this study to respondents would have eventually prevented misunderstandings. Hopefully, the researcher managed to collect data with the help of Taiwanese students.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study along with the limitations noted, there are several recommendations for researchers for future research in this field.

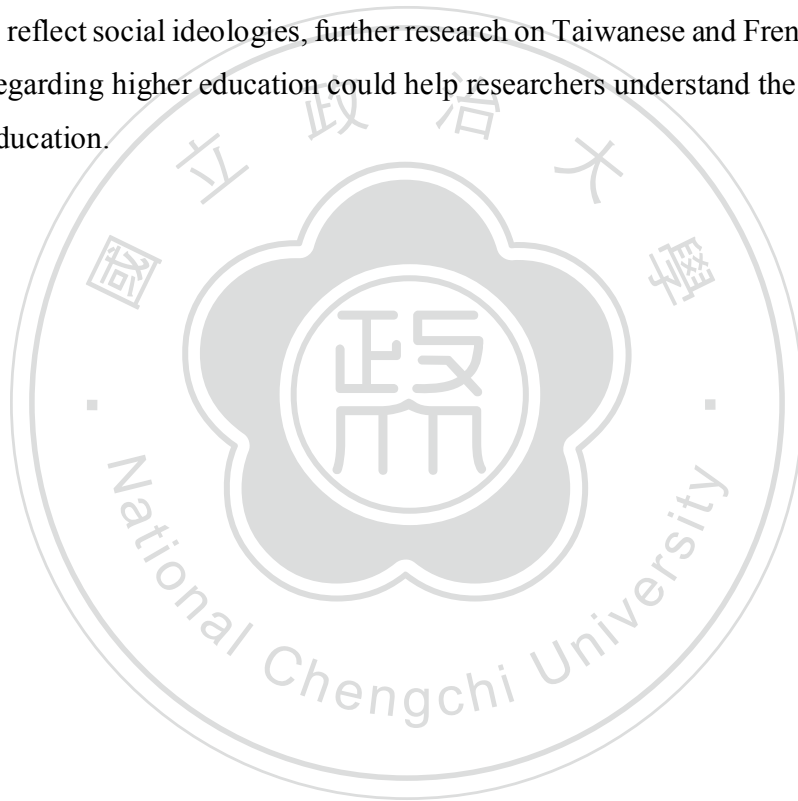
Firstly, Taiwanese and French college admission systems should be at first analyzed separately to determine differences that might appear in the process of admission in their different tracks of higher education institutions. It would help to provide a clearer picture of both systems processes and in which ways they might be similar or different. It will also help future researcher to organize their research.

As mentioned in this study, the researcher has only analyzed universities in Taiwan and France which didn't provide a general picture of the enrollment process into higher education. Future researchers then have many avenues to build upon to find a more comprehensive picture of college admission in Taiwan and France. More research needs to be conducted on differences between public and private universities in Taiwan, as well as between the three tracks of higher education in France. Additionally, it would be noteworthy to examine in details the factors justifying the failure to get admittance into a specific college.

Future researchers should also attempt to conduct more quantitative data collection and analysis on students' perception of college admission as it cannot be determined based on a small percentage of students enrolled in higher education. If the college admission process appears to be different from one college to another thereby favoring some students to the detriment of others, then reasons hiding behind such differences should be examined.

In terms of policies, it would be interesting for French college admission system to provide a new framework which could offer the same process of college admission for candidates to university, technological institutions and preparatory classes (which conduct to the Grandes Ecoles) in order to offer all students with the same opportunity to enroll in higher education within a specific social background.

At the very least, this study has provided evidence that students in Taiwan and France have different ideologies on higher education. All human knowledge is socially constructed since values and beliefs always predicate it. As individual attitudes and opinions reflect social ideologies, further research on Taiwanese and French ideologies and beliefs regarding higher education could help researchers understand the complex issue of higher education.



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Appendix 1. Survey's questions

A Study of College Admission: The Case of Taiwan and France 大學入學考試制度之研究：以台灣與法國為例

1. Your gender

- ☐ Male
☐ female

2. How old are you?

.....

3. Your grade level:

- ☐ First-year student
☐ Second-year student
☐ Third-year student
☐ Fourth-year student

4. Your university

.....

5. Indicate your overall grade point average in high school

- ☐ 90-100
☐ 80-89
☐ 70-79
☐ 60-69

6 What is the highest level of education obtained by each of your parents (or guardians)?
(Mark one in each column)

	Father	Mother
Less than high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High school graduate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education after high school other than 2-year or 4-year college Some college (community/junior college)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College graduate (bachelor's degree)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduate degree (master's/doctorate)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. How many of your siblings attend college or are college graduates?

- ☐ none
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5 or more

8. What do you plan to do after completing your undergraduate degree?

- ☐ work full-time
☐ continue studying for a master degree
☐ join military
☐ undecided

9. Please indicate which of the tests below you have taken: (Taiwan)

- ☐ Taiwan General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT)
☐ The Advanced Subjects Test (AST)
☐ Both

10. Please indicate which of the tests below you have taken: (France)

- ☐ The General Baccalaureate
- ☐ The Technological Baccalaureate
- ☐ The Professional Baccalaureate

11 If you hold the general Baccalaureate, please indicate which of the specialization below you have taken:

- ☐ Litterature
- ☐ Sciences
- ☐ Economic and Social Sciences

12. Please indicate which one of these processes you have successfully undertaken: (Taiwan)

- ☐ Stars Program - Special Admission Recommended by High School
- ☐ Personal Application - College screening test + Portfolio + Interview
- ☐ Admission by examination and placement -students submit preference list

13. If you have taken The Advanced Subjects Test (AST, 指定科目考試); what is/are the reason(s)?

- ☐ Did not take part either in the Stars program or the personal application process
- ☐ failed to gain admission
- ☐ not satisfy with the Taiwan General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT) results

14. When you were in high school, how much time do you spend during a typical week doing the following?

	none 0	< 1 hour	1-5 hours 1-5	5-10 hours 5-10	10-15 hours 10-15	> 15 hours
Studying/homework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socializing with friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talking with teachers outside of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talking with your parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working (for pay)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteer work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student clubs/groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exercise/sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cramschool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading for pleasure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15 How well do you feel your high school had prepared you for each of the following?

	Extremely well	Somewhat well	Not well	Not sure
To gain admission to public universities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To gain admission to private universities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To gain admission to the college of your choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To succeed in college level work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get a good job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To gain admittance in University Institutes of Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. How important do you believe each of the items below is in gaining admission to higher education?

	Single most important factor	Very Important	Moderately important	Minor Factor	Not important
Your high school grades	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your application essay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exceptional talent you have in one area (athletics, arts, leadership, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your Taiwan General Scolastic Ability Test score (GSAT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your Advanced Subjects Test score (AST, 指定科目考試)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic reputation of your high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your involvement in volunteer work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your rank in your class when you graduate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your involvement in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending Cram School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your letters of recommendation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interview	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Portfolio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Baccalaureate Score	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17 What are the factors influencing your choice of university?

- ☐ Course content
☐ Location
☐ Finance
☐ Reputation
☐ Parents & Peers
☐ Career Aspiration

18. How many college do you applied to?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 or more

19. Toughest part of the college admission process

- ☐ Taking the Taiwan General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT) 学科能力测验 or The Advanced Subjects Test (AST, 指定科目考試) 學科考試 (Taiwan)
- ☐ Registration procedure and application for financial aid
- ☐ Taking college entrance examinations such as writing essays, interviews, motivation letters, portfolios...
- ☐ Taking the Baccalaureate (France)
- ☐ Choosing schools to apply

20. Overall Complexity of Applying to Colleges

- ☐ 1 (very simple)
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 (very hard)

21. Feel free to make further comments.

Appendix 2 Interview Questions

- 1- Does your high school record and GSAT/AST score accurately reflect your effort and ability?
- 2- Why did you wanted to go to college? Why this one in particular? Was it your first choice? (if not what was your first choice?)
- 3- Was it your own desire to attend university? What were the main factors influencing your choice of attending this particular university? (location, course content, finance, reputation, parents&peers, career aspiration ...)
- 4- Tell me about a challenge that you overcame during college admission process?
- 5- How would you qualify your high school period?
- 6- What do you plan to do after graduation?
- 7- Tell me more about the process you have undergone to enter university. (學科能力測驗, 指定科目考試, 兩者均有) (個人申請, 繁星推薦, 登記分發)
- 8- What did you find the most challenging in the college admission process?
- 9- If you could change one thing in college admission system what would it be?

Appendix 3 First Interview

Tin, 26 years old. National Chengchi University, department of philosophy. Taiwan

1- Does your high school record and GSAT/AST score accurately reflect your effort and ability?

I don't think it totally reflects my ability because the grading system is not really equal. Every questions are not graded the same. For example, in the GSAT there is five subjects for a total score of 75 points. If students fail to answer five questions in the five topics of the GSAT, they will have a lower grade than students who failed to answer five questions in a unique topic! I don't think grading system in Taiwan is fair.

My GSAT score was 63/75 while my average score in high school was around 60 up to 100.

I'm actually a quick learner that's why I succeed to learn a large amount of knowledge in order to succeed in the GSAT.

2- Why did you wanted to go to college? Why this one in particular? Was it your first choice? (if not what was your first choice?)

First, we need this university diploma, everyone else got a university diploma and if you only have a high school diploma it's really hard to get a job. It's really harsh since we need to make our own living. I don't like to study but I still have to get into NCCU in order to get a job.

Second; people who go to university really learns a lot not only in the academic field but also in terms of social skills.

National Taiwan University NTU was my first choice; because this is the best university in Taiwan but I'm not hard working enough to succeed in getting admittance into this university. As I actually knew that I would failed, I chose NCCU as my second choice! NCCU have a really good reputation in social sciences field; they have really good professors and courses; resources. I like philosophy when I was in high school so I decided to go to the philosophy department!

3- Was it your own desire to attend university? What were the main factors influencing your choice of attending this particular university? (location, course content, finance, reputation, parents&peers, career aspiration ...)

In my heart I knew that I didn't wanted to go to university but the reality is that, I had to enroll in university in order to get better job opportunities. But I really wasn't interested in learning in the academic field.

The main factors influencing my choice were the school reputation and course content. Better reputation means more money to employ better teachers and equipment.

4- Tell me about a challenge that you overcame during college admission process?

Writing your own resume; selling yourself, I actually took example on others. What a person is; I have to sell myself; create my own style; I had to think a lot. I never learned how to do this kind of tasks in high school.

- 5- How would you qualify your high school period?
Stressful. The only thing, we keep hearing about is college admission examinations and how important our grades are.
- 6- What do you plan to do after graduation?
Find a job; gaming business (soft-world)
- 7- Tell me more about the process you've undergone to enter university. (學科能力測驗, 指定科目考試, 兩者均有) (個人申請, 繁星推薦, 登記分發)
學 科 能 力 測 驗 ; personal application; interview, entrance examination: mind experimentation: you need to make a choice “ when you are in a given situation what would you do ? “the simulation is: you and your group are traveling in Africa when you got captured by a cannibal tribe. If you kill one person in your group of friends you do not have to die, if you do not you will die. What would you choose; why and how?
This examination was really hard for some people; you have to think and make your own theory; high school did not prepare us for that!
- 8- What did you find the most challenging during this period?
Nothing challenging, everything is about memorizing.
- 9- If you could change one thing in college admission system what would it be?
No admission requirements at all; no restrictions.
Students can enroll in the university of their choice without any requirements regarding academic record or examinations' scores
I do not think admission system can reflect our abilities, and it will never reflect them.
This system will always sacrifice someone.
Universities could open their programs to everyone without any entrance examinations.
As long as students pay their tuitions, there shouldn't be any restrictions in students' enrollment into universities.

Appendix 4 Second Interview

Tiffany, 19 years old. Taipei Municipal University of Education, department of arts. Taiwan

- 1- Does your high school record and GSAT/AST score accurately reflect your effort and ability?

I do not think it reflects my ability to enroll in higher education and I have to admit that I have not given my best in the GSAT.

- 2- Why did you wanted to go to college? Why this one in particular? Was it your first choice? (if not what was your first choice?)

If I do not have a university degree, I will not have a good job. It was not a choice it was more like a necessity, a mandatory step. I did not really choose my university; I selected the best university among those I was eligible to apply to. My GSAT score was 55 up to 75.

- 3- Was it your own desire to attend university? What were the main factors influencing your choice of attending this particular university? (location, course content, finance, reputation, parents&peers, career aspiration ...)

I did not want to enroll in university, but I didn't know what I could do if I didn't enroll in university, so I decided to undergo the college admission process. The factors influencing my choice of the university were: school reputation, peers' advice, course content and location.

- 4- Tell me about a challenge that you overcame during college admission process?

College admission process was not really challenging. The GSAT was the only challenging element of the college admission process as it is one of the main factors of college admission decision.

- 5- How would you qualify your high school period?

Stressful. We had several examinations in senior high school and teachers will get mad at us if our grades were not good enough. There were competitions between students and different classes. We were also ranked to see which students were the best.

- 6- What do you plan to do after graduation?

I am planning to enroll in a Fine Arts school in France.

- 7- Tell me more about the process you have undergone to enter university. (學科能力測驗, 指定科目考試, 兩者均有) (個人申請, 繁星推薦, 登記分發)

學科能力測驗; personal application; interview, motivation letter, portfolio, and entrance examination. I had to paint landscapes during my entrance examination. As I have been attending a cram school specialized in arts, I felt prepared for this examination and didn't find it hard. However, interviews were more focused on my academic skills and records than on my motivation which I find perturbing.

- 8- What did you find the most challenging during this period?

The preparation to the GSAT. There is a lot of pressure on senior high school students. Family and peers really wish students to succeed in getting admittance into a good university.

- 9- If you could change one thing in college admission system what would it be?

I would change Taiwanese people mentality. I think there is a tremendous emphasis on grades and schools' reputation. If people change their mentality, maybe they will realize that students should not be distributed to universities according to their grades. I can understand that grades are important but what is the meaning of good grades when you do not know what you want to do with it?



Appendix 5 Third Interview

Rebecca, 24 years old. Paris Diderot University (Paris 7). LLCER Chinese Language. France

- 1- Does your high school record and Bacculaureate score accurately reflect your effort and ability?

I had to re-sit the Bacculaureate, and I think that my Bacculaureate score reflects my effort and ability. The first year I sat the Bacculaureate, I did not study enough which explained why I failed.

- 2- Why did you want to go to college? Why this one in particular? Was it your first choice? (if not what was your first choice?)

It feels normal to enroll into a university. We did not consider the possibility to end studying after secondary education. Enrolling into higher education is seen as a mandatory step. We simply know that we need to attend university in order to enter the job market. One of my friends recommended this university. In France, we do think that learning languages are one of the keys to success in the job market, that is why I decided to learn Chinese.

- 3- Was it your own desire to attend university? What were the main factors influencing your choice of attending this particular university? (location, course content, finance, reputation, parents&peers, career aspiration ...)

It was a personal choice. I really wanted to enroll in this university as I was really interested in its course content. It was also my desire to speak different languages and to use them for my future job, working abroad was also one of my wishes. Career aspiration was then one of the main factors influencing my choice.

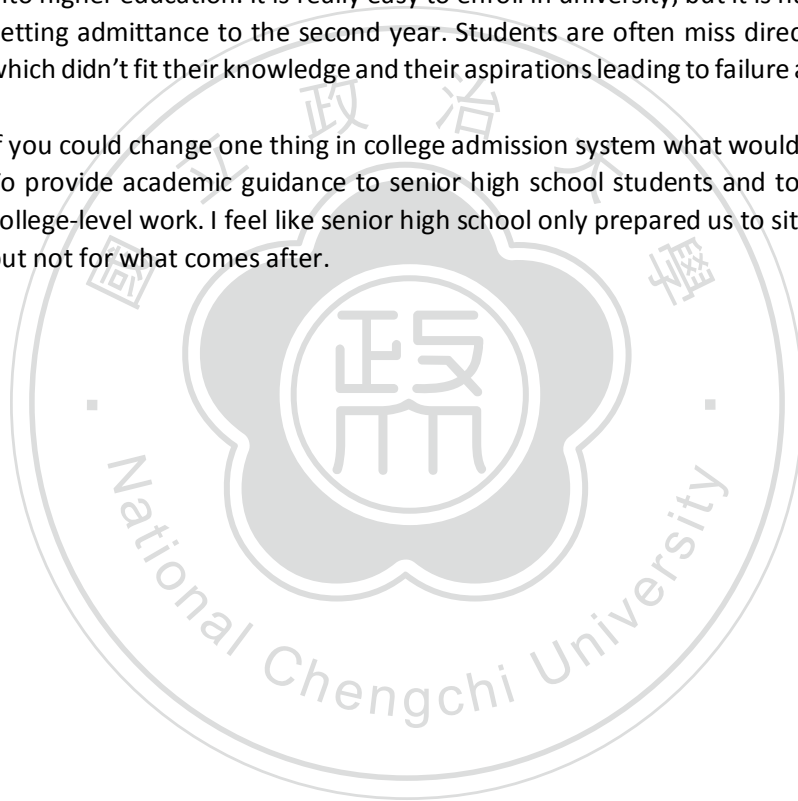
- 4- Tell me about a challenge that you overcame during college admission process?

Apart from the Bacculaureate, there is no challenge in the college admission process. Students just need to be awarded the Bacculaureate to enroll into a college. There is, however, more challenges during the first year of university as the admittance into second year only depends on students' performance.

- 5- How would you qualify your high school period?

Stressful. Even if the Bacculaureate is almost the only requirement of college admission, senior high school puts an important emphasis on grades which is stressful for students.

- 6- What do you plan to do after graduation?
I was planning to enroll in a master degree in Asia. And I am currently enrolled in a master degree in Taiwan.
- 7- Tell me more about the process you have undergone to enter university.
The procedure was quite simple; I only had to fill in a preference list on the APB and succeed in the Baccalaureate. I did not have to provide any additional documents, interviews, and additional testing.
- 8- What did you find the most challenging during this period?
The only challenge, in my opinion, is to succeed in college level work after the enrollment into higher education. It is really easy to enroll in university, but it is harder to succeed in getting admittance to the second year. Students are often miss directed into programs which didn't fit their knowledge and their aspirations leading to failure and abandonment.
- 9- If you could change one thing in college admission system what would it be?
To provide academic guidance to senior high school students and to prepare them for college-level work. I feel like senior high school only prepared us to sit the Baccalaureate but not for what comes after.



Appendix 6 Fourth Interview

Fabien, 19 years old. University Institutes of La Rochelle. France

- 1- Does your high school record and Baccalaureate score accurately reflect your effort and ability?

Scores only reflect on specific academic knowledge; in particular, what is learned during class. This does not reflect the entirety of my abilities which are more diverse than what we learn in secondary education.

- 2- Why did you wanted to go to college? Why this one in particular? Was it your first choice? (if not what was your first choice?)

To expand my professional and academic skills in order to get a career which please my ambitions. I also expect to have a good salary. The IUT discipline us in the marketing sector; which is a field that I really like. It was my first choice and I gained admittance.

- 3- Was it your own desire to attend university? What were the main factors influencing your choice of attending this particular university? (location, course content, finance, reputation, parents&peers, career aspiration ...)

It was a personal choice. I was motivated by my career aspiration, course content but also by the school reputation. The IUT is well known for being selective.

- 4- Tell me about a challenge that you overcame during college admission process?

Admission in the IUT is really selective, and there were only 170 places for 1600 requests. It was then really challenging to gain admittance in this school as I had to provide a portfolio and a motivation letter. It was important to explain the reasons why I wanted to enroll in this school, in which ways studying in this IUT would be a benefit for me.

- 5- How would you qualify your high school period?

Stressful. The emphasis on the Baccalaureate is too significant in France which made it hard for students. However, when we take a step back we realize that the Baccalaureate is not a complex examination and that getting admittance into University is really easy.

- 6- What do you plan to do after graduation?

I would like to study abroad. I do think that I have more chance to succeed if I enroll in foreign universities. There is not enough job opportunities in France.

- 7- Tell me more about the process you've undergone to enter university.

The procedure was simple and well explained. I had to provide academic record, Baccalaureate record, motivation letter and portfolio in order to enroll in the IUT. It was a rapid procedure.

- 8- What did you find the most challenging during this period?

Once again, to succeed in the Baccalaureate. It is the sole factor of acceptance into university, and he represents more than 75% of college admission decision; the remaining 25% includes motivation letters, portfolio, interviews and additional tests.

- 9- If you could change one thing in college admission system what would it be?

I would make the college admission procedure harder. I know it might be stressful for students but there are too many students failing in their first year of university because they do not have the required qualifications and do not have any interest in the field they are enrolled in. Stricter examinations and better guidance are necessary in order to improve college admission system in France.

