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OUTGOING STUDY EXCHANGES IN FRENCH AND SPANISH BUSINESS SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

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Outgoing Study Exchanges in French and Spanish Business Schools

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The purpose of this thesis was to gain knowledge of business students' outgoing study exchanges in France and Spain. Its objective was to find out how study exchanges are organized, what kind of attitudes the schools have towards outgoing free mover students and what is their interest in sending students to Asia. It also aimed to examine schools' study exchange policies in France and Spain compared to each other and to look for potential co-operation partners for AE.

An online survey was used to collect the research data. The survey was sent via e-mail to 59 target business schools in France and 65 in Spain. After the designated time allotted for the survey, an additional phone call round was made to 29 Spanish schools. The final numbers of responses were 17 from France and 18 from Spain. Of the Spanish respondents, half did not have any study exchanges. The data was analyzed from each country separately and the results were compared with each other.

The results indicated that study exchanges are more popular among French than Spanish students. Several French schools encouraged study exchanges by including study abroad periods to their study programmes' curricula. French schools were also more interested in sending students to Asia. Policies regarding outgoing free mover study exchanges were dependent on schools individually and these types of exchanges were not popular among students, likely due to lack of funding possibilities.

The commissioner can use the research findings later for marketing purposes. With a rather low response rate and high variation in individual answers, generalizations of the results are recommended to be viewed critically. In each researched country, a potential school was found for the commissioner to co-operate with. It is recommended for the company to carefully work on building relationships with those two schools to expand their markets.

Key words: student mobility, study exchange, free mover, higher education

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis was commissioned by Asia Exchange Ltd (AE). The market research was partly started during an internship at the company in spring 2016 and the thesis was conducted after the internship in the following autumn.

1.1 Commissioner

AE is a company that enables students to study and do internships in Asia. Their main service for students are exchange semesters in eleven different Asian universities, but students can also opt to do a whole degree, BBA or MBA, at one of AE's partner universities in Bangkok. In addition to Thailand, AE's partner universities are located in China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea.

The idea of AE is to provide the possibility of doing a study exchange in Asia for all students who want to go there. That has traditionally been possible for students only via bilateral exchange agreements between universities or by going as 'free mover' students. However, it is often difficult for students to get placements and to find enough information on universities, courses and practicalities when doing a free mover exchange. AE aims to make this whole process easy and affordable for all students, enabling them to have the possibility of doing a study exchange in Asia. AE has set up partnerships with selected universities, creating close relationships with them, and negotiated affordable tuition fees. With AE handling most of the paperwork on behalf of the universities, they benefit from reduced workload and increasing international presence, while the students enjoy lower fees, easy application procedures, normally guaranteed placements and continuous support from AE before, during and after their exchange.

AE was established in 2007 and at first offered study exchanges only to Finnish students, but since then they have expanded the availability of their services to other countries as well. Their main market area is Europe and currently around half of their customers come from Germany. Finnish students are still a big customer group for AE, along with French students. There are also some students outside of Europe participating in AE's study exchanges. Altogether, approximately 850 students participated in

AE's study exchanges in 2016, whereas in 2015 about 670 students did their exchange via AE.

Most students participating in AE's exchange programs study business, law, social sciences, technology or tourism in their home universities, but students from all different fields can join the programs. Some of AE's partner universities do not require students to be enrolled in a university in their home country and it is possible to do a study exchange via AE also if the applicant has only a high school or equivalent diploma.

1.2 Background

Many French students join AE's exchange programs each semester, but most of them come from one business school in Marseille. That school is a real market sweet spot for AE, but as it currently is the only big market spot in France, AE is striving to find other similarly lucrative markets there. AE is confident that other such market sweet spots can be found in France, but it requires a lot of effort to do that. This situation has been the starting point for this thesis project and AE has requested this thesis in order to get more familiar with students' current internationalisation possibilities in France.

AE has also requested that the thesis does not solely focus on the French market area, but will also produce more information about another, less well-known, market for AE. Spain was chosen as the second research subject, since students' internationalisation markets there are not very familiar to AE, but they have recently started to get a small foothold in the Spanish markets. They signed their first co-operation agreement with one Spanish university at the beginning of August 2016.

From AE's viewpoint, France and Spain are considered as similar market areas. They are both big markets with similar higher education establishments, universities and several business schools. Furthermore, they are both very active countries in student mobility, which makes them good comparison subjects for this thesis.

1.3 Research objectives and questions

The main objective of this thesis is to get a deeper insight into students' current internationalisation possibilities in France and Spain. Its purpose is to find out how outgoing study exchanges are organized, how interested business schools are to send their students to Asia and what their current position with Asia is, as well as their attitudes towards outgoing free mover students. The thesis also aims to find out how the French and Spanish business schools support students' internationalisation compared to each other, and if any institutions in either country stand out as potential market sweet spots for AE.

The objectives of this thesis are transformed into the following research questions:

1. How can students internationalise in French and Spanish business schools?
 - 1.1. How are students' study semesters abroad organized?
 - 1.2. How popular is it for students to do study exchanges?
 - 1.3. What is the schools' interest and current situation in enabling students to study in Asia?
2. How do study exchanges differ between France and Spain?
 - 2.1. Are there new market sweet spots to be found for AE?

1.4 Thesis structure and limitations

This thesis is structured upon building up knowledge of the research subject as seen in the process flowchart in figure 1 below.



FIGURE 1. Thesis process

The existing knowledge of higher education and student mobility in France and Spain is the starting point of this thesis. That knowledge is gathered as the background information earlier in chapter 1.2. Further theoretical information of the subject is gathered in the following chapter 2 as a framework for the research. The theory takes a deeper look at the higher education systems in France and Spain, defines student mobility and provides examples of how it is organised. The research methodology, including practical information on how the research was conducted, is introduced in chapter 3.

The research results and their analysis are both presented in chapter 4. The results from France and Spain are analysed separately and compared with each other to find general similarities and differences between these countries' student mobility policies. The answers are also looked at individually and analysed from AE's viewpoint in order to see what kind of meaning the survey results can have for their business and if any potential market sweet spots are found for them. Additionally, the analysis takes a look at the research itself as well as the answers gained from the survey. It contains a critical analysis of how successful the research was in addition to making conclusions of the results. Finally the thesis comes to its' conclusion in the summary in chapter 5 where the main theories, research methodology and conclusions of the survey together with the analysis of its' success are gathered together.

The research in this thesis is focused on outgoing study exchanges from business schools in France and Spain. Other possibilities for students to internationalise exist through internships and other activities, but AE mainly works in the field of enabling study exchanges and therefore internationalisation within this thesis is limited to them. Furthermore, business schools have been chosen as the main research subjects as they are considered to be the most interesting and possibly most potential target market sweet spots for AE. This limitation also aids in conducting the research within a short timeframe.

2 HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT MOBILITY

2.1 Higher education

Higher education, also known as tertiary education, refers to all post-secondary education. It is not limited to universities; it includes also colleges, technical training institutes, nursing schools, research laboratories and multiple other institutions, which together form a network of educational institutes that provide students knowledge at an advanced level. (The World Bank Group 2015.)

Higher education is crucial in many fields. A tertiary level degree is a requisite for an increasing number of jobs within a knowledge economy. In a national economy higher education is an important part of the education and training system as well as the research and development system of the economy. Its human resource development and knowledge creation are vital. (Gürüz 2011, 18–19.)

2.1.1 Higher education in France

On average, a French person between the ages of 5–39 goes through 16.4 years of education. 75 percent of French adults aged 25–64 have completed at least upper secondary education, after which they are eligible for higher education. (OECD 2016.)

The French higher education system consists of several different types of establishments, which can be either public or private institutions. France has 83 public universities, which means they get funding from the state and are therefore strict with the procedure for approval of the national diplomas they award. This enables an excellent standard of education with a modest annual cost. The universities teach all disciplines and they follow the same qualification system with other European countries, called the Licence-Master-Doctorate (LMD) system. Licence level may be called Bachelor in other countries and it takes three years to attain the diploma. Master's degree adds another two years to the studies and Doctorate requires at least eight years in total to complete. (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development 2016a.)

French higher education system is also renowned for its 250 elite institutions called *grandes écoles*. They are the most prestigious institutions of higher education in France. They specialize typically in a single area of studies, most often business or engineering, but some offer multiple disciplinary subjects. They also have programmes taught entirely in English. *Grandes écoles* are very popular in France and students must take preparatory classes for two years before officially entering a *grande école* through highly competitive entrance exams. (Expatica 2015.)

In addition to universities and *grandes écoles*, the French higher education system includes several other types of institutions. They have schools for art and architecture, catholic universities and specialised institutions within the fields of gastronomy, hotel management, fashion and film to name a few. The specialised schools are numerous and offer education in a variety of fields. Usually their programs take 2–5 years to complete. (Campus France 2016.)

2.1.2 Higher education in Spain

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014), only 55 percent of Spanish adults aged 25–64 had completed at least an upper secondary level education in 2012. Tertiary education was completed by about a third of the adult population, but nearly half of the population had finished their education below upper secondary school. The younger generations are clearly more educated than the older generations, with 64 percent of 25–34 year-olds having completed at least an upper secondary education compared to 35 percent of 55–64 year-olds. (OECD 2014.)

Spanish higher education system is mainly known for its' universities. There are almost 80 universities in Spain, approximately 50 public and less than 30 private universities. The state and the autonomous provinces of Spain fund the public universities and they provide the education to about 90 percent of all university students in Spain. The private universities commonly charge higher tuition fees, but can provide better connections to the business world. (Opiskele ulkomaila 2016.)

Both public and private universities in Spain can offer official degrees, but also their own tailor-made study programmes. The official degrees are recognised by the Spanish

authorities and are valid in other countries that have signed the Bologna process. They follow the three-step process: Grado (Bachelor's) degree takes four years to attain, master's additional 1–2 years and doctorate 3–5 years after the master's degree. (Maatiето 2016.)

Vocational training as part of higher education in Spain is organised in the same public vocational institutions as secondary level studies. They include work practice as a part of the studies that is to be carried out at the end of the study programme. (Maatiето 2016.)

2.2 Student mobility

Student mobility is often regarded as the most visible part of internationalising tertiary education (Byram & Dervin 2008, 16). A mobile student studies in another country than where they originate. The OECD (2013), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics and EUROSTAT define international students as those students who have received their prior education in another country or who study in a country, in which they are not permanent residents.

As tertiary education systems and economic globalisation have expanded worldwide, so has the number of international students. In 1990 1.3 million students were enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship, but in 2011 that number had increased already close to 4.3 million and reached 5 million students in 2014 (figure 2). The growth rate of international students from 1990 to 2011 has been almost 6 percent annually and there has been no decline in the growth rate during the global economic crisis around 2008. (OECD 2013; ICEF Monitor 2015.)

The Growth of International Student Mobility, 1990–2014

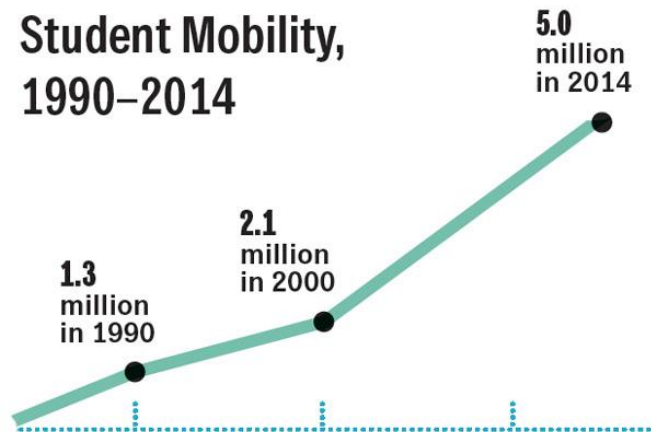


FIGURE 2. The growth of international student mobility 1990–2014 (ICEF Monitor 2015)

To shed some light on the motivations for the increasing student mobility, Gürüz’s (2011) summary on the globalised higher education scene shows some of the reasons behind this trend. In the global knowledge economy, most jobs require tertiary level qualifications and the demand has changed the role of the state as the provider of higher education. Market forces now affect education too, due to which the number of private institutions providing tertiary level education has increased and institutions compete for students. Internationalisation has also intensified in response to globalisation and intercultural skills have become more desirable attributes for the workforce. (Gürüz 2011, 198–199.)

For many emerging economies in the world, student mobility has become a means of gaining knowledge through students’ education in another country. By bringing that knowledge home, they increase the potential for innovation, and the economy can reach higher influence in the world by elevating their status. These economies are growing in tandem with international student mobility. The influence is greatest seen in Asia, where China, India and South Korea have climbed up to be among the most powerful economies in the world and at the same time, the leading sources of international students. Together they now account for more than a quarter of all students studying outside their home countries and altogether 53 percent of international students come from Asia. (ICEF Monitor 2015.)

English-speaking countries are the primary host countries for international students. Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States together host more than a third of all foreign tertiary students enrolled worldwide as seen in figure 3. The majority of international students study in the fields of social sciences, business and law. Asia has also become an increasingly more compelling destination for international students, especially for those originating within the same region. Many countries in Asia, such as China, Japan and Malaysia, have also set goals to increase their recruitment to host more international students. (OECD 2013; ICEF Monitor 2015.)

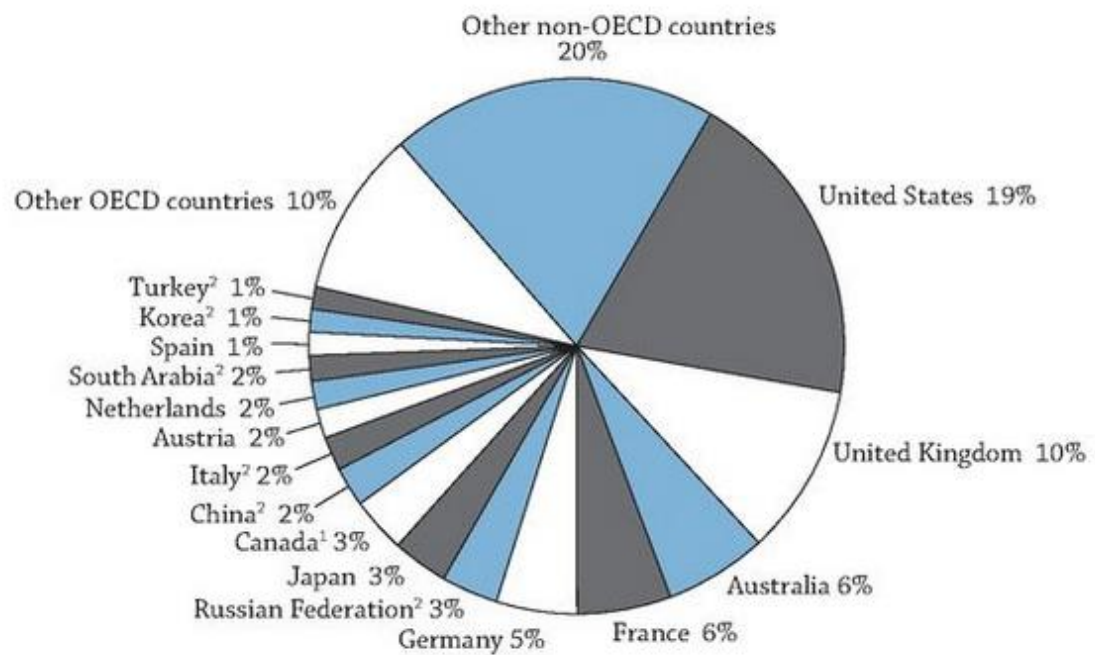


FIGURE 3. Foreign and international students' distribution in host countries (OECD 2015)

2.2.1 Types of student mobility

Student mobility can be differentiated in many ways, one of them being degree or credit mobility, where a student either studies abroad for a whole degree or for a temporary period of time, usually one or two academic semesters, and returns to finish their degree in their home institution. Degree and credit mobility have very different drivers that motivate students to study abroad. For degree mobility, the main driver is a push effect when a student finds their home country's higher education to be quantitatively or qualitatively inadequate and leaves to another country in search for better education. These

kinds of students are more driven by a need for attaining better education abroad, rather than interest in exploring another country. Degree mobility can also be called vertical mobility since it moves from countries with poor education to those with better provisions. Credit mobility, however, is horizontal mobility and moves usually between countries that are relatively equal in their level of higher education. Students going for credit mobility are often more motivated by linguistic and cultural aspects of spending time abroad and seek for a difference in contrast to their home country or institution. (Streitwieser 2014, 88–89.)

Short-term student mobility can be either an institutional exchange or a free mover exchange. In institutional study exchanges, students go abroad through university exchange programmes, such as those organised by the EU, and students are therefore selected and prepared for their experience by their home institutions. These students are usually eligible for some kind of financial support, such as the Socrates grant in Europe. Free mover students, on the other hand, do not enjoy the same benefits. Their exchange process depends solely on their own initiative and they usually have to finance their travel and stay abroad privately. They might not receive institutional help or guidance either. (Byram & Dervin 2008, 21.)

2.2.2 Study exchange programmes in Europe

The Erasmus programme is the most well-known study exchange programme in Europe. It was founded in the 1980's to provide foreign exchange options for students within the European Union (EU). It aimed to help the growth of international studying through cooperation between states, offering a variety of chances for students to experience a stay abroad. In 2014 the Erasmus programme became a part of Erasmus+, which is a more extensive EU program for education, training, youth and sport, lasting from 2014 to 2020. Erasmus+ still has a strong focus on study exchanges, but also offers opportunities for students, youth and staff to train abroad, as well as funding for other activities. Students wishing to do a study exchange via Erasmus+, can do it between institutions that belong to Erasmus+ programme countries or partner countries and that have signed an agreement for study exchanges within the programme framework. The duration of the study period can last 3–12 months and students may receive an Erasmus+

grant to help with travel and subsistence costs. (Erasmus Programme 2010; European Commission 2015, 2016.)

The Nordic and Baltic countries have also their own educational cooperation programme called the Nordplus Programme. Together with eight countries, the Nordplus aims to strengthen and develop the educational cooperation in the area. It encourages innovation and promotes Nordic languages and culture. The Nordplus Higher Education Programme is a mobility and network programme for Nordic and Baltic countries on bachelor and master study levels. It supports both exchanges and other collaboration between higher education institutions and other organisations. (Nordic Council of Ministers 2014.)

The Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS) was founded in 1995 based on previous cooperation between the first member states Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Since then it has expanded and now 16 countries are a part of CEEPUS. The collaboration promotes study exchanges between the member countries and the main activity of CEEPUS is operating joint programs within the framework that lead especially to joint degrees, especially in doctoral programs. They also award grants for students and teachers within the framework. (CEEPUS 2012.)

Some European countries are a part of an association called the “Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie” (AUF), which is an academic cooperation between French-speaking countries. It comprises of universities, grandes écoles, academic networks and scientific centres all around the world and currently has 812 members in 104 countries. The main activities of AUF are the coordination of French-speaking academic cooperation all over the world, supporting academic institutions, staff and students, and engaging in the international scene taking part in various projects. AUF also funds mobility between the member institutions. (AUF 2015.)

The Spanish-speaking world also has their own cooperation programme, coordinated by “Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo” (CINDA). The centre was founded over 30 years ago in Latin America, but now includes universities from Europe too. It aims to help in development and internationalising the member institutions by systemising academic programs, transferring knowledge and promoting study exchanges for under-

graduate students. Students may also be eligible to receive a grant from CINDA for their mobility periods. (CINDA 2016.)

2.2.3 Student mobility in France

France is a very popular destination country for international students. According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016), France was the top fourth destination country in 2014 after the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, attracting over 235 000 international students (6 percent of the total). France has policies in place to promote their higher education internationally and attract mobile students, as can be seen in two separate articles from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (2010, 2016b). They have expressed a need for French universities to become more competitive for foreign students and are even renewing their visa and consular procedures to make it easier for international students to come there. (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development 2010, 2016b.)

France hosts over twice as many international students than it sends out. In 2014 a little over 84 000 French students studied abroad. Their most popular destinations were Belgium, United Kingdom and Canada, which together attracted approximately 45 percent of all mobile French students. The flow of French students studying in abroad in 2014 is presented in figure 4. It should be noted that in the UNESCO statistics, the data covers only students that are pursuing a whole degree abroad, therefore it shows the numbers for degree mobility but excludes credit mobility and other short-term mobility. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016.)

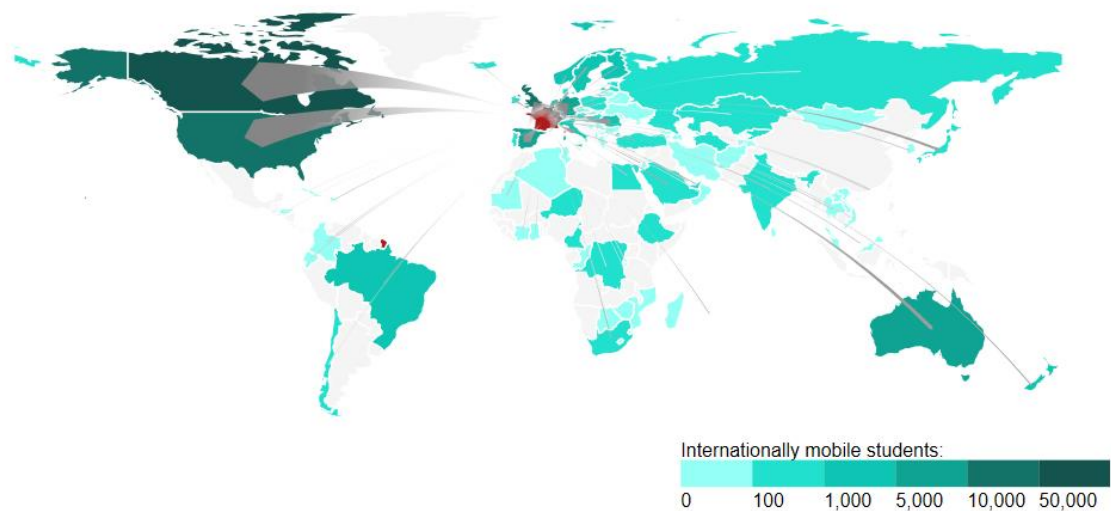


FIGURE 4. Global flow of outgoing tertiary-level students from France (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016.)

Within the Erasmus+ programme, including both studies and traineeships, France sent out nearly 37 000 students in the academic year 2013–2014. The number has increased steadily by approximately 11 000 students in six years as during the academic year 2007–2008, close to 26 000 French students joined the Erasmus program. The trend for increasing interest for studying abroad is thus clearly visible in France. (European Commission 2014a.)

2.2.4 Student mobility in Spain

Like France, Spain also aims to promote internationalisation in its tertiary education. The Ministry of Education of Spain (2014) has published a strategy for the internationalisation of Spanish universities 2015–2020 in which mobility has an important role. The ministry wants to foster the international mobility of all collectives. It will also research the possibility of integrating mobility windows for bachelor and master degree programmes. In addition, it aims to improve the measurement of mobility and to simplify visa and permit procedures for foreign students, professors and researchers. (Ministry of Education of Spain 2014.)

According to the European Commission (2014b), Spain was the most popular destination country for Erasmus+ students during the academic year 2013–2014 when over 39 000 students did their Erasmus study exchange or traineeship there. Outgoing partic-

icipation in the Erasmus+ programme was less than incoming as 37 000 Spanish students studied or trained abroad through the programme. The increasing popularity of student mobility is also visible in Spain since during the academic year 2007–2008 approximately 25 000 students participated in the Erasmus programme. However, there has been a small decline in Erasmus participation since 2011–2012: during that academic year the number of participants reached over 39 500 students. (European Commission 2014b.)

Global student mobility statistics from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016) show that nearly 29 000 Spanish students were mobile abroad in 2014. The global flow of these degree students is presented in figure 5. Their most popular destination countries were the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and France. At the same time, Spain hosted over 56 000 mobile degree students. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016.)

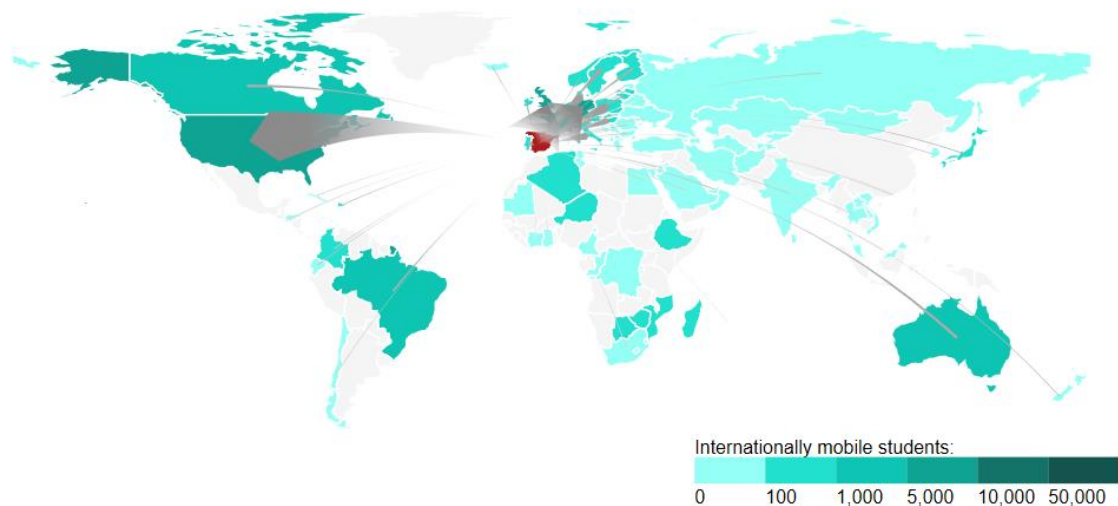


FIGURE 5. Global flow of outgoing tertiary-level students from Spain (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016.)

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Quantitative research by an online survey

This thesis relies mainly on quantitative research, which means that it is numerically oriented and involves statistical analysis. For quantitative research, it is important to get a large sample of respondents that are representative of the target population in order to uphold a degree of statistical reliability to the research. Every respondent is asked the same series of questions. (Van Hamersveld & de Bont 2007.)

According to Housden (2008, 161), quantitative data is often used to show opinion poll results and for companies' marketing purposes – when companies claim that 9 out of 10 customers prefer their product, quantitative data has been used to show that result. The data is highly valuable and Housden (2008, 161) even calls it “the best-known currency of marketing research”.

A survey is a research tool for systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. If a survey is administered by an interviewer, it is often used face-to-face, over the telephone, online or as a combination of these options. Self-administered surveys are traditionally handed directly to respondents, sent by post, fax or nowadays e-mail, and can be available online. E-mail surveys and web surveys are nowadays common and they are advantageous in their inexpensiveness to administer. They can include images, sound files and other content flexibly, they are easy for respondents to fill in when convenient and they are easy to control. (Housden 2008, 161–162, 174.)

Doing surveys online has made it easy for researchers to have a global reach with low cost and reporting on the explored phenomena has become very fast. Web-based surveys have therefore numerous advantages, but they have downsides too. With technology being varied, not all computers may support the type of survey administered and survey e-mails can easily be perceived as spam. In addition, validating who has responded to the survey can be difficult due to the fact that multiple people can use the same computer and possible respondents may have confidentiality issues with online surveys so they need reassurance of it. It is possible that a web-based survey leads to poor research when it is being carried out on an ad hoc basis. (Housden 2008, 174.)

3.2 Survey for outgoing study exchanges

The survey for this thesis was aimed at the international relations personnel in French and Spanish business schools. With that in mind, it was constructed to find out how study exchanges are enabled by these institutions, how popular study exchanges are in them and where students usually go for their exchanges. The survey was implemented with an online tool for easy information gathering and distribution was carried out via e-mail to selected organisations. The full survey can be found in appendix 1.

The contact details for the business schools, which the survey was sent to, were received from AE. Before the thesis process began, the company already had compiled a comprehensive list of French business schools and it was supplemented during the researcher's internship at AE in spring 2016. The information on Spanish business schools was gathered during the following summer before the internship came to an end. Altogether, the survey was sent to 59 business schools in France and 65 in Spain.

The survey was sent via e-mail to the business schools at the beginning of October 2016. For French schools the accompanying e-mail in English (Appendix 2) was also translated to French, translation provided by AE (Appendix 3), and it was sent as a bilingual version. Two weeks were reserved for gathering the information from the schools. To attract answers, AE agreed to donate 2 U.S. dollars to the UNESCO Programme for the Education of Children in Need for each response gathered via the survey.

As the response rate for the survey was slow during the first week, a reminder (Appendix 4) was sent to the schools, which had not yet answered the survey, on the eighth day of administering the survey. For the reminder AE provided a short Spanish translation (Appendix 5) combined from the first accompanying e-mail and the reminder e-mail attempting to attract more answers especially from Spain. The reminder prompted a few more answers, but due to the response rate still being slow, a second reminder (Appendix 6) was also sent to the schools after three more days.

At the end of the planned information gathering period, 24 responses had been received for the survey. The majority of responses, 19 of them, came from France and only five from Spain. Of the French responses two were considered invalid, one coming from a student and the other a duplicate from one of the responded schools. Because of the low response rate from Spain, in the following two days after the scheduled information gathering period, an additional phone call round was made to business schools there.

The institutions were first called systematically in alphabetical order. After some calls, it was noted that a few Spanish business schools did not have any kind of study exchanges. One of them explained the reason for it to be that they offer only online studies and another responded that they have only short-term master's study programs, which last up to a year. After this, the rest of the call round was conducted selectively, excluding business schools that have only online studies or master studies lasting approximately one year. In total, 29 Spanish business schools were contacted by phone.

The phone calls prompted five more responses to the questionnaire from Spain. In addition to that, eight schools stated on the phone that they do not have any study exchanges. Altogether, 18 valid responses were received from Spain and 17 from France. The corresponding response rates from each country were 28 percent and 29 percent respectively.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 French results

Before compiling the results of the survey from the French respondents, there are three issues to take into account. Firstly, one of the French schools provided two responses to the survey. To some of the questions these answers differed from each other slightly and they were combined to one response for analytical purposes. Higher values in answers were chosen for the analysis, based on the researcher's previous knowledge of the institution in question. The second issue is that one of the respondents, albeit being a French business school, operates also in Spain. Based on the survey it is not certain, but the answers received from this school likely represent the whole organisation, therefore including information also from their Spanish campus. In this research, however, this school is considered solely as a French institution. Thirdly and lastly, in cases where a school has given an answer as a value of a range when a simple number is preferred, an average value of the answer has been used for analysis.

4.1.1 Outgoing exchanges in French business schools

The French participants in the survey mainly represented the international relations departments or international offices of their institutions. A few participants were coordinators or directors in other departments. Two participants did not tell their position at all as it was not compulsory to do so for the survey. The only identifying information compulsory to state in the survey was the school's name. These names are not published in this thesis in order to protect the schools' anonymity. In the following data analysis, the schools may be referred to by numbers 1–17 or less when there are fewer responses to individual questions.

All of the business schools' study programmes' curricula allowed students to do study exchanges. A clear majority of them also had at least one study programme with a mandatory study abroad period (figure 6). Half of these schools named more than one study programme requiring students to spend a part of their studies abroad.

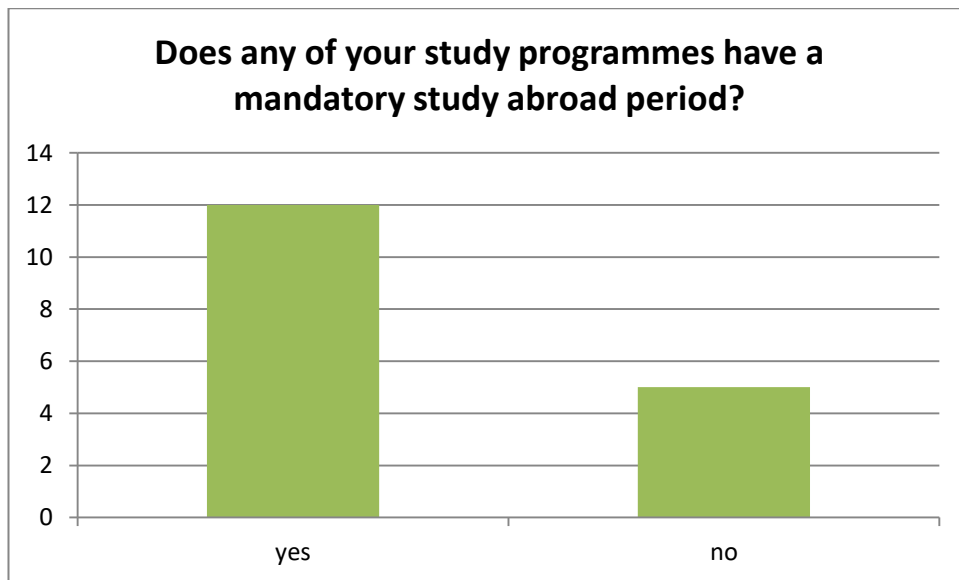


FIGURE 6. Mandatory study abroad periods in French business schools (n=17)

The number of students going for exchange varied significantly between institutions. These numbers are depicted in figure 7. In the two schools that did not have any mandatory study abroad periods, only 5–20 students went for a study exchange each year. The highest number of yearly outgoing exchange students from an institution was 800. This can be explained with the fact that this institution requires a study abroad period in all of its study programmes. Two other schools also had a very high number of outgoing exchange students, as they stated to send abroad approximately 600 students every year. Both of these schools have two study programmes, which require students to do a study exchange. On average, the French business schools send 258 students abroad on study exchanges per year.

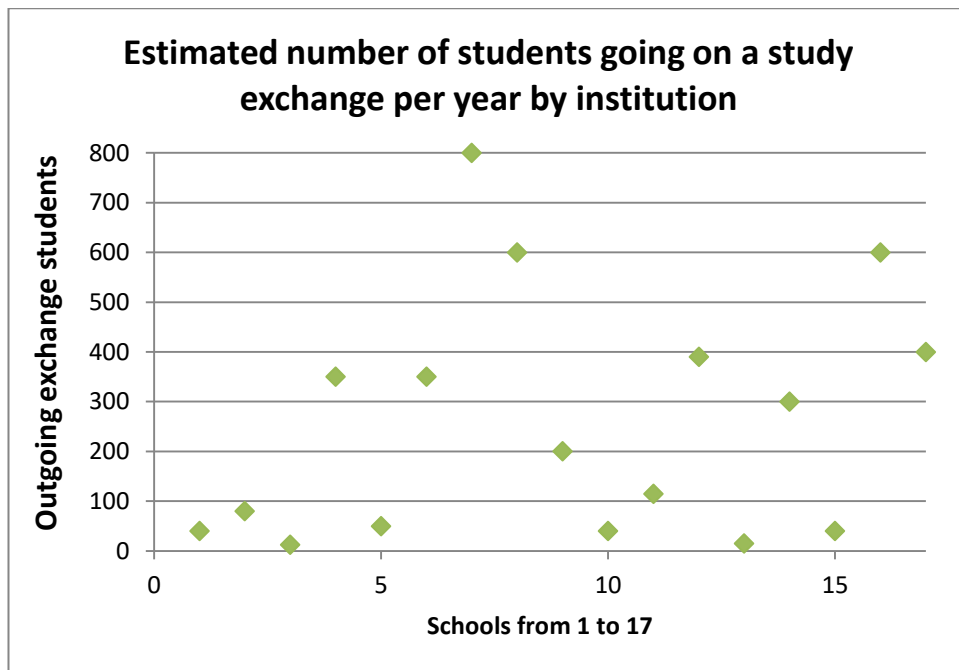


FIGURE 7. Estimated number of outgoing exchange students per year in France (n=17)

The most popular destination for French students to go for their study abroad period was Europe. Over half of the respondents stated to send out more than 50 students to other European countries every year. In schools that had a lower number of students going for a study exchange each year, Europe was still the most popular destination for their students.

Of the other destinations, North America and Asia were at a similar level in popularity for students to go to. The top four sending institutions from France all sent out more than 50 students to both North America and Asia every year. South America was also a rather popular destination, but there was one respondent, which did not send any students there. Australia and Africa were neither very popular destinations. More students studied abroad in Australia, but most schools sent out only a few students there yearly. Africa as a study abroad destination was the least popular as the majority of schools did not send any students there for study exchanges. Destination popularity is represented in figure 8 below.

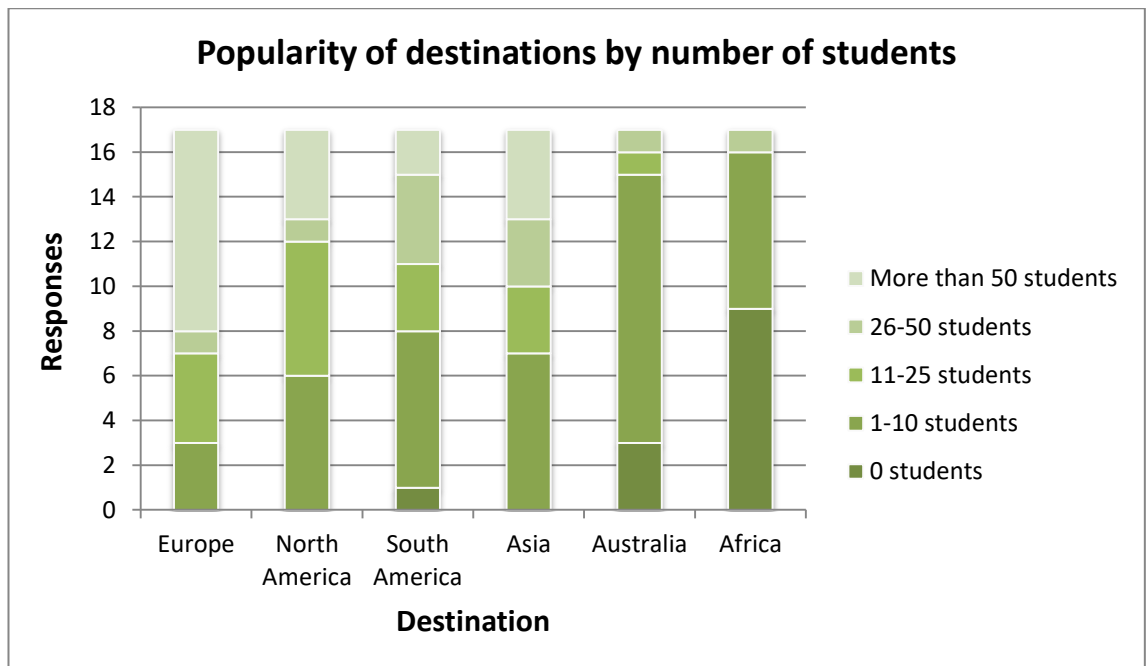


FIGURE 8. Popularity of destinations in France by number of students (n=17)

The majority of responding institutions had partner agreements with institutions in Asia and only two French business schools in this research did not have any partner agreements there. Those two schools each sent abroad only 40 students on study exchanges every year, which is significantly less than the average number of students doing study exchanges from French business schools.

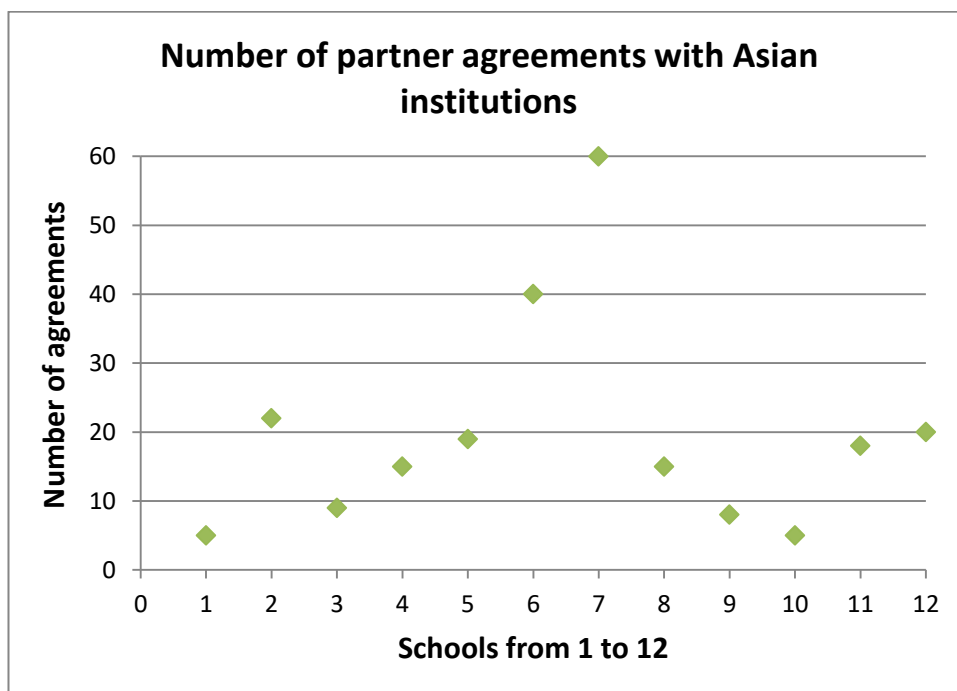


FIGURE 9. Number of partner agreements between French and Asian institutions (n=12)

Of the 15 French business schools that have partner agreements with Asian institutions, 12 answered the number of agreements they have. These numbers are presented in figure 9 above. One of the business schools had a clear affinity to Asia by holding 60 partner agreements with Asian institutions. This school was one of the top three sending institutions from France. The school with most outgoing study exchanges had the second most agreements in Asia, which was approximately 40 agreements. Four schools had less than 10 agreements with Asian institutions. The average number of agreements was 20.

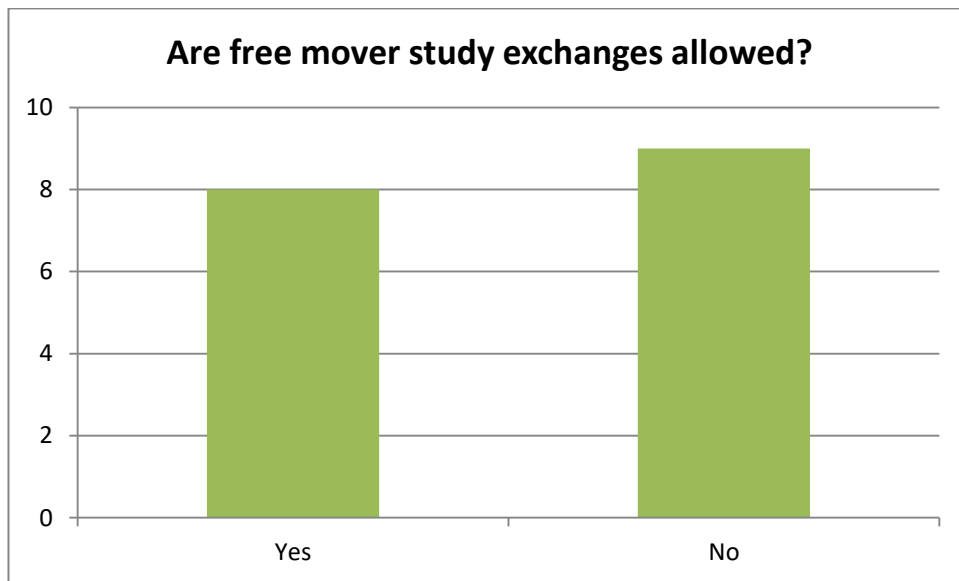


FIGURE 10. Permission for free mover study exchanges from French business schools (n=17)

French business schools have divided policies regarding free mover study exchanges as seen in figure 10 above. According to the survey, nine schools did not allow free mover study exchanges, whereas eight schools allowed them. From these eight schools, three did not have any students going to study abroad as free movers regularly. Three schools only had a few outgoing exchange students as free movers, one school sent out 11–25 and the last one 26–50 students every year.

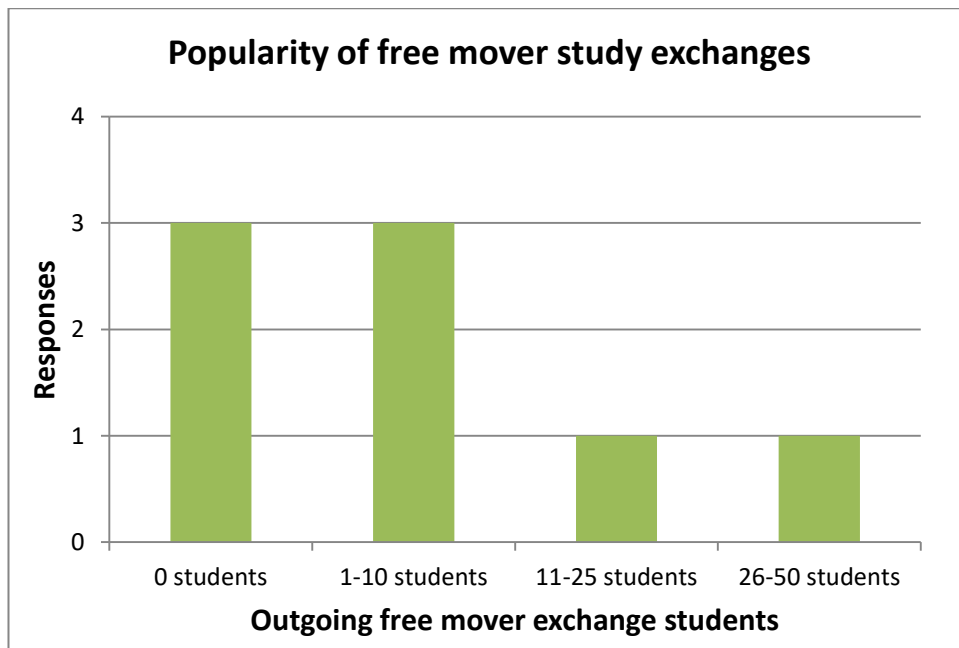


FIGURE 11. Popularity of free mover study exchanges from French business schools (n=8)

Funding for outgoing study exchanges is clearly easier attained when going abroad via schools' own partner agreements. Every type of funding that were asked in the survey – governmental support, school's own grants and other grants – were better available for students going in study exchanges through schools' own partner agreements than for free mover exchange students. Governmental support was the most popular source of funding as 10 schools stated their students to be eligible for it when going to an exchange through their partner agreements and two of these schools said that free mover students are also eligible for it.

Other grants were also a popular source of funding with nine schools stating that their students can receive them. One of these schools named other grants as a funding source also for free mover students. Institutions' own grants for exchange studies were rather rare. Three respondents stated outgoing exchange students to be able to get them if they go on the exchange through the school's own partnership agreements. The top sending institution of the respondents stated their students to only get funding for study exchanges from their own grant. Sources for funding study exchanges are depicted in figure 12.

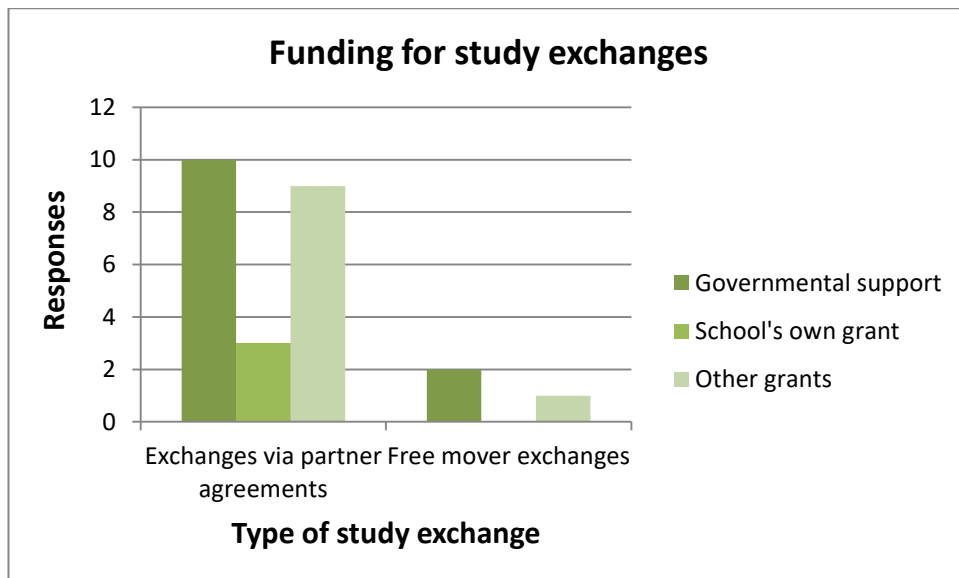


FIGURE 12. Funding sources for outgoing study exchanges in French business schools (n=17)

All of the French schools participating in the survey offer both bachelor and master level studies for their students. Most of these schools let their students have the possibility of going for a study exchange during both bachelor and master studies. However, there are two schools, which let only bachelor level students to go on a study exchange and they have specified it to be during their third year. One of those schools does not have mandatory study exchange in any of their study programs and both of them are among the institutions sending the fewest number of students abroad every year.

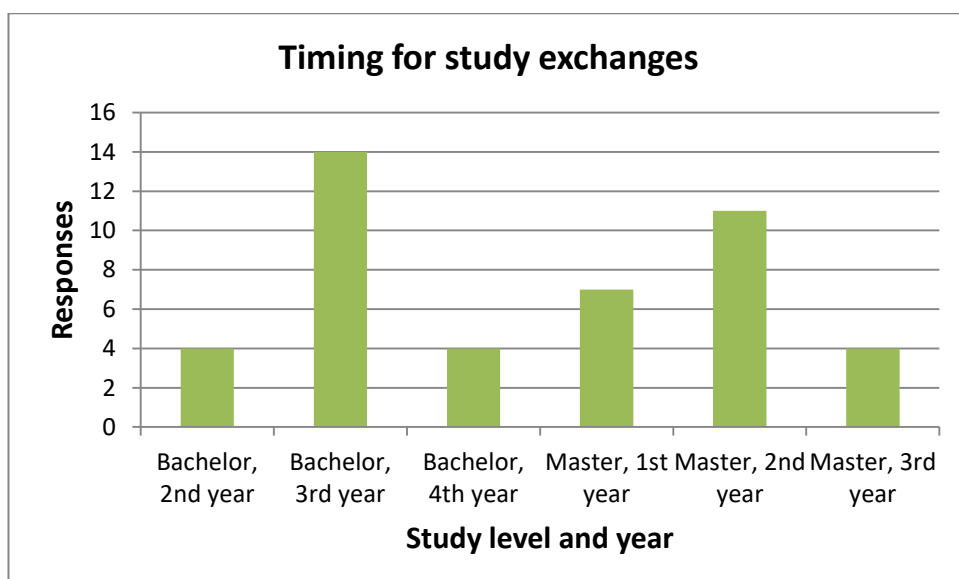


FIGURE 13. Popularity of timing study exchanges based on study level and year in French business schools (n=17)

The most popular time for French student to go on a study exchange is during their bachelor studies on their third year as seen in figure 13. In some schools, it is also possible to go on a study exchange on the second or fourth year of bachelor studies. When continuing onto master level, many students go on a study exchange already during their first year, but the peak of timing the exchange is during the second year. Some students can still study abroad during their third year.

The French business schools are quite flexible when it comes to timing study exchanges. Eight out of 17 schools stated at least three study years when students usually study abroad. Schools, which stated two different years for students to go on their exchange, typically responded with one bachelor and one master level year. However, there were two schools where students usually go on their study exchange only during their bachelor studies, even though they are allowed to do so also during their master studies.

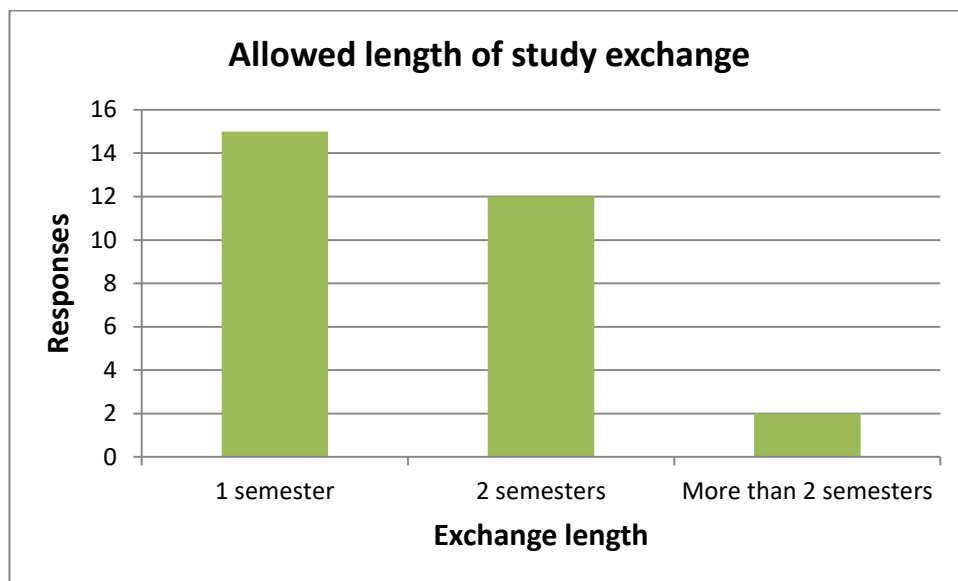


FIGURE 14. Allowed length of study exchange in French business schools (n=17)

The majority of respondents stated that their students are allowed to stay on a study exchange for one or two semesters. However, there were a few schools, which permit their students to stay on a study exchange for only one semester. This makes the allowed length of one semester for a study exchange to be the most popular in French business schools as seen in figure 14. Two schools prefer longer exchanges, with one of them allowing exchanges only for two semesters and the other for more than two semesters. The option of studying abroad for more than two semesters was also chosen by a second

school, but that school allows also one or two semester exchanges. In additional comments, two schools mentioned that their students can alternatively choose to do a double degree in another country instead of going on a study exchange.

4.1.2 Analysis of the French results

Based on the results of the survey, study exchanges are common from French business schools and most of these kinds of institutions encourage students to study abroad for some time. The encouragement can be seen from the result of the mandatory study abroad periods, as more than two thirds of the respondents have at least one study programme where studying abroad is part of the curriculum. Therefore, business schools in France consider it valuable for students to spend time abroad.

The amount of study exchanges is quite individual for French business schools and varies significantly between institutions. The reason behind this might be the size of the student population in these schools, but it is not clear based on the survey. Naturally, the mandatory study abroad periods also increase the amount of study exchanges and schools following that policy have mostly the highest amount of outgoing study exchanges, excluding a couple of exceptions. The average of 258 outgoing students per institution each year based on this research is likely skewed higher than it is in reality, due to the fact that 3 out of 17 respondents had significantly more outgoing exchange students than the other schools.

The most popular destination for French students to go for a study exchange was unsurprisingly Europe. Because of the close ties between countries in Europe and the popularity of the Erasmus+ programme, it is natural that students stay within Europe when they go abroad. It is likely less daunting for students to stay closer to home and for French students it is also likely tempting to go to another French-speaking country. The last reasoning applies to North America too. Canada is included in the area and it is partly a French-speaking country, which is likely why it draws many French students there. Together with the United States, Canada is also quite a traditionally attractive country for studying abroad.

In the destination comparison, the most surprising element was the popularity of Asia as a study destination. It seems to be a very important area for French schools to focus on and for students to go to, being at least at the same level in popularity, if not above, with North America. The importance of Asia was also reflected in the number of partnership agreements between French and Asian institutions. The number of agreements varied quite a lot between institutions and two of the respondents had clearly more agreements than others, but with a total average of 20 agreements – or 14 if the two schools with most agreements are excluded –, French schools are well connected to Asia and clearly interested in sending students there.

The French business schools were divided in their policies regarding outgoing free mover students. 8 out of 17 schools allowing free movers, when the others do not, shows that each school has a very individual take on the issue. No general alignment for business schools in France can be derived from this result. It does not seem to be popular for students to go on study exchanges as free movers. Even in schools where outgoing free mover study exchanges are allowed, none or few students take the opportunity to do so. In two schools, outgoing free mover students were a little more common, but they seemed to be exceptions in this matter.

It remains unknown why free mover studies are as rare as they seem to be, but speculative reasons behind it might be that it is more difficult for students to go on their exchanges as free movers or that the institutions do not support and encourage the option sufficiently. Based on the survey, a lack of funding for free mover exchanges can also be a significant reason behind this phenomenon. According to the responses, students going on the traditional partnership exchanges are much more likely to get funding for studies abroad, most importantly from the government, but also from other grants. In three schools, they could also receive a grant from their own institution, but even though two of those institutions allowed free mover exchanges too, they did not give the grant to the free movers.

Timing study exchanges well for students to get the most benefits out of them is very important. For study programmes with mandatory study abroad periods, a time for the exchange is usually reserved directly in the curriculum. In the French business schools, it is most popular to send out bachelor students abroad during their third year of studies, but in a few schools it is also possible in their second or fourth years. For master stu-

dents the schedule to study abroad is more flexible and many students do it already during their first year, but the second year is the most popular timing for it. From some schools, students may still also go on a study exchange during their third year of master studies.

The length of study exchanges is most commonly allowed for one academic semester, but for students to be able to stay abroad for a whole year is almost equally common. These are the lengths of study exchanges allowed by the schools, but do not reflect how popular each length is for students. In some cases, students might also stay abroad for a longer time. Two respondents said their students are allowed to stay on an exchange for more than two semesters and two others mentioned in the additional comments that instead of exchanges, students can opt to do a double degree abroad. Therefore, French students have many options on how and how long they want to study abroad.

4.2 Spanish results

Spanish business schools are very divided in allowing study exchanges altogether. Of 18 responses, nine schools did not have any study exchanges at all. Reasons behind this were mainly focusing on providing online classes and short-term master level studies. In addition to those, there was one respondent whose reason for not allowing study exchanges was that they teach students in a field of expertise where exchanges are not possible to arrange easily. They do organise students to spend some time abroad, but not in the traditional way of study exchanges. With this many schools not allowing study exchanges at all, the sampling of positive answers is nine. The survey results of these nine schools will be presented shortly.

4.2.1 Outgoing exchanges in Spanish business schools

Like from the French schools, the Spanish respondents were also mainly representatives of their institutions' international departments or offices. Two respondents did not state their positions. The schools' names will not be published here and they may be referred to by numbers 1–9 or less if there are fewer responses to individual questions. In the Spanish answers, there were also a few cases where respondents have given an answer

as a value of a range when a simple number is preferred and an average value of the answer has been used for analysis.

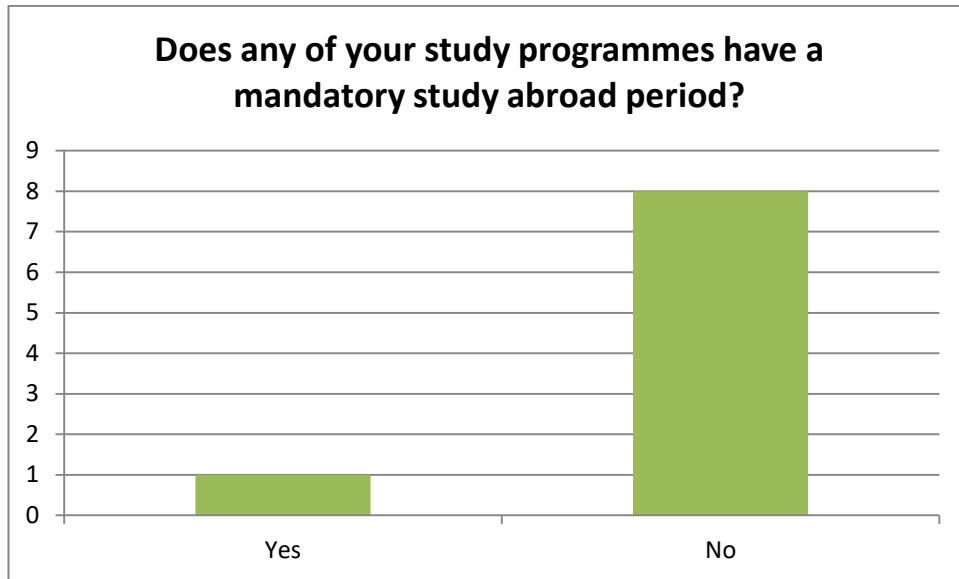


FIGURE 15. Mandatory study abroad periods in Spanish business schools (n=9)

Of the nine schools, in which their study programmes' curricula allow study exchanges, only one has a mandatory study exchange in one of their study programmes as seen in figure 15. The exchange is a required part of studies in the bachelor level and that school also has the highest number of outgoing students every year, sending out over five times more students than the second most sending institution as seen in figure 16. This top sending school stated to have 499 outgoing exchange students every year, while the least sending institution only has 2. An average number of outgoing students from all of the nine institutions is 82. If the top sending institution is excluded, due to the difference in student volumes, the corresponding average number of students is 30.

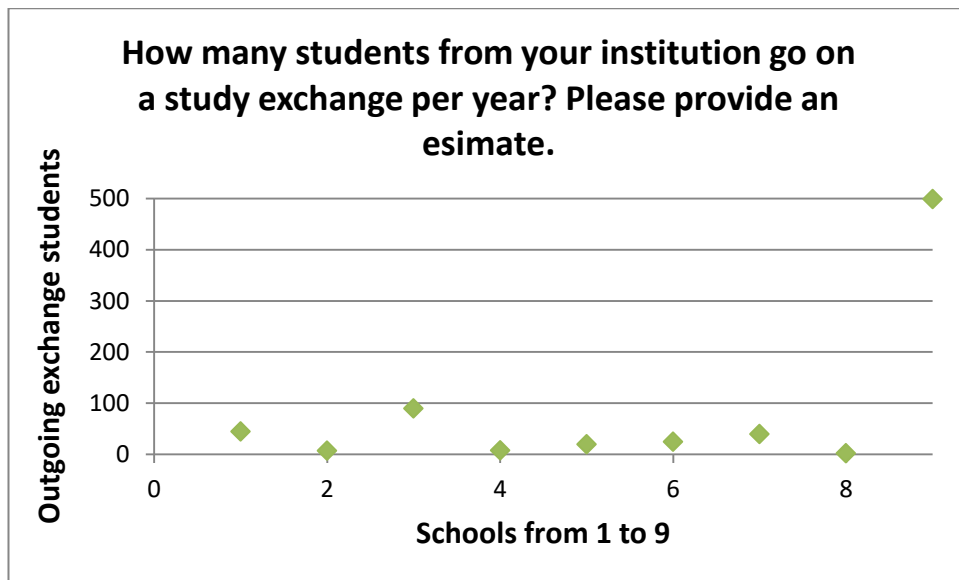


FIGURE 16. Estimated number of outgoing exchange students per year in Spain (n=9)

Europe is the most popular study exchange destination for Spanish students. Most schools send the highest number of outgoing exchange students to other European countries, but there was one school that did not send any students to them. That particular school only has eight outgoing exchange students per year heading to North and South America and Asia. For the other schools, North America as a study destination was also quite popular and a couple of schools sent out 11–25 students there every year. A few schools did not send any students there. In addition, South America and Asia were both quite popular destinations for Spanish students. Most schools send at least a few students to both continents every year. Australia receives students only from two schools and Africa from three. The school with most outgoing exchange students sends more than 50 students to Europe, North America and Asia. The popularity of exchange destinations from Spanish business schools are depicted in figure 17 below.

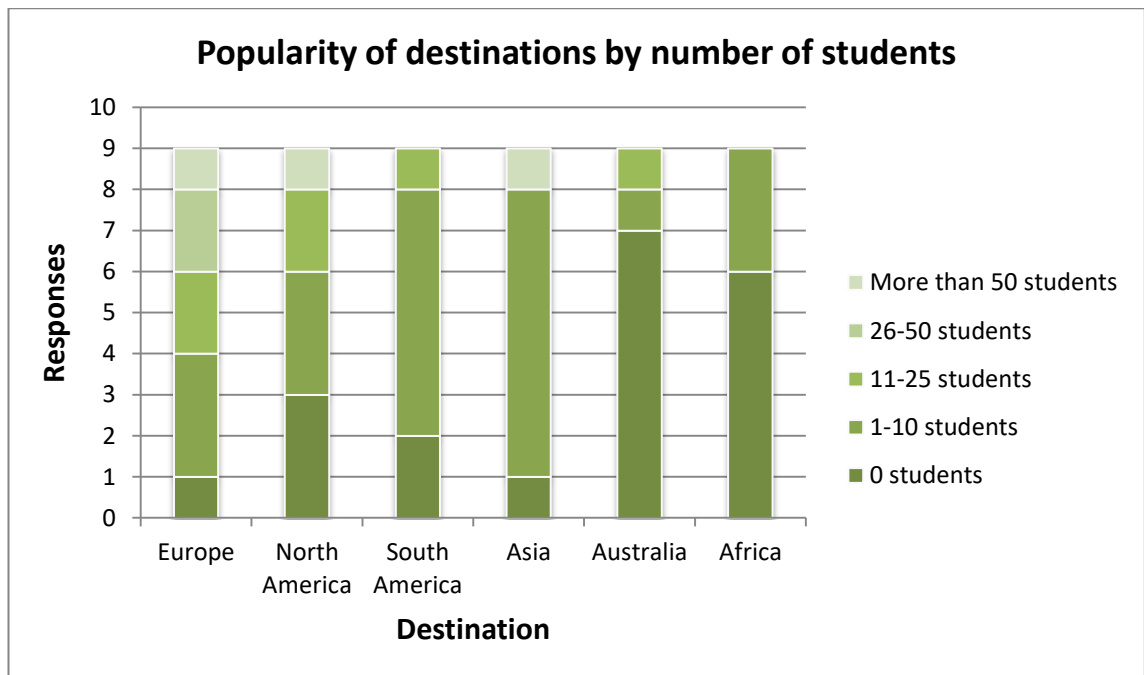


FIGURE 17. Popularity of destinations in Spain by number of students (n=9)

Most Spanish business schools have partnership agreements with Asian institutions. Only one of the respondents did not have any agreements there. The number of partner agreements each Spanish business school has with Asian institutions can be seen in figure 18. The school with most outgoing exchange students also has the most agreements with Asian institutions. It has 30 agreements, whereas the school with the second most agreements only has 6. Including all responses, the average number of agreements with Asian institutions is 6, but if the institution with most agreements is excluded, the average is 3 agreements.

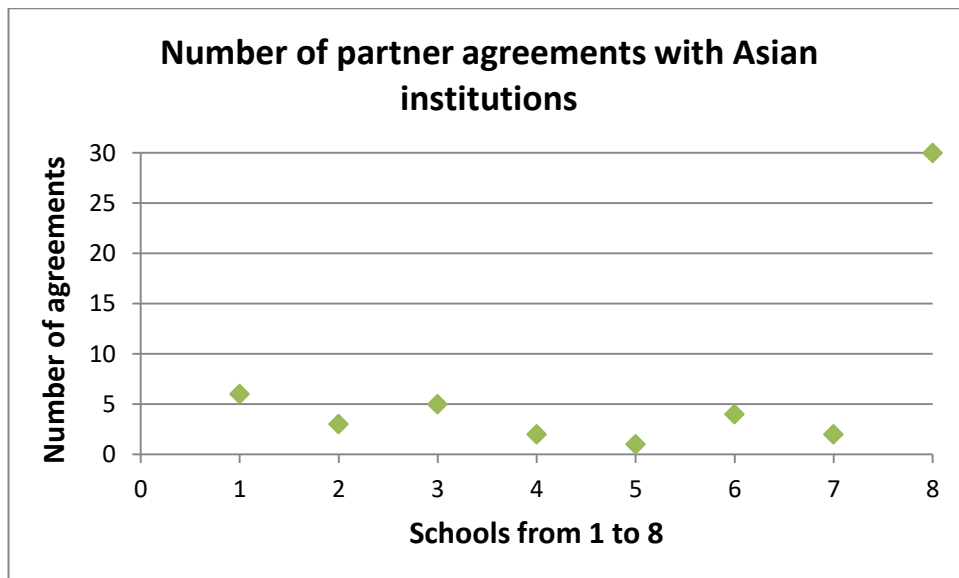


FIGURE 18. Number of partner agreements between Spanish and Asian institutions (n=8)

The permission to go on a free mover study exchange depends on the school. Four out of nine survey respondents allowed their students to do study exchanges as free movers (figure 19). Only one of these schools normally sent out a few students abroad as free movers every year. The others did not usually have any outgoing free mover exchanges.

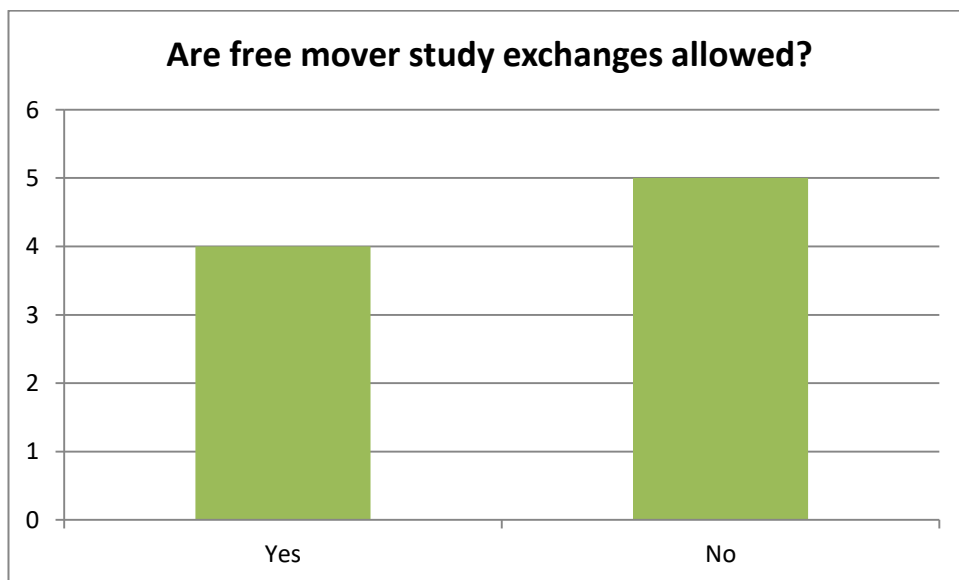


FIGURE 19. Permission for free mover study exchanges from Spanish business schools (n=9)

Funding for study exchanges in Spain comes primarily from governmental support. This support is only available for exchanges through schools' own partner agreements. Other

grants are also a popular source to fund study exchanges and, according to one school, can also be attained by free mover students. Institutions' own grants are only available in two schools in this research and they are only given to outgoing students via partner agreements. Funding sources by type of study exchange are presented in figure 20 below.

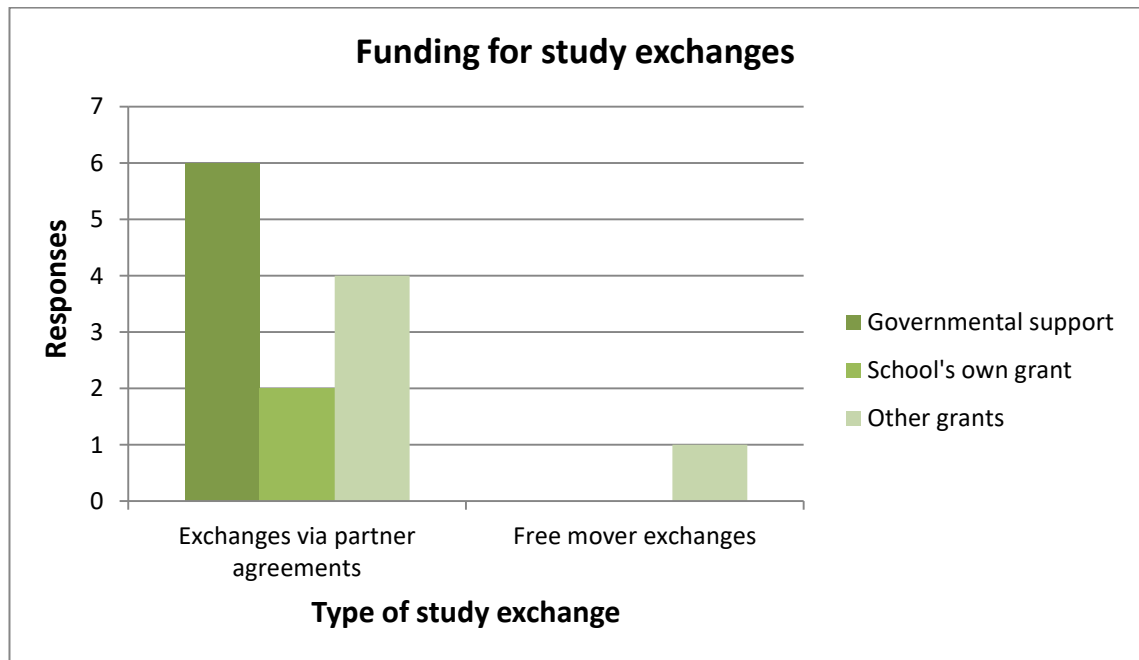


FIGURE 20. Funding sources for outgoing study exchanges in Spanish business schools (n=8)

One of the Spanish business schools participating in the survey offers only master level studies for their students. The eight other respondents offer both bachelor and master level studies. In half of these schools, where both study levels are available, students can go on a study exchange only during their bachelor studies. In the other half, students can spend a study period abroad during both bachelor and master studies.

The most common time for Spanish students to go on a study exchange is during their third year of bachelor studies (figure 21). This applies also to 3 out of the 4 schools sending out only bachelor students. One of those schools also sends out students on their second year and another only during their fourth study year. For Spanish master level students, the time to go on a study exchange is usually during their first year. This includes the school that only offers master level studies. Only one school, with the most outgoing exchange students, stated that their master students also study abroad during their second year.

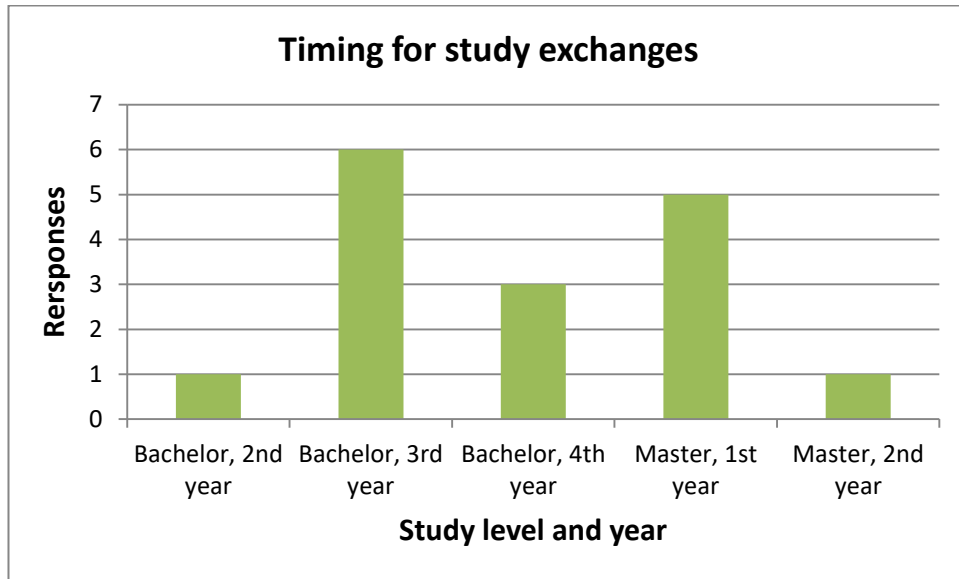


FIGURE 21. Popularity of timing study exchanges based on study level and year in Spanish business schools (n=9)

The most common timeframe that Spanish students are allowed to spend abroad is one semester (figure 22), but allowing exchanges for two semesters is almost as common. Most Spanish respondents stated only one option for the length of time students can spend abroad, but the master level institution chose all levels. They explained in the additional information that the length of their study exchanges depends on the agreements they have with their partner institutions. Therefore, students can spend from less than one semester up to more than two semesters abroad depending on which partner institution they go to. They can also opt to do a double degree. Another respondent, where only bachelor level exchanges are allowed, stated that even though their students can stay abroad for two semesters, they are usually recommended to stay only for one semester during their last semester of studies in their fourth year.

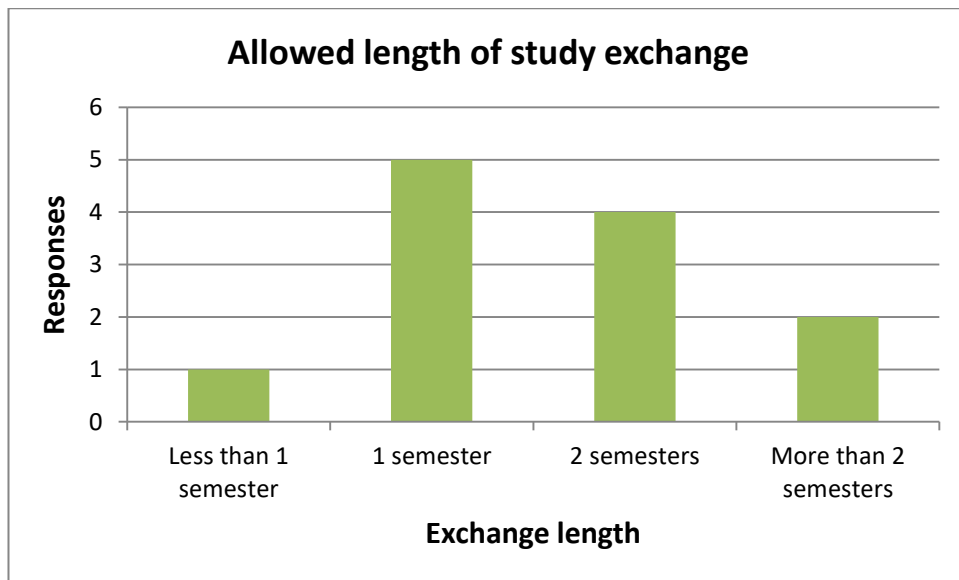


FIGURE 22. Allowed length of study exchange in Spanish business schools (n=9)

4.2.2 Analysis of the Spanish results

Amongst Spanish business schools there are many that do not organise study exchanges at all. Of the survey responses received from Spanish schools online and on the phone, only half stated to allow their students to go on study exchanges. Keeping this on mind, only nine responses could be analysed for this research.

Looking at the mandatory study abroad periods from Spanish schools, they do not seem highly encouraging for their students to study abroad. Only one school requires their bachelor students to spend time abroad during their studies and that school sends out overwhelmingly more students abroad every year than any of the other schools, which responded to the survey.

To look at the yearly average number of outgoing exchange students per institution, it is better to exclude the top sending institution since it distorts the results significantly. The individual number of outgoing students still varies from 2 to 90 within eight schools and the average number of students abroad every year from them is 30. The number is low and it gives the impression that Spanish schools do not especially encourage their students to go on study exchanges. The size of Spanish business schools could also affect this result, but they have not been investigated in this research more carefully. The dispersion of the number of outgoing exchange students in each school also signifies that

the policies and encouragement regarding study exchanges are individual for each Spanish institution.

Based on the survey, Europe proves to be the most popular destination for Spanish students to go on a study exchange, even though one school did not send students there. North America keeps on being a popular exchange destination, although unexpectedly three schools did not send any students there. Asia's popularity from Spain was also a little surprising. Most of the survey respondents sent a few students there every year and its popularity seemed to be consistent among the schools. The Spanish schools have on average only a few agreements each with Asian institutions, which reflect the numbers of outgoing students there. The highest sending institution, however, sends more than 50 students to Asia every year and based on also their number of partner agreements with Asian institutions, they have a clear affinity to Asia along with Europe and North America.

For Spanish students, South America is also a quite popular study destination, likely because there are many Spanish-speaking countries. Australia and Africa were the least popular study exchange destinations and Spanish schools send out only a few students there. Australia's unpopularity can likely be explained by the long distance and Africa may not attract students due to restlessness in the area or lack of sufficient educational infrastructure. However, these reasons are purely speculative and are not based on the research results.

Free mover study exchanges are a dividing issue for Spanish business schools. 4 out of 9 schools allow students to go on exchange as free movers, but only one of them actually has a few outgoing free mover students every year. This tells that free mover exchanges are not encouraged. In addition to that, free mover exchanges are difficult to receive funding for based on the survey. One school stated that free mover students can get other grants for their exchanges, but that was the only mention of any form of monetary support for them in the survey. Students going on traditional partner exchanges are in a much better position. They are eligible governmental support and possibly other grants. Additionally, two Spanish business schools gave their own grants to students going on partner exchanges. In the light of this situation, it is not surprising that students might perceive free mover exchanges as off-putting.

The time for Spanish students to go on a study exchange is mainly concentrated to the end of their bachelor level studies. Within the survey respondents, there was one school, which offered only master level studies and therefore organised exchanges solely for master students. Half of the other schools allowed only their bachelor level students to go on study exchanges. This was quite unexpected since they offer master level studies too. However, perhaps in a similar manner to some of the schools that stated during the research not to have any study exchanges, these schools may also offer short-term master level studies and therefore cannot include studying abroad to their master studies' curricula. This reasoning, however, has not been proven and is therefore speculative. In schools where master level study exchanges are allowed, students are usually sent abroad already during their first year of studies. This also tells that the master studies might not last very long in these Spanish schools.

According to the survey results, Spanish business school students are most commonly allowed to study abroad for one semester during their degree studies. However, exchanges lasting for two semesters are almost equally common. The two-semester exchanges are mainly allowed in those schools that let only bachelor level students to go on study exchanges. The number of outgoing exchange students from those schools varies a lot and no generalisation can be derived from these schools' policies here. These schools do not seem to encourage study exchanges in any similar manner and it is possible that these schools are the ones allowing two semester exchanges purely by coincidence.

4.3 Outgoing exchange organisation in business schools: France vs. Spain

There are many similarities in study exchange organisation in French and Spanish business schools, but there are also some differences. This research showed that there is a drastic difference in the sheer volume of outgoing exchange students from these two countries. French business schools have a clear alignment to endorse internationalisation of their students and they have created several study programmes, which include a mandatory stay abroad. In Spanish business schools, however, making study exchanges a part of curricula is rare.

From all the survey respondents sending students abroad, the average numbers of outgoing exchange students per institution from France and Spain are very different: 258 vs. 82. It has been mentioned before that both of these numbers are likely skewed a little higher than they should be in reality, due to a few schools sending abroad much more students than others, but with a ratio of three to one, the difference is clear. French schools are much more active in sending students abroad than Spanish schools are.

For both French and Spanish students, the most popular destination to study abroad were the other European countries. It is common for students stay close to home, even when going to study abroad, so this result was not surprising. The popularity of different exchange destinations also showed that students in both countries head to destinations where their native language is used. Many French students go to study abroad in North America and Spanish students steer towards South America, even though the volume of students is very different.

The modern day's importance of Asia could also be seen in the number of both countries' students heading there. In France it was striking how much business schools send students to Asia now, the importance of the destination having been raised to the same level with North America. The significance was also seen in the number of partner agreements with Asian institutions. French business schools had 20 agreements with Asian institutions on average, whereas Spanish schools had 6. In the light of this, it is clear that French schools are more invested to have their students go to Asia, but these numbers also reflect the difference in outgoing exchange students' volumes from these countries. Australia as a destination was more attractive for French than Spanish students, but neither of them sent very many students there nor to Africa. Overall, the destination choices for students in both France and Spain were highly similar.

Policies regarding students doing free mover study exchanges from France and Spain were also similar. In both countries, about half of the survey respondents allowed free mover study exchanges, whereas the other half did not. Therefore, no generalisation of policies in business schools regarding free mover study exchanges could be made. They are completely dependent on the schools themselves individually. From the numbers of actual outgoing free mover exchange students, it can be seen that these types of exchanges are not popular in either country, much less in Spain. Only one Spanish school stated to have a few outgoing free mover exchange students every year, whereas from

France over half of the schools allowing free mover exchanges actually had some students going abroad as such. In conclusion, free mover exchanges from France were a little more common than from Spain, but nonetheless unpopular.

The possibilities to get funding for study exchanges are quite equal in France and Spain. Exchange students going abroad through schools' partner agreements are in a clearly better position to receive funding than free movers in both countries. Governmental support is the most typical form of funding for studying abroad, closely followed by other grants. In addition, France and Spain both had two or three schools that also had their own institutional grants for outgoing exchange students, but they were only available for partnership exchanges. For free mover exchange students, the options to get funding are scarce. In both France and Spain there was one school in each that stated other grants to be accessible for free movers and in France two schools that stated governmental support to be available for them. Therefore, outgoing free mover exchange students might be in a slightly better position in France than Spain.

The timing for students to go on study exchanges differs a little between France and Spain. From the business schools in both countries, the most popular time for bachelor students go abroad is during their third year. In Spain, however, exchanges are more clearly favoured to be done at the end of bachelor degree studies, the fourth study year being proportionally more popular for them than in France. In French schools, timing bachelor study exchanges was a little more evenly divided throughout the whole degree studies. For master level students the difference was more pronounced. In Spain, the exchanges are emphasized on the first year of master studies, but in France the second year is more popular to study abroad. In a few French schools, master students also did their exchange during their third study year, but in Spain, none of the respondents stated their students to go abroad at that time.

Students are normally allowed to spend one or two semesters abroad in both French and Spanish business schools. They have very similar policies when it comes to the length of study exchanges students are allowed to do. One-semester exchanges are allowed a little more commonly than exchanges lasting for two semesters, but both are popular lengths for study exchanges. In both France and Spain, there were also a couple of schools, which let their students study abroad also for more than two semesters. In addition to this, one or two schools from each country mentioned that their students can also

opt to do a double degree instead of the normal study exchange. Therefore, these policies are very similar in France and Spain.

4.4 Market evaluation for AE

Based on this research there is potential for AE to expand their markets in both France and Spain. Some business schools in these countries allow their students to go on study exchanges as free movers and from AE's viewpoint that is the first essential aspect of study exchanges to take notice of since their exchange offering in Asia is based on students going on their study exchanges as free movers.

Free mover exchanges are quite rare, especially from Spain. Finding funding for this type of study exchanges seems to be difficult and it is likely more difficult for students to independently find exchange places where to go as free movers. Therefore, they prefer going on exchanges through institutions' partner agreements, while receiving better support and funding. These kinds of issues are roadblocks for AE to conquer when going into the researched markets. Nevertheless, with the potential being there, a better look at the individual responses to the survey is needed.

With the higher volume of outgoing exchange students from France, this market area shows more potential for AE to find new market sweet spots to spread their services. Of the 17 French survey respondents, 8 schools allowed their students to go on study exchanges as free movers. One of these schools is the one French school that AE already has close ties with and has established a relationship to work together to send students to Asia. Excluding this school from the equation, this leaves seven potential business schools in France for AE to co-operate with. None of these seven schools is completely new for AE. Most of them have been contacted before and from two of these schools, a couple of students have joined AE's study programmes in Asia. All but one of these seven schools have mandatory study abroad periods in at least one of their study programmes.

The number of yearly outgoing exchange students from the French institutions varies from 15 to 800, so the with such different student volumes, the ones with more exchange students are considered more potential as co-operative partners for AE. The top

sending business school located in western France stands out from the other schools as it also sends out up to 25 students abroad as free movers each year. This shows that they are already familiar with the necessary practicalities that come with free mover exchanges and therefore it should be easier for AE to work on co-operating with them. AE has already been in contact with this school and the first student from there is set to join one of AE's programmes for the next spring semester. It is recommended that AE would now work diligently to build a further relationship with this school as it has high potential to be a new market sweet spot for them.

Even though the exchange student volumes from France are much higher than from Spain, it is also possible to find potential there. AE has not had any Spanish students joining their programmes yet, but they have recently started contacting institutions there. Considering this, Spain is still a very new market area for AE and needs a closer look. Based on the survey respondents, four out of nine Spanish business schools sending students abroad allow their students to do free mover exchanges. Only one of these schools has outgoing free mover exchange students regularly. This school also sends more exchange students abroad every year than the other three. Between all of the four schools, the number of outgoing exchange students varies from 20 to 90. Their interest in sending students to Asia seems to be at quite an equal level; all of them send 1-10 students there yearly. Additionally, they all have at least one partner institution there.

The most potential market sweet spot of the Spanish business schools is the one sending the most students abroad. With the highest exchange student volume and regular outgoing free mover exchange students, they already have some experience with them and are possibly willing to send out more students as free movers. Their study exchanges are only meant for bachelor students, but that works well with AE's offering as most of their study programmes are directed at that study level. It can be worth it for AE to contact the other schools allowing free mover exchanges too, but special attention should be directed to this one school in Barcelona.

4.5 Evaluation of the research

The research purpose was to gather information on outgoing study exchanges from French and Spanish business schools. The objectives were to find out how study ex-

changes are organised, how popular they are and what is the schools' attitude towards sending students to Asia. It also aimed to find out how study exchanges from France and Spain differ from each other and if there are any schools there that would prove to be potentially new market sweet spots for AE.

The research managed to answer the previously set research questions quite well. It has helped to gain more knowledge on outgoing study exchanges from the two target countries, which was the main goal for this thesis. The previous knowledge AE had was more focused on France, so especially the information gained from Spanish study exchanges will be valuable for the company.

A rather low response rate is the biggest issue concerning the research. It affects the reliability of the research and makes it difficult to draw proper conclusions from the results. Therefore, the overall results have to be looked at critically and it is to be remembered that the individual results from each respondent vary quite significantly. The response rate could possibly have been affected more positively by selecting the researched schools differently. At the beginning of the research, it was unknown that such a large proportion of the business schools in Spain offer only online or short-term master studies and therefore do not send their students abroad at all. This was one of the reasons, which made getting responses difficult from Spain and it resulted in half of the Spanish responses being that they do not have any study exchanges. Nonetheless, these answers are also valuable and have served to give more information on Spanish business schools in general.

In order to gain a more detailed analysis of the survey results, a little more background information of the responding schools would have been useful. Some of the variations in the results are speculated to have been affected by for example the number of students each responding school has. This information, however, is not certain since this was not asked in the survey and not all of the schools have stated the number of their students on their website. This makes the survey lack slightly in gathering sufficient background information. Nonetheless, the survey has otherwise been constructed quite well, giving versatile information on study exchanges from France and Spain. It was also successful in finding potentially good schools for AE to co-operate with, which was also something the commissioner wished to achieve.

Overall, the research was conducted and timed well. For AE it was made at a time when they need more knowledge of Spain as they are in the process of entering the market. There was a slight delay in the schedule for information gathering when the survey did not receive enough responses from Spain at first, but extending the survey by a couple of days and contacting the schools by phone was efficient enough to spark some more responses. In the end, the schedule and methods for the research proved to be sufficiently efficient and successful.

5 SUMMARY

The subject for this thesis came from AE. They have had many French students in their study exchange programmes, but primarily from a single business school in Marseille. Hoping to boost the participation of French students from other schools too, AE requested research to be conducted on the study exchange organisation in French business schools. Upon discussing the research with AE, it was agreed that the research should not focus solely on France, and Spain was brought up as a second research target. AE has not had any Spanish students in their study exchange programmes yet, but is currently looking to build up connections in Spain to offer their programmes there. Additionally, Spain and France were considered to have similar potential as market areas for AE. Therefore, after some consideration, researching the outgoing study exchanges from French and Spanish business schools was chosen as the subject for this thesis.

The main objective of this thesis is to find out how students in French and Spanish business schools can internationalise. This includes getting more knowledge on how the schools organise their study exchanges, how popular studying abroad is and how interested the schools are in sending their students to Asia. The research also aims to compare the outgoing study exchanges between the French and Spanish business schools and to see if any of those schools stand out as potential market sweet spots for AE.

The theoretical framework compiles together existing information on higher education and student mobility, focusing especially on France and Spain. The French higher education system is very versatile, with both public and private institutions offering study possibilities in a multitude of fields. France has 83 public universities, which ensure a good standard of education, but the country is especially renowned for its' 250 elite institutions, *grandes écoles*. In Spain, higher education is mainly focused on universities. They have approximately 50 public and close to 30 private universities, which can offer tailor-made study programmes in addition to the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system that is used in most European countries, including France. Both countries also have several other type of institutions offering academic and vocational education in different fields.

Student mobility has experienced a significant increase in student volumes since the 1990's following the globalisation of the world. In 2014, five million students were mobile and English-speaking countries attracted approximately a third of those students.

One of the most common ways to differentiate types of student mobility is to divide it to degree and credit mobility, which corresponds to the length of time students spend abroad. Degree mobility is popular for students seeking better education outside of their own countries, whereas credit mobility is often based on students seeking new experiences in a different environment. In Europe there are many programmes that promote student mobility, especially credit mobility. The Erasmus+ programme is currently the most well-known of these type of programmes and it is also popular in France and Spain.

The research of this thesis is quantitative in nature. The methodology relies on receiving a large sample of responses from the target population. A self-administered online survey was chosen as the research tool for efficient and easy information gathering. The survey was directed to the international relations personnel in French and Spanish business schools. It was sent to them by e-mail at the beginning of October 2016. The target population consisted of 59 business schools in France and 65 in Spain. Two weeks were reserved for administering the survey and two reminders were sent to the schools before the response time ended. Due to a low response rate especially from Spain, an additional phone call round was made to 29 Spanish schools over the following two days. Final response numbers are 17 from France and 18 from Spain, which includes nine schools stating that they do not have any study exchanges at all.

The survey results indicate that French schools encourage their students to study abroad more than Spanish schools. A majority of the French respondents have a mandatory study abroad period in at least one of their study programmes, whereas the situation in Spain is the contrary. The average number of outgoing students from French business schools is 258 and from Spanish business schools 82, but the exact numbers vary significantly between individual institutions. This, however, shows that study exchanges are much more popular from the French schools. Europe was the most popular study abroad destination for all students. For French students the next most popular destinations were North America and Asia. These, along with South America, are also popular for Spanish students, but there is a noticeable difference between the two countries. The popularity of Asia from France is slightly surprising, but it seems to be an important destination for French students also based on the number of partner agreements between French and Asian institutions.

Approximately half of the schools doing study exchanges in both France and Spain allowed free mover study exchanges. The result indicates that these kinds of policies are very dependent on the schools individually. Outgoing free mover exchanges are not popular in either France or Spain, but the numbers correspond the same message as the overall outgoing exchange student numbers do – studying abroad is more popular among French than Spanish students. The lack of funding possibilities for free mover exchanges is likely one of the main reasons for students not going on such exchanges, based on the survey results. Study exchanges are done most commonly during the third year in bachelor studies and first or second year in master studies. Spanish schools accentuate the end of bachelor studies for exchanges, but for master level, an earlier timing is preferred compared to French schools. French and Spanish students are allowed to stay in exchange normally either one or two semesters.

From AE's viewpoint, the most important issue from the survey results is the number of allowed free mover exchanges. Since the results were very evenly divided between the respondents in both countries, no conclusion could be made as a general policy that schools in either country have regarding free mover exchanges. Nonetheless, the individual results are still valuable information for AE. The current unpopularity of free mover exchanges and evident lack of funding for them may also become issues for AE when trying to get a better foothold in the researched market areas. France shows more potential for AE to expand their markets there, but in each country there was a business school with great potential for AE to co-operate with. It is recommended that AE would contact and work on building relationships with both schools.

The research itself is quite efficient and successful. It answers the set research questions well and provides very valuable information for AE from both researched market areas. The biggest issue with the research is the rather low response rate, which hurts the research reliability. The answers from schools also have high variability and averages experience slight distortion. In addition to this, half of the Spanish business schools that answered anything for the survey stated that they do not have any study exchanges due to online or short-term master's studies. The large proportion of Spanish business schools operating this way was unknown at the beginning of the research and it served partly as a reason for the low response rate. Therefore, the results have to be treated with some criticism.

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2 (2)

Do you have exchange agreements with any institutions in Asia? *

Yes No

Do you allow free mover study exchanges? *

Yes No

Where can students get funding for their study exchange? Please select from the options below.

	Governmental support	Your institution's grant	Other grants
Exchanges via your institution's own agreements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free mover exchanges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you offer both Bachelor and Master level studies, on which level can students participate in a study exchange?

Bachelor Master Both

When do your students usually go on their study exchange?

Bachelor, 1st year Bachelor, 2nd year Bachelor, 3rd year Bachelor, 4th year
 Master, 1st year Master, 2nd year Master, 3rd year

How long can students stay on a study exchange? *

Less than 1 semester 1 semester 2 semesters More than 2 semesters

If you would like to give any additional information on your institution's outgoing study exchanges, please write here.

Submit

Appendix 2. Accompanying e-mail for the survey, English version

Thesis survey on outgoing student mobility

If this e-mail did not reach the person in charge of your institution's outgoing study exchanges, please kindly forward this to them. I highly appreciate the help with my thesis research. Thank you.

Dear professional in students' international affairs,

My name is Päivi Kaikkonen and I am a Bachelor student from the International Business degree programme in Tampere University of Applied Sciences, one of the biggest UAS's in Finland. As a part of my studies I am writing my final thesis and researching outgoing study exchanges in business schools in France and Spain. For my research I have made this survey and I would be very grateful if you could spend a few minutes to answer the questions. It takes approximately 3-5 minutes to take the survey.

My thesis has been commissioned by Asia Exchange, a Finnish company specialized in providing exchange study opportunities in Asia. They will donate 2 USD to the UNESCO Programme for the Education of Children in Need for each response I receive for this survey.

All responses to this survey will be handled anonymously and confidentially, and no identifying information will be made public.

Please submit your answers to the survey at latest on **October 16th, 2016**. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please don't hesitate to contact me at this e-mail address.

Thank you for your time and have a pleasant week!

Best regards,

Päivi Kaikkonen

Appendix 3. Accompanying e-mail for the survey, French translation provided by AE

L'enquête pour une thèse de licence sur la mobilité des étudiants sortants

Au cas où ce courriel n'atteint pas la personne responsable de la mobilité des étudiants sortants de votre institution, veuillez le faire parvenir à la personne concernée. J'apprécie grandement toute aide relative à ma thèse. Merci.

Cher expert en relations internationales d'étudiants,

Je m'appelle Päivi Kaikkonen et je suis étudiante de licence au programme de commerce international à l'université de sciences appliquées de Tampere, l'une des plus grandes en Finlande. Je suis en train d'écrire ma thèse finale dans le cadre de mes études pour laquelle je recherche des échanges d'étudiants sortants dans les écoles de commerce en France et en Espagne. Pour ma recherche j'ai préparé cette enquête et je vous serais reconnaissante de prendre quelques (3-5) minutes pour répondre aux questions demandées.

Ma thèse est commandée par Asia Exchange, une entreprise finlandaise offrant des opportunités de faire un échange en Asie aux étudiants. Asia Exchange donnera 2 USD à UNESCO Programme pour l'éducation des enfants en détresse pour chaque réponse fournie à cette enquête.

Toutes les réponses pour cette enquête seront traitées de façon anonyme et confidentielle et aucune donnée d'identification sera publiée.

Veuillez soumettre vos réponses à l'enquête **le 16 octobre 2016** au plus tard. Si vous avez des questions concernant cette enquête, n'hésitez pas à me contacter à cette adresse e-mail.

Je vous remercie de votre temps et je vous souhaite une agréable semaine !

Cordialement,

Päivi Kaikkonen

Appendix 4. First reminder e-mail

Reminder: Thesis survey on outgoing student mobility

Greetings Sir/Madam,

I noticed that you haven't answered my survey on outgoing study exchanges yet, which I sent you on Monday, October 3rd.

Your answer to the survey is for a good cause. It helps me with my final thesis and for each answer I get, my research client, Asia Exchange, donates 2 USD to the UNESCO Programme for the Education of Children in Need.

It only takes 3-5 minutes to take this survey so please fill it in as soon as possible. The deadline for the survey is next Sunday, October 16th.

I appreciate your help, thank you!

Best regards,

Päivi Kaikkonen

Appendix 5. Spanish translation of the e-mail, provided by AE

Si este correo electronico no llego a una persona correcta, por favor sigue este mensaje adelante para la persona responsable de los intercambios en el extranjero. Estoy muy agradecido por su ayuda.

Saludos cariñosos desde Finlandia,

Yo soy Päivi Kaikkonen, una estudiante de Negocios Internacionales de Tampere University of Applied Sciences. Estoy escribiendo mi tesis final de intercambios en el extranjero y estoy investigando las practicas de intercambios en escuelas de negocios en España y Francia.

Le he enviado una encuesta hace una semana, pero todavia no he recibido una respuesta.

Todas las respuestas marcan la diferencia. Las me ayudan muchisimo con mi tesis final, y al mismo tiempo, Asia Exchange dona 2 USD para UNESCO por todas las respuestas. Asia Exchange es una empresa finlandesa, que ayuda estudiantes a acceder universidades asiaticos para los estudios de intercambio.

Contestar la encuesta es muy facil y no necesite más que 3-5 minutos para hacerlo. La fecha limite es el Domingo, 16 de Octubre.

Yo agradezco muchisimo la ayuda suya. Muchas gracias de antemano.

Saludos cordiales,

Päivi Kaikkonen

Appendix 6. Second reminder e-mail

2nd reminder: Thesis survey on outgoing student mobility

Good morning Sir/Madam,

I have not received an answer from you yet to my survey on outgoing study exchanges, which I originally sent you on Monday, October 3rd.

The survey is research for my final thesis, but unfortunately I have received very few answers to it. Therefore, I am requesting you again to please fill in this survey as soon as possible.

The survey really takes just 3-5 minutes of your time and it would help me greatly if you can fill it in. Also, for each answer I receive, my thesis' commissioner, Asia Exchange, donates 2 USD to the UNESCO Programme for the Education of Children in Need. The survey ends next Sunday, on October 16th.

Thank you for your help!

Best regards,

Päivi Kaikkonen