# Exploring the balance of students' efforts, expectations and outcomes across subjects in response to teachers' expectations

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**Biography**
*Dr Minh Hanh Le is currently conducting her second PhD programme in Education at Auckland University. She has completed a PhD programme in Business Economics. Her previous researches are in the area of value-based efficiency assessment using frontier analysis method. For the coming period, she expects to explore the decision making criteria of students in the principal - agent relationship with teachers.*

**ABSTRACT**
Teachers' expectations can be indicated to serve the dual function of both nurturing/rewarding high intellectual achievements and directing students' efforts across subjects, similar to what Holmstrom and Milgrom (1991) stated about compensation systems in the employment relationship. Whereas the former function of teachers' expectations has been intensively discussed in the education literature, there is little empirical evidence to thoroughly understand its latter function. This study is proposed to investigate how the multi-task issues in the standard economic analyses of a principal-agent relationship, is mirrored in teacher-student interactions. Specifically, my coming PhD program aims to investigate how students allocate their efforts among different subjects in response to different teachers' expectations. The three main objectives are:

   i.    to examine the distribution pattern of students' efforts, expectations, and outcomes across parallel courses, in response to different teachers' expectations;
   ii.   to benchmark students based on their rationality in making learning decisions using a multi-dimensional assessment framework encompassing their efforts, expectations, and outcomes; and
   iii.  to portray how different groups of students respond to teachers' expectations.

To solve the research questions, the proposed model is designed as a combination of a measurement framework and a judgment framework. The measurement framework is constructed based on multiple variables encompassing students' efforts, expectations, and outcomes. The judgment framework is developed to portray different groups of students given their positions to the best practice frontiers and examine how these groups respond to teachers' expectations. Teachers are categorised into three groups of high expectation, low expectation and average progress characteristics, based on their ratings of students' performance at the class level. The portrait frame can be formed by students' backgrounds (ethnic group, gender, family characteristics) and students' behaviours (mental contrasting vs. effort justification).

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