Student decisions and consequences
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Citation for published version (APA):
Webbink, H. D. (1999). Student decisions and consequences

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Preface

The project 'Verder Studeren' on which this thesis has been based had a remarkable start. In 1990 a research proposal for a preliminary project by the later 'Verder Studeren' team was preferred to a proposal by a team of Prof. dr. Ritzen. Later on the Ministry of Education and Science, headed by Minister Ritzen, strongly supported the project 'Verder Studeren'. In 1997 we had the honour to present the final report to Minister Ritzen personally. During the first years of 'Verder Studeren' Mars Cramer and Hessel Oosterbeek stimulated me to use this project for writing a thesis.

Almost all chapters in this book have their roots in analyses carried out for the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Chapter 3 is a rewritten version of Webbink (1994). Chapter 4 and 6 are slightly revised versions of respectively Oosterbeek and Webbink (1995) and Oosterbeek and Webbink (1997). Chapter 5 is based on joint work with Hans van Ophem.

In writing this thesis I benefited most from the persons who already participated in the remarkable start and stayed on in the 'Verder Studeren' team in the following years: Uulkje de Jong, Jaap Roeleveld and Hessel Oosterbeek. With Uulkje and Jaap I had many inspiring discussions, shared many 'contract research worries' and had much fun about the typical daily incidents in contract research organisations. Hessel laid the foundation of this thesis, taught me on the economics of education and shared many research ideas. It is a great honour for me that we are co-authors of two articles published in De Economist. With minor revisions these articles have been taken in this thesis. I consider them as highlights of this book. I also want to thank Hans van Ophem as a co-author who programmed and estimated the complicated model in Chapter 5 and was never tired of trying new suggestions even after long time intermezzos. And of course I want to thank my promotor Joop Hartog who impressed me with his enthusiasm, energy and efficiency. No matter where he stayed in the world, from Japan to Portugal, within no time he sent me corrections combined with new ideas for the analysis.

I am also indebted to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the financial support of the project 'Verder Studeren' and especially I want to thank Frans de Vijlder for his efforts to make this unique line of research possible. Moreover, I want to thank the Foundation for Economic Research (SEO) for giving me the opportunity to write a thesis and offering an inspiring working climate.

Several other people contributed in one way or another to this thesis. In alphabetic order I want to thank Hana Budil, Bob Harmeijer, Wim Kottier and Tekla Sibbel who helped me in finishing this book. Last I want to thank Rinke for supporting me in my struggle with decisions and consequences.

Dinand Webbink