

1 **Massivization of Higher Education:** 2 **Evidence from Albania, Kosovo, and North** 3 **Macedonia**

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5 *There is a significant expansion of universities in the Western Balkans and*
6 *an increasing number of students enrolled. In a region where economic*
7 *growth is sluggish and youth unemployment is high, education is one of the*
8 *key proxies to determine future development. This rapid expansion of*
9 *universities has not been accompanied by the provision of resources to*
10 *maintain ambitious standards, quality, and relevance. This study examines*
11 *the factors leading to a deterioration of education quality, tackling teaching*
12 *competencies, infrastructure, and professors' ethics. Using original data,*
13 *this study investigates the HE quality from the perspective of two main*
14 *stakeholders – professors and students – in Albania, Kosovo, and North*
15 *Macedonia. The study points out to outdated teaching methods, lack of*
16 *enrolment quotas and skill mismatch with the labour market. It all boils*
17 *down to low institutional monitoring criteria and lack of admission quotas,*
18 *creating space for unethical behaviour and massivization of HE.*

19
20 **Keywords:** *Teaching quality, massivisation, skill mismatch, unethical*
21 *behavior*

22 23 24 **Introduction**

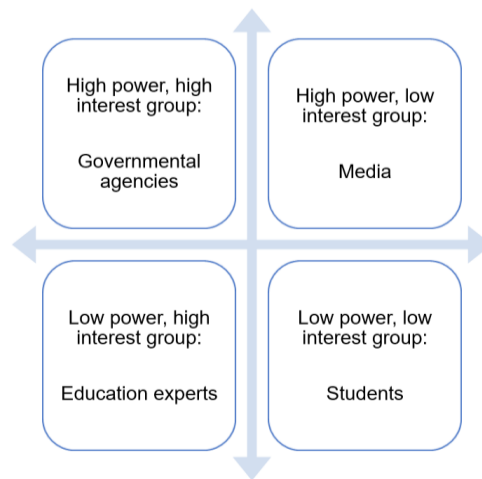
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26 Education has been a vital part of the revolution of Europe that has seen
27 various countries on the continent and dominate the international scene
28 (Subang, & Selangor, 2018). However, education has not had a remarkable
29 impact in some European countries, especially Western Balkans, despite a
30 massive engagement of the youth in higher education and the opening of
31 additional universities. Even though the Western Balkans have largely relied
32 on foreign donations and interventions from organizations such as the
33 European Union to bolster the quality of higher education in universities and
34 colleges, the quality of higher education administered in Albania, Kosovo, and
35 North Macedonia has eroded (Parameswaran & Glowacka, 2015). The success
36 and failures of the quality of higher education have been largely attributed to
37 the massivization of the education sector and teaching methods employed in
38 tertiary institutions.

39 There is a considerable expansion of several universities in the Western
40 Balkans (WB) and an increasing number of student enrolments. The rapid
41 expansion of universities has not been accompanied by the provision of
42 resources to maintain high education standards, quality, and relevance. Higher
43 education (HE) institutions have relied much on a sufficient quantity of outputs
44 without much interest in the adequacy of quality, even less so on research,
45 which plunged the WB's labour market with large numbers of output that have
46 caused disequilibrium in the labour market. Education policies, in the
47 respective countries of the study, are usually disseminated via a top-bottom

1 progression, starting from the Ministries of Education, Accreditation Agencies
 2 and other governmental agencies, often ignoring those engaged hands-on in the
 3 process. This paper aims to get a closer look at higher education (HE)
 4 massivization in the context of the WB landscape by engaging in the dialogue
 5 of two main stakeholders of the HE sector – academic staff and students.

6 We define and argue the presence of mass education based on two main
 7 arguments. In the WB, a) almost every high school graduate has access to
 8 universities, regardless of their performance, as some of the private colleges do
 9 not apply entrance exams or, if applied, are usually formal, and b) the skill
 10 mismatch between demand and supply in the labour market leaves many
 11 graduated students from tertiary education redundant and unemployed. The
 12 argument for mass education in the HE is supported by stylized facts from our
 13 three sample countries.

14 *Figure 1. Relevant stakeholders in HE*



16 *Source: Authors (2022)*

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 19 During the early 2010's the share of enrolled students in tertiary education
 20 in our sample countries from WB was around 40 percent. During the last
 21 decade, in Albania and Kosovo, the share of enrolled students has reached
 22 around 70 and 73 percent, respectively, whereas in North Macedonia the
 23 numbers are more alarming, going up to 96 percent (MEST, 2022; ASK, 2022;
 24 INSTAT, 2022; SSO, 2022). Meanwhile, in a more developed regional
 25 country, such as Slovenia, this trend is in reverse (Subang & Selangor, 2022).
 26 The rapid transition process may have distorted the link between education and
 27 quality and between education and employment.

28 According to OECD (2018) rankings, the quality of education in the WB
 29 is ‘‘disappointingly low’’, despite massive education going on. One of the
 30 related reasons concerning the second argument is the relatively high
 31 unemployment rate prevailing in the WB. The unemployment rate in Albania,
 32 Kosovo, and North Macedonia is 12 percent, 25 percent, and 16 percent,
 33 respectively. The unemployment rate among youth (ages 15-24) is even higher:
 34 20.9 percent, 50 percent, and 35 percent, respectively. A high level of youth

1 unemployment rate may have surged the WB governments to liberalise the
2 education sector by licensing many additional public and private universities,
3 to maintain the social peace, if not to also help stop emigration. Albania,
4 Kosovo, and North Macedonia, respectively have 40, 32 and 19 actively
5 operating universities. These are three small European countries with a
6 population ranging from 1.8 to 2.9 million. For comparison, the HE system in
7 small, developed countries of Europe like Luxemburg and Malta consists of
8 only 5 universities each, whereas Switzerland with three times as much
9 population as the WB sample countries, has only 12 active universities. If we
10 additionally consider migration as one of the other structural issues these
11 countries constantly face, the figures implying mass education become of
12 higher concern. For example, only from 2015-2019 Kosovo lost almost 10
13 percent of its population as a consequence of migration. Therefore, what
14 Karanovic & Karanovic (2015) refer to mass education in the WB as ‘a bubble
15 in the making’, we say that by now these trends may be well out of proportion.
16 Even though the skills mismatch issue has regained some attention of
17 institutions and media, the massivization of HE is not yet part of the public
18 discourse.

19 Additionally, the cost of investing in a university diploma in WB
20 outweighs the economic benefits. In Kosovo, those with high school degrees
21 (not university degrees) have the highest employment share in the private
22 sector. In Albania, the share of jobseekers with a university education is around
23 7 percent of total job seekers, however, this share has been increasing by 1
24 percentage point each year in the last four years. The unemployment among
25 youth is not only because of the low economic absorption capacity to
26 accommodate newcomers in the labour market, but also because of the skills
27 mismatch in the labour market ([Bartlett, et al., 2014; WIIW, 2020). The
28 presence of skills mismatch implies that universities in the WB either provide
29 low-quality education, or are out of touch with the market and industry needs.
30 Thus, delivering outdated curricula, or a massive number of enrolled students
31 incentivised by the profit motive leaves universities uninterested in addressing
32 structural issues in the education system – or all three of them. The latter is
33 even truer given the lack of university enrolment quotas set by the
34 Government, even in cases when, for example, more economists and law
35 graduates are already redundant. The institutions should admit students who
36 can be successful in the institution’s academic program, including specifically
37 recruited populations. The number of students should derive from the market
38 needs, the physical infrastructure of HE institutions, and the number of
39 academic personnel available.

40 In presence of mass education, neither the economy benefits from a
41 ‘qualified’ and educated workforce nor the university graduates capitalize on
42 their education degrees, creating a deadweight loss effect. If anything, they
43 both are on the losing side. One might argue that these countries need to shift
44 the attention towards vocational schools and universities, as a way to address
45 the matter of skills mismatch. However, since the highest unemployment rate
46 pertains to graduates from vocational schools, begs the question if vocational

1 schools in the WB are a victim of mass education and low education quality, if
2 not lower than academic schools and universities.

3 The rest of the study is organized as follows. Section 2 examines theories
4 on the quality of HE and mass education. Section 3 presents the methodology
5 used and models employed to measure agents' perceptions on mass education.
6 Finally, section 5 concludes the paper and provides policy implications.

9 **Literature Review**

11 Hiebert (2013) asserts that the Western Balkans countries have witnessed
12 a tremendous increase in population in the last four decades. The continuous
13 increase in population has created the need and the avenue to expand the high
14 education sector to accommodate the growing number of students transitioning
15 from high school to universities and colleges (Owlia & Aspinwall, 2016). The
16 high proliferation of students has made it possible for most students who pass
17 their high school exams to enrol in their preferred courses to become successful
18 individuals in society (Jacoby & Howard, 2015). USAID, UNDP, SDG, and
19 OECD ranked Kosovo bottom third among 72 countries that participated in the
20 PISA test (Saqipi, 2019). The reason behind the deficient performance is linked
21 to outdated practices, the traditional education system, and limited financial
22 and professional capacities. At the same time, it faces delays in the implementation
23 of reforms, preparation of curriculum and their implementation, and a lack of
24 textbooks suitable for teaching and learning (Sokoli et al., 2021). Hence,
25 regardless of their success in high school and entrance exams, students are
26 enrolled in university programs. Enrolment of students with a considerable gap
27 in learning from high schools into universities and colleges has affected the
28 quality of education offered in HE institutions.

29 The standing paradox of massivisation is that it has led to the degradation
30 of higher education quality through the proliferation of tertiary institutions. In
31 most Western Balkans countries, the number of public institutions has
32 remained fairly constant in the last two decades of the 20th century and the first
33 decade of the 21st century (Galloway, 2015). On the other hand, the population
34 of students has increased exponentially. Hence, public universities have not
35 been able to offer adequate vacancies. Consequently, private investors have
36 managed resources to leverage the ballooning student population (Jacoby &
37 Howard, 2015) by opening an exponential number of higher education
38 institutions.

39 Through the ministries of education, the governments have played a key
40 role in the “mushrooming“ of private universities through authentication and
41 registration of private universities (Lagrosen, 2014)]. Despite the tremendous
42 strides made by Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia in the increased access
43 to education, the growth has posed some serious challenges to the quality of
44 higher education (Owlia & Aspinwall, 2016), as in the following.

45 Notably, private institutions in Western Balkans have actively engaged in
46 the monetization of education. In most countries, private universities, colleges,

1 and vocational training institutes are more numerous than public universities
2 (Jucker & Mathar, 2014). The doctrine of education discourages the
3 commercialization of education; private universities have actively engaged in
4 turning the higher education sector into profit-making schemes at the expense
5 of education (Ferguson, 2018). Most private institutions have resorted to
6 offering vacancies to students from affluent backgrounds at the expense of
7 students from poor backgrounds (Hill, 2015). Most private universities have
8 widely dished out vacancies to students based on how much they can afford it
9 economically instead of students' qualifications. Consequently, private
10 facilities have been forced to offer education to low-ranking students in terms
11 of academics.

12 Additionally, the monetization of education has led to a decrease in
13 diversity in higher education. Diversity is a fundamental tool in assessing and
14 implementing quality control measures in the education sector (Kapfudzaruwa
15 et al., 2018). On the contrary, when private institutions enrol students based on
16 social class, they leave a diverse population of students from other social
17 classes that are academically endowed or have other talents integral in realizing
18 the high quality of education (Krampf & Heinlein, 2014). The practice of
19 engaging only with students from a certain background denies the students the
20 ability to learn and appreciate other students' cultures, which is critical in
21 fostering critical thinking skills inside and outside universities.

22 Moreover, the massivization of the education sector has lowered the
23 quality of education by creating a shortage of qualified faculty members. For
24 quite a long time, public institutions of higher education have enjoyed a wide
25 range of professors and lecturers (Kapfudzaruwa et al., 2018). However, the
26 proliferation of private institutions has led to the scramble for faculty members,
27 which has created an artificial shortage of human resources (Krampf &
28 Heinlein, 2014). The lack of a proper framework to increase the training and
29 employment of professors has lowered the quality of higher education. Even
30 though many of the current professors themselves are educated in developed
31 Europe or the U.S., the current system built on old values makes the pass-
32 through of the western educational values difficult. Most of the activities of
33 universities require the close supervision of lecturers and other members of
34 staff (Ivy, 2001) in the initial stages of employment. However, the shortage of
35 qualified lecturers lowers the ability of learners to research and innovate.

36 Nonetheless, massivization has scaled down the quality of higher
37 education by lacking valid institutional data. The general understanding would
38 be that the increase in student enrolment has improved institutional data
39 storage (United Nations, 2018). However, most institutions have failed to
40 integrate technology to store and retrieved the data of students, examinations,
41 and faculty members. The government and other educational stakeholders have
42 been unable to conduct extensive research on the quality of education in
43 Western Balkans countries (Thoresen et al., 2015).

44 Equally important, massivization has led to an increase in corruption
45 cases, which has lowered the quality of education. Corruption cases have been
46 rampant in higher education, especially after the massivization of the entire

1 education sector (United Nations, 2018). Many corruption cases have occurred
2 during examinations where unscrupulous lecturers have conspired with
3 students to reduce the validity of examinations. There are evident cases, where
4 lecturers have solicited bribes from students to award them good grades
5 (Thoresen et al., 2015). Also, there are several public accusations and lawsuits
6 against male professors allegedly conditioning female students for sexual
7 favours to pass exams, as a by-product of massivization and lack of/or lowered
8 internal controls. In addition, the employment of members of staff has been
9 marred with cases of corruption where administrators hire their relatives,
10 friends, or people who pay and meet certain obligations before they are given
11 the jobs (Thoresen et al., 2015). It is imperative to note that the government
12 and registration authorities have engaged in dubious dealings where they offer
13 accreditations and charters to institutions that do not meet certain criteria,
14 especially private institutions (Hiebert, 2013).

15 Notably, universities and colleges have witnessed massive intakes of
16 students, forcing the education institutions to start other campuses (Mazzarol,
17 1998). The increase in student enrolment in higher education institutions has led
18 to the establishment of satellite campuses (Hughes, 2018), which are not
19 necessarily located far away from original campuses, meaning they were not
20 opened to facilitate education but to increase the clientele. In Kosovo, public
21 universities have seen a drastic rise in the number of students who wish to
22 study which has prompted various institutions to institute mechanisms of
23 moving some students to satellite campuses (Sokoli et al., 2018). However, the
24 establishment of additional branches of higher education organizations has
25 downgraded the quality of education because they were not opened to facilitate
26 education for students but rather to increase the clientele, i.e., students enrolled.

27 Most of the satellite campuses in the Western Balkans cannot offer quality
28 education to students. The universities lack the financial resources to build
29 large structures that can accommodate all the students (Ofei-Manu, 2014).
30 Also, the “satellite” campuses lack competent professors since some private
31 institutions are driven by their passion for generating money but do not offer
32 quality education that meets the needs of learners and the requirement of
33 learners (Veloutsou et al., 2004). Additionally, massivization has led to the
34 employment of inexperienced and inept lecturers since the satellite campuses
35 are not closely monitored by the various universities that fall under them
36 (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

37 Equally important, massivization has largely contributed to lowering the
38 quality of education through the introduction of irrelevant courses. Notably, the
39 world is evolving at a first-rate in terms of innovation and technology
40 (Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002). It is the responsibility of universities and
41 colleges to introduce courses that align with the market’s demand and increase
42 employment probability. However, the higher education system in the Western
43 Balkans still holds to old syllabuses and irrelevant courses that do not serve the
44 labor market needs nor current technology and innovation trends (McMahon,
45 1992). The courses have declared some graduates redundant since they lack the
46 qualification of meeting the various employment obligations set by companies

1 (María Cubillo et al., 2006). The desire to increase profits and reduce
2 expenditures in higher education institutions prompts various institutions to
3 introduce courses that do not meet the criteria set by the various departments of
4 education.

5 One of the most effective teaching methods that positively impact the
6 quality of higher education is lectures. Particularly, lectures are vital in
7 instructing many students, especially in non-technical courses that do not
8 require close supervision (Shahsavari & Sudzina, 2017). Common units such as
9 communication skills and entrepreneurship can be effectively taught using
10 lectures. Additionally, lectures are cost-effective as one lecturer can attend to
11 many students (Tam, 2002). Also, the use of lectures in learning gives students
12 the flexibility and freedom of closely following discussions put forth by
13 teachers. Hence, training lectures in teaching methods is a highly effective tool
14 for bolstering the quality of higher education (Sokoli & Hajrizi, 2020).

15 Digital learning is another teaching method by organizations, especially
16 concerning the hands-on courses, to ensure that they foster a high quality of
17 education administered to students. In the advent of digital transformation,
18 most public and private institutions have embraced technology to run their
19 activities (Sokoli & Koren, 2017). Digital learning allows tutors to teach
20 students remotely with the use of computing devices and the internet. A student
21 should not necessarily be in the school compound for them to study. A student
22 needs a laptop, smartphone, and strong internet service for them to be in a
23 position to connect to online classes.

24 Many universities have embarked on profit-making schemes that have been
25 largely dependent on tuition fees paid by students. The education levels have
26 deteriorated to a point where grades and certificates are issued even to students
27 not attending classes at all. In Albania, there have been numerous cases
28 reported by the media of private universities soliciting money from politicians
29 to award them with degrees to seek elective posts. The monetization of higher
30 education has drastically contributed to the loss of confidence in higher
31 education by the public, which has forced some employers in North Macedonia
32 to hire people based on experience as opposed to qualifications (Podolsky et
33 al., 2019). On the contrary, students who acquire certificates from higher
34 education institutions lack critical thinking skills that are integral in helping a
35 person solve workplace problems.

36 37 38 **Data** 39

40 This study intends to investigate several aspects of HE in the Western
41 Balkans, such as teaching quality, massivization, and other factors that may
42 distort the relationship between professors, students, and the labour market.
43 Ideally, these aspects would be treated using institutional data, nevertheless,
44 several relevant variables are not reported and there are inconsistencies
45 between reported data in Western Balkans countries. Therefore, we have
46 directly contracted information from those involved hands-on in this process,

1 i.e., professors and students. The data used in this study are from a primary
2 source, retained via two questionnaires designed for professors and students.
3 The questionnaires were distributed in eight different universities, public and
4 private in Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia, from October 2021 -
5 February 2022. The questionnaires were intended for public and private
6 universities in three countries, covering around 60 percent of all HE institutions
7 in three sample countries. The questionnaires were sent to the Quality
8 Assurance offices and rectorate, which were then distributed to all mailing lists
9 of Bachelor students and professors, as per our instruction. The distribution of
10 questionnaires was realised at the discretion of universities. The questionnaires
11 were distributed in an online format, i.e. Google forms, containing 14 questions
12 each. The same questionnaires were distributed to professors and students,
13 changing the questions' perspectives. For example, if professors were asked
14 'what teaching method do you use,' students were asked the same question as
15 in 'what teaching method do your professors use.'

16 The response rate was more satisfactory from the students' side. There
17 were 764 students and 197 professors who answered the full list of survey
18 questions (table 2 and 3).

19 Rather than basing the questions on the standardised HESQUAL question
20 styles and institutional-based questionnaire format, the conducted surveys go
21 one step further by engaging in this conversation with two main stakeholders in
22 the education system – professors and students. By taking their views on the
23 quality of the HE and massivization, we took a closer look at the more intimate
24 factors impacting this relationship, in terms of the quality of teaching, personal
25 relations, and other factors that may distort this relationship and incentives for
26 the labour market. The questionnaires seek to contract information on
27 perceptions of four aspects of the HE in the Western Balkans: a) teaching
28 quality, b) massivization of HE, c) employment, and an aspect not frequently
29 ignored or avoided in academic studies, d) professors' ethics.

30 Each variable is described in table 1 below.

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1 *Table 1. Variable description and descriptive statistics*

Variable name	Information category	Students Freq. %	Professors' Freq. %
Dependent: qualityhe	2. Which of the following factors most influences the quality of university education?		
	a) Number of enrolled students and study tariffs = 1	13.59	9.64
	b) Quality of professors' publications in scientific journals = 2	22.61	19.8
	c) Number of employed graduates = 3	40.92	55.84
	d) University rigour in student evaluation, number of graduates = 4	22.88	14.72
	1. Are you a student in?		
1.studentpubal	a) Albania - Public University 1	23.66	13.2
2.studentprivl	b) Albania - Private University 2	1.44	58.88
3.studentpubks	c) Kosovo - Public University 1	9.21	0.51
4.studentprivks	d) Kosovo - Private University 2	54.9	9.14
5.studentpubmk	e) Northern Macedonia - Public University 1	1.57	17.26
6.studentprivmk	f) Northern Macedonia - Private University 2	9.15	1.02
	3. Are your professors competent for the subjects they teach?		
1.competent	a) Are qualified, both theoretically and practically for the subjects they teach = 1	52.16	45.69
2.competent	b) Lectures are up to date with the latest developments in the field of teaching = 2	20.00	25.89
3.competent	c) Have the expertise but lack communication skills (knowledge transfer skills) = 3	16.47	9.64
4.competent	d) Often lack subject expertise and communication skills (knowledge transfer) = 4	11.37	18.78
	4. Are university laboratories, digitized etc. conditions for teaching/learning purposes?		
H E 1.conditions	a) Yes, administration, labos, workspaces, teaching system are modern and digitized = 1	56.97	68.53
2.conditions	b) No, we continue to learn in the same environment and labs. as a decade ago = 2	11.84	5.08
Q u a l i t y 3.conditions	c) Partly invested in modernization and digitalization = 3	31.18	26.4
	5. Do you think that HE education also depends on students' motivation/commitment?		
1.studmotiv	a) No, because the quality of education depends on the quality of professors' lectures = 1	7.5	26.9
2.studmotiv	b) Yes, student motivation is most important, regardless of teaching quality = 2	63.16	58.88
3.studmotiv	c) The quality of education also depends on the quality of the professors = 3	26.71	-
4.studmotiv	d) The quality of education depends on the quality of education in secondary schools = 4	2.63	14.21
	6. Which teaching method your professors apply?		
1.lectmethod	a) Classic lecture (ex cathedra) = 1	17.37	na
2.lectmethod	b) Interactive lectures where student participation is stimulated = 2	38.03	na
3.lectmethod	c) Application of digital platforms during the lecture = 3	20.92	na
4.lectmethod	d) Practical exercises with active participation of students = 4	19.08	na
	7. The knowledge gained at university will help you (or have helped you) to find a job?		
E m 1.emplskills	a) Yes, it has helped me (will help me) = 1	31.63	59.39
P l o y 2.emplskills	b) No, the labour market depends more on e.g. nepotism, political support, bribery = 2	38.43	9.64
3.emplskills	c) It has (will help me) but additional training outside the university is also needed = 3	26.54	30.96
4.emplskills	d) No (will not help me), because firms and institutions require other skills = 4	3.4	-
	Would you rather prefer?		
E n 1.professchool	a) Vocational education (university level) but get a <i>professional degree</i> = 1	62.11	57.36
2.professchool	b) Academic studies (university level) and receive a Bachelor degree (ac. degree) = 2	37.89	42.64

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1 *Table 1. Contd.'*

Variable name	Information category	Students Freq. %	Professors' Freq. %	
8. Have you ever been sexually harassed by a professor?				
P r o f e s s o r s t u d e n t s	1.sexassual	a) Yes, it happened to me personally = 1	2.1	9.64
	2.sexassual	b) No, it did not happen to me = 2	76.18	79.7
	3.sexassual	c) I have heard cases against other students = 3	19.34	10.66
	4.sexassual	d) I am a witness of such cases against other students = 4	2.37	-
9. Did a professor ever asked for a bribe to pass an exam or enroll at a university ?				
o t h e r s	1.bribe	a) Yes, it happened to me personally = 1	3.03	6.09
	2.bribe	b) No, it did not happen to me personally = 2	75.92	85.28
	3.bribe	c) I have heard cases from other students = 3	17.76	8.63
	4.bribe	d) I am a witness of such cases against other students = 4	3.29	-
Do you think that the number of students in universities affects the quality of teaching?				
H E M a s s i v e s	1.nrstudents	a) Yes, it is excessive and based on infrastructure, academic staff and market needs = 1	47.24	30.46
	2.nrstudents	b) It is adequate, we do not have any problem with this number of admitted students = 2	36.71	53.3
	3.nrstudents	c) No, there is no impact = 3	16.05	16.24
10. Do you think there are enough universities in your country ?				
M a s s i v e s	1.enoughcollg	a) There are many universities / colleges (more than enough) = 1	53.03	76.65
	2.enoughcollg	b) No, because the classrooms are overcrowded = 2	15.39	7.11
	3.enoughcollg	c) No, because youth unemployment is very high = 3	31.58	16.24
11. If you were given the opportunity, would you prefer to study abroad?				
i n t e r n a t i o n a l	1.studabroad	e) Yes = 1	92.24	na
	2.studabroad	f) No = 2	7.76	na
12. If the answer to the previous question is yes, then is it because:				
o n l i n e	1.aboadbcs	a) The quality of education in our country is lower than in other countries = 1	26.84	na
	2.aboadbcs	b) Foreign diplomas increase employment opportunities in our country = 2	26.32	na
	3.aboadbcs	c) Just for experience = 3	16.71	na
	4.aboadbcs	d) For easier employment abroad = 4	30.13	na

2 *Source: Authors (2022).*3
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Methodology

8 All questionnaire data are categorical, including the dependent variables,
9 with more than two possible discrete outcomes (table 1). The Linear
10 Probability Model has the disadvantage of rendering fitted probabilities less
11 than zero or greater than one and the partial effect of any explanatory variable
12 (appearing in level form) is constant. This limitation can be overcome by using
13 binary choice models, such as Logit or Probit models (Wooldridge, 2013).
14 Therefore, given that the dependent variable is a categorical variable, this study
15 employs the logit model. Furthermore, the dependent variable has more than
16 two outcomes of no particular order, which requires using an ordered logit
17 model.18 Because all of your independent variables are categorical, it is necessary to
calculate marginal effect for each outcome using the values of independent

1 variables for each observation, and then averages these individual level
2 marginal effects across the sample, instead of calculating margins at means,
3 which intuitively does not help with the interpretation.

4 In ordered logit the proportion assumption may be violated, hence we
5 estimate the model using multinomial logistic regression (mlogit). One
6 disadvantage of the multinomial logit is that it may not perform very well if
7 the distribution of possible outcomes is not balanced, i.e. too few frequencies
8 for an outcome. However, the mlogit model uses only variables that describe
9 the characteristics of the individuals and not of the alternatives, which limits
10 the usefulness of the model for counterfactual predictions.

11 The mlogit model works best when the alternatives are dissimilar and not
12 just substitutes for one another, i.e. do not overlap, which is our case (table 1).
13 Mcfadden (1973) states that a mlogit should be used only in cases where the
14 outcome categories are “plausibly assumed to be distinct and weighted
15 independently in the eyes of the decision maker”. In the students’ estimated
16 model (equation 1), the Hausman test was carried out to verify the difference of
17 coefficients on the models.

$$18 \log(\text{qualityhe})^S = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{studpubprivalksmk} + \alpha_2 \text{competent} + \alpha_3 \text{lectmethod} + \\ 19 \alpha_4 \text{studmotiv} + \alpha_5 \text{conditions} + \alpha_6 \text{studyabroad} + \alpha_7 \text{abroadbcs} + \alpha_8 \text{emplskills} + \\ 20 \alpha_9 \text{professchool} + \alpha_{10} \text{nrstudents} + \alpha_{11} \text{enoughcolleg} + \alpha_{13} \text{sexassualt} + \alpha_{14} \text{bribe} + \varepsilon_i \quad (1) \\ 21 \\ 22$$

23 Comparing the coefficients of the unrestricted model (where conditions
24 was excluded); the results indicate that the null hypothesis that ‘the odds are
25 independent of other alternatives’ cannot be rejected therefore there is no
26 evidence of a violation of the IIA assumption, i.e., adding or deleting
27 alternative outcome categories does not affect the odds among remaining
28 outcomes (table 2). Also, for each question, respondents can choose only one
29 option and the response options on the questionnaires are no close substitutes,
30 which helps maintain the IIA assumptions. The likelihood ratio chi-square of
31 112.93 with a p-value of 0.011 indicates that the model as a whole is
32 statistically significant, as compared to the null model with no predictors. The
33 pseudo R^2 statistic indicates that the model fit has increased at least 5.6%.

34 In the professors’ estimated model (equation 2), the Hausman indicates
35 that there is no evidence of a violation of the IIA assumption (table 2). The
36 likelihood ratio chi-square of 117.58 with a p-value of 0.002 indicates that the
37 model as a whole is statistically significant, as compared to the null model with
38 no predictors. The pseudo R^2 statistic indicate that the model fit is increased at
39 least 2.6%.

$$40 \\ 41 \log(\text{qualityhe})^P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{professorpubprivalksmk} + \beta_2 \text{competent} + \beta_3 \text{studmotiv} + \\ 42 \beta_4 \text{emplskills} + \beta_5 \text{professchool} + \beta_6 \text{sexassualt} + \beta_7 \text{bribe} + \beta_8 \text{nrstudents} + \\ 43 \beta_9 \text{enoughcolleg} + \varepsilon_i \quad (2) \\ 44$$

45 In professors’ questionnaire, certain variables that do not apply, like
46 reasons for studying abroad, are not in the variable list. Additionally, it was
47 noted that students’ responses pertaining to the lecture method were more

1 honest compared to those of professors, because choice 1 (ex-cathedra
2 lecturing method) was reported only 2 times in professors' dataset. Based on
3 practitioners' knowledge, we are aware that this method still prevails,
4 especially in public universities.¹ As this variable could render biased results, it
5 was excluded from the model.

8 Results

10 In the following the results from two estimated models for students and
11 professors using multinomial logit will be presented. The mlogit predicts the
12 impact of different factors (teaching methodology, infrastructure, ethics and
13 employability) have on HE quality, by estimating parameters describing
14 marginal utilities. The results are interpreted as follows: if the explanatory
15 variable is increased by one unit, what is the probability of quality in HE
16 changing, compared to the baseline group (conditional on the baseline group).
17 The purpose of the analysis is to investigate how well a multiple choice
18 response can be predicted, conditional on the base category (baseline group =
19 0).

20 In table 2, 4. *Rigour* (University rigour in student evaluation, number of
21 graduates) is chosen as the base category (*rigour* = 0). The predicted marginal
22 effects rendered no significant variables, when outcome = 1, i.e. number of
23 enrolled students and study tariffs (*1.qualityhe*), compared to base category.

24 The predicted marginal effects, when outcome = 2 (*2.quailtyhe*, i.e. quality
25 of professors' publications in scientific journals), compared to base category,
26 other things being equal, are as follows. If the number of students increases in
27 any of the universities in WB, the education quality is more likely to decrease
28 in all cases, though significantly in *studentinpubks*, *studentinpubmk* and
29 *studentinprivmk*. If lecturing conditions continue to be the same as a decade
30 ago, then HE quality education is less likely by 8.6pp. Based on data
31 tabulations, 18 students have reported personal sexual harassment from
32 professors, 147 have heard of such cases from other students 18 others have
33 witnessed such cases, indicating the presence of such phenomenon and low
34 criteria and monitoring in HE in the Western Balkan countries. The results
35 indicate that any type of sexual context (heard or experienced) in the HE
36 significantly decreases the education quality in HE. If *2.enough* (no, because
37 the classrooms are overcrowded) increases by 1 unit then the *2.qualityhe* is less
38 likely by 13.4pp, confirming our postulation that more universities are feeding
39 into more HE massivisation and less employment. If students who want to
40 study abroad for easier employment abroad (*4.abroadbcs*) increase by one unit,
41 then the *2.qualityhe* is less likely by 6.6pp, as compared to *rigour*, possibly
42 because local universities are left with lower end of quality students.

43 The predicted marginal effects, when HE quality depends on number of
44 graduates i.e., outcome = 3 (*3.quailtyhe*), compared to base category, other
45 things being equal, are as the following. If the number of students in all

¹Authors have more than 10 years of teaching experience in HE.

1 countries increases, then the HE quality determined by number of employed
2 students is more likely in all sample countries, but significant only in North
3 Macedonian universities. This is consistent with our postulation that the more
4 students entering HE, the more selection criteria should be in place in HE. If 3.
5 *sexassual* (I have heard cases against other students) and 4.*sexassual* (I am a
6 witness of such cases against other students) increase by one unit, the
7 probability that the quality in HE is determined by number of employed
8 students is more likely. Some students may not particularly be preoccupied
9 with the internal ethical standards of the university, probably more so in those
10 universities where there is no punishment culture, but rather the economic
11 capitalisation of their studies. In WB sexual education is not part of the
12 education system, thus students' awareness may not be optimal. Furthermore,
13 despite public and legal accusations against professors, there were no
14 suspensions or dismissals.

15 The predicted marginal effects, when HE quality depends on number of
16 graduates i.e., outcome = 4 (*4.qualityhe*), compared to base category, other
17 things being equal, are as the following. If professors' competencies increase
18 for one unit (in all categories), then education quality is more likely to drop.
19 This may be explained by the lack of proper didactic training and deficiencies
20 in knowledge transfer from professors to students. If the number of academic
21 universities increase by one unit, the HE education quality is likely to drop by
22 6.7pp. This is in line with prior expectations that academic universities are
23 prone to massivization and lack proper coordination with the needs of the
24 labour market. If the number of colleges' increases for one unit because the
25 unemployment is high in the WB, then the *4.qualityhe* is more likely to happen
26 by 10.8pp. This is also in line with prior expectations that the increasing
27 number of colleges should be faced with stricter accreditation criteria and
28 monitoring processes to prevent further massivization. If the number of
29 students not preferring to study abroad increases by one unit, then the
30 *4.qualityhe* is more likely to happen by 15.2pp. Lastly, if the number of
31 students wanting to study abroad because foreign diplomas enable more
32 employment opportunities locally, then the *4.qualityhe* is more likely to happen
33 by 7.1pp.

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1 *Table 2. Estimated results from students' perspective*

base = 4 (rigour)	outcome=1 qualityhe		outcome=2 qualityhe		outcome=3 qualityhe		outcome=4 qualityhe		Diagnostics
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	
1.studentpubal									LR chi2(105) 112.93 p = 0.011 N= 764
2.studentprivat	-0.044	0.094	-0.049	0.140	0.198	0.155	-0.105	0.095	
3.studentpubks	0.038	0.057	-0.110*	0.062	0.056	0.069	0.017	0.057	
4.studentprivks	0.004	0.040	-0.077	0.051	0.024	0.052	0.049	0.044	
5.studentpubmk	0.086	0.137	-0.306***	0.042	0.311**	0.153	-0.091	0.108	
6.studentprivmk	-0.070	0.045	-0.222***	0.054	0.274***	0.073	0.018	0.062	
1.competent									Pseudo R2 = 0.056;
2.competent	0.007	0.034	0.062	0.041	-0.004	0.046	-0.065*	0.040	
3.competent	-0.004	0.037	0.053	0.045	0.021	0.052	-0.070*	0.043	
4.competent	-0.028	0.041	0.076	0.058	0.068	0.065	-0.116***	0.043	
1.conditions									Hausman ia = 0.999
2.conditions	-0.048	0.044	-0.086*	0.046	0.036	0.065	0.098	0.062	
3.conditions	-0.083	0.029	-0.005	0.038	0.049	0.043	0.038	0.037	
1.studmotiv									
2.studmotiv	0.007	0.028	-0.042	0.034	0.015	0.039	0.020	0.033	
3.studmotiv	0.101	0.104	0.068	0.111	-0.096	0.111	-0.074	0.074	
1.lectmethod									
2.lectmethod	-0.019	0.038	0.001	0.044	0.061	0.053	-0.043	0.047	
3.lectmethod	0.019	0.042	0.027	0.048	-0.059	0.055	0.013	0.051	
4.lectmethod	-0.002	0.042	0.013	0.050	0.005	0.060	-0.016	0.053	
1.empskills									
2.empskills	-0.001	0.031	-0.035	0.038	0.025	0.045	0.01	0.038	
3.empskills	0.043	0.033	0.009	0.041	-0.029	0.047	0.02	0.041	
4.empskills	0.034	0.076	0.100	0.098	-0.066	0.098	-0.07	0.077	
1.professchool									
2.professchool	0.003	0.026	0.006	0.031	0.058	0.037	-0.067**	0.031	
1.sexassual									
2.sexassual	0.068	0.068	-0.248***	0.124	0.134	0.108	0.047	0.098	
3.sexassual	0.077	0.073	-0.329***	0.126	0.237**	0.114	0.015	0.101	
4.sexassual	0.021	0.090	-0.399***	0.138	0.305**	0.155	0.072	0.137	
1.bribe									
2.bribe	0.013	0.035	0.012	0.041	0.024	0.049	-0.05	0.046	
3.bribe	-0.031	0.070	0.134	0.096	-0.079	0.093	-0.02	0.096	
1.nrstudents									
2.nrstudents	-0.073	0.027	-0.029	0.034	0.099***	0.040	0.004	0.035	
3.nrstudents	-0.018	0.039	0.016	0.045	0.041	0.038	-0.040	0.042	
1.enoughcollg									
2.enoughcollg	0.045	0.038	-0.134***	0.037	0.073	0.053	0.016	0.043	
3.enoughcollg	0.043	0.028	-0.031	0.034	-0.119***	0.038	0.108***	0.034	
1.studabroad									
2.studabroad	-0.010	-0.010	-0.075	0.050	-0.07	0.064	0.152**	0.066	
1.aboadbcs									
2.aboadbcs	-0.050	0.033	-0.040	0.043	0.019	0.048	0.071*	0.042	
3.aboadbcs	0.007	0.044	-0.021	0.051	0.010	0.056	0.004	0.047	
4.aboadbcs	0.004	0.035	-0.066*	0.039	0.015	0.046	0.047	0.039	

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1 In table 3, to be consistent with the students' approach, *rigour* (university
2 *rigour* in student evaluation, number of graduates) is chosen as the base
3 category (*rigour* = 0). The predicted marginal effects rendered no significant
4 variables, when outcome = 1 (*1.qualityhe*), compared to base category.

5 The predicted marginal effects, when outcome = 2 (*2.quailtyhe*, i.e. quality
6 of professors' publications in scientific journals), compared to base category,
7 other things being equal, are as follows. If the number of professors increases
8 in any of the universities in WB, the education quality is more likely to
9 decrease in all cases, though significantly in *professorpubmk* and
10 *professorprival*. This could be explained by the increasing criteria from the
11 accreditation agencies to have at least three Ph.D. lecturers per program at a
12 period of lacking doctorates. In addition to the massivisation of Bachelor's
13 studies, the increased demand for Ph.D.s led to a massivisation of doctorate
14 studies, too. If *2.competence* (lecturers are up to date with the latest
15 developments in the field of teaching) increases by one unit, the HE quality
16 will likely drop by 9.9pp, as compared to *rigour* (base category). This finding
17 may initially sound as an anomaly. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the theory
18 section, students received at the HE come with a lot of education gaps from
19 elementary and secondary education system, as confirmed by the PISA
20 rankings. Therefore, students may face difficulties catching up with the latest
21 developments and technologies. If *3.conditions* (partial modernisation and
22 digitalization) increases by one unit, the *2.quailtyhe* is likely to increase by
23 6.3pp. If *3.emplskills* (it has (will help me) but additional training outside the
24 university is also needed) increases by one unit, then *2.quailtyhe* increases by
25 12.8pp. This is in line with prior expectations, postulating that the current
26 education system is insufficient in terms of quality and employment
27 generation. If *3.nrstudents* (professors' perception that number of students
28 does not impact teaching quality) increases by one unit, the drop of *2.quailtyhe*
29 (quality of professors' publications in scientific journals) is more likely by
30 16pp. Professors may be accustomed with the historically large classrooms,
31 therefore do not sense the marginal time consumption by additional students.
32 Therefore, less time disposal for professors may naturally be associated with
33 the diminishing quality of professors' publications.

34 The predicted marginal effects, when HE quality depends on number of
35 graduates i.e., outcome = 3 (*3.quailtyhe*, i.e. HE quality depends on number of
36 students employed), compared to base category, other things being equal, are
37 as follows. If the number of *professorprival* increases by one unit, the
38 probability that *3.quailtyhe* () is more likely by 49.6pp. As expected, if
39 additional training is acquired for students (*3.emplskills*), *3.quailtyhe* is more
40 likely by 26.4pp. Two significant variables *2.bribe* (*did not happen*) and
41 *3.bribe* (have heard of bribe cases) provide contradictory results. As expected,
42 more *2.bribe* (number of those who were not subject to bribe) lead to less need
43 for *4.quailtyhe* (university *rigour* in student evaluation, number of graduates).
44 However, *3.bribe* (the number of professors who have heard about bribe cases
45 in HE) increases by one unit, the *3.quailtyhe* (number of employed graduates)
46 again increases. The latter could be explained by distortions in the labour

1 market, such as pervasive incentives and dishonest practices, i.e. nepotism and
2 cronyism, especially in the public sector institutions of WB.

3 The predicted marginal effects, when HE quality depends on rigour in HE
4 i.e. outcome = 4 (*4.quailtyhe*, i.e. University rigour in student evaluation,
5 number of graduates), compared to base category, other things being equal, are
6 as the following. As expected, the increasing number of professors in the three
7 WB countries, is more likely to decrease *4.quailtyhe*, even though the
8 difference is more significant in *professorprival*. Partial investments in HE are
9 more likely to increase *4.quailtyhe* by 0.4pp. Around 40 professors have
10 declared that have either heard or were personally had an issue of a student
11 being sexually harassed. However, only in outcome 4 the results are
12 significant. If the number of those who were not sexually assaulted increases
13 by one unit, the *4.quailtyhe* is more likely by 16pp. If *2.bribe* (number of those
14 who were not subject to bribe) increases by one unit, then *4.quailtyhe* is less
15 likely by 34.8pp. If the number of professors thinking that more colleges are
16 needed because unemployment is high (*3.enoughcollg*) increases by one unit,
17 the *4.quailtyhe* is less likely by 8.8pp.

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ONLY FOR REVIEW

1 *Table 3. Estimated results from professors' perspective*

base = 4 (rigour)	outcome=1		outcome=2		outcome=3		outcome=4		Diagnostics
	qualityhe		qualityhe		qualityhe		qualityhe		
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	
3.professorpubks									LR chi2(105)
4.professorprivks	0.071	0.053	-0.010	0.108	0.007	0.121	-0.068	0.103	117.58
3.professorpubmk	-0.062	0.036	-0.226**	0.098	0.448	381.1	-0.160	381.1	p = 0.002
4.professorprivmk	0.180	0.107	-0.137	0.115	-0.041	0.157	-0.002	0.130	
1.professorpubal	-0.036	0.047	-0.053	0.127	0.213	0.138	-0.124	0.105	N= 197
2.professorprivall	-0.062	0.037	-0.226**	0.098	0.496***	0.105	-0.207**	0.093	
1.competent									Pseudo R2
2.competent	-0.045	0.045	-0.099*	0.061	0.012	3.294	0.133	3.294	
3.competent	0.188	0.130	0.102	0.120	-0.247	1.104	-0.043	1.099	0.258
4.competent	0.188	0.052	-0.055	0.081	0.218	4.305	-0.132	0.071	Hausman äia = 0.957
1.conditions									
2.conditions	0.168	0.166	-0.0478	0.834	0.032	0.191	-0.153	0.031	
3.conditions	0.127	0.077	0.063***	0.063	0.021	0.102	0.004***	0.071	
1.studmotiv									
2.studmotiv	0.110	0.042	-0.078	0.067	0.027	0.080	-0.059	0.058	
3.studmotiv	0.042	0.047	-0.028	0.096	-0.052	0.117	0.038	0.098	
1.emplskills									
2.emplskills	-0.053	0.059	0.040	0.113	0.091	0.131	-0.08	0.074	
3.emplskills	-0.048	0.048	0.128*	0.072	0.264*	0.083	0.054	0.065	
1.professchool									
2.professchool	0.055	0.046	-0.019	0.057	0.005	0.072	-0.041	0.050	
1.sexassual									
2.sexassual	-0.072	0.081	-0.022	0.108	-0.066	0.124	0.160***	0.027	
3.sexassual	0.055	0.125	-0.108	0.131	-0.091	0.171	0.143	0.092	
1.bribe									
2.bribe	-0.047	0.111	0.053	0.125	0.342***	0.122	-0.348*	0.199	
3.bribe	-0.087	0.107	-0.013	0.150	0.304*	0.169	-0.204	0.211	
1.nrstudents									
2.nrstudents	-0.126	0.059	-0.019	0.069	0.109	0.083	0.036	0.054	
3.nrstudents	-0.137	0.063	-0.160**	0.074	0.264**	0.105	0.033	0.082	
1.enoughcollg									
2.enoughcollg	-0.096	0.021	0.078	0.113	0.103	0.127	-0.085	0.081	
3.enoughcollg	0.043	0.073	-0.097	0.065	0.141	0.094	-0.088*	0.051	

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Conclusions and Policy Implications

Western Balkans (WB) is a region that has started the education reforms, amongst other structural reforms, relatively late and later than the developed part of Europe. In a region where economic growth is sluggish and youth

1 unemployment is high, education – as the main pillar of each society, is one of
2 the key proxies to determine future development. However, the higher
3 education (HE) system in this region does not rank well on international
4 agencies and has been criticised for massivization. Therefore, this study has
5 investigated the factors leading to the massivization and deterioration of HE
6 quality in WB, by taking the perspective of two main stakeholders – professors
7 and students – in Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia. Using survey data of
8 primary source, the empirical model tackles typical factors pertaining to
9 professors’ competencies and teaching methods, students’ motivation and
10 academic curiosity and study conditions, but equally as important controls for
11 circumstantial factors directly linked to the general education system standards,
12 such as massivisation of colleges, employability of students and dishonest
13 behaviour from professors.

14 The findings from the students’ perspective are as follows. An increasing
15 number of students in all three countries are more likely to decrease their HE
16 quality in public and private universities. Increasing professors’ competencies
17 may not necessarily reflect better teaching quality, due to the lack of
18 knowledge transfer capabilities and proper didactic training for professors. The
19 increasing number of universities, reflecting massivization of the HE education
20 in WB, is seen as a substitute for unemployment. There is a considerable
21 number of students who prefer to study abroad to increase employment
22 probability either locally or internationally. This perception of the students
23 once again points to the lower education quality in WB. Furthermore, the
24 majority of students have declared a preference for a professional university
25 system that enables partial employment, as compared to the prevailing
26 academic HE system. A critical finding of this study is the evidence of bribes
27 and sexual assaults testified by students. The presence of such phenomena
28 (confirmed also by public lawsuits and not only by students’ perceptions) boils
29 down to low monitoring and controlling criteria in the HE system.

30 Consistent with students’ findings, the results have indicated that the
31 increasing number of professors also reduced the quality of HE. This could be
32 explained by the increasing criteria from the accreditation agencies to have at
33 least three Ph.D. lecturers per program at a period of lacking doctorates. In
34 addition to massivization of Bachelor studies, the increased demand for Ph.D.’s
35 led to a massivization of doctorate studies, too. Partial modernisation and
36 digitalization were found to have an increasing impact on the quality of HE.
37 Likewise, the results indicated that professors, too, agree that the current
38 education system is not sufficient to provide student employment, and
39 additional trainings are needed. The rapid increase of Ph.D.’s in the recent
40 years may have created a non-complaining culture among current professors
41 concerning the rising number of students and colleges. Despite disturbing
42 results concerning professors ethics (sexual harassment cases and bribe cases),
43 students seem to primarily be preoccupied with economic capitalisation of their
44 studies, given the non-punishing culture of universities towards professors,
45 pervasive incentives and dishonest practices, especially in the public sector
46 institutions of WB. A bias in professors’ response was detected in declaring

1 fewer sexual assault cases than students, but nevertheless agree that such
2 phenomena decrease the quality of the HE system.

3 The massivization of HE in WB is not only deteriorating the teaching
4 quality in WB, but also impeding future economic and institutional
5 development.

6 In order to stop the massivization of HE in WB, a joint commitment and
7 coordination of actions of all institutions of HE, accreditation agencies and
8 ministries of education is necessary to improve the quality of the teaching
9 process. First and foremost, the HE institutions need to engage in a robust
10 education system where they educate various people on the importance of
11 embracing and practicing integrity in education [16]. Creating awareness on
12 improving the quality of education will go a long way in improving the
13 confidence of people in the education system in Albania, Kosovo and North
14 Macedonia (Pavlova, 2010).

15 Admission quotas need to be established to bridge the gap between
16 graduated students in each faculty and economy needs and hence, reduce the
17 excessive cadres and increase those required today and potentially in the future
18 Depending on the changing needs of the economies, admission quotas should
19 be adaptable and if need be, certain programs should stop re-accreditation
20 when market needs are filled or in excess of graduates.

21 Appropriate mechanisms and policies need to be established to evaluate
22 the performance of professors and make their selection and re-election based
23 on these performance indicators and not only on formal documents. The
24 education system needs to be reformed by initially addressing the lack of
25 teaching quality. Investments need to be made in the transfer of knowledge
26 from the OECD and EU higher education institutions to Western Balkan one.
27 Teaching quality should be a subject of external reviews carried out by
28 dedicated bodies (quality assurance, accreditation, or evaluation agencies) to
29 encourage institutions to set up and reinforce internal quality assurance policies
30 and mechanisms that will include processes in safeguarding the quality of
31 teaching, whereas the teaching criteria should be legally binding and set out by
32 the ministries of education.

33 Low academic ethics are to a large extent the responsibility and culpability
34 of governmental institutions. It is of utmost importance that universities in WB
35 increase social responsibility, academic and financial transparency, and be
36 subject to continuous internal and external audits.

37 It is imperative to note that research is the backbone of higher education
38 and critical in triggering sustainable developments in WB countries.
39 Nevertheless, the research investment in WB is less than 0.5% of GDP. Public
40 funds need to raise for scientific research and support of both, professors, and
41 students, in conducting scientific research.

42 Students are a high-interest stakeholder in this process, as the ultimate
43 beneficiary or the damaged part, therefore their opinion and feedback regarding
44 professors' performance should be formally taken into account. Each university
45 should establish close cooperation with employers and adapt curricula based on
46 market needs and demands.

1 Lastly, the HE system should be open to international applicants, in order
 2 to change the internal dynamics and steer up the competition for better
 3 publications and teaching methods.

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