Implementation of factor analysis in the evaluation of higher education

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In the academic environment, although the competition is tough, market signals do not have enough power to swiftly and efficiently show the difference in quality among universities, faculties and study programs. In these circumstances, especially in the countries conducting radical reforms of higher educational systems, institutions must develop their own methodologies for quality evaluation of HE. Implementation of reliable and robust statistical methods is necessary in order to obtain swift and exact information about the HE institution from all important aspects. Involvement of students as partners represents one of the most important elements in the process of higher education and its reform. Students are one of the most important sources of information for self- evaluation of institution and study programs. The question is how to quantify the student opinion and which aspects of HE to evaluate. In order to find the answers and to handle the significant number of variables, we implemented multivariate statistical analysis and conducted the survey at the University of Novi Sad. The goal is to identify basic aspects for the evaluation of HE from student's point of view. Sample of 1300 students was defined and data set from the survey was analyzed through factor analysis. Eight criteria connected to the different aspect of HE were discovered. This paper shows how factor analysis was conducted and what results were obtained with critical assessment of the implementation process.

Keywords: Factor Analysis, Higher Education, Bologna Process, Student Involvement, Self-evaluation