

# Awareness of Public-Private Partnership: The Case of Albanian University Students

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**Abstract** The Public Private Partnership (PPP) is one of the developmental models prevalent in most developing economies to promote the quality of life of people and to boost the overall socio-economic development of the country. One of the widely used indicators of the preparedness of Albania to integrate with the European Union (EU) is the similarities of the country's developmental models with that of the EU, PPP being one of them. The main objective of the paper is to measure the perception of the Albanian young educated generation on PPP. This is done through a descriptive, inferential, and critical analysis of primary data, gathered through a survey administered among the students (bachelor and master's degree) of the University of Tirana. It is concluded that an updated high school curriculum in all faculties with knowledge on new policy tools, particularly the PPP, will be useful in increasing student awareness of and support for it. Participatory governance with active feedback and control mechanisms would increase public satisfaction and reduce public complaints.

**Keywords** Public-Private Partnership, Public Awareness, European Union Integration, Risk-Benefit, Regulatory Rules, Survey

## 1. Introduction

A widely cherished Albanian dream is its final integration with the European Union and several reforms and transformations of the Albanian socio-political life are geared towards this vision. Among the efforts to speed up the EU acceptance, success in Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects is often showcased by the changing Albanian governments, irrespective of their party affiliations. PPP tool has often been the governments'

preferred method of assuring certain service to its public [1]

The increased interest on the part of the financial investor and other private entities in PPP is almost evenly matched by the demand for new infrastructure by developed countries as well as developing countries [2]. In this regard, the way how the costs versus benefits of PPP are publicly perceived is seen by the authors of this paper as a very interesting topic for further investigation.

In the case of the Republic of Albania, "the concession" concept is more prevalent than "the public-private partnership" concept. It happens like that, considering the fact that the old legislation (the first Albanian law on concessions, used to be the one adopted in 1995 "On concessions and the participation of the private sector in the public services and infrastructure", adopted in 2006 and amended as the law "On concessions") was focused in this term, while recently the contemporary term 'Public private partnerships (PPP) was introduced and reflected this development in the new law of 2013 "On concessions and public private partnerships

There is no universally recognized definition of public-private partnerships and governments across the world describe them in varying ways. However, it is commonly understood that the idea of public-private partnership refers to the public and private sector jointly providing the investment and/or financing of public assets or services and/or the joint design, operation and management of public assets or services.

The most useful definition of the term is the one adopted by World Bank definition, which describes PPPs as, a mechanism for government to procure and implement public infrastructure and/or services using the resources and expertise of the private sector...PPP's combine the skills and resources of both the public and private sectors through sharing of risks and responsibilities" [3]

Depending on multiple criteria, i.e. risk allocation and

reward tools, PPP project can be developed under many contractual types, i.e.: 1) A public work/service concession; 2) A public work/service contract (Law of 2013) So that, a concession is one of the types generated by PPP project scheme.

The “risk allocation’ criteria refers to the fact, on how the risk of the contract object is shared between the stakeholders of the concession/PPP contract. While in the PPP model, both sectors, public and private ones will be faced with some risks in PPPs and these risks should be defined and allocated to the parties who are best able to manage it [4].

While the “reward tool” refers to the way how it is managed in the contract the relationship among the right to use public works/services and the right to receive payments or generate revenues by the stakeholders of the concessions/ PPP contacts.

Based on the Albanian legislation of this field, [5] the economic and social sectors, where concession and PPP projects can be implemented are as follow: Energy, Telecommunication, Mining, Natural gas, Education, Social Services, Public Administration facilities, Health, Industrial parks and business support infrastructure, Urban and suburban rehabilitation and development, Transport,

Waste, Water, Sports, Tourism, Science, Land and forest rehabilitation, Culture, Technology and information and the database infrastructure, Prisons and judicial infrastructure, Economic and Fiscal development ect.

Based on the numbers of signed contacts, Energy and Gas Industry, followed by Transport and Healthcare are among three developed sectors of PPP projects in Albania so far (Figure 1).

Going through the official document as the relation for the State Budget 2018 [6] drafted by the Ministry of Finances and Economy, we can find that actually in Albania there are 10 PPP contracts supported directly by the state budget. Budgetary cost for 10 of them is foreseen at around (126,352,615,000 Albanian Leke = 1,035mln Euro) and the time length of them varies from 5 years to 30 years in max. Line Ministries, responsible for them are: 1) Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (45.4 % PPP contracts value); 2) Ministry of Health and Social Protection (25.3 %) 3) Ministry of Finances and Economy (21.9%) 4) Ministry of Education (6.8%), while Municipality of Tirana is co-partner in one contract with Ministry of Education and another one with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (Open data Albania, 2018) (Table 1)

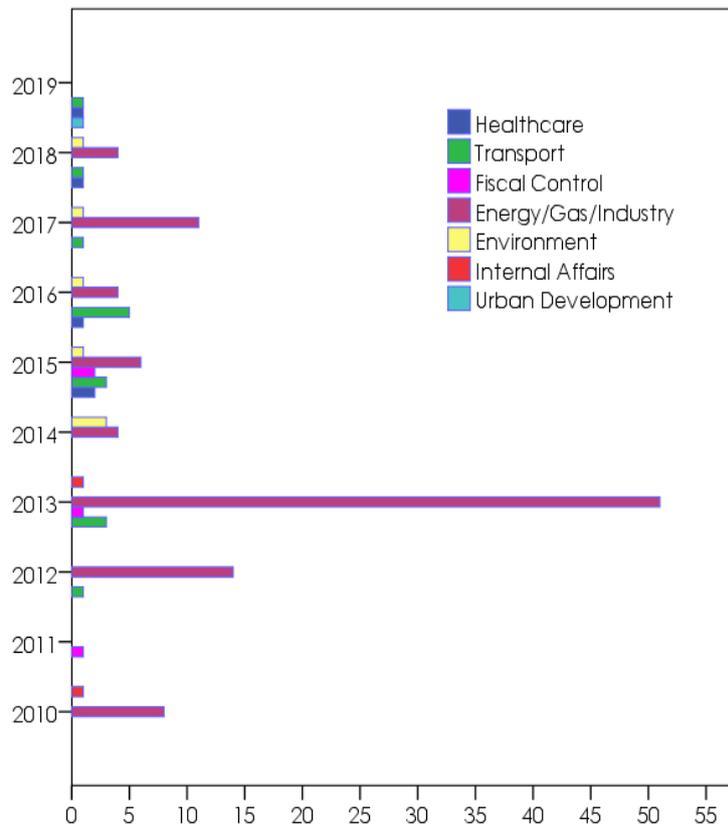


Figure 1. Number of Contracts based on activity field, through years

**Table 1.** Distribution of PPP contracts through responsible units (2018)

Responsible Unit	Name of the contract	Period	Contract's value in proportional to total(%)
Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Check-Up service	2015-2024	5.1 %
Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Hemodialize service	2016-2025	5.1 %
Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Support service in surgical operations	2015-2024	7.9 %
Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Support service in hospital laboratory	2018-2027	7.2 %
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	Solid waste and Sewage in Elbasan	2015-2022	2.3 %
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	Solid waste and Sewage in Fier	2017-2022	2.9 %
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	Road infrastructure (Arbri road)	2018-2030	19.0 %
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	Road infrastructure ( Milot-Morine road)	2018-2047	1.6 %
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	Hidrocentral (HEC) (Devoll river)	2015-2019	5.6 %
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and Tirana Municipality	Tirana Incinerator	2018-2047	14.6 %
Ministry of Finances and Economy	Service of Container scanning	2014-2029	21.9 %
Ministry of Education and Municipality of Tirana	Building school in Tirana Municipality	2017-2024	6.8 %
Total			100 %

In order to have a proper PPP implementation, government should be in a position to adopt two approaches: a financial one, which targets to use private funding so as to fulfill the needs and another is service based so as to augment the cost and time efficacy [7].

This is in overall the situation of PPPs in Albania, as far as referring to official resources. PPP model is an alternative used by Governments all around the world to offer better services to its people, while using effectively and efficiently the public funds in cooperation with private sector.

Literature review, especially the one offered by World Bank [3] introduces a set of benefits and risks in case of adopting this kind of model.

One of the most important one, as reflected by International Monetary Fund, in case of Albania, is the fact that PPP, has raised the fiscal risk for the country, which makes it an urge to improve strategies in the frame of Public Investments scheme [8].

Considering PPP as a complex issue (social, economic, juridical, media etc), and multidisciplinary aspects of Albanian life, we think as an interesting point, having a hint of public perception about the issue.

The Albanian Media and social networks have referred to the PPP model, the way it is implemented in Albania, as not such a positive experience [9].

On the other hand, the socio economic scientific literature offers a general positive picture of PPP model in a country life [3].

## 2. Methodology

Besides the panorama of what official resources,

international financial organizations and social media offer, we find it as a very interesting to see what the perception of public is in this regard. A good example to be followed in this respect is having primary data through a survey process.

The surveyed data and the results would help us to find out how and in what extend PPP model is understood in reality, not only in the way of institutional and regulatory implementation but also on benefits, risks, challenges and success indicators that this model provides in the Albanian context of high education generation.

As it is the first attempt in this initiative, we as socio-economic researchers, critically think to focus this sensibilisation campaign effort at the generation of students in high education system in Albania, with the hope to extend the study with more stakeholders in the future.

Our reasoning to target this part of the population (bachelor and master degree students) is supported by the fact, that in general point of view, the PPP : (i) is a new complicated socio-economic – juridical term, which is not widely scientifically elaborated among other common stakeholders , (ii) the model considers 15% shares of Albanian GDP in budget of 2019 [8] which makes high market value in Albanian economy, (iii) the model is regulated through a complex rules' system not very easily understood by general public (iv) long –term activity, which lasts for years and mostly affects the actual young generation.

Having these issues in mind, our population target is the generation of students (bachelor and master degree) of University of Tirana. This is because University of Tirana is the biggest and the oldest University in the country and its academic curricula is adapted by all other universities in the country.

Considering the field areas that PPP covers, the interesting study fields are focused at students of Faculty of Economy, Faculty of Judiciary, Faculty of Social- Sciences and Faculty of History- Philology (where branch of Journalism is developed).

Refereeing to data on students registered during last three years 2015-2018 (three years of bachelor degree) and 2016-2018 (two years of master degree) provided by the registrar secretary offices of each faculty on April 2019, there are in total 30,040 students (N (population size) = 30,040) Table 2, shows the distribution of registered students for this period according to faculties and level of studies as share of the population size (Ni/N).

**Table 2.** Share of students according to faculties and respective level of studies

Faculties (i)	Share of students in population (Ni/N) %
Faculty of Economy	37 %
Faculty of Social Sciences	19.8%
Faculty of Judiciary	22.7%
Faculty of History-Philology	20.5%
Total	100%

Considering a margin error ( $\Delta$ ) of 5% level, a confidence interval of 95% ( $z=1.96$ ),  $N= 30040$ , and 50% proportion, the sampling size is calculated to be 350 ( $n \approx 350$ ) “1” [10].

$$\Delta = z \cdot \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n} \cdot \frac{N-n}{N-1}} \quad (1)$$

Respecting the stratified sampling rule, we used the same sampling fraction for each stratum regardless of the differences in population size of the strata. Practically, we used stratified sampling rules in two steps: 1) keeping safe the share of each population size even for sample size ( $N_i/N = n_i/n$ ) 2) considering the fact that in population, the ratio of bachelor students towards masters’ one is 2:1, we respected this ratio even in sampling technique [10] (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Sample size per each faculty according to level of studies

Faculties (i)	Share of students in sampling ( $n_i/n$ ) %	Number of students (Sample size) (ratio 2:1)
Faculty of Economy	37 %	130 (85 Bachelor + 45 Master)
Faculty of Social Sciences	19.8%	70 (47 Bachelor + 23 Master)
Faculty of Judiciary	22.7%	79 (53 Bachelor + 26 Master)
Faculty of History-Philology	20.5%	71 (48 Bachelor + 23 Master)
Total	100%	$n=350$ (233 Bachelor + 117 Master)

The survey technique is undertaken through a questionnaire, which has around 26 questions, most of them close-ended. The respondents have to choose only one alternative in a multiple choice question. First part of the questionnaire (Question 1-12 and 22-26 are formulate in the way to judge about the general perception of PPP while other questions (ordinal scale of measures) tend to assess the interviewer's judgment on the effectiveness of PPP in Albania. The scale of measures for the variables used are either nominal (coded in continuous numbers 1, 2, 3, etc.) when the responder has to choose among the groups or, ordinal, measured in three levels as Likert scale (1=the least, 2=somehow, 3=the most) where the respondents has to asses about the level of attitude toward the alternative. It is proposed the alternative “Don't know”, coded as 8, per each of the questions. Two reference sources are used to build our adopted questionnaire: (1) Questionnaire used in Ukraine for measuring the public awareness on PPP model [11], (2) Questionnaire used by [12], to measure the effectiveness of the infrastructure PPP projects in USA.

The survey is undertaken through a lively administrating questionnaire. The period of the survey covers May- June 2019. A training activity was done by us with 5 students (administrators) per each faculty and then the trained students took care for the interviews, while going to different groups of seminars and lectures and had the questionnaire filled. SPSS software, its 23<sup>rd</sup> version, is used for data entry, data cleaning, data results and analysis.

Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distribution in percentage and metrics (mean) are used to analyze the data and come up with the results.

A Stratified random sampling (in multiple stages) is used, where the population can be divided into smaller groups that don't overlap but represent the whole population, considering the profile of the students and the academic year they belong too [13]. While sampling these groups was organized, we made a sample from each group separately.

For example, at Faculty of Economy, there are 4 main profiles, which follow bachelor and master's degree (Economics, Management, Finance and Accounting, Economic Informatics). There are in total 39 lecturing groups in bachelor's degree, ratio: 1: 2: 2: 1.5, i.e. (2 groups/academic year (Economics) +4 groups (Management) + 4 groups (Finance) + 3 groups (informatics Economics) = 13 lecturing groups per each bachelor academic year, while 13 lecturing groups/academic year \*3 years= 39 lecturing groups). Our sampling used to be 85 bachelor's degree students, considering 5 students per each group we calculated to stratify randomly selected in total 17 lecturing groups.

Considering the weights of each profile and the fact that students of second and third year would have more knowledge on PPP, due to maturity of their studies, there were randomly selected : 4 lecturing groups for the first academic year (one per each profile), 6 selected lecturing

groups for the second academic year, i.e ratio 1:2:2:1 (1 Economics + 2 Management + 2 Finance + 1 Informatics Economics) and 7 lecturing groups for the third academic year, ratio 1:2:2:2 (1 Economics + 2 Management + 2 Finance + 2 Informatics Economics), so in total 17 lecturing groups. Then 5 students (randomly selected, i.e first five students sat down at the first desks) were randomly selected to fill the questionnaire, which was lively administered by the administrator of the survey.

Referring to master's degree students, there are two types of master's degree offered, with almost the same number of students registered: Professional master's degree and scientific master degree. Sampling of 45 students at Faculty of Economy is stratified in two strata: 21 Professional master's degree + 24 scientific master's degree. The ratio of the students according to the profile, goes in line with that of bachelor level (1: 2: 2: 1.5 =Economics: Management: Finance: Informatics Economics). So that the administrator, chose a class of "Research methods module for economics" where all professional master's degree students of economics were present and randomly selected 3 first students sat down at first desk.

The same procedure, during the development of the respective module, he followed for students of professional master's degrees of Management (7 students), Finance (7 students), and Informatics Economics (4 students), in total 21 (ratio: 1:2.1:2.1:1.3). The same procedure was followed for the scientific master's degree students, keeping safe the weights, i.e: Economics (4 students) + Management (8 students), Finance (8 students), and Informatics Economics (4 students) = 24 students, ratio (1:2:2:1).

This rule was followed by each administrator of the questionnaire per arch of the other three faculties.

This is the way how the students were sampled, and a multiple stratified random sampling is used. The researchers had to be trying to keep safe the survey weights in order to have a sampling which represent as near as it can the population.

After going through the questionnaire, none of the students choose not to answer the questions, but in total 6.6% of the selected, since in the beginning declared that "Don't know what PPP is" (table 4). In these cases, the administrator of the survey, interrupted the questionnaire filling process with that student and try at the same moment to replace him/her with another selected student, who at least, on its own knowledge had an idea of what PPP is, so he/she could be able to answer the following questions. Each of the following questions of the survey has as the alternative answer, the option "Don't know", so that, lively administered questionnaire helped that even the students who sincerely could choose not to answer the question, could check "Don't know", which still is critical thinking interpretable and resulting so in maximum response rate.

### 3. Results

As previously mentioned, there were 26 questions of the questionnaire, but we mainly focused on the results in four dimensions:

**Firstly:** The awareness in general about the definition of PPP as well as the law that regulate this kind of initiative in Albania ([14] and [15]). This is done through frequency distribution of the survey results for respective informative questions, providing a cross-tabulation with the Faculty and level of studies that the student is attending, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 2.

**Secondly:** The next set of results is dedicated to the awareness about the fields where PPP project is implemented in the country and the partners (private sector, local and central governance) involved. Comparing these results (perception) with the reality, would help us to conclude if the reality about the role of government is well percept and what to do to improve the reality reflection in public awareness [16].

Frequency distribution in percentage is still used to get the results of the survey (Figure 3-5, Tables 5-6).

**Table 4.** What is public private partnership?

		Your Faculty				
		Faculty of Econ.	Faculty of Judic.	Faculty of Social.	Faculty of Philo.	Total
	1) A donation or loan by a private party for a public good	13.2%	7.6%	11.3%	11.3%	11.1%
	2) A long-term relationship between a public and private party for delivery services, which belong to public sector.	58.1%	74.7%	64.8%	62.0%	64.0%
	3) A government subsidy to private business	10.1%	1.3%	7.0%	8.5%	7.1%
	4) Other	14.0%	8.9%	7.0%	12.7%	11.1%
	5) Don't know	4.7%	7.6%	9.9%	5.6%	6.6%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %

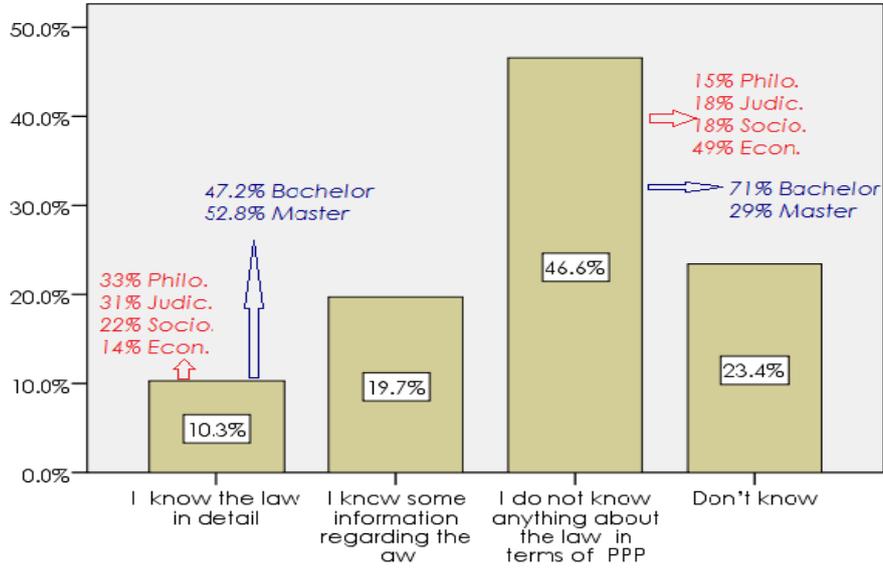


Figure 2. What do you know about the Albanian Law on Public Private Partnerships adopted in 2013?

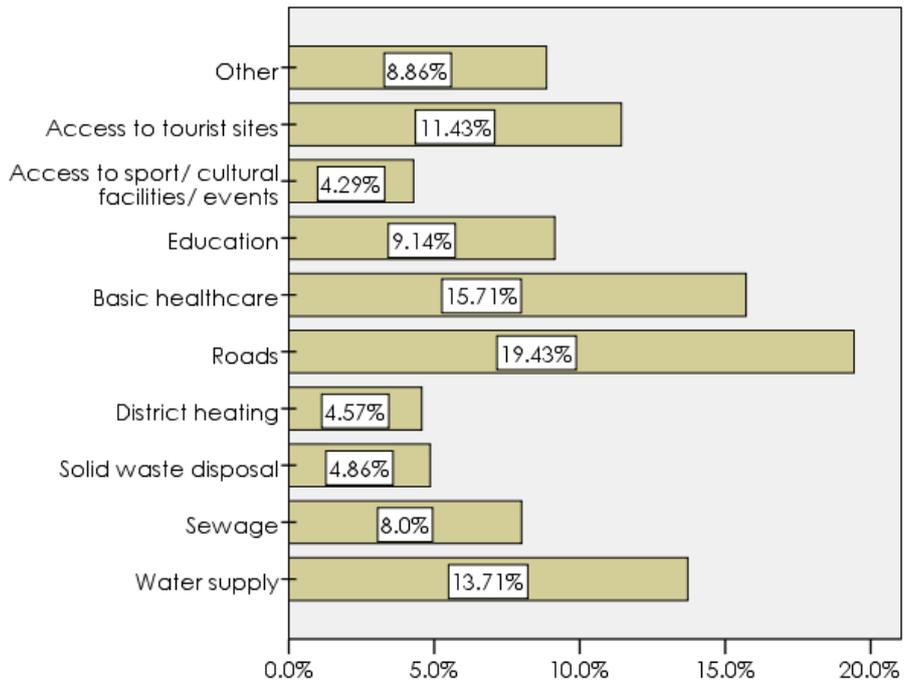


Figure 3. In which field do you think PPP are more useful?

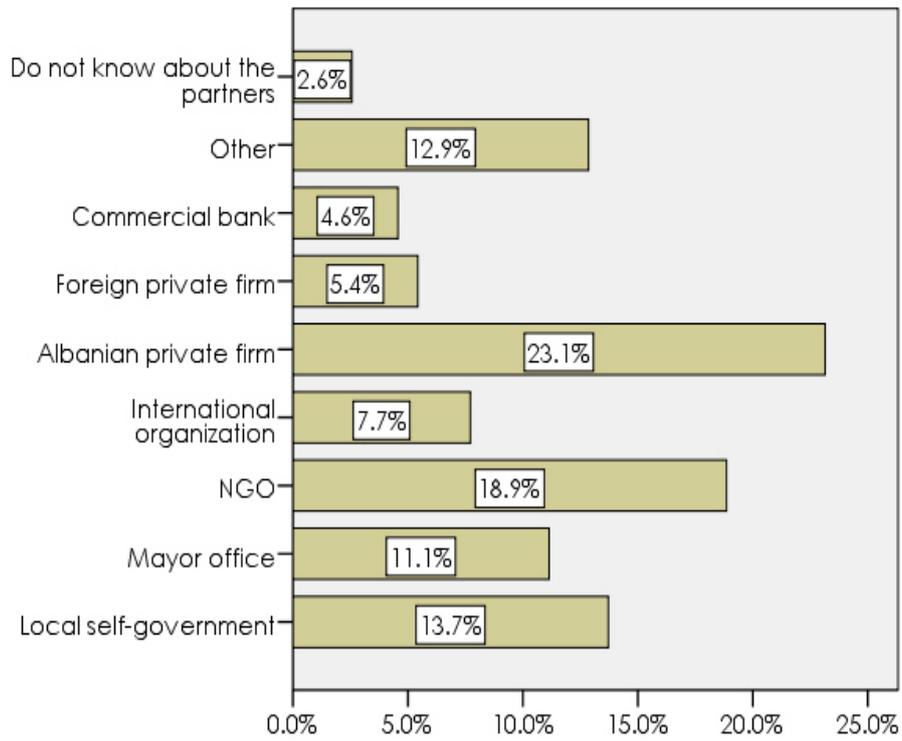


Figure 4. Which partner is most appropriate?

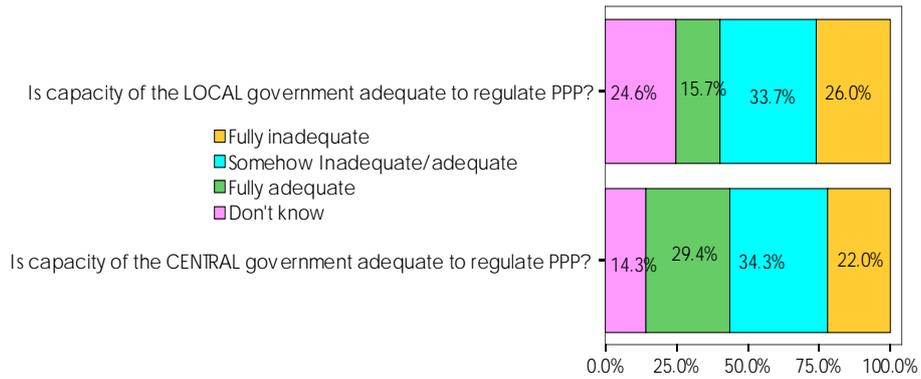


Figure 5. Is capacity of the CENTRAL - LOCAL government adequate to regulate PPP?

Table 5. Do you know, which CENTRAL government unit is responsible for PPP support and implementation monitoring in Albania?

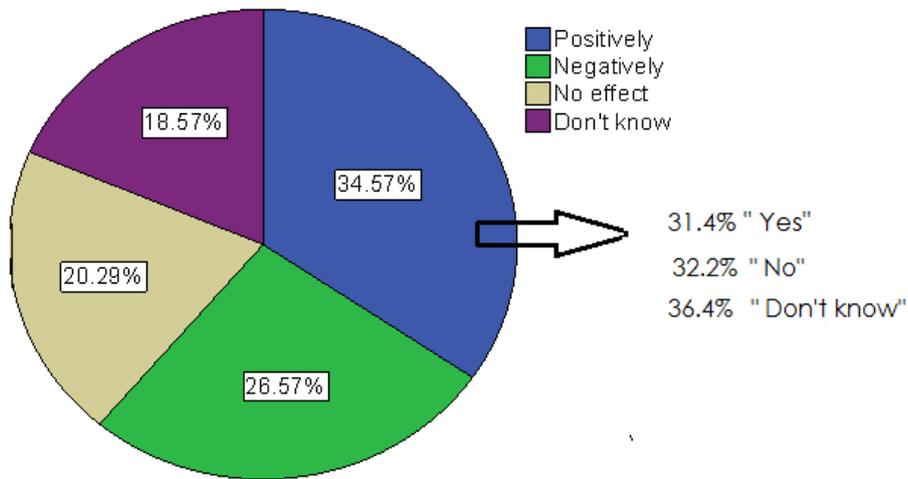
	Faculty of Econ.	Faculty of Judic.	Faculty of Social.	Faculty of Philo.	Total
1. Council of Ministers	9.3%	22.8%	25.4%	19.7%	17.7%
2. Ministry of Finances and Economy	20.9%	19.0%	32.4%	14.1%	21.4%
3. Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	23.3%	6.3%	5.6%	19.7%	15.1%
4. Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth	6.2%	5.1%	1.4%	2.8%	4.3%
5. Ministry of Health and Social Protection	8.5%	5.1%	4.2%	8.5%	6.9%
6. Agency of Concession Treatments	16.3%	21.5%	8.5%	8.5%	14.3%
7. Other	7.8%	1.3%	4.2%	11.3%	6.3%
8. Don't know	7.8%	19.0%	18.3%	15.5%	14.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 6.** What is the most important function of any PPP Units established at the central level dealing with implementation of PPPs in Albania?

	Bachelor degree Student	Master degree student	Total
1. Regulatory/Oversight	14.0%	32.2%	20.0%
2. PPP Nationwide Statistics	14.0%	21.7%	16.6%
3. Information/Training on PPP Implementation	26.4%	13.0%	22.0%
5. Promotion/Marketing of potential PPP projects	11.1%	9.6%	10.6%
6. Expert Resource Support	5.5%	8.7%	6.6%
7. Don't know	28.9%	14.8%	24.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 7.** Is capacity of the CENTRAL/ LOCAL government adequate to regulate PPP?

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coeff. of variation
In your opinion, is capacity of the CENTRAL government adequate to regulate PPP? (from 1-3)	1.97	.752	38.1%
In your opinion, is capacity of the LOCAL government adequate to regulate PPP? (from 1-3)	1.86	.732	39.3%



**Figure 6.** How Albanian PPP model is affecting country's integration in EU: vs. Do you know any successful PPP in Albania?

Some metrics is used for assessment of the capacity of Central and Local governments in regulating PPP projects in Albania, as it is percept by students (Table 7). This is to compare the capacities of two governments (Local and central one) toward PPP regulations.

*Third:* As every reform in Albania is seen as an effort toward EU integration of the country, *the way how PPP project is percept toward this integration process* [17] and [18] is measured through two questions of the

questionnaire and summarized in Figure 6, which is a graphic design of two cross tabulated variables:

*Fourth:* *The assessment of effectiveness of PPP projects* in terms of: a) its key *success factors* [19] and [20]. Figure 7 shows the percentage of the respondents on how much important they consider each successful factor of PPP ((1 rated as the least and 3 as highest of importance)) While, Table 8, shows some metrics of the assessment per each of the factor overall and per faculty as well.

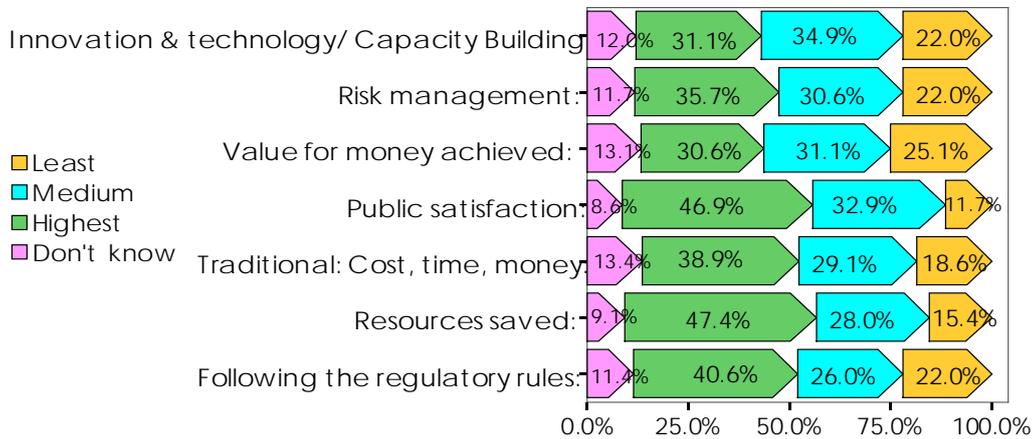


Figure 7. How do you consider each indicators of a successful PPP project, rated on their importance?

Table 8. Metrics (mean) on Assessment of key indicators of a successful PPP project

	Faculty of Econ.	Faculty of Judic.	Faculty of Social.	Faculty of Philo.	Total
Following the regulatory rules	2.17	2.40	2.26	2.00	2.21
Resources saved	2.24	2.45	2.55	2.21	2.35
Traditional: Cost, time, money	2.09	2.45	2.38	2.09	2.23
Public satisfaction	2.34	2.46	2.35	2.41	2.38
Value for money achieved	1.88	2.35	2.30	1.77	2.06
Risk management	1.95	2.35	2.30	2.15	2.16
Innovation & technology/ Capacity Building	1.88	2.36	2.23	2.07	2.1

b) its' *profound problems* [21] and [22]. Figure 8 shows the percentage of the respondents on how much important they consider each problem of PPP ((1 rated as the least and 3 as highest of importance)) While, Table 9, shows some metrics of the assessment per each of the problem according to faculties overall and per faculty as well.

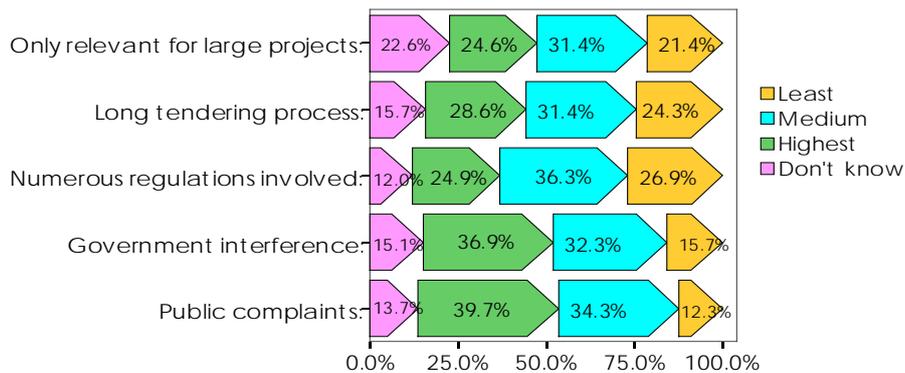


Figure 8. How do you consider each profound problem of PPP project, rated on their importance?

Table 9. Metrics (mean) on the assessment of profound problems of PPP project

	Faculty of Econ.	Faculty of Judic.	Faculty of Social.	Faculty of Philo.	Total
Public complaints	2.10	2.45	2.53	2.31	2.32
Government interference	2.21	2.33	2.39	2.05	2.25
Numerous regulations involved	1.91	2.16	2.11	1.75	1.98
Long tendering process	1.88	2.31	2.22	1.87	2.05
Only relevant for large projects	1.86	2.22	2.18	2.04	2.04

## 4. Discussion

As previously mentioned, there were 26 questions of the questionnaire; given the focus of this paper, we will not be analyzing the responses to all of them. Table 4 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents for the definition of PPP. 64% of the Overall respondents correctly define PPP, while 6.6% “Don’t know” how to define PPP. Going through each university, the majority of the students per each faculty have a good answer on the definition of PPP. Faculty of Judiciary (Law) has the highest percentage (74.7%) and Faculty of Economy has the lowest one (58.1%). This finding is explained by the fact that the right definition of PPP is mainly treated at the law of PPP, so faculty of Law’s curricula is more orientated at this direction.

Referring to figure 2 (which shows the frequency distribution of the respondents on their level of knowledge about the Law of PPP dated on 2013 in Albania), we can say that around 30% in overall have at least some knowledge about the law, while 46.57 % declared that they have no idea about the law, while 23% were not aware of their knowledge. Master’s degree student are the ones who have the largest proportion of those who already know the law in detail (52.8%). In terms of faculties, the majority for this level of knowledge belongs to Social sciences and Judiciary faculties (33% and 31%). While, if we focus at the level of “don’t know anything about the law”, the majority are bachelor’s degree students (71%) and in terms of Faculty, the one of Economy has the largest portion of the respondents (48%).

Students were asked about the most useful field of PPP implementation in Albania and the results are shown in figure 3, given a percentage of respondents per each field. “Roads” has the highest percentage (19.4%), followed by “Basic healthcare” (15.7%), “Water Supply” (13.7%) and “Access to tourist sites” (11.4%). These are the most sensitive fields considered to have PPP project intervention.

If we compare this public perception with the fields where PPP are actually implemented (table 1), we see that ‘Solid waste and Sewage, Energy’ is considered as the most useful field by the Government (25.4%), followed by “Basic Healthcare” (25.3%), “Finance”, “Economic development”, “Education” etc. Besides “Roads” and “Basic healthcare” fields, where there is some consistency, for other fields, there is a miss consistency about the fields that are considered most useful by the public on one side and the government, on the other side. Considering the fact that “Public satisfaction” (Table 8) and “Public complaints” (Table 9) are considered at the most important respectively success factor and profound problem, the government should make more efforts to hear public voice in terms of implementing a PPP, since when choosing the field where it should be applied.

Asked about the appropriateness (Figure 4) of the

partner involved in PPP, the majority was for “Albanian Private Firms” (23.11%), followed by NGO (18.9%) and Local self-government (13.7%). This panorama, make us think that students still believe in the success of PPP implemented by the partners within the country, where private sector is most favored, civil society the second and the local government, the third, coming up with option “other” with 12.9% (which they might think it is central government”, but still this is the fourth).

Table 5 shows a frequency distribution of the government unit responsible for support/implementation/monitoring of PPP. The way how it is in Albania, the majority of the overall students (65.4%) think that this is the responsibility of the executive (Council of Ministers and Ministries) only 14.3% have the correct perception (“Agency of Concession Treatments”) and the majority of the correct answers are within Faculty of Judiciary, which still confirms the need of for the updated curricula from other faculties in this regard.

These results show public perception on centralization of PPP phenomenon by the governmental executive. This goes in line with the result of Figure 5, where 24.6% of the respondents “Don’t have knowledge” on the capacity of Local government to regulate PPP, while comparing with 15.4% for the same question regarding central government. Central government is more in game involved when talking for PPP and public awareness is more sensitive toward it.

Table 7 shows about metrics on the assessment of capacity for these two types of governments. It shows that local government is assessed at a lower level of adequacy to regulate PPP than Central government (1.86 toward 1.97), considering in this regard central government as a more important PPP regulator.

While the most important function of any PPP established at the central level (Table 6) is considered to be: “Information /training on PPP (22%), followed by “Regulatory/oversight” (20%) and “Statistics” (16.6%). These three items show that a higher transparency function of the central level is asked by the general public on PPP projects. Master’s degree students ask most for “Regulator”, they know reality much better and in practice, so they need transparency in terms of rules and laws and non-corruption, while bachelor’s degree, consider as most important function “Information and training”, this goes in line with their lower studies level, they are eager for information and training.

European integration perspective is felt in every reform that Albania is having, so it is interesting to find out how PPP is affecting this integration prospect. Figure 6 shows a frequency distribution on this assessment, and the majority of the respondents (34.57%) consider the way how PP is implemented as an initiative which is positively affecting the integration process, 26.67% consider it as negatively affecting, while 20.29% thinks that there is not effect of PPP projects in EU integration process and 18.57% are indecisive in correlation among the two processes, which

brings in mind for more efforts to make the two processes known in general public, not only as a separate reforms or initiatives, but as a part of a whole endeavor.

We have considered 7 indicators [12] of a successful PPP projects and ask the respondents to rate per each of them their importance 1= the least, 2= medium, 3= the highest, 8= don't know. Figure 7, shows the results, from which we can say that: the factor that is considered as the least important by most of the respondents (25.1%) is "Value for money achieved"; the factor that is considered at medium importance by most of the respondents (34.9%) is "Innovation and technology/ capacity building"; the factor that is rated with the highest level of importance by most of the respondents (47.4%) is "Resource saved" followed shortly by "Public satisfaction" (46.9%). Table 8 (which shows the metrics per each key indicator of success) confirms what Figure 7 speaks about: almost every factor is considered as above average of importance (Means >2). "Public satisfaction" and "Resource saved" are the ones with the highest mean (respectively 2.38 and 2.35), which make these two factors as top indicators, through which a PPP is publicly evaluated as successful project.

We have considered 5 most profound problems [12], that are associated with a PPP project and ask the respondents to rate per each of them their importance 1= the least, 2= medium, 3= the highest, 8= don't know. Figure 8, shows that: the problem that is considered as the least important by most of the respondents (26.9%) is "Numerous regulations involved", the factor that is considered at medium importance by most of the respondents (36.3%) is still the "Numerous regulations involved"; the factor that is rated with the highest level of importance by most of the respondents (39.7%) is "Public complains" followed shortly by "Government Interference" (36.9%). Table 9 (which shows the metrics per each profound problem) confirms what Figure 8 talks about: almost every problem is considered as above average of importance (Means >2). "Public Complains" and "Government interference" are the ones with the highest mean (respectively 2.32 and 2.25), which make these two problems as the most important once regarding PPP project. Less than medium importance (1.98) is considered the "Numerous regulations involved".

## 5. Conclusions

This study is an attempt to assess the young educated generation's awareness about the new development tool such as the PPP. Information channels of all types do their function on informing people about socio-economic-judicial terms, but there is a lack of attention in promoting critical thinking on the phenomenon and perceive it as a multidisciplinary issue. It is very encouraging to know that close to 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the students surveyed correctly identified the technical definition of PPP. That said, quite contrary to the expectation, only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the students thought PPP

projects would make Albania a favourite for EU ascension. It needs to be investigated why this is the case. The awareness on what happens in the country regarding PPP related legislation and regulations tools is poor among the students. Only around 21% of the respondents had some knowledge about the recent laws on PPP in Albania. The students are of the view that PPP should consider the general public as the ultimate beneficiaries and their satisfaction should be the final yardstick on whether and how it should be employed as a developmental vehicle.

Consistent with this, it seems that more efforts should be done by university faculties (especially the faculty of Economy) to update their curricula with new concepts and models in PPP. Courses should be offered at the bachelor's degree level of studies or even before that in the high schools.

A more decentralized outlook on the PPP issue should be developed, giving more space to the local governments on PPP regulation and implementation. Central government should enforce the function of transparency (information) and regulatory terms (fighting the corruption) in terms of PPP implementation; because this is the function that the public is asking from Central government units.

Whenever a reform or initiative is introduced, it should be considered in correlation with the outcomes of other reforms (especially the ones related with the EU integration) and make this effort measurable through direct/indirect effects it has upon other disciplines. This will synchronize sustainable development and socio-economic progress.

Considering the fact that "Public satisfaction" and "Public complains" are considered as the most important respectively successful factor and profound problem, the government should make more efforts to hear public voice in terms of implementing a PPP, since when deciding about the field where PPP project is implemented.

When determining a PPP project as a success or not, the general public is sensitive toward indicators such as "Public satisfaction", "Resource saved", and "Cost/time/money". These three criteria should be kept in consideration when the call for PPP is issued by government and during the process of evaluation bids.

Of particular concern to the success of PPP are "Public complains" and unnecessary "Government interference". Efforts should be made to avoid unwanted interference and to mitigate complains, through strict regulatory practices and by a means of a mix of rewards and punishments. The political class and the bureaucrats are key players, but their powers should have boundaries.

We encourage further studies on how PPP is perceived in the Albanian society, widening the scope of the study to include other key stakeholders, such as: Businesses (Private firms), Governmental units (Local and Central), Media, and the Civil Society. A comparison across these groups would provide valuable perspectives. Also, although firmly rooted, it is still an untested assumption that the engagement of developmental models like the PPP

as tools for socio-economic development would increase the attractiveness of Albania among the EU negotiators; this too needs to be tested in the light of empirical data. Finally, it should be recognized that, regardless of whether it is going to aid EU acceptance, PPPs do have a role in the development of a nation. In other words, the costs and benefits of PPP deserve to be studied based on other independent matrices and measures as well.

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