MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL AND TRANSVERSAL SKILLS IN THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: *This study aims to conduct a multidimensional analysis of professional (hard) and transferable (soft) skills within the academic institutional environment, using a praxiological approach applied at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (ASEM). In a context marked by profound digital transformations and increased volatility in the labor market, the study investigates faculty members' perceptions regarding the relevance, use, and methods of developing these skills, which are essential for a knowledge-based economy. The research methodology involved the use of a comprehensive questionnaire, structured into five thematic sections, which enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from a representative sample of faculty members. The investigation focused on identifying correlations between variables such as years of teaching experience, academic rank, and the degree of digitization of the educational process. The results highlight the central role of digital literacy and effective communication as pillars of contemporary pedagogical success, while also pointing to a discrepancy between the recognition of the importance of soft skills (empathy, adaptability, teamwork) and the formal opportunities available for developing them. The study highlights the need for a strategic approach to the continuing education of academic staff, moving beyond the traditional model of self-directed learning. The conclusions offer pragmatic recommendations for optimizing institutional strategies, proposing the creation of centers for pedagogical development and the institutionalization of programs dedicated to cross-cutting competencies. This integrated approach is fundamental for aligning the educational process with European standards and for strengthening the institution's prestige in the face of the dynamic demands of today's socio-economic environment.*

Keywords: *soft skills, hard skills, transferable skills, praxiological study, professional development, knowledge-based economy.*

Classification JEL: *I23, I25, M19, M53.*

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1. Introduction

In today's educational landscape, marked by rapid digitalization and a redefinition of the paradigms of human interaction, the role of the university professor goes beyond the mere transmission of specialized knowledge. The quality of education in higher education is no longer determined solely by the professor's academic expertise, but increasingly depends on a complex symbiosis between "hard" skills (technical and specialized) and "soft" skills (transversal and socio-emotional). Although professional competence remains the foundation of academic authority, current labor market dynamics and the profile of new generations of students require faculty members to demonstrate greater adaptability,

empathetic communication, and advanced proficiency with digital tools. The central issue addressed in this study concerns the discrepancy between the theoretical recognition of the importance of soft skills and the extent to which they are formally integrated into continuing professional development strategies.

Recent studies suggest that, while digital and methodological competencies benefit from visible institutional support, interpersonal and self-management skills often remain the preserve of informal learning, left to the discretion of the teacher's individual experience. The main objective of this study is to investigate the level of use, perceived importance, and development needs of soft and hard skills among faculty members at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (ASEM). The research aims to identify not only the core skills considered critical to success in the classroom, but also the structural barriers that limit continuous professional development. In this regard, the study seeks to answer questions such as: What is the actual role of soft skills in the success of teaching from the perspective of senior teachers? And to what extent does the current organizational climate facilitate or, conversely, inhibit the successful development of these competencies?

The methodology adopted is predominantly exploratory and inductive, using a questionnaire as the primary tool to capture both quantitative data and subjective perceptions from a representative sample of faculty members. Choosing this approach allows for a nuanced diagnosis of the phenomenon, offering an authentic perspective on the "praxiology" of competencies in the academic environment.

2. Literature Review

The paradigm shift in global higher education shifts the focus from an exclusive evaluation of technical competencies (hard skills) to an integrated recognition of transversal competencies (soft skills). In the contemporary socio-economic context, labeled as the knowledge-based economy, the academic instructor is no longer a simple transmitter of structured information, but a facilitator of learning experiences and human capital development.

According to the empirical findings formulated by Deaconu et al. (2014), the university environment must maintain a functional alignment with the volatile demands of the labor market. Higher education institutions face pressure from employers who prioritize graduates equipped with highly developed socio-emotional and communicative profiles. Consequently, to cultivate these attributes in students, the academic staff must first master and actively exhibit these transversal models. Professional skills form the baseline of scientific authority, but their operationalization is structurally conditional on the interpersonal and socio-emotional framework of the professor (Romanenko et al., 2024).

Teaching efficiency is fundamentally subordonated to the quality of human relations created inside the lecture hall. From a praxiological standpoint, Bîrsan and Cepraga (2022) state that organizational communication management inside higher education represents a crucial instrument for institutional synchronization. Effective verbal communication, active listening, and empathy are not merely natural personal traits, but professional attributes that directly dictate the absorption rate of information by students. This matches the arguments of Slama-Cazacu (2000), who notes that communicative strategies are structural components of any interaction, and in the educational framework, they prevent systemic blockages. Furthermore, Șoitu (2001) builds the concept of the "pedagogy of communication", showing

that any educational act is, at its core, a communicative process where the emotional intelligence of the instructor serves as the primary transmission channel.

At the global level, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018), through its *Learning Framework 2030* (also known as the *Learning Compass 2030*), underlines that the volatile socio-economic landscape demands the active cultivation of "transformative competencies". These include creating new value, reconciling tensions, and taking responsibility. For university professors, this operational framework implies a continuous transition towards a "lifelong learner" status. Continual professional development cannot remain confined to periodic updates of narrow specialized knowledge; it must encompass a structured architecture of soft skills, such as crisis management, cognitive flexibility, and stress resilience.

The acceleration of academic digitization requires a reconfiguration of pedagogical delivery. The *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (TPACK) model, synthesized by Mishra and Koehler (2006), states that efficient digital teaching is not achieved by simply adding isolated technical tools (hard skills) into the classroom. Instead, it requires a complex, hybrid convergence of three major knowledge bodies: Content, Pedagogy, and Technology.

A professor might possess excellent knowledge of the field (Content) and standard digital skills like operating basic software (Technology), but without the dynamic integration of Pedagogical methods - which relies heavily on soft skills such as adaptability and contextual flexibility - the educational outcome remains suboptimal. Therefore, technological literacy must be seen as a hybrid competency, whose success depends entirely on the teacher's cognitive flexibility and relational capacities.

Despite the widespread literature regarding the importance of soft skills in western corporate and academic environments (Miller, 2024), there is a visible research gap regarding the practical and empirical diagnosis (praxiology) of these competencies within the specific post-Soviet transitional higher education landscape of the Republic of Moldova. Most institutional strategies for professional training remain technically oriented, focusing on rigid methodologies and administrative metrics, while ignoring the institutionalized, formal training of emotional and relational intelligence.

This study addresses this specific gap. The scientific contribution consists of a multidimensional diagnosis of the relationship between the teacher's profile (seniority, rank) and their professional reality within a major economic university (ASEM), offering an empirical framework designed to transform spontaneous, self-taught soft skills acquisition into targeted, systematic institutional policy.

3. Methodology

To ensure scholarly rigor and allow replication by other researchers, the methodological apparatus is structured as follows:

- The study uses a mixed-methods design (quantitative and qualitative), descriptive, and exploratory, operating through a praxiological approach to evaluate the operational reality of academic skills.
- The empirical data collection was conducted over a four-week period, between Apil 15, 2025, and May 15, 2025.

- The target population consists of the entire academic staff of the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (ASEM). A non-probability, purposive sampling method combined with convenience sampling was applied. The final validated sample included $N = 52$ active faculty members. The sample exhibits high internal qualitative representation relative to the institution's senior management and teaching core, as it includes a heavy concentration of Associate Professors (66%) and faculty members with over 20 years of higher education experience (60%), who directly shape the pedagogical culture of the university.
- The primary instrument was an original structured questionnaire, distributed digitally. The questionnaire consists of 19 items: 15 closed-ended questions structured on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Not at all/Very low to 5 = Extremely/Very high) used to measure the frequency of tool usage and perceived relevance, and 4 open-ended questions designed to collect qualitative feedback and define the ideal profile of the modern instructor.
- Quantitative data was processed using descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, and cross-tabulation to correlate variables (e.g., teaching experience vs. training participation). Qualitative data from open-ended responses underwent structural thematic content analysis, using open coding to extract recurring thematic categories.
- The primary limits of the study include the sample size ($N=52$), which restricts generalized statistical extrapolations to the entire national higher education system of Moldova, and the potential for social desirability bias inherent to self-reporting surveys on professional competency levels.

4. Results and Discussion

In the sample surveyed (N=52 valid respondents), the vast majority of respondents are faculty members with extensive professional experience and advanced academic ranks. The distribution by academic rank indicates that 66% of respondents are associate professors, followed by lecturers (14%) and teaching assistants (12%). Only one respondent (2%) holds the title of full professor, and two other respondents hold specific roles as methodologists (support staff involved in methodological activities).

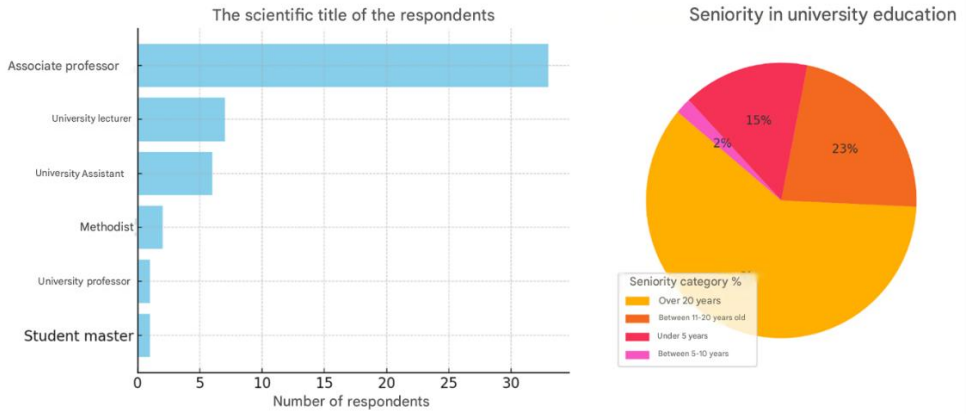

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by academic title and years of experience in higher education

***Source**: prepared by the authors based on data collected during the research*

From the perspective of seniority in higher education, the distribution is also uneven: approximately 60% of respondents have over 20 years of teaching experience, 23% have between 11-20 years, 15% have less than 5 years, and only ~2% fall within the 5-10-year range (Figure 1). A profile of the sample thus emerges that is dominated by senior faculty members (mostly associate professors with over two decades of experience), a fact that may influence perceptions of professional competencies and training needs.

The teachers surveyed indicated which types of skills they use most frequently in their current professional work (with the option to select up to 3 options). The results reveal a clear predominance of communication and digital skills: nearly all respondents frequently use communication and interpersonal skills (94% of respondents) and digital skills (88%) in their academic work. Next in terms of frequency are scientific research skills (indicated by ~70% of respondents), reflecting the important role of research activity at the university. In contrast, administrative skills (managing organizational activities) and leadership skills (management, institutional coordination) were mentioned by less than half of the sample (approximately 38% and 34%, respectively).

At the bottom of the list, adaptability and conflict resolution skills were selected by about 34% of respondents. These results suggest that, in daily practice, teachers rely primarily on soft communication skills (teaching, interacting with students and colleagues) and hard digital skills (using educational technologies), which reflects both the current demands of the modern educational process and the multiple roles that a teacher fulfills (for example, effective communication of information and the use of digital e-learning platforms).

Figure 2. The types of skills that teachers report using most frequently
***Source**: prepared by the authors based on data collected during the research*

Regarding the predominant form of interaction with students, the majority of faculty members (approx. 74%) indicated that teaching takes place in person (in a traditional classroom setting). A smaller percentage (17%) uses a hybrid teaching format (alternating between online and in-person), while the rest mentioned either individual tutoring/practical activities (~8%) or other specific forms. It is worth noting that no respondent indicated exclusively online teaching as the primary method, which reflects the institution's specific nature (economic profile) and, possibly, a return to direct interaction post-pandemic. This context also explains why digital skills are so widespread: even in face-to-face teaching,

teachers use digital tools (presentations, course management platforms, online resources). The few who did not mention digital skills among their current uses are predominantly senior teachers who teach face-to-face (without advanced technologies) or are involved in individual tutoring - situations where technology plays a lesser role.

Another aspect of assessing the current situation focused on participation in continuing professional development. The question "How often do you participate in continuing professional development activities (courses, conferences, workshops)?" reveals a moderate commitment to professional development: more than half of the respondents (52%) indicated that they participate annually, and nearly a third (29%) even more frequently, on a quarterly basis. Only ~13% attend courses or conferences monthly, while a small group (approx. 4% + 4%) rarely or never participates in such activities. These figures show that, although there is interest in training (about 81% participate in training at least annually), very few do so frequently (monthly), and a small number do not participate at all. When correlated with years of service, it is observed that teaching staff with extensive experience (over 20 years of service) participate in training at a high rate (90% of them have taken courses in the last 2 years), a sign that adapting to new requirements motivates them to learn continuously. Those at the beginning of their careers have slightly lower participation rates (approximately 75% of those with less than five years of experience have recently attended training sessions), possibly due to a lack of time or opportunities. A positive aspect highlighted by the study is the perception of organizational culture: 85% of respondents believe that the institution's organizational environment encourages continuous learning and collaboration among faculty members, while 13% believe that this is only partially encouraged. Only one person (2%) responded negatively, perceiving a lack of institutional support in this regard. This broad consensus (98% in total or partial agreement) suggests the existence of an organizational climate conducive to professional development - a favorable premise for the implementation of training strategies.

Thus, an assessment of the current situation shows that ASEM's academic staff make extensive use of both soft skills (particularly communication and interpersonal skills) and hard skills (digital and subject-specific skills) in their teaching activities. Faculty members have a positive attitude toward continuous learning, with most participating regularly in professional development and perceiving the institution as supportive of this effort. However, there are also limitations: a small segment of faculty members is hardly involved in training at all, and the general pace of training is predominantly annual, which may indicate time or resource constraints (aspects explored in the following sections). Overall, we can state that there is an awareness of the importance of professional competencies (both soft and hard) and a favorable foundation for initiatives to develop these competencies within the analyzed university environment.

Qualitative and quantitative analysis of experimental data. This section provides a detailed analysis of teachers' responses regarding the importance of soft and hard skills, their level of mastery and development, as well as perceptions of their impact on teaching practice. The analysis combines a quantitative approach (descriptive statistics, frequency distributions illustrated graphically) with a qualitative approach (examination of open-ended responses and comments provided by respondents) to offer the most comprehensive picture of the phenomenon.

Hard skills-essential for teaching. Teachers were asked to select the technical (hard) skills they consider essential for their work. Options included specific digital skills (using

Microsoft Office, e-learning platforms, specialized software), foreign language skills, research methodologies, financial analysis, etc. The results reveal a common core of technical skills perceived as critical: at the top is the use of Office-type applications (word processing, spreadsheets, presentations) - mentioned by ~77% of respondents, followed by e-learning skills (online teaching platforms, e.g., Moodle) - 66%, and knowledge of a foreign language (of international use) - 64%. Approximately 58% of respondents emphasize the importance of scientific research methodology (planning and conducting studies, data analysis), which reflects the integration of research and teaching activities. In second place is the use of specialized software (SPSS, EViews, etc.) for analysis and projects, mentioned by ~28% of faculty members, closely followed by financial analysis skills (26%). A small number of respondents (1-2 people each) also indicated other hard skills of interest, such as AI (artificial intelligence), project management, or "skills related to the courses taught, including social media," signaling specific individual needs. The overall distribution is illustrated in Figure 3.

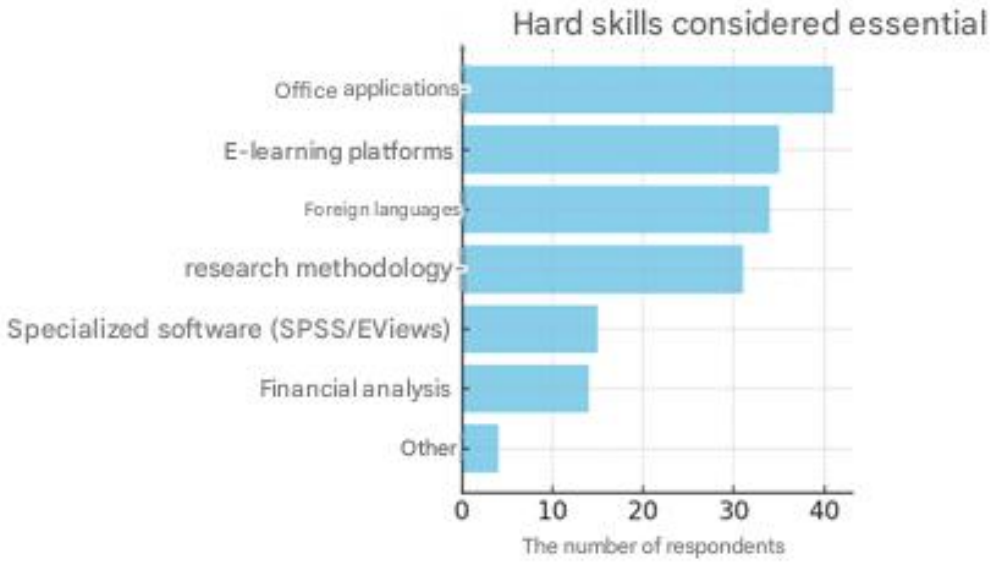

Figure 3. Hard skills considered essential by teachers

***Source**: prepared by the authors based on data collected during the research*

These findings confirm that, in addition to specialized knowledge, faculty members at a business school require a set of cross-cutting hard skills: the effective use of common digital tools, teaching in virtual environments, communication in a foreign language (to access international literature and engage in external collaborations), and research methodology. The high level of importance attributed to these skills correlates with the degree to which they are institutionally encouraged: in response to the question "To what extent do you consider that the institution encourages the development of these hard skills?", respondents provided ratings on a scale of 1–5, with an average response of 3.94. More than two-thirds (≈74%) rated the level of encouragement as high (a score of 4 or 5 out of 5), 21% rated it as moderate (a score of 3), and only 6% perceived it as low (a score of 2); notably, no faculty member considered that the institution does not encourage the development of technical skills at all (score of 1). These data suggest that there are visible institutional initiatives (IT training, research facilities, etc.), but there is also room for improvement to achieve a perception of "very high" encouragement among all employees.

As expected, the majority of teachers (85%) reported that they had participated in courses or training programs to develop technical skills (IT, software tools, foreign languages, etc.) over the past two years. The 15% who did not do so are split relatively evenly between younger staff (with less than 5 years of experience) and senior staff, a sign that barriers to participation (discussed later) can affect various categories of staff. Importantly, there is a critical mass of staff already engaged in developing hard skills, whom the institution can leverage as promoters of digital and methodological innovation.

Soft skills perceived as important. A central objective of the study was to identify the soft skills (transversal, socio-emotional, and intrapersonal) considered most essential in teaching. Teachers were able to choose up to 3 from a predefined list of soft skills. Effective communication clearly emerged as a priority: 90% of respondents selected "effective verbal communication" as a very important soft skill in their work. Additionally, approximately 60% cited empathy and active listening, highlighting the need to understand and connect with students, and another 60% mentioned adaptability to change, an essential quality in a dynamic educational environment. Critical thinking was chosen by 55% of respondents, suggesting that teachers value fostering a critical mindset, not just imparting factual knowledge. Next are emotional intelligence (45%) - the ability to manage one's emotions and relate empathetically - and teamwork (42%) as important skills, reflecting both the teacher-student relationship and collaboration among colleagues within departments or on projects. Skills such as time management were mentioned by 32% of respondents, and resilience and stress management by about 26%, a sign that a considerable portion of faculty members feel the pressure of academic stress and find the ability to manage it useful. Leadership (12 mentions, 23%) appears to be a lower priority among individual soft skills - an understandable finding, since not all faculty members hold leadership roles, and those who do not coordinate teams may not perceive leadership as an immediate necessity. The vast majority of teachers recognize the importance of communication and interpersonal skills, along with empathy and adaptability, as the foundation of effectiveness in education. Figure 4 summarizes these results.

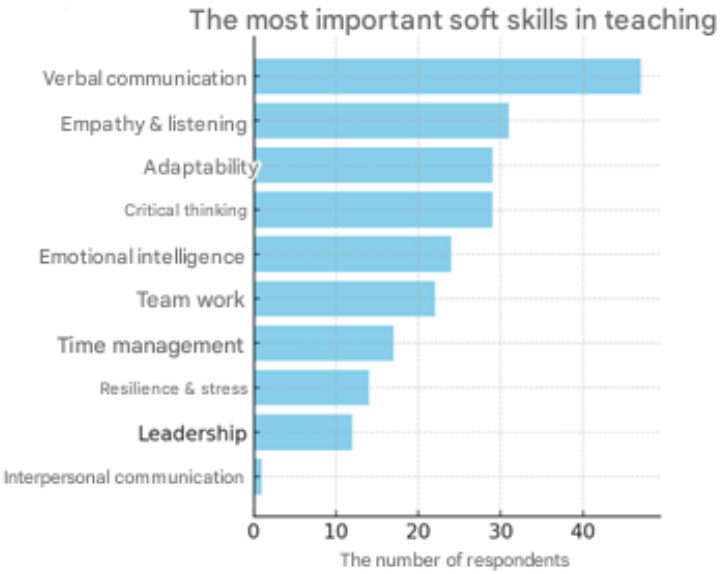

Figure 4. The top soft skills considered necessary for teaching (ranked by frequency of mention)

***Source**: prepared by the authors based on data collected during the research*

Ways of Acquiring Soft Skills. An interesting insight gained from the survey is how teachers acquired most of the soft skills they possess. The responses highlight the predominance of informal and experiential learning: 94% of respondents indicated that they developed their soft skills through professional and personal experience, learning from classroom practice and real-life interactions with students and colleagues. Furthermore, more than half (≈51%) mentioned that they were self-taught in this process - they cultivated their communication, time management, and empathy skills on their own, likely through personal reflection, reading, observation, and self-improvement efforts. In contrast, only 40% participated in dedicated training for soft skills (communication workshops, pedagogy courses, personal development, etc.).

The Importance of Soft Skills in Teaching Success. A key question explored teachers' perceptions of the role that soft skills play in their teaching success, compared to hard skills. The responses, expressed as percentages (value ranges), unanimously point toward recognition of the importance of soft skills: no respondent considered that soft skills contribute less than 25% to success, a sign that all view these skills as at least as important as subject-matter expertise. Most respondents - 55% - believe that 50-75% of success in the classroom is due to soft skills, while another 26% go even further, estimating that soft skills account for more than 75% of success compared to hard skills. The remaining 19% consider the contribution of soft skills to success to be in the range of 25–50%; no faculty member cited a lower percentage. In practice, the overwhelming majority of faculty members confirm the paradigm that "a good teacher is defined not only by their expertise in the field, but also by their ability to communicate, motivate, understand, and connect with students."

The impact of soft skills on various aspects of professional practice. To elaborate on how soft skills specifically influence teachers' performance, respondents were asked what exactly "directly influences soft skills," with the option to select up to three aspects. The results highlight the multiple and interconnected effects of these skills. The most frequently mentioned positive consequence of a high level of soft skills is the quality of communication with students and colleagues - 46 respondents (87%) indicated that soft skills (e.g., empathy, presentation skills, active listening) lead to better, clearer, and more effective communication with students and the academic community.

The second effect, closely linked to the first, is overall professional performance: ~66% believe that mastering soft skills enhances teaching and academic performance (for example, an empathetic and communicative teacher achieves better results in the teaching-learning process). In third place (60%) is the ability to analyze information and form well-reasoned opinions, suggesting that teachers view soft skills as higher-order cognitive abilities (critical thinking, reflection) that help them process information and make well-informed decisions. This is closely followed by effective teamwork (57%): soft skills (such as cooperation, open communication, and emotional intelligence) facilitate collaboration with colleagues within departments, research projects, or other institutional stakeholders, thereby increasing team efficiency. A smaller but still significant number of respondents believe that soft skills directly influence problem-solving ability (34%) - for example, creative thinking, stress management, and flexibility help in finding solutions to challenges that arise in the educational process.

Managing emotions (both one's own and students') was cited by 19% of respondents as being influenced by soft skills, and conflict management by 15%; these lower percentages indicate either that not all teachers frequently encounter conflict situations, or that some

consider conflict management a separate, more specialized component of competencies. Figure 5 provides an overview of these influences.

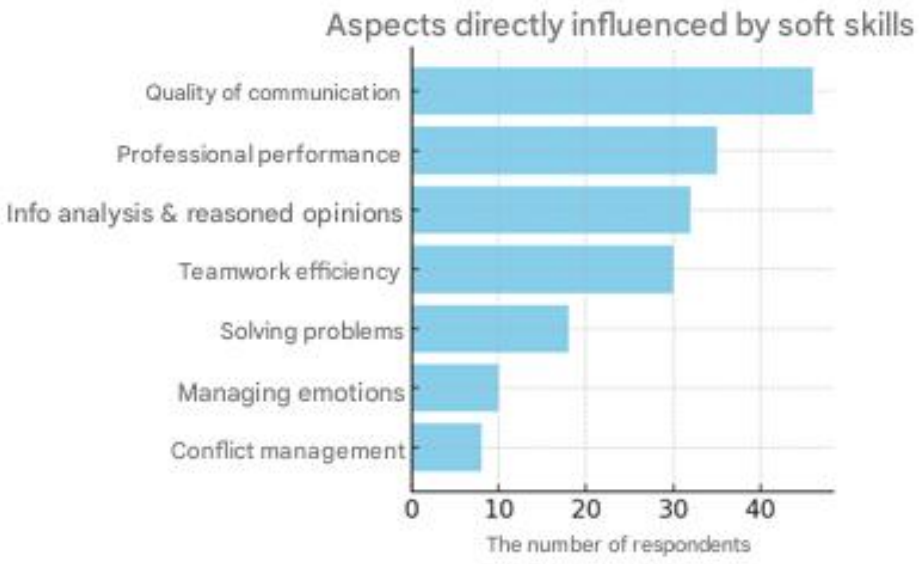

Figure 5. Aspects of teaching practice directly influenced by the level of soft skills (teachers' opinions, frequency of mention)

***Source**: prepared by the authors based on data collected during the research*

Overall, these findings confirm the existing literature, which emphasizes the critical role of soft skills in the educational environment. A teacher with well-developed interpersonal skills can communicate the subject matter more effectively, motivate and inspire students, collaborate more efficiently with colleagues, and handle challenges (discipline issues, conflicts, adapting content to the class profile, etc.) with calm and creativity. Therefore, investing in the development of these skills has a multiplier effect: not only does it improve the individual performance of the teacher, but it can also raise the quality of interactions across the entire organization.

Future development needs – skills that need to be emphasized. An analysis of future development needs reveals a convergence of responses toward three priority areas of nearly equal importance: digital skills (60%), interpersonal skills (58%), and research and innovation skills (58%). Secondarily, leadership and management skills are mentioned by 28% of respondents, reflecting aspirations toward administrative roles. To a lesser extent, specific needs such as conflict management, optimizing official correspondence, and tailoring training to specific disciplines were highlighted. Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of the main responses.

This feedback underscores the imperative of continuously adapting to the challenges of digitalization and e-learning by improving IT skills. At the same time, it confirms the growing awareness of the need to strengthen interpersonal skills (empathy, adaptability), which are vital in student-centered educational paradigms. The prioritization of research and innovation skills reflects the aspiration toward scientific excellence and curriculum modernization, while the interest in leadership indicates the need for specific training in educational management for potential coordination roles. Specific suggestions regarding conflict management or administrative communication point to specific areas that can be addressed through customized training modules.

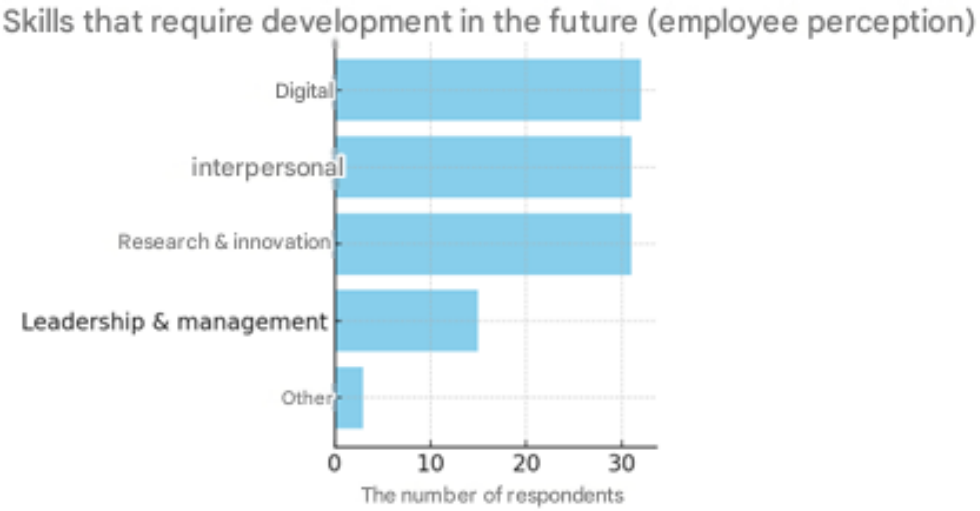

Figure 6. Types of skills perceived as requiring further development within the institution

***Source**: prepared by the authors based on data collected during the research*

This feedback underscores the imperative of continuously adapting to the challenges of digitalization and e-learning by improving IT skills. At the same time, it confirms the growing awareness of the need to strengthen interpersonal skills (empathy, adaptability), which are vital in student-centered educational paradigms. The prioritization of research and innovation skills reflects the aspiration toward scientific excellence and curriculum modernization, while the interest in leadership indicates the need for specific training in educational management for potential coordination roles. Specific suggestions regarding conflict management or administrative communication point to specific areas that can be addressed through customized training modules.*The main obstacles to professional development*. One key question focused on identifying the factors that limit the development of teachers' professional competencies. Respondents could select up to two obstacles from a list (including the option to add others).

Approximately 77% of respondents (41 faculty members) cited "lack of time" as a major factor hindering their professional development. This reflects the heavy workload of university faculty (lectures/seminars, preparing materials, administrative tasks, research, student advising, etc.), leaving little time available for training or additional self-study. The second obstacle, mentioned by 43% of respondents, is the lack of institutional resources necessary for professional development.

This issue may include a lack of funding for attending conferences or courses, limited access to high-quality training programs, insufficient resources for developing practical skills, or even inadequate managerial support. At the same level (43%) is the lack of individual motivation among teachers. Such a percentage indicates that nearly half of teachers acknowledge that, beyond external factors, low motivation constitutes an impediment to continuous professional development. The next most common obstacle (12%) is the mismatch between training offerings and teachers' needs. In other words, a certain number of teachers believe that the available training programs are not relevant, up-to-date, or tailored to the specifics of their subject and their interests, which discourages them from participating. Figure 7 summarizes these results.

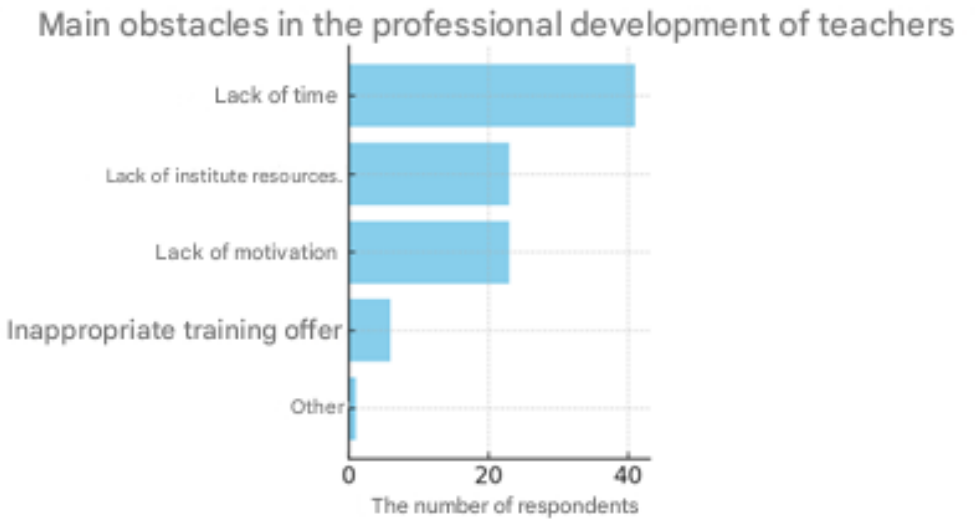

Figure 7. Types of skills perceived as requiring further development within the institution

***Source**: prepared by the authors based on data collected during the research*

The Ideal Profile of the Modern University Faculty Member - Qualitative Perspectives. The final part of the qualitative analysis focuses on the professors' open-ended responses to the question: "How would you describe, in a few words, the ideal profile of a modern university faculty member?" This question generated a series of descriptions and adjectives that allow us to understand the collective vision of the model of excellence in the teaching profession.

Analysis of these responses reveals certain recurring key traits:

- *High professional and teaching competence*. Many respondents emphasized that an ideal teacher must be "professional" and "competent," with a solid background in both their field of study and teaching. Descriptions such as "intelligent, well-prepared, and using modern methods" or "excellent teaching skills" were frequently cited. The emphasis, therefore, is on mastery of the scientific content and the ability to convey it effectively (pedagogical skills).
- *Empathy and openness toward students*. The most frequently mentioned quality was empathy. The term "empathetic" appears explicitly nine times in the responses, often accompanied by "and a good listener." The ideal professor is perceived as being close to students, capable of understanding their needs and difficulties. Likewise, being "close to students," "friendly," and "communicative" are ideas that emerge from multiple descriptions.
- *Openness to new ideas and adaptability*. About 10 respondents used the word "open" in phrases such as "open to knowledge/innovation" and "open to new ideas." This implies both a desire for continuous professional development (lifelong learning) and receptiveness to new teaching methods or technologies. Adaptability is also confirmed by terms such as "flexible" or "adaptable" (mentioned at least 4 times). The ideal teacher can adapt to changes in the curriculum, new generations of students, and various unforeseen situations.
- *Motivation and passion*. Several terms highlight the importance of passion for the profession - "passionate," "dedicated," and "committed" were mentioned repeatedly.

Likewise, "motivated" appears several times, indicating that an ideal teacher is motivated, enthusiastic, and puts their heart into what they do, which in turn motivates and inspires students.

- *Communication and collaboration skills*. The ideal candidate is a "good communicator" and "public speaker" who is effective at conveying messages, but also "collaborative" (a term mentioned in several responses).
- *Integrity and humanism*. Character traits such as "fairness," "integrity," "patience," and "calmness" were also mentioned. Some emphasized that the ideal teacher should be "respectful," "understanding," and "kind," suggesting an ethical and empathetic profile rather than an authoritarian one.
- *A focus on continuous development*. Many descriptions suggest the idea of "continuous learning" - an ideal teacher is "always improving," "up to date with the latest research," and "keeping pace with technology." Thus, intellectual flexibility and curiosity are integral parts of this profile.

One respondent's concise description of the ideal profile goes as follows: "Intelligent, professional, flexible, approachable to students, passionate about their work, open to innovation, and empathetic." This statement encapsulates most of the qualities mentioned by others and can serve as a composite sketch of the educator the academic community desires. It is worth noting that the emphasis is placed on both professional competencies (intelligence, professionalism) and soft skills (empathy, communication, adaptability, passion). This reinforces the message of the entire study: the ideal balance between hard and soft skills is essential for teaching excellence. Without solid knowledge and technical skills, a teacher cannot deliver quality content; however, without soft skills (communication, empathy, openness), they cannot effectively convey that content and cannot truly educate students.

5. Conclusions

This study has highlighted the indispensable nature of a holistic approach to the professional training of university faculty, demonstrating that effectiveness in contemporary higher education depends on a functional balance between hard skills (subject-matter expertise) and soft skills (transversal skills). The praxiological analysis conducted within ASEM confirms that, although academic expertise remains the pillar of scientific authority, pedagogical success is mediated by the ability to communicate, empathize, and adapt to a digitalized environment.

A key finding of the study is the existence of a discrepancy between the recognition of the value of transferable skills and the institutional mechanisms for developing them. The data indicate that the development of interpersonal and research skills is often left to individual effort and informal learning, a process hindered by major structural obstacles, particularly a chronic lack of time (77%) and limited financial resources. This time pressure, generated by administrative and teaching tasks, constitutes the main barrier to innovation and scientific performance.

In conclusion, the transition to a student-centered education aligned with the demands of the knowledge-based economy requires a paradigm shift at the organizational level. It is imperative that the institution become a catalyst for skills development by:

- Institutionalizing cross-disciplinary training by creating programs focused on soft skills and research, moving beyond the traditional model of self-directed learning.
- Digitally optimizing processes and reducing administrative burdens through automation, to free up time for professional development.
- Providing managerial and motivational support through the implementation of incentive mechanisms that recognize and reward excellence in both dimensions of the teaching profile.

Only by strategically integrating these areas can the university ensure a resilient faculty capable of delivering a superior learning experience and strengthening its academic prestige within the European context.

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