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THE NEED FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS MANAGERS

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Abstract. *The development of the intellectual abilities of managers is an essential mechanism for the modernization of the society in a continuous phenomenon of globalization. According to A.N. Dakhin, this means that, in fact, "the ability to generate, reproduce, master and use knowledge becomes the main resource of a person in the 21st century". Another point of view in this direction is the opinion of Michael Barber, one of the world's leading experts in educational policy, who states that the need for a transition to a school model, "whose purpose is to prepare students, has become obvious, for the knowledge-based economy, developing the ability to search, synthesize and critically understand an increasing volume of information, as well as the simple assimilation of knowledge. " Thus, managers certainly need to train and develop appropriate skills to perform their activities in optimal and efficient conditions". M. Barber suggests that the educational outcomes of graduates depend mainly on the quality of teaching. One of the structural elements that characterizes an efficient education system is the professional teaching staff and the "continuous improvement of the qualities and skills of the staff".*

A large number of studies have been devoted to the problem of professional development of a teacher, but the issue of leading teachers learning we find it in less researches.

Keywords: *firefighters, route, evaluation, military personnel, running, stages.*

Introduction. The analysis of the literature [2, 3, 4, 6] reflects a series of works that approached elements of research with reference to the understanding of professional development. Some researchers consider professional development from the perspective of qualitative transformations of the psychological system [5, 6]. Others, however, perceive it as "the growth, formation, integration and implementation in the pedagogical activity of professionally significant personal qualities and abilities, knowledge and skills".

Among the approaches needed to define the concept of professional development of the sports manager we can list:

- professional development of the personality of the sports manager;

- personal development that determines the improvement of his professionalism;

- professional development is integrated and is achieved in the professional activity and interaction of the sports manager with the environment [7].

In national / international psychology and pedagogy are presented various approaches to the definition of components of professionally conditioned personality. L.M. Mitina [6] identifies three integral elements in this regard: concentration, competence and flexibility.

The **aim of the research** is to analyze and determine the need to address lifelong learning and professional development of lifelong executives in order to achieve individual and organizational performance.

Research objectives:

- identifying the factors that impose the need for professional development of management;

- elaboration and application of the theoretical and praxiological model of transformational leadership (TPMTL) in order to generate the development of individual and organizational performances;

- obtaining the necessary data and information to determine the competencies of management in order to stimulate change and the degree of individual and organizational performance.

The TPMTL provides solutions for addressing transformational leadership in the context of the professional development of sports managers to improve individual and organizational performance. The transformational leadership and the culture of

the sports organization constitute a managerial and value premise in the formation of the leader in order to develop the organizational performances.

In order to achieve the proposed goal, we proceeded to develop and apply the questionnaire consisting of 15 questions. It was applied to a focus group of 197 people, of which: 49 teachers from high schools and sports schools in Romania, 67 managers of different levels from sports organizations, 42 graduates of the faculties of physical education and sports and 39 employers.

Interpretation of relevant data and information in the context of the research topic

To the question: "Can you list the factors that can generate the professional development of sports managers?" we have obtained the following answers:

| No. | Answer variants | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-----|--|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Professional development courses | 24 | 12% |
| 2 | Personal development programs | 29 | 15% |
| 3 | The influence of the team | 32 | 16% |
| 4 | Leadership and coaching programs | 16 | 8% |
| 5 | Participation in events and round tables on various topics of interest | 51 | 26% |
| 6 | Participation in events that address issues related to change and risk in management | 45 | 23% |

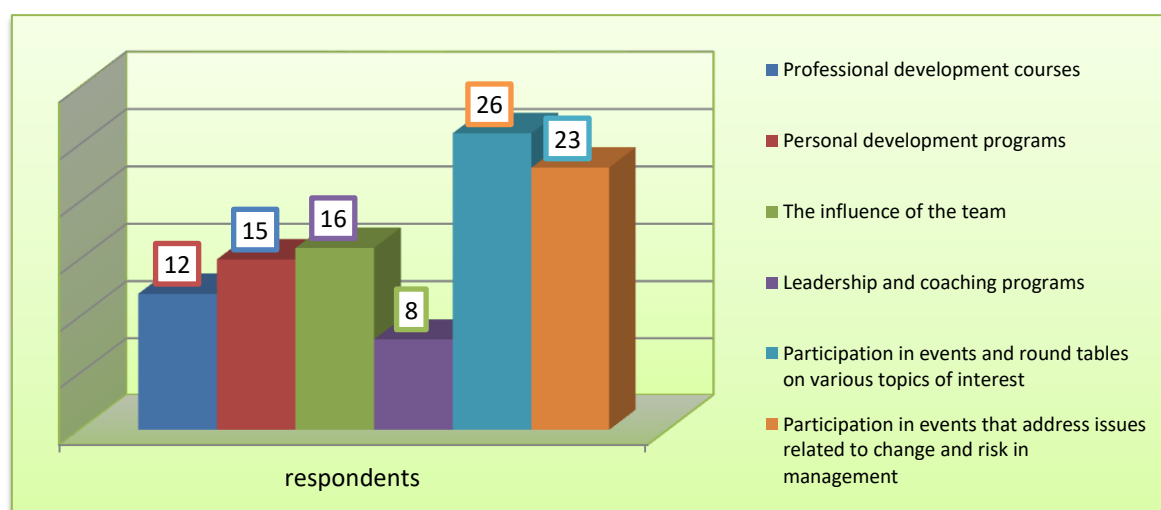


Fig. 1. Graphic representation of the answers regarding the factors that can generate the professional development of sports managers

From the analysis of the factors that can stimulate professional development in the management staff of the physical education and sports system, we identified that there are situations that can lead to negative attitudes among specialists, oriented towards certain perceptions and desires not to change personally / organizational. The lack of a training / professional development system in this direction can be associated with certain methodological shortcomings, poor health, lack of time, limited financial resources, including certain living circumstances. Lack of objective information about the necessary activities that can stimulate participation in various events, round tables, development programs, training, leadership and coaching can lead to loss of interest in this regard. Stimulating factors mentioned by respondents in various percentages: professional development courses (12%); personal development programs (15%), team influence (16%), leadership and coaching programs

(8%), participation in events with different topics of interest (26%) or those that address change and risk management (23%) %) can make up a well-established system of methodical activity in the training and professional development programs of sports managers. The availability of specialists (continuing education and continuing education courses) from which one can learn continuously throughout one's life put into practice models of good educational practice, their example and influence, ability to gain team recognition, novelty and experience in the field, providing the necessary support and attention to a certain issue of interest from the sports manager, the need for self-improvement and last but not least the creation of an atmosphere of study, cooperation and development support.

Responses on the question: "Do you know what the concept of transformational leadership entails?" were the following:

| No. | Variants of answers | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 31 | 16% |
| 2 | No | 129 | 65% |
| 3 | Hard to answer | 37 | 19% |

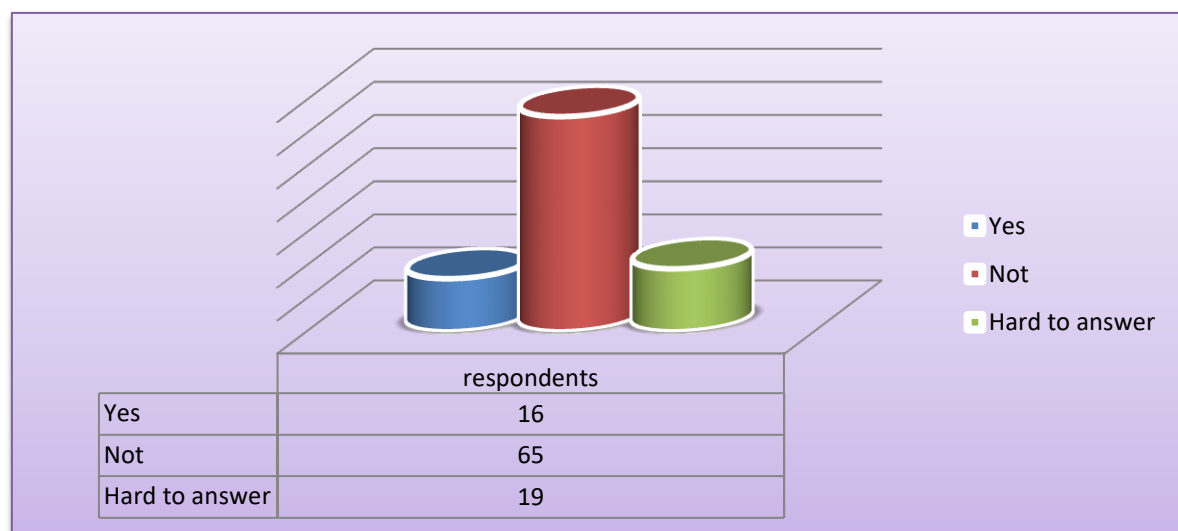


Fig. 2. Graphic representation of the answers with reference to the concept of transformational leadership

According to the author of the theory of transformational leadership B.M. Bass, transformational leadership should be distinguished from the transactional one. Transactional leadership refers to the process of motivating potential customers by appealing to their interests and to generating rewards and promises in line with their efforts. Instead, transformational leadership is more about mutual commitment between leader and subordinate. Leaders try to stimulate their subordinates' enthusiasm for change and development, trying to get them to understand the key issues of the group or organization and generate interest in their performance, achievement, growth and development. Also, Western psychologists B.M Bass, B.J. Avolio

[1], who approached research on the theory of transformational leadership, considered that the term charisma is a completely measurable quality of a person. Following the research, a certain set of properties was identified, by measuring which it is possible to determine the degree of charisma of a person.

Regarding the answers to the question: "Do you think that the development and application in professional development programs of a theoretical-praxiological model of transformational leadership could stimulate the improvement of the individual performance of the sports manager and the sports entity?" they were arranged in the following way:

| No. | Variants of answers | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 136 | 69% |
| 2 | No | 32 | 16% |
| 3 | I don't know | 29 | 15% |

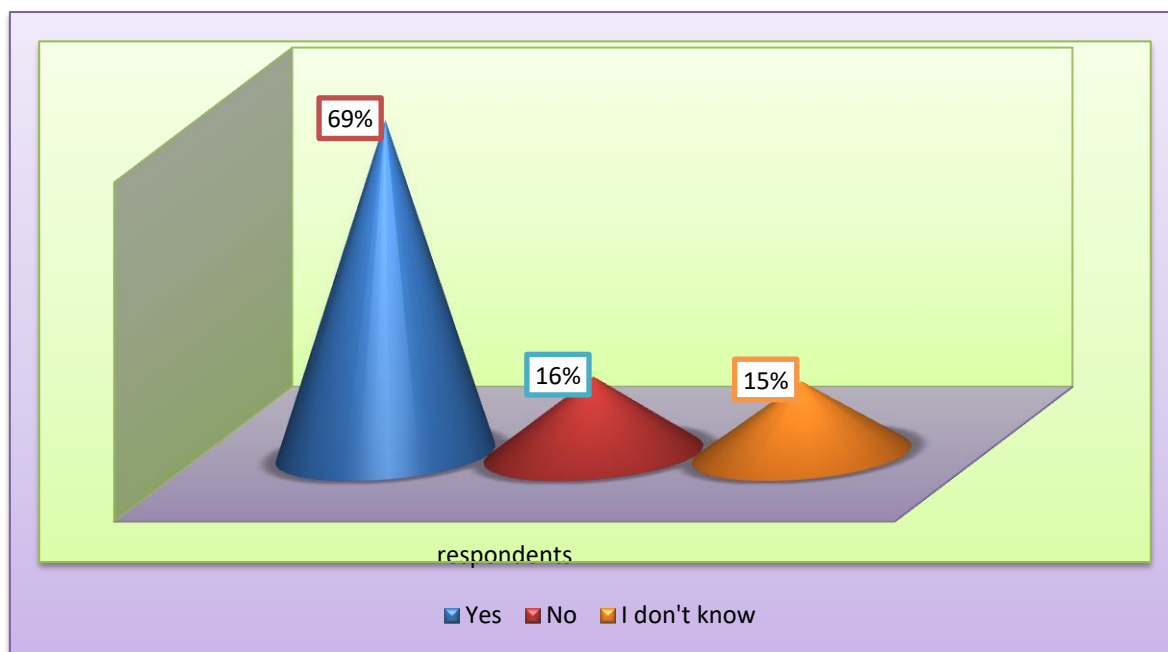


Fig. 3. Graphic representation of the answers with reference to a theoretical-praxiological model of transformational leadership of sports managers

From Figure 3 we can see that the majority (69%) of those interviewed gave affirmative answers regarding the need to develop and apply a new training / professional development model focused on the transformational leadership of sports managers.

Transformational leadership includes the following dimensions:

- individual approach or leadership through personal development (it is associated with the importance and attention that the leader shows for the development of subordinates and for their personal interests). The leader listens to the needs of subordinates, offers them interesting job opportunities, and delegates authority to them to develop their skills and build self-confidence (we refer to the "higher levels" of the hierarchy of needs);

- intellectual stimulation or leadership by stimulating critical thinking and creativity. The leader encourages subordinates to use their own imagination and identify effective ways to carry out activities. This type of leadership is essential when changes and innovations are needed;

- motivation is leadership by inspiring subordinates. The leader (sports manager) creates a clear picture of the future, which is both optimistic and achievable, encourages others to increase the level of expectations, managing to clearly convey the mission of the sports organization;

- ideal influence or leadership based on charisma. This means that the leader is trying to be a role model. He perseveres in achieving his goals, is fully responsible for his actions, and demonstrates the utmost confidence in his vision for the future. Leaders sacrifice self-interest for the benefit of others and share success and common interests. Starting from these dimensions we can say that for the sports manager it is essential to become a well-prepared person from a professional, intellectual, psychological point of view, status ensured by professional and managerial skills that can be developed through various coaching, training and leadership programs.

On the question: Do you know what charismatic leaders are all about? were obtained the following responses:

| No. | Variants of answers | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 22 | 11% |
| 2 | No | 132 | 67% |
| 3 | Hard to answer | 43 | 22% |

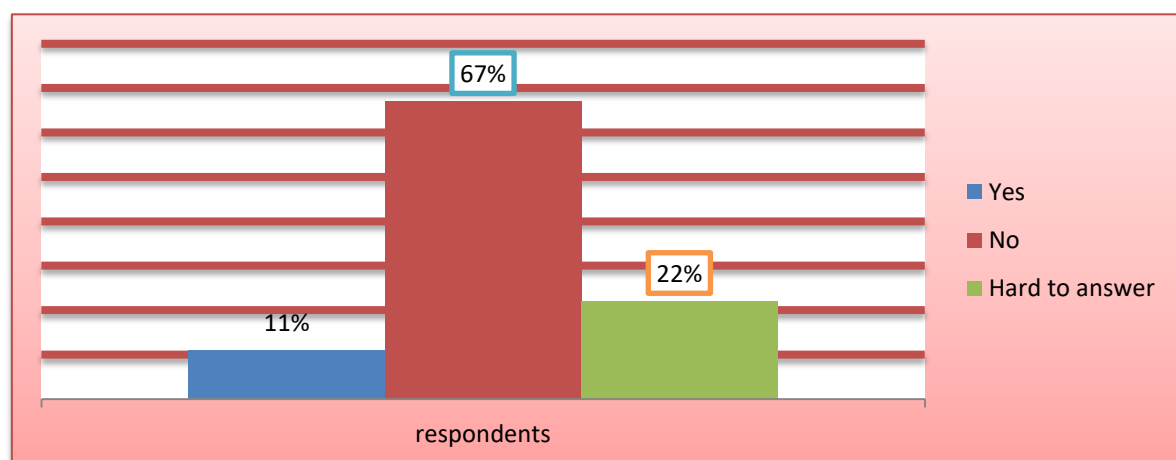


Fig. 4. Graphic representation of the answers with reference to the charismatic versus transformational leadership

From the graphical representation of the interviewees' answers we can see that 67% of them do not know the meaning of the term charismatic leadership compared to the transformational one. According to the literature, the comparison between transformational and charismatic leadership actually indicates a resemblance to them. However, according to B.M. Bass, there are also important differences between them. Charisma is a necessary but insufficient component of transformational leadership. For example, managers encourage subordinates to imitate their behavior, but they are unlikely to be prepared to follow suit. Transformational leaders influence subordinates by evoking strong emotions, but they do so for human reasons: they seek to improve an individual, an organization, or a society. Instead, charismatic leaders sometimes try to burden their subordinates by keeping them in a weaker and more dependent form. They are more interested in personal loyalty than in loyalty to values and ideals. Some researchers see the difference between charismatic and transformational leadership in that the former create new organizations, and the latter change existing ones. The strength of B.M. Bass's

research is that it is based on questionnaire data. This means that the hypotheses can be tested, the results challenged or reproduced, and that there are quantitative data that make the results more accurate. Most other transformational leadership research is descriptive, based on interviews with leaders, and therefore does not have these benefits. Transformational leaders tend to be energetic, enthusiastic, strategically minded, and have innate qualities such as the speed of finding and processing information, an abstract and concrete view of the world. These leaders are not only interested and involved in the process, but are also focused on helping each member of the group and turning their employees into leaders who are able to take responsibility for their own actions, behavior, and accomplish their goals. The quality of transformational leader is desirable to be trained and developed in the sports manager.

To the question: "Do you consider it necessary, in the current conditions, the processes of modernization of the higher profile education to intentionally update the training / professional development of the sports managers of different levels from the sports entities?" responses were the following:

| No. | Variants of answers | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. | Yes | 122 | 62% |
| 2. | Certainty | 53 | 27% |
| 3. | Not necessary | 22 | 11% |

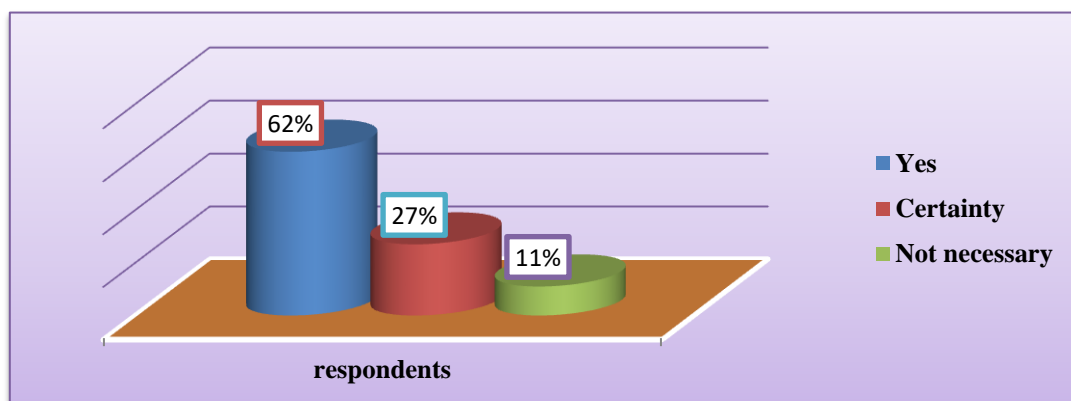


Fig. 5. Graphic representation of the answers regarding the updating of the professional training / development of sports managers

Moreover, the analysis of the specialized literature and the educational practice shows us that the graduates of the higher education institutions of physical education and sports do not have an efficient managerial training, and moreover they do not have a degree in sports management. The data show us a relatively low level of potential management in sports and an inefficient development by participating in training programs / continuous training of these categories of professionals (lack of a continuing education program, accredited by sports management, both in Romania and the Republic of Moldova). In addition, a significant proportion (56.43%) of young people manifest in practice certain stereotypes of an administrative and authoritarian management style. A percentage of 2.68% of young managers are oriented towards approaching the economic leadership style to the detriment of the attention paid to the professional development of employees.

According to the data accumulated in the research, only a small part (22.08%) of sports managers with professional experience of up to two years have a sufficient level of development of effective leadership. These data update the issue addressed in the research, if we take into account the fact that, in the process of professional training of future sports managers, due attention is not paid to the component of managerial training. The main reasons for the current situation in universities is the particularity of the professional training of sports managers, where the development of leadership potential is often not a priority and methodologically endowed field.

Regarding the answers to the question: "Can you mention what skills are needed to stimulate the process of individual / organizational change / development for performance?" they were arranged in the following way:

| No. | Variants of answers | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Yes | 61 | 31% |
| 2 | I don't know | 109 | 55% |
| 3 | Partially | 27 | 14% |

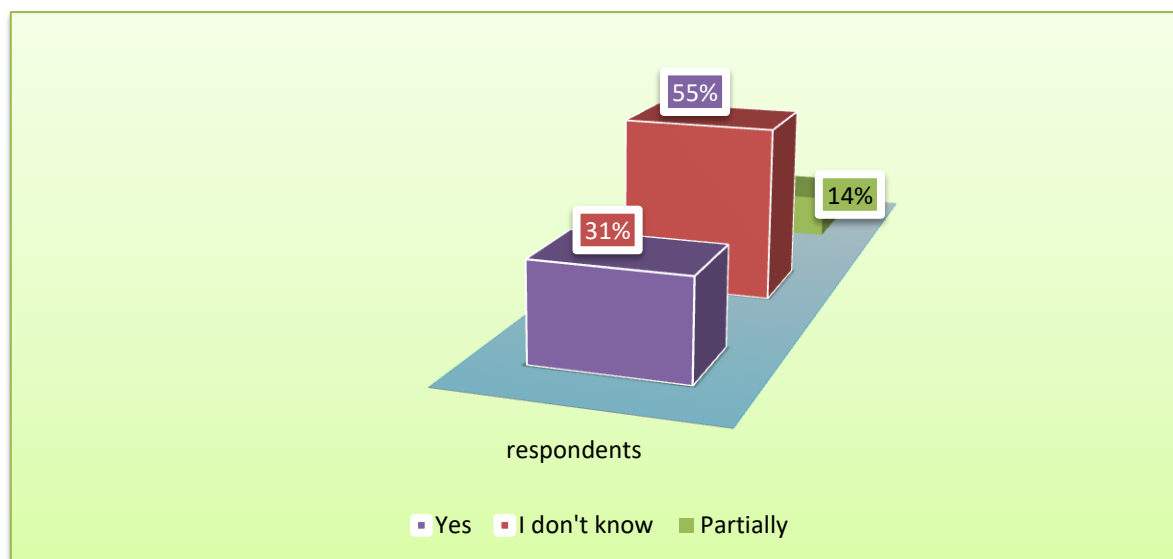


Fig. 6. Graphic representation of the answers regarding the competencies needed to stimulate the process of change / individual and organizational development of sports managers

According to the data reflected in Figure 6, it can be seen that 55% of respondents do not know the profile of the skills needed to address individual and organizational change. Management theorists present a series of skills necessary for a manager and which he divides into three main groups: conceptual, social (humanistic) and technical. At the same time, it is said that the relationship between the main types of skills changes as a person climbs the career ladder. Conceptual skills are the cognitive (cognition-related) abilities of a person to perceive an organization as a whole and, at the same time, to clearly understand the specifics and interrelationships of its parts. They are also reflected in the ability of managers to think systematically, to process the data received, to transform it into information, to plan and organize activities taking into account the development prospects of the organization and the external environment.

Social skills are the ability to work with people and achieve organizational goals with their support. In the modern world, these managerial skills are considered critical to ensure the survival and competitiveness of an organization or unit. Social skills are also defined by the terms "communication skills", "emotional intelligence".

The technical skills are the special ones needed to complete the work tasks: knowledge and mastery of methods, technologies, innovative problem-solving methodologies, the ability to use equipment, technical and digital means.

In **conclusion**, we can mention that:

- it is necessary that in order to achieve performance at individual and organizational level, sports managers should approach learning and continuous professional development;

- the elaboration and implementation in the professional development programs of the sports managers of a theoretical-praxiological model of transformational leadership will stimulate the improvement of the individual performance of the sports manager and of the sports entity;

- the process of training and professional development of sports managers is desirable to be continuously updated and improved, both in terms of teaching quality (with a focus on scientific research) and in terms of ensuring optimized learning content focused on praxiology and needs of students;

- the skills trained in sports managers must also be oriented towards change, development and innovation, both at a personal and institutional level.

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