

I. SOCIALINIS DARBAS SOCIAL WORK

THE MOTIVATION FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF PERSONAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS ACTIVE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

In the paper, the authors discuss the motivation for the profession of social work and perception of selected elements of personal and professional skills and abilities of social

workers, active in the field of public administration. The research was realized while using quantitative strategy using an author's questionnaire based on a sample of 63 respondents – social workers. Factor analysis has identified unidimensional motivation factor for pursuing the profession of social work and two factors of personal and professional skills and abilities – internal and external equipment of social worker.

Keywords: *Public Administration, Professional Skills of Social Workers, Personal Skills of Social Workers*

Introduction

Public administration as organized activity carried out by bodies of state administration, municipality units, and public institutions while maintaining public tasks, has undergone certain development. The character of public administration is always reflecting social, economic and cultural-historical society development, it is a historical process that evolves and adapts to its own changes to changes in the evolution of society (Tej, 2011).

For the needs of operational program Effective public administration is public administration (OP EVS) defined as the management of all the public affairs in the interest of the public. Optimized public administration in Slovakia is a key prerequisite of realization of any structural change aimed at intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth. Through OP EVS is realized program ESO (Effective, Reliable and Open public administration), that represents the completely new operational program, implemented in current program period of 2014–2020 for the very first time. OP EVS falls under European Social Fund and it is a first operational program dedicated solely to public administration. The vision of OP EVS is to place an individual – citizen into the center of attention and offer quality public services to citizens in every phase of life or business. Key focus areas of OP EVS are among other things considering the topic of paper, noncorrupted and transparent public administration, modern human resources management and competent employees within public administration. Implementation of the operational program should contribute to the fulfillment of the national strategic objective of modern, professional, efficient, reliable, no corrupted and transparent public administration in Slovakia.

As A. Balejová (2012) mentioned the main issues within professionalization of public administration in the condition of Slovak Republic are mainly often changing within organizational structures of public administration, legislative changes affecting performance, in the positions and posts of employees providing the performance of public administration due to changes within government garnitures. The presence of constant personnel and legislative changes is against the reliability and ability of the public administration and results in low public service attractiveness for good and highly qualified individuals. As the OECD (2015) states, a certain degree of guarantees, function period and employment for state employees is necessary for continuity in public administration and encourages stability and professionalism. (Skorková, 2016).

As Z. Skorková states further (2016), another problem of public administration in our local conditions is the procedures for recruiting employees. As stated in the OECD report (2015), a survey conducted in the context of the human resource management strategy by 2020, found that in almost three-quarters of all hiring processes the winner was “temporary staff.” These findings question significantly the adherence to the principle of quality in recruitment, and also whether the selection is based on objective, reliable and well-documented principles that result in the selection of the best candidates. Competency-based management is a system that combines strategic personal functions into a single entity, while its connecting element is a system of so-called key competencies. As per this, key competencies are those professional competencies that are shared by all members of the organization and are very important to the success of the organization. J. Porvazník (2011) strictly distinguishes between competence and the meaning of term “competence”. Competence is understood as ability - the ability to act and work in a certain position. Competence is understood as a duty, authority, and responsibility. Competence is understood as a duty, competence, and responsibility. Competence according to the author denounces the level, the degree of ability to ensure its competences. Overall competency, according to his theory, is created by learned skill, application skill, and social maturity (Porvazník et al., 2016).

The main objective of the competence management system is to acquire, develop and keep those highly motivated, committed, loyal, professionally skilled, in a nutshell, competent employees, while the company provides for them more opportunities to further develop their competencies and of course, appropriately appreciates their contribution to the organization (Skorková, 2016).

Every employee is an individual with his own personality, disposing of general and professional knowledge, who has his own view of life, with his own temper, self-discipline, and performance. Human potential significantly influences the process of providing public services, so from the point of view of H. Šimková (2006), human capital innovation is also needed. The current society puts high demands on employees engaged in public-law activities. According to I. Rostková (2005), it is necessary to talk also about specific groups of citizens (old people, inappropriate citizens, minority ethnic groups ...), who are often frequent clients of state administration and municipality government in order to ensure equal access for the development of human potential. Employees who act as subordinates and work in public administration institutions should have features that usually inspire them to solve tasks independently in accordance with the specified profile features of a particular job. The most desired characteristics could be included in the following picture (Tej, 2011):

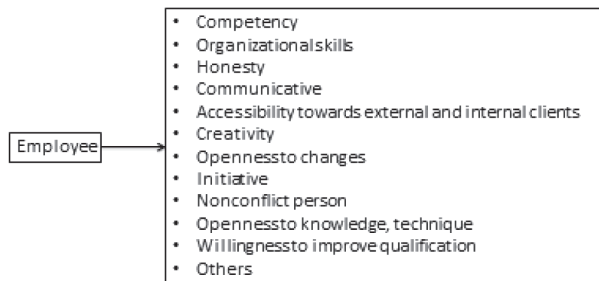


Fig. 1. Characteristics of the employee in public administration
Source Tej, 2006

As J. Tej (2011) continues, employees of public administration have to dispose of complete and wider range of characteristics due to the performance of specific services resulting from the high variability of clients, especially in the social sphere. We cannot skip the fact that each of the employees represents a specific personality, including also elements such as education, specialization, intelligence and individual predispositions, willingness to study further, etc. Thanks to training programs of professional education, employees can increase their qualification and level of education that is required by an institution within the current and upcoming tasks. The current validation brings minimal standards of education that are based on description and definition of specific knowledge, skills or attitudes to perform a particular activity.

An indispensable role in abovementioned is represented by motivation. To motivate employees is absolutely necessary, but with regards to human individualities, it is not easy (Šimková, 2006). According to S. P. Robbins, and M. Coulter (2012), motivation is a willingness to make a certain effort to achieve the goals of an organization that is conditioned by the fact that the individual simultaneously satisfies also his needs.

According to H. Harausová (2015), work motivation is a particular "energetic" side of people's behavior that brings dynamism to the work process and activates people. It focuses on work performance, required work behavior, and so on. Work motivation can also be defined as a process of influencing an employee to a specific activity that leads to the satisfaction of the employee's needs while at the same time meeting the organization's goals. In addition to internal reasons - motives that increase work motivation, whether, in an individual or a working group, work motivation is closely related to needs, habits, interests, working attitudes, ambitions.

Increasing quality of working life and job satisfaction should be the priority objective of each organization as it also has a significant impact on the social climate of the organization, culture. Employee assessment and a sophisticated rating system that should be a matter of public administration, together with excellent management and sufficient feedback from the manager, should lead to an increase in motivation and thus employee productivity (Kozelová, 2016).

Work motivation in public administration is defined by M. Vaverčáková (2006) as a phenomenon that is to be found in complex contexts of the internal and external environment, in a complex of interdependent, conditional and variable factors. In one case, employees may be motivated by management through methods such as remuneration, promotion, praise, and others (external motivation). Second scenario, employees motivate themselves to look for, find and perform work that meets their needs or meets their expectations (internal motivation).

F. Herzberg's theory of two factors of motivation is one of the content-based motivation theories based on classical behavioral tradition and trying to identify and explain the factors that cause and maintain motivated behavior of employees. In the spotlight of the interest of such theorists are human needs, their relationships, preferences, and working environment factors that lead to achievement and satisfaction. The theory points out to the relationship between work motivation and work satisfaction, two groups of mutually different factors. Factors of one group affect work satisfaction (motivators - satisfactors) and factors of the second group of work dissatisfaction (frustrators - dissatisfactors) (Botka, Vaverčáková, 2016). The research deals with the motivation for the profession of a social worker based on his personality (internal) and professional (external) equipment.

1. Research methodology

The aim and object of research. The research aims to find motivation for the profession of social work by the social workers themselves in the context of their personal (internal) and professional (external) equipment. The object of research are social workers working at the Office of Labor and Social Affairs and Family in the town of Liptovský Mikuláš in all departments.

The method of research. The research was carried out by a quantitative strategy, using a self-designed questionnaire. The self-designed questionnaire was targeted towards identifying motivation to choose the profession of a social worker and perceiving the importance of different aspects of the social worker's personal equipment. In terms of motivation, the respondent answered within the five-point scale (1 - not at all, 5 - to a large extent), expressing the intensity of motivation to choose the profession of a social worker. In terms of the perception of the importance of personality equipment, he responded within the five-point scale (1 - minimally important, 5 - very important). Data processing was implemented through descriptive and inductive statistics; factor analysis is used to identify motivation to choose a profession and identify the perception of the importance of professional equipment. The Mann-Whitney U-test and Student t-test were used to find differences in motivation to choose the profession and differences in perceptions of professional equipment concerning various aspects of current employment. The link between the motivation to pursue the profession of social work and the perception of the importance of personality aspects was identified through correlation analysis.

Research questions. Based on the setup goal, research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What is the degree of motivation to choose the profession of social work for respondents? What are the differences in motivation to choose the profession of social work about different aspects of employment?

RQ2: What is the degree of perceived importance of the personal equipment of social workers? What are the differences in the perceived importance of the standard equipment of the social workers regarding different aspects of employment?

RQ3: What is the connection between the motivation to act in the profession of social work and the perception of the importance of the personal aspects of social workers?

Sample of respondents. The survey sample consisted of 63 respondents - social workers from the Office of Labor and Social Affairs and Family in Liptovský Mikuláš and Ružomberok, of which there were 49 women and 14 men. The total number of employees of these organizations is 90 social workers. Simple random selection created the sample. Respondents were aware of the purpose of the research and the way the data is processed and published.

Majority of respondents had a university education (1st grade - N 12, 2nd grade - N 41) and secondary education (N 10). 39 respondents graduated within of Social Work, 24 respondents graduated with another specialization. 33 respondents worked in the social affairs field, 17 in the employment services sector and 13 in the assessment activities department. The average age was 38.7 years (± 9.34), the average length of practice was 8.5 years (± 7.4).

2. Research results

In Fig. 2 we visualized motivation to choose the job of a social worker. Respondents were motivated above average by their desire to work in the field of social work, further with the fact that work was in their immediate vicinity, motivated also by the certainty of salary, personal ambition, security and job security. On average, they were also motivated by working conditions and a functional position. They have also been motivated below average by a particular organization and its leadership and an opportunity to reach any progress within this position.

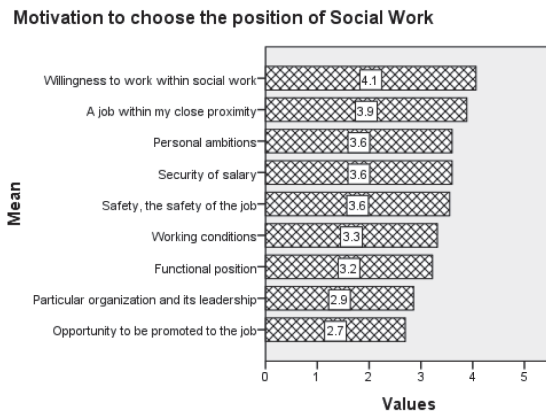


Fig. 2. Motivational factors to choose the position of social worker

2.1. Factor analysis of motivation to choose the profession

Items related to motivation to choose a profession were subjected to a factor analysis that demonstrated the existence of one unique factor (unidimensional factor) - motivation to choose a profession, that is, all items measured this aspect.

In Table 1 we find pictured rotated factor matrix consisting of the individual items of motivation when choosing a profession. The result of the KMO Variable Involvement Motivation test when choosing the profession was 0.812 and the result of the Barlett's Sphericity test was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 101.802$, $p \leq 0.000$). Varimax rotation was used. Two items were excluded from factor analysis due to the low saturation of the factor (< 0.30): salary security, work in my immediate vicinity.

Table 1. Factor analysis of motivation items when choosing a job

	Factor 1
<i>Opportunity for promotion</i>	0,805
<i>Particular organisation and its leadership</i>	0,741
<i>Job conditions</i>	0,725
<i>Functional position</i>	0,666
<i>Safety, job safety</i>	0,607
<i>Personal ambitions</i>	0,521
<i>The desire to work in the social work sphere</i>	0,519
<i>% of the depleted variance</i>	43,92

Factor 1 – Motivation to choose a position. *Factor 1: min. – 10,00, max. – 34,00, AM – 23,32, SD – 5,43, ME – 23,00.* This factor groups together the items that concern motivation to choose a profession. This is an opportunity for career promotion, motivation focused on a particular organization and its leadership, working conditions, functional position, security and job security, personal ambitions and a desire to work in the field of social work. The variable is normally divided (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test: Statistic = 0.088, $df = 63$, $p = 0.200$).

2.2. Differences in motivation to choose a profession concerning various aspects of the current position

From Table 2 we deduce that:

- Those who have been more motivated to choose the profession of the social worker are more satisfied with their current job, like their profession, they are more satisfied with financial evaluation and fairness in the remuneration system compared to those who are less motivated to choose the profession of a social worker ($p < 0.05$).

- Respondents do not differ in the evaluation of the team and the fulfillment of expectations from the position due to their motivation to choose the profession of a social worker ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2. Motivation to perform the job within social work concerning perceive of satisfaction with the performance of profession.

		N	AM	SD	t	df	p-value
overall satisfaction							
motivation	satisfied	47	24,66	5,12	3,691	61	0,000
	not satisfied	16	19,38	4,36			
Do you like your job?							
motivation	I like it	54	24,06	5,13	2,785	61	0,007
	I dont like it	9	18,89	5,30			
How much do you earn within your profession, good or bad?							
motivation	good	54	24,06	5,13	2,785	61	0,007
	bad	9	18,89	5,30			
fairness of remuneration system							
motivation	fair	29	25,00	4,98	2,355	61	0,022
	unfair	34	21,88	5,45			
What is the team like?							
motivation	good	49	23,88	5,13	1,550	61	0,126
	bad	14	21,36	6,17			
Have your expectations been fulfilled?							
motivation	yes	48	23,56	4,85	0,638	61	0,526
	no	15	22,53	7,11			

2. 3. Perceiving the importance of personal equipment

In Fig. 3 we see the visualization of the importance of a social worker's personal equipment. For respondents - self-reflection, acknowledgment of their limits of profession and professional competence, recognition of their professional and personal limits, use of psycho-hygienic tools, continuous education, consulting with colleagues and consulting with professionals from other supportive professions, were of the utmost importance. Regular supervision was important for them within the average scale.

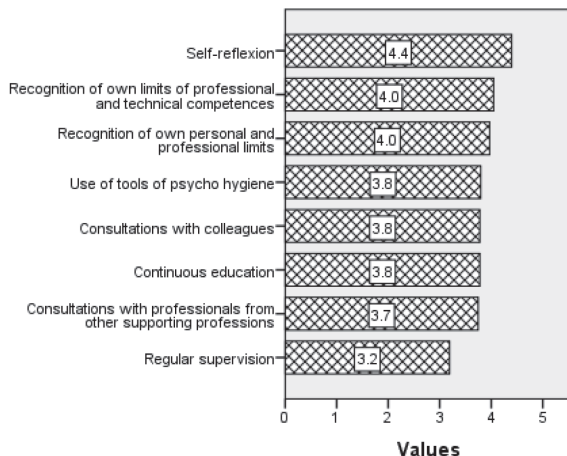


Fig. 3. Importance of personal equipment of social worker

2.4. Factor analysis of the perception of professional equipment

Items related to the perception of the importance of professional equipment were subjected to factor analysis that proved the existence of two factors we already mentioned: internal equipment and external equipment.

In Table 3 is a depicted rotated factor matrix consisting of individual items of perception of the importance of professional equipment. The result of the KMO test of the variable importance of professional equipment was 0.763 and the result of the Barlett's Sphericity test was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 238.764$, $p < 0.001$). We used the Varimax rotation.

Table 3. Factor analysis of items of professional equipment importance

	Factor	
	1	2
<i>recognition of own personal and professional limits</i>	0,904	0,157
<i>recognition of own borders of professional and technical competences</i>	0,844	0,224
<i>self-reflexion</i>	0,821	0,190
<i>consultations with professionals from other supporting professions</i>	0,211	0,795
<i>use of psycho-hygienic tools</i>		0,757
<i>regular supervision</i>	0,115	0,689
<i>consultations with colleagues</i>	0,381	0,674
<i>continuous education</i>	0,522	0,643
% of depleted variance	43,92	

Factor 1 – internal equipment. *Factor 1: min. – 4,00, max. – 15,00, AM – 12,41, SD – 2,40, ME – 13,00.* This factor combines the items that concern the internal factors of the professional equipment, in particular, the recognition of their personal and professional limits, the recognition of their limits of professional and technical competence and self-reflection. Variable is not normally distributed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test: Statistic = 0.174, df = 63, p = 0.000).

Factor 2 – external equipment. *Factor 1: min. – 7,00, max. – 25,00, AM – 18,28, SD – 4,15, ME – 19,00.* This factor collects items related to external factors of professional equipment, namely consultation with colleagues and other professionals, use of psycho-hygienic tools, regular supervision, and continuous education. The variable is not normally distributed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test: Statistic = 0.140, df = 63, p = 0.004).

2. 5. Differences in perception of professional equipment concerning various aspects of current position

From Table 4. we deduce that:

- for those respondents with the higher importance of internal qualifications, job vacancies are more likely to be met than those for whom internal qualification skills are not so important (p <0.05).
- those respondents for whom the external professional equipment is more important adapted to their profession more easily than those for whom the external professional equipment is not so important (p <0.05).
- in other aspects of current employment, respondents do not differ due to the importance of professional equipment (p > 0.05).

Table 4. Perception of professional equipment concerning aspects of the profession

		N	AM	SD	U-test	Z	p-value
<i>Overall satisfaction</i>							
<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>satisfied</i>	47	12,53	2,54	300,000	-1,217	0,223
	<i>not satisfied</i>	16	12,06	1,98			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>satisfied</i>	47	18,30	4,01	365,000	-0,175	0,861
	<i>not satisfied</i>	16	18,25	4,68			
<i>Do you like your job?</i>							
<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>I like it.</i>	54	12,57	2,43	153,000	-1,793	0,073
	<i>I dont like it.</i>	9	11,44	2,07			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>I like it.</i>	54	18,46	4,01	210,000	-0,652	0,515
	<i>I dont like it.</i>	9	17,22	5,04			
<i>How do you feel you earn in your job?</i>							

<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>good</i>	54	12,57	2,43	153,000	-1,793	0,073
	<i>bad</i>	9	11,44	2,07			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>good</i>	54	18,46	4,01	210,000	-0,652	0,515
	<i>bad</i>	9	17,22	5,04			
<i>Fairness within remuneration system</i>							
<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>fair</i>	29	12,48	2,73	439,500	0,748	0,454
	<i>unfair</i>	34	12,35	2,12			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>fair</i>	29	17,34	4,52	380,000	-1,567	0,117
	<i>unfair</i>	34	19,09	3,69			
<i>Is the team good or bad?</i>							
<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>good</i>	49	12,5510	2,43294	271,500	-1,199	0,230
	<i>bad</i>	14	11,9286	2,30265			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>good</i>	49	18,6531	4,10564	242,000	-1,679	0,093
	<i>bad</i>	14	17,0000	4,20622			
<i>How did you get used to?</i>							
<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>easy</i>	56	12,52	2,46	128,500	-1,497	0,134
	<i>difficult</i>	7	11,57	1,81			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>easy</i>	56	18,79	3,90	77,500	-2,606	0,009
	<i>difficult</i>	7	14,29	4,23			
<i>Were your expectations met?</i>							
<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>yes</i>	48	12,81	2,25	199,000	-2,635	0,008
	<i>no</i>	15	11,13	2,50			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>yes</i>	48	18,92	3,65	244,500	-1,874	0,061
	<i>no</i>	15	16,27	5,08			
<i>Does your job match what you would like to do with your future plans?</i>							
<i>internal equipment</i>	<i>agree</i>	32	12,47	2,81	430,500	-0,913	0,361
	<i>doesn't agree</i>	31	12,35	1,94			
<i>external equipment</i>	<i>agree</i>	32	18,16	4,57	487,500	-0,117	0,906
	<i>doesn't agree</i>	31	18,42	3,75			

2. 6. Correlation between motivation to perform profession of social work and perception of the importance of personal aspects

The correlation was reviewed by the Spearman correlation coefficient. As Table 5 shows that there is a link between self-motivation and self-reflection only ($r = 0,317$, $p = 0,011$). This is a positive, moderate relationship, which suggests that for those respond-

ents who have been motivated to pursue the profession of social work is self-reflection as a component of professional equipment more important.

Table 5. Motivation to perform profession of social work and perception of the importance of personal aspects

		<i>motivácia</i>
<i>self-reflexion</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	0,317*
	<i>p-value</i>	0,011
	<i>N</i>	63
<i>recognition of own personal and professional limits</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	0,114
	<i>p-value</i>	0,375
	<i>N</i>	63
<i>recognition of own limits of professional and technical competences</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	0,082
	<i>p-value</i>	0,521
	<i>N</i>	63
<i>continuous education</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	0,216
	<i>p-value</i>	0,090
	<i>N</i>	63
<i>regular supervision</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	0,139
	<i>p-value</i>	0,278
	<i>N</i>	63
<i>consultations with colleagues</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	-0,069
	<i>p-value</i>	0,592
	<i>N</i>	63
<i>consulting with professionals from other supportive professions</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	0,132
	<i>p-value</i>	0,302
	<i>N</i>	63
<i>psychohygienic tools</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient</i>	0,021
	<i>p-value</i>	0,871
	<i>N</i>	63

Conclusion

Modernization and reform of public administration is part of the dynamic changes taking place in Slovakia since 1992. The reform of public administration requires a comprehensive approach. It is based on a long-term strategy that includes except changes in the territorial-administrative organization of the process of increasing professionalism, competence and ethics in public administration, as well as improving the quality of public administration for the benefit of society and the development of human resources, education and training of staff and executives in the public sector. This is, however, very closely related to its professionalization (Tej, 2011). Part of this process is also to know how executives of individual professions perceive their profession.

Our research has shown that choosing a social work profession has been motivated by social workers working in public administration, especially with a desire to work in this area, further as job position in the close proximity of respondents, job security, personal ambitions and security and job security. Furthermore, it was found that respondents who were more motivated to work in the field of social work were more satisfied with their jobs, preferred their professions, and with financial rewards and fairness in the remuneration system were more satisfied compared with their less motivated colleagues. Both high and low-motivated employees evaluated their team and also whether their job met their expectations to a similar extent.

Social workers consider the most important aspects of their professional equipment, in particular, self-reflection, knowing the boundaries of their professional and technical competence, knowing their personal and professional limits, using psycho-hygienic tools, continuous education, consulting with colleagues and experts from other areas. The individual elements of the equipment were grouped into two factors that were called internal and external equipment for the purposes of this research. The internal equipment concerns internal factors of professional equipment (knowledge of personal and professional limits, recognition of limits of his professional and technical competence and self-reflection). External equipment related to external factors of professional equipment (consultations with colleagues and other professionals, use of psycho-hygienic tools, supervision and education). Those respondents, for whom the most important elements of the internal professional equipment were to a higher degree assessed that the job had met their expectations. On the contrary, respondents, for whom more important elements of external professional equipment have become easily accustomed to employment. It is interesting to realize that for self-motivated respondents, self-reflection is an inevitable component of an employee's equipment. This may be related to the fact that motivated employees are trying to do their best to know what self-reflection is an inevitable aspect in terms of retrospective, individual assessment of their work performance.

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THE MOTIVATION FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF PERSONAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS ACTIVE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Summary

In the paper, the authors discuss the motivation for the profession of social work and perception of selected elements of personal and professional skills and abilities of social workers, active in the field of public administration. The research was realized while using quantitative strategy using an author's questionnaire based on a sample of 63 respondents – social workers. Factor analysis has identified unidimensional motivation factor for pursuing the profession of social work and two factors of personal and professional skills and abilities – internal and external equipment of social worker.

Research has shown that choosing a social work profession has been motivated by social workers working in public administration, especially with a desire to work in this area, further as job position in the close proximity of respondents, job security, personal ambitions and security and job security. Furthermore, it was found that respondents who were more

motivated to work in the field of social work were more satisfied with their jobs, preferred their professions, and with financial rewards and fairness in the remuneration system were more satisfied compared with their less motivated colleagues. Both high and low-motivated employees evaluated their team and also whether their job met their expectations to a similar extent.

Social workers consider the most important aspects of their professional equipment, in particular, self-reflection, knowing the boundaries of their professional and technical competence, knowing their personal and professional limits, using psycho-hygienic tools, continuous education, consulting with colleagues and experts from other areas. The individual elements of the equipment were grouped into two factors that were called internal and external equipment for the purposes of this research. The internal equipment concerns internal factors of professional equipment (knowledge of personal and professional limits, recognition of limits of his professional and technical competence and self-reflection). External equipment related to external factors of professional equipment (consultations with colleagues and other professionals, use of psycho-hygienic tools, supervision and education). Those respondents, for whom the most important elements of the internal professional equipment were to a higher degree assessed that the job had met their expectations. On the contrary, respondents, for whom more important elements of external professional equipment have become easily accustomed to employment. It is interesting to realize that for self-motivated respondents, self-reflection is an inevitable component of an employee's equipment. This may be related to the fact that motivated employees are trying to do their best to know what self-reflection is an inevitable aspect in terms of retrospective, individual assessment of their work performance.

Keywords: *Public Administration, Professional Skills of Social Workers, Personal Skills of Social Workers*

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