

MANAGEMENT FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS: REGIONAL ASPECT

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to identify the factors contributing to the improvement of the quality of social services in residential institutions, which due to the imperfection of modern methods of assessing the quality of social services determines the need for its development based on qualitative criteria. It raises the need for study of scientific approaches to formation and development of social service institutions, improving mechanisms of quality management of social services in residential institutions of different types. To achieve the aim of the research, the expert survey among the managers, administrators, and employees of psychoneurological boarding institutions of Zaporizhzhya region took place. The main empirical indicators of the study were: the factors of improvement of the quality of social services; the main reasons of low quality of social services; assessment of compliance with indicators of quality of social services in a residential institution.

Keywords: social care, social servicing, social services, the quality of social services, residential institutions.

1 INTRODUCTION

The creation an effective system of social care of the population in Ukraine is one of the priorities of state social policy, which involves a qualitative transformation in the system of management of social care for the population according to the new social and economic challenges and the dominating needs of the population. It requires the introduction of new, more flexible and efficient approaches to government management of social care institutions and residential institutions, in particular.

Social systems, values, social work, social services, sectoral partnerships in one aspect or another in their works touched upon: Parsons, Shils (1983) studied values in social systems, David (2009), Borychenko et al. (2019) studied theoretical elements of social work, Milner, O 'Byrne (2009) studied the use of assessment methods in social work, Graham, Shier (2010) studied the practical aspects of social work, Norbeck, Lindsey, Carrieri (1981) developed tools for measuring social support, Hughes, Wearing (2007) studied the specifics of social work management, Stein (1971) described the elements of social work management, Zirps (2003) and Bodnar, Mirkovich, Koval (2019) described human resources management in social work and education, Pillsburg (2003) researched social services market, Jorgensen (2006) and Kvitka et al. (2019) studied evaluating cross-sectoral partnerships, Luman (1975) analyzed the professionalization of social services.

Quality management of social services in residential institutions presupposes some specific management actions of state and non-government in the scope of the law, economic, HR, and information, aiming to improve the quality system processes, that is ensuring the provision of quality social servicing by a residential institution (Koval, Pukała, 2017; Araftenii, Bashynska, 2018; Bagmet, 2018; Vivchar, Redkva, 2018; Drobnic, 2019).

In the practice of state regulation of social sphere, the questions of assessing the quality of social services in social servicing institutions been investigated insufficiently, especially as for the institutions of social care of the population and the prognostication system of social security of the population in modern economic conditions (Nazarova et al., 2019). The imperfection of the methods of the quality assessment of social services forces us to develop the qualitative criteria and to improve the system of prognostication for public social care system. All this causes the need to examine the scientific approaches concerning the formation and development of social servicing institutions (including ones of residential type), improvement of the mechanisms of state control of quality of social services in residential institutions of different types, the combination of state regulation and non-government leverage that will ensure the development of social servicing institutions providing residential care.

2 THE PURPOSE AND THE OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study is to identify factors of improvement of the quality of social services in social servicing agencies providing residential care at a regional level. The main objectives of the present study are 1) to allocate the factors of low efficiency of social services in residential institutions; 2) to identify the factors that contribute to the quality of social servicing; 3) to determine the level of compliance with quality indicators of social services in institutions.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

To identify the factors of improvement of the quality of social services in the residential institutions, the sociological research – an expert survey was conducted among managers of administrations and employees of psycho-neurological boarding schools of Zaporizhzhya region (sample size n=200 which is 10% of the general set of establishments). The reliability and validity of the research results been ensured using

complex analysis (content analysis of the statements) and statistical methods (using PPP STADIA 6.0 and SPSS 14.0).

The methodology of the research is based on the use of general scientific methods of cognition of social phenomena and processes, and on sociological methods of obtaining the empirical data – expert interviews, based on the questionnaire, developed by the author of the present research. The main indicators of the study were: 1) the factors of improvement of the quality of social services; 2) the main reasons of low quality of social services; 3) the assessment of compliance with indicators of quality of social services in a residential institution. The study was conducted in October-November 2018.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social care is a component of the system of social protection of the population. The term "social services" is used relatively rare in scientific literature. According to number of scientists, social servicing in modern conditions stands as one of the areas of social work and the organisational forms of social activity, which is regarded as a system of certain ways of social humanistic activities aimed at the adaptation which requires obtaining relevant competencies (Koval et al., 2018; Luchaninova et al., 2019).

The social servicing is seen as the creation of designing of the conditions to meet the developmental needs of the people that emphasize the personalised routes of the social policy, and in addition, is regarded as an absolute function of society and the state, as the process of providing of social services in accordance with the development of economic conditions, ecology (Popova et al., 2019; Koval et al., 2019), etc.

Social services, and therefore it must be considered from the perspective of the socio-managerial approach that allows allocating two basic paradigms of the research. The first group of studies includes the concepts that consider the formation of external forms of institutionalisation, that exists in society as a certain way of acting regardless of an individual, to be the central problem of the institutionalization of the system the delivery of social services.

The structural-and-functional approach is very important for that group of researchers. Thus, in Parsons's theory (1983) of social action, the social service is a specific system of performance which has its own structural and functional features. First, it is the status and role way of communication between providers and consumers of social services. Second, formal values and norms (like the code of ethics) and informal ones (like national peculiarities of social behaviour, mentality, national character, archetype structure of the national consciousness) carry the regulatory function in this system.

But, as noted by Parsons and Shils (1983), the main functions of the system of social service provision are the ones of social adaptation, integration, socialisation, and consolidation of members of the society. The second group of sociological concepts of institutionalising the system of social service provision includes the theory of subjective orientation, which considers it as a characteristic feature of the internal structure of society, contributing to the patterns of development of society that ensures its integrity; those theories are focused on social performance of the individual and its social identification.

Unlike traditional concepts of the system of classical sociology, Luhmann (1991) puts the problem the relationship between the system and the environment, but not

between the part and the whole. His article "The forms of assistance in the process of changing social conditions" (Luhmann, 1975) devoted to the study of the process of transformation of interpersonal mutual aid to professional impersonalised service with a guaranteed quality. That is, from his point of the view, the professionalisation of many types of operations and adjustment of the needs of individuals in time is the base for the institutionalisation of the services. This applies to the modern system of social servicing.

The quality standard of social service, the indicator of the quality of social service, the evaluation criteria for the delivery of social services, the level of quality of social services, quality management system social services - those are the categories related to the concept of quality of social services. Quality of the delivery of social services is a phenomenon that has been defined by the objective criteria of its measurement (meeting the specific standards), and at the same time, it appears in the subjective feelings and perceptions of specific individuals only. And since the clients of social work have specific characteristics, condition of physical or mental health, and are not always able to assess adequately the quality of social services, the evaluation process becomes more complicated. Therefore, the emphasis is put on the compliance of social services with the certain standards, which is more objective assessment tool for their quality.

In 2016 the Ministry of the Social Policy of Ukraine had approved the "the State standard of inpatient care for individuals who have lost the ability to self-service or have not acquired this ability" that defines the quality indicators for the provision of social services in the stationary care. The quantitative and qualitative indicators of the quality of social services in inpatient (residential care) social service institutions (Bukanov et al., 2019).

Thus, among the quantitative indicators of the quality of social services were defined the following: 1) the number of complaints and the results of their consideration; 2) number of thanks; 3) the number of recipients of social services that have improved their emotional, psychological and physical condition; 4) the number of successful appeals for social services-patient care; 5) the number of employees that have relevant vocational training; 6) the number of employees, raising their level of qualification; 7) periodicity of monitoring of quality of providing social services of residential care; 8) compliance with the established quality parameters to the ones obtained during monitoring. Amongst the qualitative indicators of the quality of social services in the State standard was selected: 1) targeted and individual approach; 2) effectiveness; 3) timeliness; 4) the accessibility and openness; 5) respect for the dignity of the recipient of social service; 6) professionalism.

The empirical study, aiming to identify the factors, improving the quality of social services in the residential institutions.

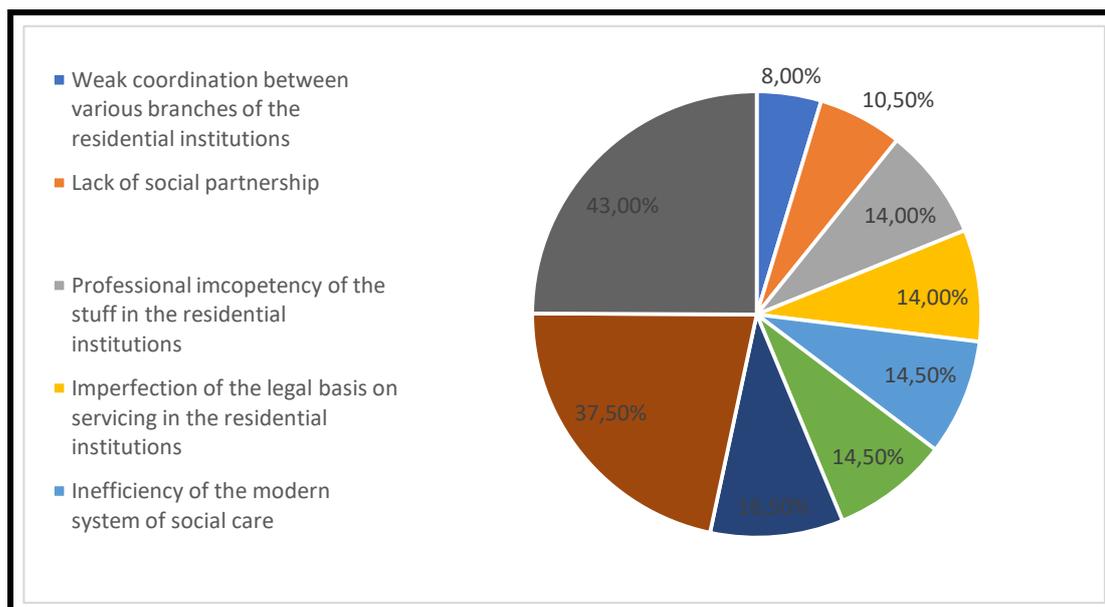


Fig. 1 Main causes of the low quality of social services in social servicing agencies providing residential care

Among the main reasons for the low quality of social services in social servicing agencies providing residential care allocated: insufficient budget funding (43%), inadequate logistics (37,5%) and lack of innovative technologies for the provision of social services (16,5%). The lack of effective communication of residential institutions, public organisations and business structures in the provision of social services as the cause of the low efficiency of management has quite a minor figure of 10.5%.

To identify factors of improvement of the quality of social services in residential institutions, the experts were asked to answer the open question: "What, in Your opinion, will improve the quality of social services in a residential institution in which You work?". 135 experts delivered their opinion on that matter. Using content analysis of the statements 6 factors-categories were specified.

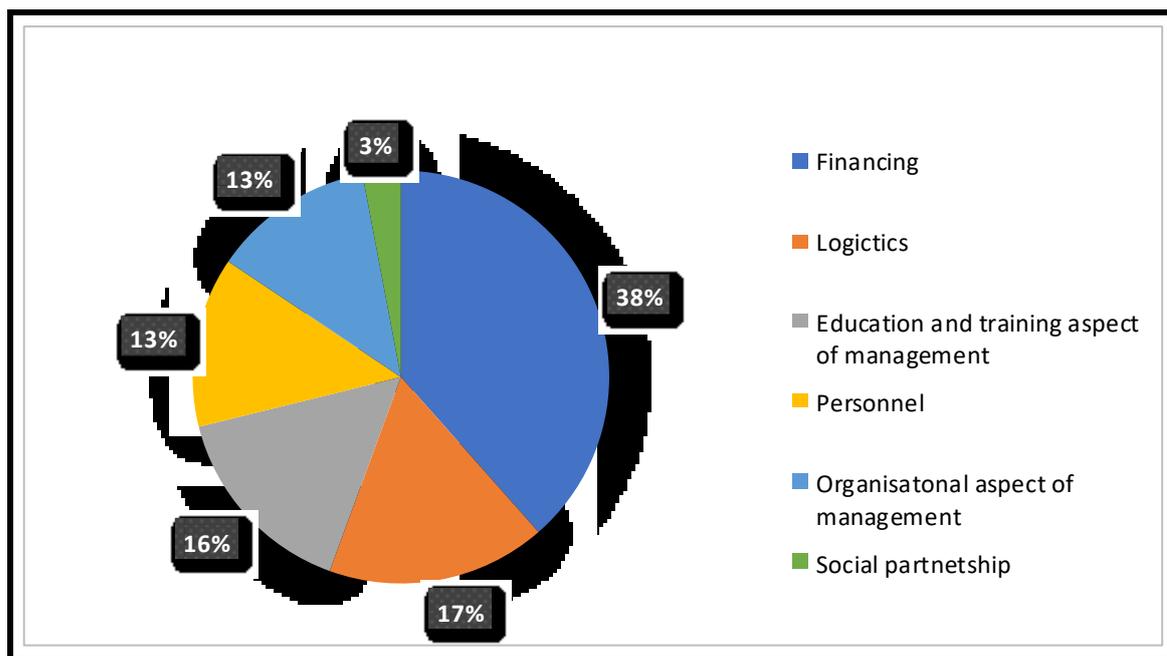


Fig. 2 Factors of improvement of the quality of social services in residential care institutions (results of the content analysis).

1. The "Financial support" factor (38,52%). Typical statements: "increase of wages, insufficient funding, financial incentives". This is the leading factor regarding low quality of social services in social service institutions providing residential care.

2. The "Logistics" factor (17,04%). Typical statements: "improving logistics".

3. The "Educational and instructional aspect of management" factor (15,56%) is associated with the need for training, improvement of professional skills of employees of residential care institutions. Typical statements: "learning, education professionals, professional development, workshops, training".

4. The "Human resources" factor (13,33%) reflects the need for specialists and experts in different fields. Typical statements: "lack of professionals, availability of specialists, more qualified social workers, increase the number of medical staff".

5. The "Organisational aspect of management" factor (12,59%). On the one hand, this factor reflects the value aspect of performance ("respect, responsibility, caring and dedication, an individual approach, justice"), on the other – it reflects the regulation of the activities ("the quest for qualitative performance at work, professionalism of medical specialists, lack of authority of the heads of boarding institutions, European load, the correct calculation of personnel according to the number of wards, regulation of the legislation, the development of sport and leisure").

6. The "Social partnership" factor (2,96%). Typical statements: "cooperation with charitable organisations, an involvement of NGOs, foreign sponsors, investments" (Koval et al., 2017).

It is revealed that the main factors of increasing the quality of social services in residential institutions are the improvement and optimisation of financial and organisational management (including training and personnel) governance mechanisms.

Fig. 3 shows the assessment of compliance with quality indicators of social services provision in a residential institution (respondents were asked to use a scale where 1 is the lowest score 5 is the highest one).

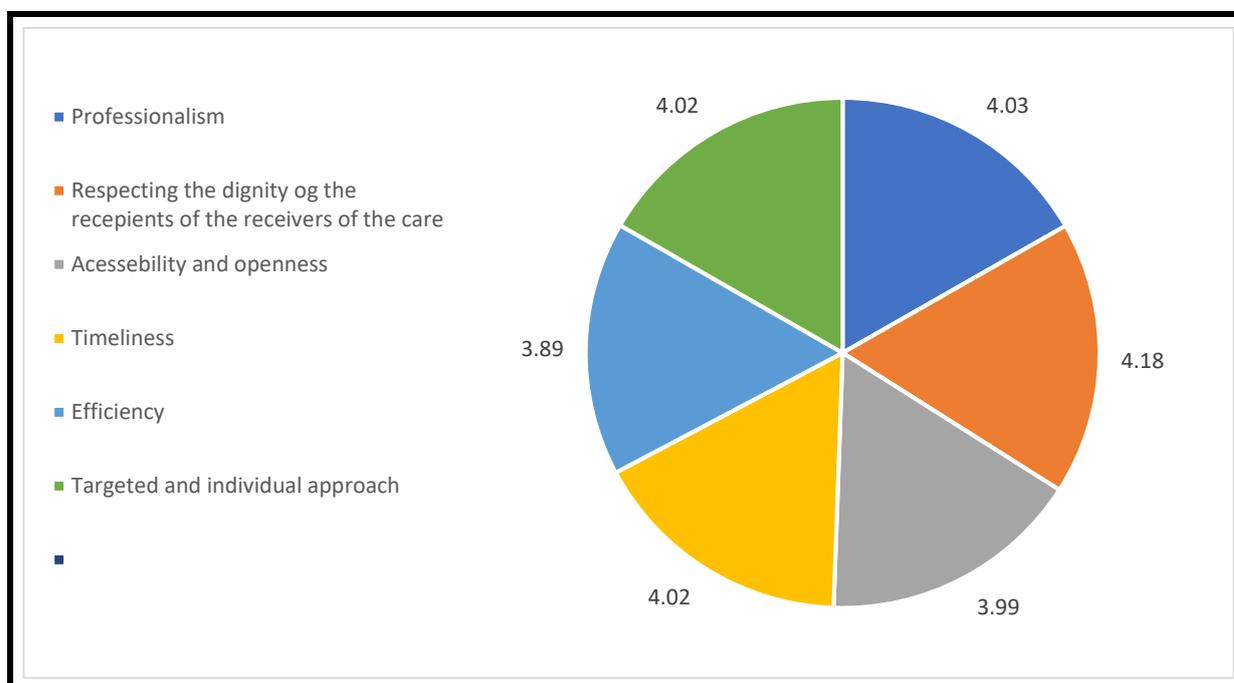


Fig. 3 Assessment of compliance with quality indicators of social services provision in a boarding institution (average values).

The experts estimate that among the indicators of quality of social services the most important indicator is "Respect for the dignity of the recipient of social services", which indicates compliance with basic ethical principles of social work: respect for the dignity of everyone; the priority of interests of each individual; tolerance; trust and cooperation in solving problems of the client; confidentiality. The smallest are the values of the parameters: 1) "effectiveness" (3,89) – assessing improvement in the physical and emotional-and-psychological condition of wards; 2) "accessibility and openness" (3,99) – evaluation of the logistics of the provision of social services in residential institutions, which, incidentally, is a factor of improvement of the quality of social services.

The results of the expert studies indicate the urgent need to reform the system of management of institutions of social care, especially inpatient, residential. Moreover, the improvement of financial and management mechanisms requires new approaches (perhaps with the involvement foreign experience). Obviously, improving the quality of social services in institutions is closely connected to the formation of a new model of governance, based on partnership and cooperation between government, commercial and public sectors of society. It is also proved by some contemporary scientists in their research and managers in the social services sector.

Jorgensen (2006) is currently promoted as a win-win model of high potential, in which the cooperation between the three sectors of society increases the possibility of solving pressing problems and making an important contribution to the development of civil society and also beneficial to other partners of the cooperation in the social sphere.

5 CONCLUSIONS

So, on the basis of theoretical analysis and results of the expert survey we can draw the following conclusions: first, identify the components of quality social services, such as: the ability to increase the level of social security of the recipients by meeting their vital and social needs; the satisfaction of the recipient, contents, quality, accessibility of services, forms and methods of their provision; secondly, the main factors to improve the quality of social services in residential institutions is the adequacy of financial and logistical support, improvement of human resources management mechanism (professionalisation, introduction of new specialisations), the formation of a management model based on the mechanism of social partnership through the involvement of the commercial and public sectors of society; third, compliance with quality indicators of social services will promote customer oriented model of social services.

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