

DECISION-MAKING PECULIARITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOCIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The peculiarities of decision-making by social workers in social care institutions are analyzed in the article. It introduces how social workers cope with delicate and socially sensitive situations according to the clients, of social care institutions, welfare. Ethical commitments and empathy of social workers, personal indications of client's needs and objectives, are emphasized in the research. When a social worker is a team member and collaborates with other specialists, the interdisciplinary aspect of decision-making is indicated in the article.

Key words: Social care institution, decision-making, co-operation decision-making, teamwork, ethical commitments.

Introduction

Technological, economic, and social changes constantly affect the sphere of decision-making. People are getting vulnerable due to society aging in Lithuania and other social changes. As a result, social worker becomes a pivotal person to assist those, who are unable to take care of themselves or their family members. It is crucial that the decision-making peculiarities of social workers are constantly investigated, since, working in social care institutions, they meet the change of population and new social problems, phenomena day after day. Social worker takes the responsibility to provide social services when people under care do not have necessary social skills or encounter difficulties in life. "Socially under care", most of clients that means a decrease in self-support and the ability to make decisions, according to Orlova and Gruževskis (2014). Thus, social worker must reveal more complex decision-making responsibilities together with specific competence and duty to solve their position problems. To improve quality of life and ensure the quickness of decision-making, social workers cooperate with the clients of social care institutions and solve a variety of problems. A social worker's daily routine of decision-making is one of the most important aspects, especially working in a social care institution, when social workers must solve problems properly and competently, also co-operating with institution colleagues for decision-making. Complex provision of social services, according to Gražulis (2014), offers opportunities to progress and promote professional qualification. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the decision-making process in the institution. Practical offers to develop learning in institutions, according to actual world needs, presented by Baldwin (2016). He emphasizes the pursuit of continuous learning, as well as creative tension is required to become a learning institution. The competence and professional skills of social worker are essential in the decision-making process. High competence of the specialist is required due to increasing complexity and decision-making at lower management levels of the institution. The purpose of social work practice, by Coulshed and Orme (2018), is to make appropriate decisions according to social work theory in the context of individuals. As stated by Adamonienė (2015), a social worker takes full responsibility for the process, examines the condition of the client, identifies the current situation, looks for appropriate solutions, considers the most acceptable possibilities, and, finally, submits a decision and implements it. The research indicated that the decision-making of social workers depends on the situation: stress level at work, work experience and culture of communication in the institution.

Problematic research questions set in the article: the impact of decision-making due to the professional experience of social worker? By what method co-operation of the decision-making in social care institution is presented?

The aim of the research – to analyze the peculiarities of decision-making by social worker in social care institution.

The objectives of the research:

1. Examine theoretical aspects of the decision-making process.
2. Investigate the professional experience of social worker due to the decision-making process.
3. Reveal the active involvement of interest groups in the decision-making process.

Practise-based decision-making of social workers in social care institutions

“Socially under care”, most of the clients that means the decrease in self-support and the ability to make decisions, according to Orlova and Gruževskis (2014). As a result, a person becomes dependant on other people or loses self-sufficiency. Charenkova (2018) pointed out that socially under care person in social care institution, where he is incapable to control simple decisions of everyday life, is a threat to personal identity and welfare. Residents of social care institution, who only seek to meet their needs, become dependent on others compassion, professionalism, and empathy. Thus, social worker of social care institution takes full responsibility for the establishment and guidance of clients’ welfare, hence, for decisions he make as a professional. However, according to Charenkova (2019), criticism often appears due to the dominant professional role when social care institution workers make decisions related to the elderly care process. It is crucial for social worker to determine which decisions a resident can make on his own, without harming (insulting) a person or depriving him of his full self-sufficiency. The ethical need of decision making emerges to point out main principles and standards to ensure that decision made is honest and equitable according to the requirements of the client and institution. The value of honesty indicates that decision made does not discriminate a client and creates a position of equality. The following important ethical aspect is community benefit. Community is the institution wherein social worker and client are the members of it. Ethical decision is considered acceptable when it is beneficial for the community and presents the creation of common good. The philosophers of ancient times considered the purpose of social welfare as the priority of common good for society.

Social workers in social care institution constantly encounter with problems and difficulties depending on personal situation of clients, such as: economic challenges, health issues, legal proceedings, personal relationships with family members, social segregation. According to Charenkova (2018), daily decisions, such as: how to spend spare time, when to have dinner, who to go for a walk with, made by residents of social care institution, are not simple decisions about behaviour, but more obviously about development of their identity. Social workers, while making decisions, assume the responsibility for the creation and maintenance of welfare for a client, since socially under care clients encounter with compound difficulties. Social workers of social care institution, act in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts and make decisions due to distribution of residents’ supplies and financial costs, as Gambrill (2013) indicates. These decisions are essential both, for residents and social worker. Co-operating with a client, social workers have an opportunity to observe the behaviour and interaction, whereas observation presents crucial information to evaluate the situation of a client, as Šatkauskienė (2014) states. Proper relations with a client provide an opportunity for social worker to analyze and observe a client, as well as obtain equitable decisions to the emerged difficulties. Čiapaitė and Vaitkevičienė (2020) point out that, to correspond to people under care needs, it is essential to communicate about actual possibilities of service provision, pay attention to their expectations, analyze and preferable recognize the needs of service for the clients and improve social services.

The investigation of social workers motivation aspects in social care institution by Griciūtė and Senkevičiūtė-Doviltė (2018), pointed out that low motivation level might cause difficulties or decision-making and development at professional level, reluctance, as a result, social worker loses interest in his position. It is essential to increase the level of motivation for work and possibilities to form appropriate decisions, to encourage and motivate social workers. One of the methods is to operate as a learning institution, to achieve and convey latest comprehension. To increase a sense of work satisfaction, change behaviour and thinking, according to Grublienė and Urbonaitė (2014), it is necessary to create sustainable and united institutional culture. One of the most important motivation aspects to function, is a commitment to clients. Social workers with strong sense of commitment to clients and their social welfare, are prepared to make decisions according to the needs and interests of a client. It is essential to emphasize that motivation is closely related to acknowledgment and work contentment of social worker. The benefit for clients and institution submits social workers particularly motivated to achieve higher institutional results, according to acknowledgment of their work results and efforts. Šneiderienė (2020) states that the level of social worker competence, learning necessity of work environment and motivation for social workers from an executive to make progress, influence the impact on decision making and the capacity to adjust external and internal challenges of the institution, thus, to build a learning organization. It supports social workers to recognize situations promptly, create an interrelated knowledge interaction, improve skills and in accordance with the previously mentioned aspects, to make decisions. Community members of a learning institution merge new comprehension and skills into daily work environment, as a result, social care for clients is provided more qualitatively. It is essential, due to an individual level of social worker and institution, that the whole maintains to adjust and correspond compound needs of clients and worldwide social challenges.

The methodology of the research

A qualitative methodological approach was chosen for the research, to investigate individual experiences of the informants. Three social workers of social care institution participated in the research. Research sample concluded according to the criterion sampling method. As Žydžiūnaitė and Sabaliauskas (2017) claim, criterion sampling is structured by improving cases, which correspond the criteria stated by the researcher and provide relevant information. A semi-structured interview method was selected to gather research data. According to Kardelis (2017), the interview method helps to reveal the problems of the subject and to evaluate work peculiarities. Research was conducted in December 2022. The method of qualitative content analysis was chosen to examine and process the data collected in the research, which enabled the research participants to reveal the peculiarities of decision-making process and decision-making by social workers in the context of learning institution.

The ethical principles that were applied in the research: *confidentiality* and *anonymity* to protect the personal data and information of the research participants; *respect for personal privacy* so that research participants are not used solely to achieve the research objectives.

Results and analysis of the research

Proceeding the research about decision-making of social workers, it was essential to analyze the opinion of research participants about decision-making process. The participants of the research indicate subjectively individual attitude and feelings, point out different experiences and attitudes to equivalent items. Firstly, the research indicates the formation of decision-making process by research participants, "Refer to Figure 1".

Figure 1. The description of decision-making

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Characteristic of decision-making	Process formation	<i>It is a definite process...[B]</i> <i>Arrange decision-making process...[C]</i>	2
	Process establishment	<i>The situation...[A]</i> <i>The ability to evaluate situations...<></i> <i><...Asking are there any encountered an analogous situation. [A]</i> <i>Define situation together with residents of the institution...> [A]</i> <i>It is possible individually if the situation is clear...>[B]</i>	4
	Determined by requirements	<i>Appropriate solution to the problem.[C]</i> <i>Structured approach to problem solving..<></i> <i><...related problems of the residents in the institution...[C]</i> <i>When the problem is clarified..>[A]</i> <i>Daily problems...<></i> <i>Depending on the situation, problem. [B]</i>	4

According to decision-making process, identity similarities appear analyzing informants' experiences and could be determined by the same institutional behaviour. Decision-making by the participants of the research was stated as a process of creation: "*The situation...[A]*, *The ability to evaluate situations...<>*, *<...Asking are there any encountered an analogous situation. [A]*, *Define situation together with residents of the institution...> [A]*, *"It is possible individually if the situation is clear...>" [B]*. Some of the research participants related decision-making with the dependence of needs: "*Appropriate solution to the problem" [C]* "*Structured approach to problem solving...<>*" "*<...related problems of the residents in the institution...[C]*" "*When the problem is clarified...>" [A]*" "*Daily problems...<>*" "*Depending on the situation, problem."* [B]. Decision-making is complex and segregate process, which does or does not develop in a certain order, selecting an appropriate and effective way of solution, as Adamonienė (2015) states. However, the

experiences of informants emphasize the understanding of decision-making as a “situation.” Decision-making according to the situation is an adaptable method to operate. Each situation is defined by certain circumstances, accordingly, the competence of social worker to operate in dynamic environment is crucial. As Baranauskienė and Kyguolienė (2013) claim, it is essential to evaluate the status of decision-making in certain situations, while the situation may appear as an opportunity to exceed objectives or expectations. The participants of the research emphasize the concept of “a problem”, due to decision-making conception: “*Appropriate solution to the problem [C]. “Daily problems...<>” Depending on the situation, problem” [B].* Most of the research participants frequently stress that situations and problems are an integral part of decision-making. Therefore, decision-making is a structured activity, which aim is to achieve the intended objective, thus, as the research results indicate, objective depends on the situation.

In the analysis of decision-making, it is essential to reveal the category of decisions made by social worker in his professional practice. The participants of the research pointed out that decisions made during their work practise are connected to daily situations and the behaviour of clients, “Refer to Figure 2”.

Figure 2. Decision-making in work practise

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Professional decision-making	Daily decisions	<i><...decisions connected with living conditions in the institution...[A] Daily problems<...> maybe the main for residents, so when, where they should leave or go...[C]</i>	2
	Decisions caused according to clients' behaviour	<i><...decisions related to the behavior of residents and other social problems.[B]</i>	1

Research data emphasize that principal decisions, encountered in work practise, relate to: “*Daily problems <...> the main for residents, so when, where they should leave or go...” [C]. Present experience assumes previous experience: “... with people under care, living conditions in the institution” [A].* One of the informants stated that frequently decision-making is caused by the behaviour of the clients: “*Constantly making decisions related to the behaviour of the residents...” [B].* Opinions of the research participants confirmed the statement of Charenkova (2019), that persons living in social care institutions are traditionally claimed to be passive recipients of care services and incapable comprehensively participate in solving social care issues. Consequently, social workers make decisions related to daily routine and social welfare of the clients. According to the author (Charenkova 2019), daily decision-making of the residents of social care institutions, such as: how to spend leisure time, when to have dinner or go for a walk, are not just ordinary decisions how to behave themselves, but more like decisions of what to be as a person. As a result, a crucial issue for the clients of social care institutions appears, what way to maintain and foster their identity. According to the maintenance of identity, the relevance of personal approach to the client appears, i.e., “small narratives” in the context of daily routine. Since social worker is a creator of “small narratives” too, yet these can differ from the ones of the clients’, an ethical attitude towards the other is emphasized.

The most decisions made during work practise are related to behaviour of the client and daily living conditions. These decisions are affected by the clients’ appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. Daily living conditions of the clients are constantly improving, therefore clients usually become dependent on the personnel around.

The function of social worker is substantiated with co-operation, as decision-making is divided into levels. According to the opinions of the informants about mostly applied decision-making methods of problems solving in work practise, it was found out that personal decisions dominate against collective decisions, “Refer to Figure” 3.

Figure 3. Level solved and analyzed problems

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Methods of decision-making	Personal level	<i>The most acceptable decision-making for me is individual, because I can make it fast.[A] I use individual level more often, because we spend lots of time with the residents.[B] In my opinion, usually individually. Because problems more often relate to the residents of care institution and we must react at once, here, and now. [C]</i>	3
	Co-operation level	<i>...if it is important, significant, using co-operation level, to search for a suitable solution.[B]</i>	1

While investigating an interview, the informant stated: *The most acceptable decision-making for me is individual, because I can make it fast. [A]*. Other informants expressed certain opinions: *I use individual level more often, because we spend lots of time with the residents. [B]* *In my opinion, usually individually. Because problems more often relate to the residents of care institution and we must react at once, here, and now. [C]*. It indicates that social worker is constantly co-operating with the client and involved in his individual situations. Personal level decisions are the first and the closest level for the client. Personal level decisions made, include the evaluation of individual client needs, the provision of services and emotional support. According to Kavaliauskienė and Nikolajenko (2017), social worker can interpret the subject of his profession as a personality, which creates and accumulates unique personal experience. In relation to personal level, it motivates self-sufficiency and individual decision-making. As Adomaitytė-Subačienė (2015) states, the quality of social services and the standards of social care institution include both, personal and co-operation levels. It confirms the established procedure of work organization in the context of decision-making process. The opinion of co-operation decision-making level identified: *...if it is important, significant, using co-operation level, to search for a suitable solution. [B]*. The participant of the research emphasizes that important and significant decisions are made consulting with colleagues or executives, to prevent himself of full responsibility or to manage the best suitable decisions made for the situation. According to Buzaitytė-Kašalynienė, etc. (2016), executives of the institution might help their employees, solving complicated situations, as they gain experience in social work with the clients too. Executives foster social workers to consider their work experiences with the clients, relations, and emotions, to create institutional culture with open communication, sharing experience and learning from it. Decision-making in co-operation level, improve the quality of decisions, as not only the diverse of solutions are afforded, but a stronger team is formed, together with the confidence of members. It contributes to more effective institution function and the implementation of its mission.

The participants of the research are more likely to make decisions personally, this might be caused by the peculiarities and circumstances of work. According to co-operation level, the participants emphasize the most important and significant decisions of the institution, to convey decisions initiated, as well as possible.

The aim of the research was to find out obvious diversity in decision-making among the employees of the institution. According to the participants, significant differences have not been noticed, except, distinguish certain circumstances, that decision-making process might differ, "Refer to Figure 4".

Figure 4. Differences in work practice, according to decision-making process

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Decision-making peculiarities	The avoidance of responsibility	<i>Some employees avoid making crucial decisions, together with responsibility .[C]</i>	1
	General discourse	<i>...the attitude to decision-making is different.[A] depends on the situation, problem... Do not notice any significant differences. [B]</i>	2

The data of the research indicate that diversity of decision-making is not extensive: “Difficult to answer, depends on the situation, problem. Do not notice any significant differences” [B]. “Do not notice differences, our work order is similar, a client is the most important...[A].” According to Rimkus (2015), the sense of decision-making peculiarities and uncertainty comes from expanding the boundaries of social work and the dependence on the context, together with prevailing discourse. Each social group provides a meaning to the occurrence of experience through a general discourse, and it is never one-sided. Social worker can make the best decisions only by recognizing these interactions. The participants of the research do not notice disagreements among colleagues in decision-making, however, they distinguish circumstances that might cause differences in work results of decision-making process. An interesting aspect emerged: the uncertainty in decision-making. The statement of the informant reveals: “Some employees avoid making crucial decisions, together with responsibility. “[C]. In accordance with the institution needs of changing society, uncertainty is a natural component of decision-making process. Analyzing data, the importance of collegial collaboration and institutional culture is essential.

In decision-making process, it is crucial to reveal the necessity of human recourses characteristics in decision-making. Informants were focused on skills, competences, and the evaluation of the situation, “Refer to Figure 5”.

Figure 5. Required characteristics in decision-making process

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Human recourses characteristics in decision-making	Analytical and communicational skills	<i>Be able to evaluate situations, according to the needs of residents, also it is very important to know how to communicate with residents and colleagues.[A] The ability to evaluate and identify assistance needs for a person<...> the ability, to communicate [B] <...be able to collect information,...[B]</i>	3
	Personal skills	<i>Responsibilities, psychological knowledge, communication skills, tolerance, goodwill, confidentiality.[C] <...empathy is important, the ability to communicate, confidentiality, ethics, honesty<...>, co-operate [B]</i>	2

The research pointed out that analytical and communication skills are principal in decision-making. The participants revealed the importance of: “Be able to evaluate situations “[A]. “The ability to evaluate and identify assistance needs for a person <...> the ability, to communicate [B], ...be able to collect information...[B] and apply, decisions made to the residents of social care

institution. The informants stress that social care workers consult clients about their rights and duties, analyze the situation and submit appropriate decisions with the guidance reference, observe if support for a client is productive, as Adomaitienė and Balčiūnienė (2017) imply. Analytical skills of social worker in decision-making are crucial to analyzing the situation of a client, identifying, evaluating, and implementing the problem. The research also revealed that communicational skills are significant, as these abilities consider the capacity to listen diligently, to communicate empathically, creating relationships based on trust and acknowledgement between social worker and the client. Personal decision-making skills are essential: "... *psychological knowledge, communication skills, tolerance, goodwill, confidentiality.* "[C], "... *empathy is important, the ability to communicate, confidentiality, ethics, honesty <...>, co-operate* "[B]. These personal skills enable to evaluate situation and to make proper decisions. According to Sadauskas and Leliūgienė (2010), a social worker must possess knowledge about culture, race, ethics, social status and to comprehend the influence for a client lifetime, otherwise, it might cause a negative impact to social relationships.

According to the research data analysis, the process of co-operative decision-making was revealed. The participants of the research shared the experience about co-operation with colleagues in decision-making process. Most of the participants agreed that partnership co-operation in decision-making, assists to solve problems successfully. In addition, according to the importance of situation, colleagues get involved into decision-making, "Refer to Figure 6".

Figure 6. *The aspect of co-operation in decision-making*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Collegial decision-making	Team co-operation	<i>I try to co-operate with colleagues, share necessary information...>[B] We all look for common and appropriate decision-making method..>.[A] Consulting, accepting different opinions...>[C]</i>	3
	Colleagues involvement according to situation	<i><... assistance in decision-making, asking colleagues or executive for some advice, asking if there are those who encountered a similar situation.[A]</i>	1

The research data revealed that in the process of decision-making, participants usually implement a team co-operation approach, using active co-operation manner and seeking for common, appropriate decision-making method. The participants state that: "... *I try to co-operate with colleagues, share necessary information > "[B]. "... We all look for common and appropriate decision-making method > "[A]. „ Consulting, accepting different opinions...> "[C]. According to Gražulis (2014), the participants agree that social workers apply co-operation method to implement institutional objectives. Social worker, in this case, brings team members together for a decision-making process. The collegial decision-making indicates that the involvement of colleagues according to situation, appears when: "<...> *assistance in decision-making wanted, asking colleagues or executive for some advice, asking if there are those who encountered a similar situation* "[A]. Collegial co-operation, according to the opinion of the participants, is a preferable attitude in decision-making, to lead the assistance to decide, while the involvement of colleagues according to situation appears when the informant has not encountered a particular experience, until a certain situation emerged.*

Decision-making analysis investigates aspects to the influence of immediate and proper decision-making. The participants of the research revealed actions for immediate and efficient decision-making. Various opinions of the participants appeared, "Refer to Figure 7".

Figure 7. Decision-making process

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Decision-making levels	Investigation approach	<i>When the problem is fully resolved or searching for the most appropriate way to make a decision.[A] Firstly, it is necessary to collect essential information about the client.[B]</i>	2
	Estimation approach	<i>The list of advantages and disadvantages, consideration of the opportunities...[C] ...the assessment of expected benefits ..[B] ...then the problem is defined...[B]</i>	3

According to the collected research data, decision-making process begins from the analysis of the problem. The necessity develops to investigate the situation in detail, during decision-making analysis: “*When the problem is fully resolved or searching for the most appropriate way to make a decision, without a delay of decision-making.*” [A], the other participant claimed, “*Firstly, it is necessary to collect essential information about the client <...>*” [B]. The analysis of the problem reveals objectives and the identification of proper decisions. All this, assume to ensure social welfare for the clients. As previous research data indicated, it requires analytical skills and co-operation with colleagues. As participants of the research point out, it is the necessity to accomplish the evaluation of situation, according to decision-making analysis: “*...the assessment of expected benefits <...> the prediction of possible choices, the possibilities of consequence outcomes, then the most suitable decision revealed.*” [B], “*The list of advantages and disadvantages, consideration of the opportunities, the proper decision-making [C].*” The competence, according to Adomaitienė and Balčiūnienė (2017), depends on personal knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, which conceal deep into the personality and occur with successful work results in a certain sphere. In decision-making process, it is crucial to apply evaluation means properly, as risk factors and solutions are estimated.

The aim of the research was to consider the involvement of residents into decision-making process. During the interview, the participants of the research claimed that the involvement of process is multifaceted, “Refer to Figure 8”.

Figure 8. The involvement of residents

In accordance with the collected data of the research, it is obvious that the involvement of

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Co-operation with the residents of the institution	Collection and acceptance of suggestions	<i>Together with the residents of the institution, we sort out the situation and listen to their opinions and suggestions to identify the most suitable decision-making alternative .[A]</i>	1
	Social needs and its enforcement	<i>Residents involved to whom the decision-making is related.[C] Efforts are made to indicate the benefits of being involved in decision-making, also, it is important a proper (trust-based) communication with the residents of social care institution. [B]</i>	2

the residents to decision-making process and their contribution, are essential: “*Together with the*

residents of the institution, we sort out the situation, listen to their opinions and suggestions to identify the most suitable decision-making alternative "[A]. As Šatkauskienė (2014) states, social workers co-operating with the client, gain the opportunity to observe the communication and behaviour between clients, which is crucial for situation evaluation process of the client. The participant claims about the contribution of residents in decision-making process: "Efforts are made to indicate the benefits of being involved in decision-making, also, it is important a proper (trust-based) communication with the residents of social care institution." [B]. The opinion of another participant: "Residents involved to whom the decision-making is related "[C]. These experiences focus attention on the significance of the involvement of clients to decision-making process, which impacts to ensure clients welfare. The involvement process enables clients to feel comprehensive and that decision-making responds to their needs. It fosters the confidence of clients to social care institution and improves the quality of communication.

The research pointed out the difficulties, which influence decision-making process. The participants of the research revealed that difficulties in work practise and decision-making process, arise due to lack of co-operation and systemic boundaries, "Refer to Figure 9".

Figure 9. Difficulties in decision-making process

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
The impact of difficulties	The lack of co-operation	<i>The resistance of residents to any decision made, the lack of colleagues co-operation in decision-making.[A]</i> <i>The lack of collective decision, teamwork.[C]</i> <i><... the reluctance of colleagues to co-operate,<...>, the reluctance of the client to co-operate, [B]</i>	3
	Systemic boundaries	<i>The lack of information,<... > conflicts, disagreements...[B]</i> <i><...uncertain requirements<...> the lack of finances.[B]</i>	1

The data of the research indicate that basic difficulties in decision-making emerge due to co-operation problems with the clients: "The resistance of residents to any decision made, the lack of colleagues co-operation in decision-making "[A]. The participant of the research emphasizes the lack of teamwork and collective decision: "The lack of collective decision, teamwork." [C]. Likewise, the research data identified the reluctance to co-operate between colleagues and clients: "<... the reluctance of colleagues to co-operate, <...>, "the reluctance of the client to co-operate" [B]. The difficulties in decision-making process emerge when systemic boundaries appear: "The lack of information, <... > conflicts, disagreements...[B] <...uncertain requirements<...>the lack of finances [B]." These are essential reasons for difficulties to evolve. It might be stated that difficulties for the participants of the research in decision-making occur, when adverse or inappropriate co-operation with colleagues and clients, or systemic boundary, disturb eligible decision-making. Systemic boundaries in decision-making process appear due to structural, organizational, or cultural subjects. The research revealed that colleagues, to prevent consequences due to respective decision, approach to risk avoidance more. As a result, in the context of learning organization, a social care institution should additionally encourage open communication, the diversity of attitudes and promote innovation, that create new experiences and contemporary opportunities.

Conclusions

1. According to the analysis of the decision-making process, it was proved that the knowledge and competencies of social workers are crucial to the decision-making process. Applying knowledge and competencies, it is not difficult to decide on various levels: individual, co-operation, and organizational. In addition, the interaction of a client and teamwork are essential in decision-making. The impact of social workers' decision-making process in social care institutions, implements the loss of self-government of the residents in the institution. Consequently, the responsibility of decision-making, in most cases, depends on social worker and his competence to enable knowledge and experience.

2. The research revealed that social workers in their work practice face difficulties due to teamwork decision-making, this was emphasized by social workers with long-term careers, compared to other professionals in the sphere. The decisions are related to the appropriate or inappropriate behavior of the clients. So that, to maintain an ethical attitude towards the client and to enable actions in the daily environment, the ethical attitude of social worker develops, without denying otherness.

3. The data of the research expose that social worker, working in social care institutions, observes uncertain co-operation with colleagues in the decision-making process, which might cause difficulties in implementing responsibilities as a social worker. This is determined by several aspects, like, insufficient communication when the conversation between colleagues is effectless or competitive, the other aspect, there are no definite responsibilities or explicit decision-making process. Consequently, the individual level of social worker accepts a crucial role in decision-making, involving empathy and ethical responsibility concerning the client.

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