

STREAMLINING THE WORK OF SOCIAL WORKERS THROUGH THE OPTIMIZATION OF CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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DOI: 10.19062/2247-3173.2017.19.2.25

Abstract: *Social and emotional learning develops, at the jobs with a social impact, certain characteristics that are essential for work fulfilment and personal efficiency. The study starts from a few of the facets of social intelligence and, through the application of a training, proposes different ways to optimize the work of social workers. The study had 37 participants with the average age range of 36,6 years. The group meetings were realized in a constant manner can be constituted as a non-invasive method of operation with the contents that were potentially existent for each participant, but also to activate each of their resources.*

Key words: social intelligence, social worker, personal efficiency

1. INTRODUCTION

Each behavioural act is based on a certain thing that incites and a certain direction and a certain goal; even if the objective or goal is missing, the cause is always present. Inevitably, one can wonder „why did this behaviour occur?”. The answer to this question must be searched for beyond motivation. Motivation represents „a specific form of reflection through which one signals the command mechanisms – control of the personality system, an oscillation from the initial balanced state, to an energetic deficit – informational or a necessity that needs to be satisfied” [1]

Motivation is a general law for the organisation and functioning of the human psyche, i.e. she subordinates the other psychic processes: perception, thinking, memory, will, character and aptitudes. They disclose the significance and the motivational valences of the objectives and phenomena around us. Motivation is „the first chronological element to conduit” [2]. Any conduit act is motivated, even though sometimes it is not acquiesced.

Along with persistence, the intensity of the behaviour, the direction and the objectives are valuable indicators for the study of motivation, from a quantitative and respectively qualitative point of view. The intensity of the behaviour grows in proportion with our degree of implication. Depending on the complexity of the situation, or on the importance of the objective followed, we mobilize ourselves more or less, we dive deeper in action or we only go in superficially. The direction is the one that focuses us on the given goal, it is the finality which gives a measurement of our success or failure. The importance to establish the direction and objectives comes out clearly from Johns definition: „motivation represents the measure in which a persistent effort is taken towards the realisation of a goal” [3].

The motivational dimension is given by the „intensity of the needs which determine, from the person in cause, the adaptive employment to the demands of a given role, to which extent he or she wants to interpret the role, if the role convenes and corresponds to the needs to realise, how attracted is he or she to the interactional reality that he or she will be satisfying; in a word, in which measure is the role suitable and if it corresponds to his or her aspirations” [4]. In the context of work, motivation can be defined as the „degree of the employee’s availability and to put a sustained effort in order to attain certain professional objectives, defined individually or organisationally.” [5].

Besides the career motivation in being a social worker, empathy is very important, and this has special valence in all social domains. It is a basis project in the social interactions, inserting itself with necessity in the process of knowing other people, and to having the adequate reactions to other people’s behaviour. Social workers are the people who give support the the categories found in need and thus, their empathy and he empathic endeavour represent one of the central conduits on the collaborative model spiral. The intra-aiding issue refers already to being in a relationship, to establish contacts, point of departure, to be empathic. The understanding of the client makes the next intervention be guided with success towards getting positive results. The efficiency of the job of the social worker depends in grand terms by his or her persona, by variables that partake in his or her personality – self-confidence, empathical understanding, expressive communication, coherence, emotional balance, openness, social intelligence, flexibility in adapting to the reality of each client [6]. The existence of a communication channel between a social brain and another shows the existence of an emotional context in each of our interactions. [7]. The notion of social brain being introduced by Siegel, with reference to that part of the brain that includes a multitude of existent circuits to connect with those of another brain, or another person. The present study starts from initial data gathered on social workers, data referring to empathy, motivation, self-respect, for later to have an intervention in the social intelligence proposed exactly to streamline their work.

2. OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is streamlining the work of social workers through a durable training.

3. GENERAL HYPOTHESIS

The streamlining of social intelligences leads to the augmentation of the level of empathy, motivation, self-respect and personal efficiency to social workers.

Hypothesis 1. *We assume that the level of motivation, empathy and self-respect is constituted on start data that contributes to the building of a training to optimise social intelligence.*

Hypothesis 2. *We assume that the participation to the training build on the social intelligence model will determine an augmentation of the social, emotional intelligence and of self-respect to social workers.*

4. DATA ON THE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

The given research was realised on a number of 37 students, social workers, out of which 26 females, and 9 males, with ages between 27-59 years old, having an age average of 36,6 years. The selection of the subjects was random, (in liking of its definition according to [8], [9]) in the frame of the services that belong to the Child Protection services.

5. TOOLS USED IN RESEARCH

1. *Inherent motivation questionnaire* (IMI, Ryan, Koestner and Deci, 1991); inventory with 22 items in which one can subscribe 4 subscales that have as common objective the measurement of the inherent motivation of an individual in terms of his or her activity.

2. *The questionnaire that measures the emotional empathy* (Mehrabian, Epstein, 1972); shows the phenomenon of activating the capacity to emotionally substitute which offers the general tendency to be activated in different situations, measuring empathy as potential. This comprises 33 affirmations in which the subject can or cannot be in agreement with. These affirmations represent interconnected subscales which measure the relational aspects of emotional empathy. The subscales refer to: the susceptibility to emotional contagion, the appreciation of emotions of unknown or far-away persons, extreme emotional reactivity, the tendency to be impressed by the negative experiences of other people, the tendency to sympathise, the wish to be in contact with the people who have problems. The answers to each affirmation can be given on a scale that varies from a Strong agreement (+4) to a Strong disagreement (-4).

3. *Self-esteem scale (Rosenberg)*

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, 1965) is an instrument used to evaluate self-esteem, used in psychology. The scale comprises 10 items to which the subjects can answer by choosing one of the 4 answer options, which include: true, rarely true, sometimes true, false. The global level of self-esteem influences the choices in the lives of individuals, but also their existential style. The conveying of the test is realised from Băban, 1998.

6. THE PROCESSING AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Hypothesis 1.

Results obtained when applying the inherent motivation scale

In terms of the global score of the *Inherent Motivation*, results taken from this data gathering from the group of social workers, has demonstrated an average score of 68,44 – score that situates itself in the average level for the presentation of the scores specific to motivation.

The subscale called interest for the given task showed the fact that the subjects have obtained an average score of 19,85. This score situates itself in the average zone of declaration of the interest for the given task. In terms of the competency subscale, the subjects have obtained an average score of 18,92 – score that situates itself in the average zone to declare the perception towards competence. In terms if the subscale Tension/Pressure, the subjects have reported an average score of 20,67 – score that situates them in the average zone of the tension felt.

Results obtained to the questionnaire to measure emotional empathy

For the scale that measures the level of emotional empathy in the subjects from the social workers group, the score obtained was 59,68, value that describes an average empathy level.

Results obtained for the self-esteem scale

The results of the subjects from the social worker group show an average value of the score at 25,72.

The social intelligence model has as facets self-esteem, inherent motivation and emotional empathy, and thus the data obtained can be constituted as a starting point for building a training to stimulate it.

Hypothesis 2

All the study participants took part in the training, which took place at the end of 8 work sessions for a duration of 2 months. The subjects were interested in the study's development and in the possibilities to ameliorate certain necessary abilities to optimise work performance. Following the realisation of this type of intervention, one can ascertain that the level of emotional empathy and self-esteem significantly grows. The group made of these subjects' auto-evaluated themselves also through completing an analogous scale (of auto-evaluation) of their personal efficiency before and after the participation in the aforementioned program. For the efficiency variable one took into consideration the results auto-evaluated by the subjects before and after going through the optimisation training based on social intelligence. Thus, each of the subjects scored themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 in liaison with the activity shown before and after the optimisation program. The efficiency scale was built as follows: the score for very high efficiency was noted with 10, while at the opposite pole one could find the 1 efficiency score, weak efficiency. The results communicated by the subjects to this scale were as follows: for the first auto-evaluation, 15 subjects have catalogued their personal efficiency with an 8; 5 subjects have reported an indicator of 7; seven have reported an indicator of 6, and the last ones remaining have appreciated themselves at a 5. The results communicated for the second auto-evaluation were as follow: 17 subjects have appreciated themselves at a very good efficiency score of 9; 10 subjects have reported an indicator of 8; three subjects have appreciated their efficiency with an indicator of 7 and the last seven subjects have appreciated their efficiency with a 6.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The data obtained from the initial testing constitutes in data to build a training to streamline certain facets of social intelligence. Following the intervention, the progress obtained is monitored through re-testing with the inherent motivation, empathy and self-esteem tests, but also with an auto-evaluation scale for personal efficiency. From the point of view of the second hypothesis, the final data draw attention to a significant amelioration of the numerical results in terms of empathy, self-esteem and the evaluation of personal efficiency.

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