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Evaluation of Employee-Customer Relations in Social Organisations

The article reveals the problems of employee-customer relations in social organisations, identifies the principles of employee-customer relations that influence the activities of organisations in complex conditions of external and internal circumstances. The article defines the importance of the professionalism of the employee in the development of mutual relations with the client, in the creation of a certain system of communication, which contributes to the successful operation of a social service organisation. The qualitative research reveals the importance of the relationship between employees and clients in a social service organisation. The research was carried out using a semi-structured interview method, which enabled a more targeted approach to the problem. The research involved 5 subjects – social workers. The results of the study allow a deeper understanding of the importance of the relationship between the worker and the client for the functioning of social service organisations.

Keywords: employee-customer, communication, social organisations.

Straipsnyje atskleidžiamos darbuotojo ir kliento santykių problemos socialinėse organizacijose, nurodomi darbuotojo ir kliento santykių principai, darantys įtaką organizacijų veiklai sudėtingomis išorinėmis ir vidinėmis aplinkybėmis. Straipsnyje apibrėžiama darbuotojo profesionalumo svarba plėtojant tarpusavio santykius su klientu, kuriant tam tikrą komunikacijos sistemą, kuri prisideda prie sėkmingos socialinių paslaugų organizacijos veiklos. Kokybinis tyrimas atskleidžia darbuotojo ir kliento santykių svarbą socialinių paslaugų organizacijoje. Tyrimas atliktas taikant pusiau struktūruoto interviu metodą, kuris leido konkrečiau pažvelgti į problemą. Tyrime dalyvavo 5 tiriamieji – socialiniai darbuotojai. Tyrimo rezultatai leidžia pagilinti supratimą apie darbuotojo ir kliento santykių svarbą socialinių paslaugų organizacijų funkcionavimui.

Raktiniai žodžiai: darbuotojas ir klientas, komunikacija, socialinės organizacijos.

Introduction

Social services, their development, types and methods of social work practice are discussed in academic publications, but there is a lack of research-based information on the evaluation of staff-client relationships in social organisations. The lack of justification of the essence of interpersonal communication and its relevance to the organisation's activities highlights problematic aspects, such as the need to improve the professionalism and competence of staff, and the difficulties faced by social service organisations serving vulnerable populations in building a relationship of trust and connection between staff and clients.

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The problem is related to the importance of the employee-customer relationship, which can affect the performance of organisations in complex external and internal contexts.

The relevance of the study is highlighted by the growing demand for social services and the increasing number of clients in social service organisations. Research by J. Gečienė and V. Gudžinskienė (2018) reveals the importance of the quality of social services, which is not possible without the relationship between employees and clients, social relations, employee well-being and the successful management of the organisation. Peer relationships in social service organisations are an integral factor in terms of service quality and the satisfaction of client needs. Employee-customer relationships also play a crucial role in the management of social service organisations and can influence the organisation's mission, the success of its activities and the well-being of the clients served. It is important for social service organisations to create a positive working culture by improving relationships with clients and achieving better outcomes in the delivery of social services. These relationships not only affect staff morale and job satisfaction, but also have a tangible impact on the quality of customer service and the overall performance of the organisation (Garbenčiūtė, Šiurienė, 2023). The relevance of the topic of this paper is therefore based on the crucial role of employee-customer relationships for the functioning and success of social service organisations.

The novelty of the topic is revealed by the purpose of the Lithuanian Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030" – to create an environment that would allow the values of progress to flourish. Smart governance is one of the key areas for progress: participatory, communicative and collaborative, open, efficient, responsive to society's needs and delivering good quality services.

The research on the topic. The leadership of managers in social service organisations and the role of managers in the social service organisation has been revealed by J. Gečienė and A. G. Raišienė (2019), the need for social services and their application in practical activities in the aspect of the quality of social services have been, the satisfaction of clients' needs and the quality of services provided by social service organisations has been analysed by J. Gečienė and V. Gudžinskienė (2018), the relationship between the social worker and the client has been revealed by R. Garbenčiūtė and A. Šiurienė (2023), and the success of the professional relationship with the family in the process of providing social services has been analysed by J. Abramavičienė and J. Vyšniauskytė-Rimkienė (2020). Although these authors have analysed the quality of social services and aspects of social service delivery, the importance of the relationship between the client and the social worker for the performance of the organisation has not been highlighted. Therefore, this study is important in order to fulfil the research objective.

The research object – evaluation of employee-customer relationships in a social service organisation.

The aim of the research is to highlight the importance of employee-customer relationships for the performance of social service organisations.

The research method is a qualitative study using a semi-structured interview method that combines the structure of a standardised interview with the flexibility of an unstructured interview. The research is carried out in stages: firstly, the research was prepared, then the interview with the interviewee, then the interview was carried out, questions were asked and finally the interview was completed. The study involved 5 subjects – social workers from three different organisations providing social services.

The objectives of the article:

1. To reveal the impact of the employee-customer relationship on the organisation's performance.

2. To define the importance of employee professionalism in the development of the customer relationship.

3. To identify how the employee-customer relationship can influence the performance of social service organisations.

The paper consists of the following main parts: a theoretical analysis of the management of social service organisations and the relationship between employees and clients, a presentation of the methodology of the empirical study and an analysis of the results. The paper concludes with conclusions and discussion.

Theoretical background for evaluation of employee-customer relations in social organisations

Changing external environmental conditions, internal changes in the organisation's activities and increasing customer needs influence the organisation's performance, so every manager must assess the changes and create favourable operating conditions to achieve the organisation's objectives and ensure the quality of services (Gudžinskienė, Gečienė, 2018). When a social service organisation operates in a period of change, the key actors are the managers, who have the decision-making power and the ability to make changes in the organisation (Bristow and Healey, 2014). It is also important for managers to ensure smooth communication within the organisation by involving relevant professionals in decision-making, thus fostering positive relationships and overcoming challenges in the organisation. The management of a social service organisation needs to be coherent and flexible, as the organisation's activities require continuous effort and depend not only on managers but also on employees and their relationships with clients. Social service organisations are not only complex because of their work with high-risk clients, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, the socially excluded, etc., but also because of the difficulties of working in a period of continuous change. The Law on Social Services of the Republic of Lithuania (2006) defines a social service organisation as a legal person or other organisation providing social services, or a subdivision thereof, which meets the requirements set out in the law and complies with the principles of management, allocation and provision of social services, one of the most important of which is the principle of cooperation. The management, allocation and provision of social services is based on cooperation and mutual assistance between the individual, family, community, organisations defending the interests and rights of social groups of people, social

service organisations, municipalities and state institutions (Law on Social Services of the Republic of Lithuania 2006). Thus, communication and cooperation are particularly important factors for the management and organisation of social service organisations.

It is worth noting that the management of social service organisations is a process that requires constant updating, as the success of organisations is determined by favourable decision-making, flexibility, adaptability to change and successful continuity (Gečienė, Raišienė, 2019).

It can be assumed that the management and performance of a social service organisation depends on the professionalism of the manager in assessing change and anticipating goals and giving decision-making power to the professionals in the organisation. In order to ensure the quality of the services provided, it is necessary to ensure positive relationships within the organisation, as communication is an important factor in managing the organisation and organising activities.

Social service organisations are there to provide a comprehensive range of social services to meet people's basic needs, not just their physiological needs, which are of the utmost importance. A strong emphasis must be placed on promoting client participation and communication, so that the person interacts both with the staff and with other clients. Thus, open communication, close cooperation and effective relationships are the cornerstones of social service organisations. Effective communication not only determines the proper implementation of operational tasks, the realisation

the organisation's objectives, the further development of the organisation, the success of its activities and the quality of the services provided, but also the satisfaction of clients' needs (Baršauskienė, Janulevičiūtė-Ivaškevičienė, 2005). A social service organisation involves a wide range of people in its activities and there is constant communication between managers and employees, between employees and employees, between employees and clients, between clients and clients, and between managers and clients (Figure 1), who communicate every day, exchanging experiences, thoughts, and thoughts.

Although, as we can see in the figure below, communication in social service organisations takes place at different levels, the most intensive communication is between clients and the staff working directly with them, in order to meet the client's needs and ensure the quality of the services provided. The clients receiving services in social service organisations are diverse and have different life experiences, communication patterns, cultures, values, etc. However, communication is one of the most important social values without which the provision and receipt of social services is unthinkable. Through communication, people can share emotional closeness, positive feelings, accept help from staff and provide some assistance to each other. Research has identified a number of principles that characterise the employee-customer relationship:

- Customer care – wanting to help and showing it through your behaviour and words;
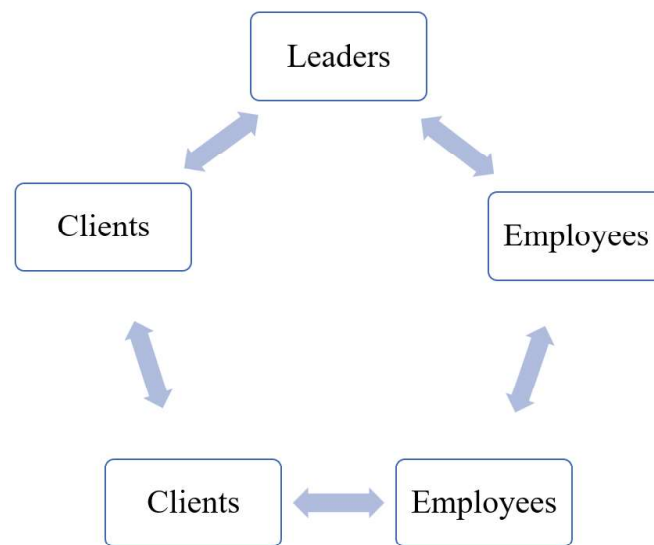- Acceptance – this involves being aware of the client's situation,

Fig. 1. **Communication in a social service organisation**

individuality and believing in positive changes in their life;

• Responsibility and commitment – the worker commits to being attentive to the client's situation, to creating a safe emotional and physical environment, and to honouring his/her promises and confidentiality;

• The authority and power that the worker's position confers on the client reinforces the client's trust in the worker;

• Empathy – the ability to see another person's world through their eyes;

• Sincerity and authenticity – a worker's sincerity means that he/she is open.

The employee's honesty and authenticity is open, honest and professional (Prakapas, 2007; Butkevičienė, 2010).

While the above principles are important and influence smooth communication and relationships, internal and external factors are equally important for building relationships in a social service organisation (Bubnys and Anusaitė, 2013) (Figure 2).

It can be noted that different habits, values, lifestyles and beliefs create different relationships between people. It should be stressed that when a person's internal factors are strong, it is much easier for them to adapt to external factors, which would not be easy for a person without the motivation or need to communicate. Building relationships is therefore a complex process that cannot be one-way. By communicating and achieving common goals in a social service organisation, stakeholders create a certain communication system where both staff and clients have to contribute to the success of the relationship (Nikolajenko, 2019). This means that each person must try to adapt to the environment and the people in it, building a relationship without relying on prejudices or negative experiences. Building
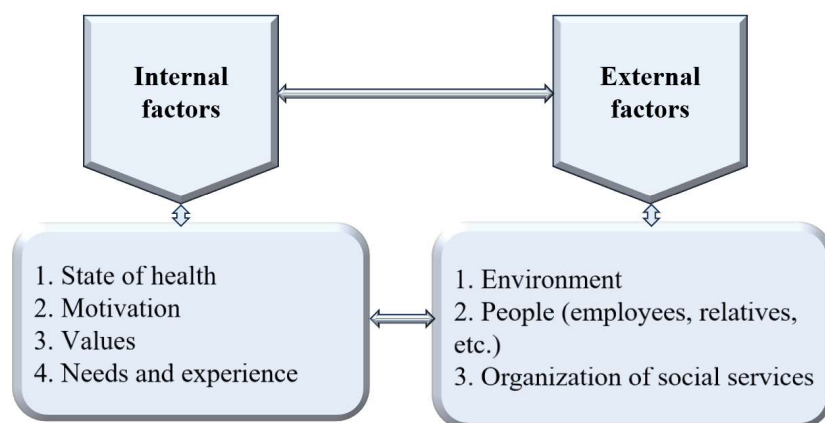
Fig. 2. **Internal and external drivers of relationships**

a collaborative relationship is a complex process that requires skill and knowledge. The relationship must be based on mutual respect, trust and knowledge of each person's strengths. Building a collaborative relationship makes it easier to achieve the objectives of the social service organisation. Empathy, respect and personal qualities, the ability to work with the client in a variety of formal and informal ways, knowing how much and how much personal information can be disclosed, and knowing when to be directive, supportive and reflective (Social Collaboration Model, 2009) are all important to building this relationship. Since one of the priorities of social work is to provide the necessary support to a person who is unable to cope on his/her own and/or does not find appropriate ways to solve a problem, assessing the needs of the person is the first step in establishing contact and communication with the person. This is the beginning of a relationship between the social worker and the client, or a social construction that involves the social worker,

the client and everything that binds the two together. This is the bonding of a common environment, a common goal, etc. (Ruškus, Kiaunytė, Zaturskis and Juodkaitė, 2020).

Thus, close communication and relationships, influenced by internal and external factors, are crucial to the smooth running of an organisation. In order to achieve common goals and develop successful relationships, not only employees but also customers have to contribute. A positive relationship between staff and clients in a social service organisation makes it easier to achieve the objectives set and has a positive impact on the organisation's performance.

The professionalism of the worker's activity is a high level of professional qualification and competence, professional skills, and mastery of modern social work methods, which focuses the worker on carrying out the activity as effectively as possible. At the organisational level, the competence of the staff is an important resource that enables the organisation to achieve its goals, and the

strength of the staff member is the ability to combine theoretical knowledge with practical application to unique clients. Employee professionalism is an important criterion in a social service organisation and is manifested in work situations and in the employee's relationship with clients. A high level of development of personal and business qualities relevant to professional activity, motivation and definition of value orientation and aspirations lead to a positive development of the professional (Nikolayenko, 2019). As R. Poviliūnas and I. Adomaitytė-Subačienė (2023) notes, a social work professional must be able to analyse, diagnose and synthesise information and think strategically. The description of performance appraisal procedures for social service workers (2006) states that the organisation's managers evaluate the annual tasks set for employees, the results to be achieved, the indicators used to evaluate them, and their ability to perform the functions set out in their job description. The development of existing competences is intrinsically linked to the evaluation process. Social workers assess their performance and competences according to different criteria, which allows them to see where they are weaker and where they need to improve. It is important to note that the tasks set must not be divorced from the professional field, i.e., all tasks must be in line with the social worker's professional competences. The competences and professionalism of social workers in a social services organisation determine not only the quality of social services provided, but also the prestige of the organisation and social work as a profession (Poviliūnas, Adomaitytė-Subačienė, 2023). Thus, competences can

be described as a dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, abilities, skills (as well as personal qualities, attitudes, values), which are required to perform certain activities in a social service organisation. There are two groups of competences – general and subject competences. Subject (professional) competences relate to professional activities and include theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the relevant field. Meanwhile, general competences include the abilities to analyse, generalise, work in a team, lead, communicate (Garbenčiūtė, Šiurienė, 2023). The ability to communicate and build relationships can be seen as part of both general and subject competences. In the context of social organisations, competences can also be considered as part of professionalism, since the work of social organisations is directly linked to social interactions: communication and cooperation. Thus, high levels of competence lead to professionalism, which makes it easier for the worker to assess the needs of the recipient, to solve problems, to draw up an appropriate plan of action and to ensure smooth and reliable relationships. Social workers use all the skills they possess to build a relationship with the client, thus creating a system of professional competence, which requires communicative competence, defined as social interaction or cooperation. The essence of communicative competence is to know and understand the client's autonomy in an empathic way, because only then can there be a reciprocal relationship. This connection helps to open up mutually, to communicate with respect, tolerance, sincerity, control of reactions and trust. As the client feels understood in such a meeting, he/she trusts

the social service organisation's worker more, engages in the helping process and is ready for change (Abramavičienė et al., 2020). The professionalism of the worker in building a relationship with the client includes:

1) Interpersonal communication – the ability to communicate rational and emotional information, to navigate the communication situation, and to use verbal and non-verbal means;

2) Interpersonal interaction – the ability to manage group dynamics, assume an appropriate role, understand the client's situation and provide support (Baršauskienė, Janulevičiūtė-Ivaškevičienė, 2005). It can be argued that the professionalism of the worker allows to assess the field of activity, to strengthen communication skills, to build trustworthy relationships, and to give meaning to the information related to the client.

According to the information provided by the Department of Social Services and Supervision under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, social workers are required to periodically improve their professional competence at least 16 academic hours per calendar year. The following forms of professional competence development for social workers are available: training, lectures, seminars, workshops, professional practice, participation in the supervision process, training of other persons (lectures, seminars, introductory training and workshops for personal care staff, supervision of professional practice of social work students).

In summary, the professionalism of the worker is important in building a relationship with the client, creating a safe and trusting environment. Social workers continuously develop and acquire new and necessary knowledge, which helps them in their professional activities, not only in ensuring the quality of the services they provide, but also in building a relationship with the client.

Study methodology

In order to explore the importance of the relationship between social workers and clients in social service organisations, qualitative research was chosen. Qualitative research provides an opportunity not only to measure the results obtained, but also to summarise the process of conducting the interviews and the way they were conducted. The qualitative research method allows for a close view of the interviewee and his/her environment (Kardelis, 2007). The choice of qualitative research allowed for a more flexible adaptation to the subjects and their environment and a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study. The semi-structured interview method was chosen for the study, which allowed for a more targeted approach to the problem and for clarifying questions to be asked only after receiving the subjects' answers. This method allows for detailed answers, which the interviewer has the flexibility to explore and follow up on the interviewee's interesting arguments. It allows the researcher to adjust the questions to the interviewee's answers in order to capture the interviewee's perspective and experience and to generate meaningful and valuable data for the research. The researcher needs to be able to balance
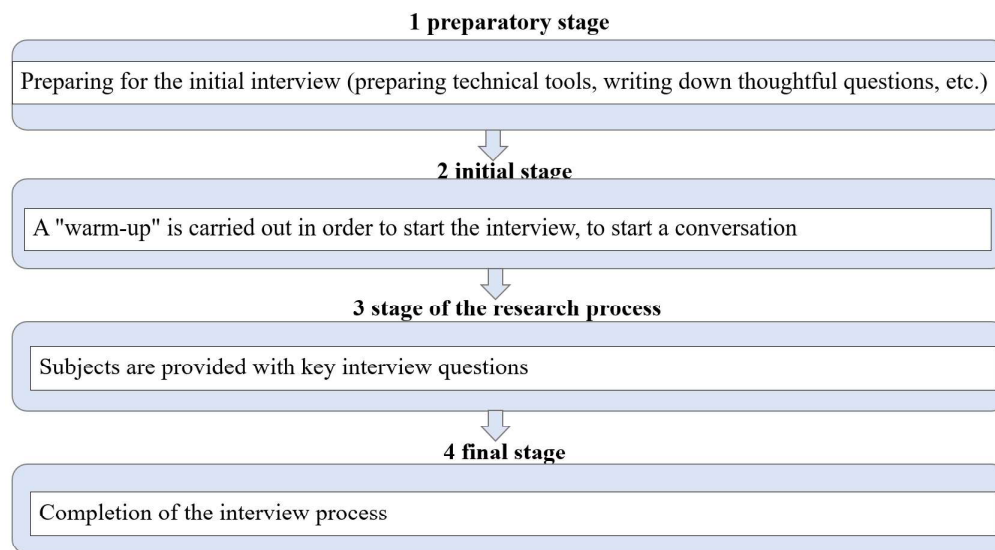
1 preparatory stage

Preparing for the initial interview (preparing technical tools, writing down thoughtful questions, etc.)

2 initial stage

A "warm-up" is carried out in order to start the interview, to start a conversation

3 stage of the research process

Subjects are provided with key interview questions

4 final stage

Completion of the interview process

Fig. 3. **Stages of qualitative research**

Source: compiled by the authors based on I. Gaižauskaitė and N. Valavičienė (2016).

the structure and flexibility of the interview with ensuring that the questions are clear, relevant and take into account the interviewee's perspective. The semi-structured interview method is particularly useful in social science research, where the focus is on understanding the subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals (Gaižauskaitė, Valavičienė, 2016). However, it is important to note that semi-structured interviews require careful planning and preparation, so the research was conducted in stages. Semi-structured interviews were conducted based on the recommendations of I. Gaižauskaitė and N. Valavičienė (2016):

The study involved 5 subjects, social workers from three different organisations providing social services. Educational background of the subjects: all subjects have a university degree in social work. The subjects were chosen for the purpose of the study, which was to select social workers who work directly and most intensively in building relationships with their clients. The interviews were carried out at the subjects' workplaces. The survey was carried out in January 2023.

The subjects were informed about the purpose of the study, consent was obtained, the subjects were informed about the use of recording devices, and it was explained that this would facilitate the researchers' work in analysing the data. It was made clear to all participants that the information obtained would remain confidential and that all subjects would be encrypted with certain letters to prevent their identification. The subjects' answers are presented in a narrative form in textual form. The data obtained from the study will be processed according to the concepts of content analysis.

Analysis of the survey results

As the analysis of the literature has shown, social service organisations need to meet the needs of their clients, listen to their concerns, define the nature of their activities and use a variety of working methods to build a relationship with their clients. The participants were asked: "How do you build relationships with clients?". The analysis of the content of the interviews identified one category: constant contact with the customer, creating a safe environment, and five subcategories (*see* Table 1).

Participants in the survey consider communication and conversation to be one of the most important aspects of building relationships with customers. Respondents noted that the first meeting with a client has an impact on their further communication and relationship development. Communication and conversations not only provide an opportunity to get the necessary information about the client, but also create a further pathway to develop the relationship and provide the necessary support. It can be argued that a social worker needs to be able to communicate with different client

Table 1. **Building relationships with new customers**

Categories	Subcategories	Affirmative Statements
Constant contact with the customer, creating a safe environment	Communication and conversations with customers	*"...I use conversations, I am often interested in the client's well-being and feelings after changing the environment, then with the help of dialogue I create a "circle of trust" between the person and myself, thus showing the person that he can trust me, that he is not alone..." (A). "...I establish relationships with new clients during the conversation, during a dialogue about human needs, life, past and future..." (B). "... I ask about his interests, what his expectations are, etc. ..." (C). "...in conversation first of all..., I talk, I communicate, I am interested in them, as with colleagues or friends, as well as with clients, maintaining contact" (D). "... we communicate often, we try to make sure that everything is fine with him, that everything is in order in the institution, that he feels safe... with the help of frequent communication, trust is created between the client and the employee" (E).*
	Establishing initial contact with customers	*"...I say hello, introduce myself, ask what his or her name is..." (C). "...when a new customer arrives, we get to know him..." (E).*
	Employee behavior that builds trust in relationships	*"... it is important to show a person that his opinion, feelings, experiences etc. are very important..." (A). "... frequent attention to the customer helps to gain his trust. He begins to trust the employees, becomes more open, feels braver, is not afraid to ask for help...". (E).*
	Keeping the promises made	*"... it is important to keep the promises made, thus strengthening the relationship and trust..." (A).*
	General activities	*"... joint activities...". (D).*

Source: compiled by the authors.

groups, to know and understand the differences and similarities between client groups and to be able to apply different working/activity methods to create a safe environment for clients. The results of the study showed that it is very important for social workers to keep their promises to clients.

The analysis of scientific sources in the theoretical part of this paper has shown that communication and the need for it is inherent in everyone, without exception, and could be described as an essential value. If communication needs are not met, it is difficult to see how other needs that are important to the individual can be met. The survey asked: "How important is communication with clients in your work?". The analysis of the information received identified one category: providing and ensuring quality social services and four sub-categories (Table 2).

The survey revealed that the process of communication with clients is very important in the work of social workers, and that this is a recurring aspect. Participants in the study indicate that communication is important because it creates a mutual bond and trust in each other.

The theoretical analysis reveals that the professionalism of the worker is particularly important in building the relationship between the worker and the client. Working with people requires comprehensive training, as it is not clear what kind of situation a social worker may encounter. The focus is then on the professional competence of the social worker. The participants were asked: "Which knowledge and competences help you?". The responses were analysed and three categories were identified: communication competences, personal competences, and the totality of acquired

Table 2. **The importance of communication with clients in the work performed**

Categories	Subcategories	Affirmative Statements
Providing and ensuring quality social services	The importance of communication	*"... communication occupies one of the most important positions in social work..." (A). "...communication is very important, after all, it's not a factory, it's not a product...". (D).*
	Clients' needs are clarified through communication	*"during communication, customers' needs and their well-being are clarified...". (E). "...only by communicating with a person, you can create mutual trust, express respect, etc....". (A). "...communication is an integral connection with the customer, and it is necessary to be able to identify the customer's needs more accurately...". (B).*
	Facilitating the adaptation period	*"...communication helps the client to adapt in a new environment...". (E). "...building connections, solving concerns...". (A).*
	Targeted provision of services is ensured	*"... helps to ensure the quality of the services provided...". (E). "... communicating with clients is a necessity, because it determines my work activities, information gathering, work planning, the quality of social services provided by the institution...". (C). "...only thanks to communication we can provide quality services, we know what customers want, what we can provide, we discuss... ". (D).*

Source: compiled by the authors.

practical and theoretical knowledge and skills. The categories are made up of 8 sub-categories (*see* Table 3).

Participants in the study say that communication skills help them a lot. Without the personal qualities they possess, they find it difficult to develop professional competences, i.e., to apply them in their work. It should be noted that at least two people are needed to communicate and build a relationship, so it is not all up to the social worker, but also to the clients to make the relationship as strong as possible. Social workers have

many roles to play, and it is not uncommon for professional issues to clash with personal preferences. This affects not only the worker but also the client. The ability to react calmly to different events, stressful situations and the ability to set priorities ensures a more successful resolution of problems. It is noticeable that it comes back to personal qualities that help in the performance. The results of the study show that working in a social service organisation requires a wide range of knowledge, as social workers

Table 3. **Competences of the employee in creating mutual relations**

Categories	Subcategories	Affirmative Statements
Communication competences	The benefits of communication	"…communication, positive communication…" (A). "…the ability to communicate…" (B). "…positive communication and helping others…" (C). "…I know how to communicate…". (D).
	The ability to be empathetic	"…respect for other people's feelings and beliefs, the ability to keep promises…" (A). "…the totality of ethical values…". (B). "… respect for the feelings, needs and beliefs of others…" (C). "…I learn to listen, I respect other people…". (D). "… it is important that the employee-customer relationship is based on the principles of mutual respect from the beginning…". (E).
Personal competencies	Ability to handle various situations	"…the ability to manage conflict situations, the ability to manage emotions and feelings…" (A). "…planning, analyzing situations to help the client…" (B). "…management of emotions and feelings, assessment of one's strengths, ability to accept challenges…" (C). "…I don't take other problems personally…". (D).
	Positive personal qualities	"…my personal qualities are very suitable for the chosen job…". (D).
The totality of acquired practical and theoretical knowledge and abilities	Benefits of acquired knowledge	"…continuous improvement, practical activities, continuous training, updated knowledge…" (B). "…knowledge gained during studies and various knowledge gained during trainings and seminars help…". (D).
	The importance of cooperation	"…the ability to collaborate, the ability to share knowledge in a team…" (B).
	General knowledge	"… medical, legal, social, economic knowledge…" (C).
	Knowledge of psychological subjects	"…psychological knowledge helps a lot…" (A). "… knowledge about the person's behavior and the situation…" (B). "… psychology of communication, gerontopsychology…" (C). "…gerontological, psychological, non-verbal communication knowledge helps a lot…". (E).

Source: compiled by the authors.

often work with clients who have many different problems, and that the knowledge and benefits of knowledge acquired by the social worker definitely help in their professional activities.

Discussion

According to J. Abramavičienė and J. Vyšniauskytė-Rimkienė (2020), working with clients of social service organisations requires not only practical and theoretical training, but also a great deal of patience and understanding towards such clients. Through collaborative activities, social workers can create an environment of relationship with clients that increases the possibility of targeting the needs of clients. R. Bubnys and D. Anusaitė (2013) found that a social worker must not only be able to communicate with different client groups, but also be able to apply a variety of approaches to their work, which is important for the social worker's approach to their professional activity, their sense of self in that activity, and their continuous development. Meanwhile, this study has shown that not only the professional training of the social worker is important for a positive relationship between the social worker and the client, but also the provision of a safe environment for clients. Social workers need a wide range of knowledge and skills when interacting with clients: communication competences, personal competences and a range of theoretical and practical skills. In addition to the personal qualities, it is difficult to identify professional competences, i.e., to apply them in the workplace, because even if you have sufficient

theoretical knowledge, you need to be able to apply it in practice.

Conclusions

The impact of the employee-customer relationship on organisational performance has been revealed by identifying the principles that characterise the employee-customer relationship and the internal and external factors that are important in building the relationship. The successful functioning of the worker-client relationship creates a system of communication that contributes to the success of the social service organisation.

The definition of the importance of the worker's professionalism in the development of the relationship with the client reveals that workers have general and subject-specific (professional) competences that are important in the interpersonal communication and interaction between the worker and client. It was found that social workers need to continuously develop their competences to ensure the quality of the services they provide and to build relationships with clients.

The empirical research on how the relationship between the worker and the client can influence the performance of social service organisations has shown that communication, relationship development and the keeping of promises to create a safe environment for clients is a necessary need when establishing a relationship with a client. The process of communication with clients in the social worker's work creates a mutual bond and trust between them. Successful communication in an organisation requires not

only the competences of the staff but also the efforts of the clients in order to build the strongest possible relationship. It has been found that in order to achieve smooth and trusting communication, the professionalism of the worker is essential for the functioning of a social service organisation.

Recommendations

In social service organisations, it is important to foster relationships between staff and clients that contribute to the success of the organisation. It is important for organisations to pay attention to and manage internal and external factors that can affect the relationship between staff and clients in order to ensure the smooth and successful running of the organisation.

It is recommended that managers of social services institutions should:
- Ensure that staff have the necessary general and subject/professional competencies to establish and maintain effective relationships with clients;
- Set objectives and involve staff in decision-making, taking into account internal and external factors that influence positive relationships;
- Enable staff to continuously develop their competences in order to ensure the quality of the services provided and a positive environment for customers;
- Promote a functioning relationship between staff and customers that helps to create mutual trust and a safe environment by developing internal communication methods, a communication system, etc.

It is recommended that social workers:
- Continually improve their professional competencies by acquiring the necessary knowledge to help them to build relationships with clients.

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DARBUOTOJO IR KLIENTO SANTYKIŲ VERTINIMAS SOCIALINĖSE ORGANIZACIJOSE

S a n t r a u k a

Šio straipsnio tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti darbuotojo ir kliento tarpusavio santykių svarbą socialinių paslaugų organizacijų veiklai. Straipsnyje atskleidžiama darbuotojo ir kliento santykių socialinėse organizacijose problematika, išskiriami šių santykių principai, darantys įtaką organizacijų veiklai sudėtingomis išorinėmis ir vidinėmis aplinkybėmis.

Kokybinio tyrimo metu atskleista darbuotojo ir kliento tarpusavio santykių svarba socialinių paslaugų organizacijoms. Tyrimas atliktas pusiau struktūruoto interviu metodu, kuris suteikė galimybę konkrečiau gilintis į šią problemą. Tyrime dalyvavo 5 tiriamieji – socialiniai darbuotojai. Tyrimo rezultatai leidžia pagilinti supratimą apie darbuotojo ir kliento tarpusavio santykių svarbą socialinei organizacijai. Tyrimo metu nustatyta, kad, užmezgant tarpusavio santykį su klientu, būtinasis poreikis yra bendravimas, tarpusavio santykių plėtojimas, padedantis sukurti saugią aplinką klientams, o pats bendravimo procesas leidžia kurti abipusį ryšį bei pasitikėjimą vieni kitais. Taigi, siekiant sklandaus ir pasitikėjimu grįsto bendravimo, reikalingas darbuotojo profesionalumas, kuris yra svarbus socialinių paslaugų organizacijos valdymui ir veiklai. Atlikus šį tyrimą paaiškėjo, kad, užtikrinant sklandų darbuotojo ir kliento tarpusavio ryšį, gerinama ir socialinių paslaugų kokybė.

Nustatyta, kad, siekiant užtikrinti teikiamų paslaugų kokybę, būtina užtikrinti teigiamus tarpusavio santykius, nes bendravimas yra svarbus veiksnys valdant organizaciją ir organizuojant veiklą. Siekiant įgyvendinti bendrus tikslus ir sėkmingai vystyti tarpusavio santykius, indėlį turi įdėti ne tik darbuotojai, bet ir klientai, nes socialinių paslaugų organizacijoje sukurti teigiami darbuotojo ir kliento tarpusavio santykiai padeda lengviau pasiekti užsibrėžtus tikslus, daro teigiamą įtaką organizacijos veiklai. Straipsnyje apibrėžiama darbuotojo profesionalumo svarba kuriant tarpusavio santykius su klientu, formuojant tam tikrą bendravimo sistemą, prisidedančią prie sėkmingos socialinių paslaugų organizacijos veiklos. Socialiniai darbuotojai turi nuolat tobulinti turimas kompetencijas, kurios įgalina užtikrinti teikiamų paslaugų kokybę ir kurti tarpusavio santykius su klientu. Socialinių paslaugų įstaigų vadovai savo ruožtu turi numatyti tikslus, įvertindami vidinius ir išorinius veiksnius, darančius įtaką teigiamiems tarpusavio santykiams, ir skatinti darbuotojo ir kliento tarpusavio santykių funkcionavimą, kurdami vidinės komunikacijos metodus, bendravimo sistemą ir pan.