

Social Curatorship in Provision of Social Services in Post-Penitentiary Care

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Abstract

An asocial individual is a personality whose actions are anti-social, manifested by violation and neglect of socially established legal norms. The individual's manners and behaviour are often purposeful and his will is so weak that he is not strong enough to help himself, his family and close persons. That is the reason why he seeks help in another person (Nowotny, 2016). Social curatorship of the Slovak Republic in accordance with the Act No. 305/2005 Coll. on social and legal protection and social curatorship includes a set of measures for reduction, prevention or elimination of mental, physical or social development disorders in a child or adult individual. The main study objective is to find out subjective perceptions of the lay public about the need, opinions and provision of post-penitentiary care for the individuals released from the execution of a prison sentence. To obtain the necessary information, we choose a questionnaire method containing a set of unambiguously formulated questions. The used questionnaire is based on the defined objectives of the work. The stated study results are interesting. An individual who served a prison sentence is negatively influenced. There are changes in his lifestyle, role, hierarchy of needs, attitudes, relationship to duties, sense of responsibility, and contact with a new environment and surrounding world.

Keywords: Social curator; Social services' Post-penitentiary car; Social and legal protection; Process of socialisation.



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1. Introduction

Committing a criminal offence in various forms is as old as humankind itself. The issue of criminality is a social phenomenon and has accompanied the society during its whole historical development. For the sake of its protection, each society develops a system focused on prevention of these dangerous phenomena. Such a system includes institutions, forms and means which the society uses to punish criminal offenders and to reeducate and resocialise them.

One of the most significant means in the system of criminal sanctions is imprisonment, i.e. individuals' isolation from the society and re-education in the institutional conditions. A new philosophy of execution of sentence, its humanisation, is based on new approaches of the society towards life and its development. This approach is manifested in a new viewpoint of execution of sentence and its implementation in re-education of the convict.

It is very easy to get through a permeable barrier to a criminal environment, but the return of the convicts from an abyss into civil life is much harder. Our important mission, therefore, is to give a helping hand to those who face a very hard and thorny path back to the society.

Social curatorship for adult individuals in the provision of social assistance, care and social services is provided by the institution of social and legal protection of children and social curatorship particularly:

- After imprisonment,
- If he is a participant in probation or mediation,
- If he is a drug addict,
- After the termination of protective education of institutional care,
- After the release from an institution for resocialisation of drug addicts,
- If the person asked for assistance in dealing with a difficult life situation.

Social curators' job is exhausting, lengthy and complicated both for the client and the curator; therefore, it is necessary to communicate with the client, listen to his issues, be self-sacrificing to help him, and behave purposefully and tactfully. For the social curator it is important to be able to find a positive element in the client and to develop his self-confidence in his strengths by gradual transfer of responsibility, which should be voluntary and so that he participates in solving the social issues he faces.

The major activities of the social curator in post-penitentiary care include:

- Maintenance of written and personal contacts with the person during the execution of a custody, the execution of a prison sentence, and participation in his re-education,
- Assistance in communication with specialised institutions,
- Intervening in dealing with personal issues and enhancing family bonds,
- Preparation of the client for the release from the execution of a custody or the execution of a prison sentence,
- Assistance after the release from the execution of a custody or the execution of a prison sentence,
- Facilitation of the return to the family, finding a job, and finding accommodation,
- Motivating the client to active approach towards finding a job,
- Keeping the written documentation for the purposes of individual care,

- Decision making in the first-degree proceedings on granting a resocialisation allowance after the client's return from the execution of a prison sentence or the execution of a custody,
- Visiting the client in the institution for the execution of a prison sentence and the execution of a custody,
- Ensuring coordination mainly with the department of employment services and the department of assistance in material need (Justová, 2009; Kozoň, 2006; Sochůrek, 2007).

Schavel and Oláh (2008) state that performing the above stated tasks allows implementation of the tasks in the area of social prevention and the strategies leading to the reduced occurrence of socio-pathological phenomena and preventing their spreading, deepening or recurrence and also neutralise the causes and conditions of their relationship. Social curators provide the persons with socially inappropriate behaviours particularly with counselling and educational care, assistance with accommodation, accommodation in special facilities, assistance in job search, cash benefits for the purposes of their resocialisation and integration.

1.1. Socio-Educational Supervision and Counselling Care

Besides the above stated activities, the social curator assists the client after the release from prison particularly in job search, accommodation mediation, inclusion in society, and thus provides socio-educational and socio-counselling services, financial support in the form of the resocialisation allowance, and psychological and material assistance. Counselling and educational care is provided by the social curator during the client's imprisonment but also after his release from prison. Before and after the release, the social curator intensively communicates and cooperates with the convict, his family, the particip

ated relevant institutions, or with other significant others. A special emphasis is on the field social work in the natural social environment or an open environment in which the client usually spends his time. In counselling care, the social curator provides the information about the existing legal regulations, decrees, limitations and available forms of assistance.

The essential goal of socio-educational supervision is to influence the offender so that he does not commit any other criminal offences, builds adequate social background and can establish himself socially again. The social curator should know well the local social network of the client (a system of organisations, the facilities providing social services, etc.) but he should be moderate when providing the information, and ask the client what he really needs, motivate and encourage him in his attempts of change. Socio-educational supervision brings the convict the assistance in overcoming the most miscellaneous obstacles, psychological support and, in active endeavour of the convict, it helps him to find his status in the society and live in accordance with its norms.

1.2. Social Assistance and Counselling In Provision of Accommodation and Resocialisation Allowance

The fulfilment of the purpose of socio-educational supervision and counselling care in the provision of social services is to provide the accused with professional assistance, monitor and inspect his behaviour and cooperate with the family and social environment in which the accused lives and works so that he leads a normal life and integrates into the society.

If the citizen after imprisonment does not ask for provision of cooperation within a specified time, the social curator based on the notification by the institution for the execution of a prison sentence or for the execution of a custody after the release of the citizen from the execution of a prison sentence will send an offer for cooperation in which individual alternatives of further cooperation are stated. In our opinion, the significant social assistance at the "start to life" after the release from the institutional facility by the social curator in post-penitentiary care is the assistance in job search, dealing with a difficult financial situation and finding accommodation.

In accordance with the Act No. 416/2001 Coll. on transition of competences from the state administration bodies to municipalities and self-governing regions, some social services facilities providing alternative accommodation are in competence of self-governing bodies. Through the cooperation between the social services facilities, local government and self-governing region, we can achieve that the clients are admitted to the social services facilities on recommendation of the social curator. It is possible to use the assistance by the municipality in which the client permanently lives, because the municipality, in accordance with the Act No. 448/2008 on social services, is obliged to provide the citizen with assistance, even if multiple municipalities are not prepared to deal with the problems of citizens after the execution of a sentence. The Article 8 of the Act on social services states that the municipality and self-governing region "provide the availability of the social service for an individual who is dependent on the social service and the right for social service selection" (translated by the study author). In accordance with the above stated Act, the municipality and self-governing region will provide social services to an individual without delay if his life or health are threatened, if an individual does not have the necessary conditions to meet the basic living needs, or if he finished the stay in a facility according to a special regulation, or he does not have the necessary conditions for living in a natural family environment. The role of the social curator is to address a representative of the municipality and introduce a plan of social assistance, because in a common dialogue both parties can find acceptable, socially affective way of social assistance for the client. In the shelter, the client is provided with housing, security, counselling, and social prevention. Depending on the conditions in the facility, also food may be provided or the conditions for cooking are created. Food in the shelter is provided particularly by bringing food from other social services facilities. To provide the basic living conditions, the adult individual can be provided with benefits of assistance in material need. In accordance with the Act No. 599/2003 Coll. on assistance in material need, material need is when "an income of a citizen and other individuals who are assessed with the citizen

does not reach the subsistence minimum and they are unable to provide or increase their income through their own actions” (translated by the study author).

Another possibility of financial and material security of the individual after the release from a correctional facility is obtaining material assistance through the resocialisation allowance in accordance with the Act No. 305 /2005 Coll. on social and legal protection of children and social curatorship which serves for the purposes of arranging personal documents and getting personal necessities (provision of finances for photographing for an identity card, purchasing a travel ticket to a place of residence, accommodation). The right for the resocialisation allowance is not automatic after the release from the execution of a custody or the execution of a prison sentence. The conditions for granting the resocialisation allowance in accordance with the Act No. 305 /2005 Coll. on social and legal protection of children and social curatorship include:

- The execution of a prison sentence or the execution of a custody for at least 30 days,
- The release from the execution of a prison sentence and the execution of a custody,
- Applying for the allowance within eight workdays after the release from the execution of a custody or the execution of a prison sentence.

The amount of the allowance is in accordance with the Act No. 601/2003 Coll. on subsistence minimum, up to 40 % of the subsistence minimum. The resocialisation allowance can be provided in the material, financial, or combined forms. In terms of its purpose, it is necessary to apply for the allowance without delay and choose the fastest form of payment. The resocialisation allowance is an instrument to overcome this problem are necessary financial means which the citizen does not have.

1.3. Presentation of the Study Which Reveals Knowledge and Reactions of Our Citizens in Provision of Post-Penitentiary Care in Slovakia

Imprisonment means a social stigma, because the society does not accept punished people, and their evaluation and expectations of their future behaviours are mostly negative. It is hard for them to gain confidence, they are rejected and unfavourably evaluated. According to Sochůrek (2007), the lay public is convinced that the convicts do not deserve any consideration and help, because they do not believe they might correct themselves and live by a more acceptable way. This phenomenon makes the adaptation (accommodation and job search, mistrust of people, etc.) more difficult for the released; at the same time, fixed undesirable behaviour can lead to the development of a lifelong “criminal career”. Furthermore, the social situation of the released from the execution of a sentence is worsened by a fact that they are not able have more permanent relationships, which makes their behaviours even more unacceptable. The transition of the imprisoned from the execution of a prison sentence to a life of freedom is considered a very difficult life situation. The experiences show that convicts’ resolutions about their return to the society along with their ideas of living honestly and obeying the law are not sufficient. A person who lived isolated from everyday life for several months or years must be prepared for and accompanied in his return to the society through post-penitentiary care. It is a very sensitive topic with which common people living in their working, private and social lives encounter only very rarely. Within the experience, we decided to focus on this issue which is oriented on the study of our society’s citizens’ knowledge related to an awareness of provided post-penitentiary care in the individuals released from the execution of a prison sentence. We conducted the study in cooperation with Monika Máčiková; and there were many facts that led us to the study – they also accompany our personal opinion that the public is not sufficiently notified about the need of post-penitentiary care, they do not know its mission, or they do not even know what the given service offers. Lacking information related to post-penitentiary care results in lack of knowledge on the need to take care of these citizens of our society

1.4. Study Objectives and Hypotheses

In defining the research part of the work, we use awareness and knowledge as well as subjective perceptions of the lay public related to post-penitentiary care. The main study objective is to find out subjective perceptions of the lay public about the need, opinions and provision of post-penitentiary care to the released from the execution of a prison sentence.

Survey hypotheses:

H1: We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between respondents’ age and knowledge of the meaning of the term post-penitentiary care.

H2: We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between gender and willingness of the respondents to accept a person released from prison back among their close persons.

H3: We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between education and willingness of citizens to help persons released from prison.

H4: We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between type of residence and awareness of post-penitentiary care among the public.

1.5. Sample

The study is intended for adult people/respondents (from 18 years of age) from the lay public. We conduct the study in the territory of the whole Slovak Republic. The sampling is not limited by respondents’ gender, education or place of residence. The planned number of the addressed is 150 random respondents living in the whole territory of Slovakia. The total number of respondents who participated in the study is 121 adult individuals. The participation was 81.3 % of the respondents from the total number of 150 (100 %).

1.6. Methods

To obtain the necessary information, we choose a questionnaire method containing a set of unambiguously formulated questions. The used questionnaire is based on the defined objectives of the work. The questionnaire items are formulated simply. We applied the closed-ended questionnaire items in a number of 18 questions. The questions No. 1 – 5 are contact (the items of a demographic character through which basic identification data used for inclusion of the respondents (gender, age, education, residence) were found). All questionnaire questions included alternative answers. The questionnaire guaranteed anonymity to the respondents. Participation in the study was voluntary. The study was conducted in 2016. The questionnaires were distributed through students, friends and acquaintances living in the whole territory of Slovakia. The contact persons were informed about the study purpose, anonymity, sample characteristics, and the extent of assistance during filling the questionnaire items. The respondents were informed about the questioning objective and they obtained consent on the use of obtained data. Through the interviewers trained by us, we assured the respondents about discretion and not abusing the obtained data.

The implementation part of the research part included individual processing of the questionnaires. The found data were evaluated in percentage and the findings were recorded in the tables to allow their easier analysis. For testing and calculation of the individual dependences, we used contingency tables, and as a test criterion we chose the chi-squared test at the 5 % significance level ($p \leq 0.05$):

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

The software Microsoft Office was used for data analysis. They worked with the use of the programme MS Office Excel 2013.

2. Results

2.1. Demographic data

In this part of work we work with the data which we obtained by questioning. We processed the individual questions and verbally interpreted the results.

Out of the total *number of the respondents*, 56 women (46.25 %) and 65 men (53.75 %) participated in the study. From the stated data we found out that an interest focused on the issue of post-penitentiary care was rather in men than women.

We found out that the most numerous group of the respondents included the addressed *aged* 18 – 30 years, this group was represented by 40 respondents (33.04 %). The second most numerous group included the respondents aged 31 – 50 years (35 respondents, 28.91 %). The respondents aged 51 – 65 years were in a group of 28 addressed (23.13 %). The least represented group of the respondents included the addressed aged 65 years and older (18 addressed, 14.92 %). The stated data suggest that the most represented group included the respondents aged from 18 to 51 years.

Respondents' education. The most numerous group included the respondents with secondary-school education with a school-leaving examination (42 respondents, 34.69 %). The second most numerous group included the respondents with secondary-school education without a school-leaving examination (39 respondents, 32.21 %). There were 22 respondents (18.17 %) with basic education. The least represented group included the addressed with university education (18 respondents, 24.93 %).

The respondents participating in the inquiry *came* mainly from town. This group was represented by 72 addressed (59.53 %). There were 49 respondents participating in the study coming from village (40.47 %).

2.2. Knowledge of the Term Post-Penitentiary Care

The findings showed low knowledge of the term post-penitentiary care. There were 78 respondents in the group of the respondents who had never heard the term; and thus, they made a group with 64.43 % representation. There were 29 addressed (23.95 %) who had heard the term. An interesting finding was that up to 14 respondents could not answer the question (11.62 %). The results clearly show the respondents' lacking knowledge related to the studied term, which shows low awareness related to post-penitentiary care.

2.3. Sources of Information About Post-Penitentiary Care

As many as 72 respondents confessed to lacking knowledge of the term, which was more than a half of the addressed respondents (59.47 %). The most numerous group of the addressed stated that they heard about the post-penitentiary care at school. This group was represented by 28 respondents (23.13 %). There were eight respondents (5.83 %) who learned about post-penitentiary care from the media. Three respondents (2.48 %) heard about this issue from their acquaintances, also three respondents (2.48 %) from a prison. Seven addressed respondents stated that they had read about the problem on the Internet (6.61 %). None of the respondents was informed about post-penitentiary care in a labour office. The findings showed that the respondents had not heard about the issue of post-penitentiary care in most cases, which shows their lacking awareness.

2.4. The Next Question Was One's Own Concept of the Term Post-Penitentiary Care

The knowledge of the term showed that only half of the addressed respondents knows what post-penitentiary care means. This group of the respondents was represented by 60 addressed (49.56 %); they expressed their opinion

by stating that post-penitentiary care means care for the released from the execution of a sentence. According to 12 respondents, post-penitentiary care means care for the dying (9.99 %); 11 respondents (9.08 %) stated that the term means care for the sick; nine addressed (7.43 %) stated that it is care for the homeless. The most numerous group of the respondents stated that it is care for mothers with children. This group was represented by 16 addressed (13.21 %). According to 13 respondents, post-penitentiary care means care for the elderly (10.73 %). Our findings show us that half of the respondents did not know the term post-penitentiary care, because the term was incorrectly indicated by up to 55.44 % of the addressed respondents.

2.5. An Ability to Accept a Family Member Who Returned From the Execution of a Prison Sentence

The findings to the question were rather of a negative character, because up to 86 respondents would rather not accept a person released from the execution of a sentence back among their close persons. After the summary, this group was represented by up to 71.02 % of the addressed. From the stated number of the inquired, 28 respondents (23.11 %) could not even imagine such a situation. There were 36 addressed (29.74 %) who were sure they would not be able to accept a person released from the execution of a sentence back among their close persons. There were 22 respondents who may not be able to do it; thus, they made a group with 18.17 % representation. There were 12 respondents (9.99 %) who hesitated on the issue of return of a member who returned from the execution of a sentence. Interesting but not surprising was the finding that only 14 addressed (11.56 %) might be able to accept a person released from the execution of a sentence back among their close persons. Only nine respondents (7.43 %) were sure they would be able to do it. Our findings showed people's fear to accept a person released from the execution of a sentence back among their close persons, because an inability to accept him back was stated by three quarters of the addressed (71.02 %).

2.6. Accepting a Person Who Returned From Prison among the Close Persons

The question was answered only by the respondents who answered the question 8 positively. Out of the total number of the respondents (121, 100 %), the stated group included only 35 respondents. From the positively answering respondents, the most numerous group would consist of those who would accept a close person back, because he belongs to the group of close persons. There were 18 respondents in this group (51.42 % of the positively answering respondents). The second most numerous group consisted of the respondents who stated they would be able to accept a person released from prison back among their close persons, because he needs help and support from his close persons. This group was represented by ten addressed (28.57 % of the positively answering respondents). Five respondents stated that the released should be given a second chance, and thus they made a group with 14.29 % representation, and only two addressed stated there is nothing to be afraid of (5.72 %). The findings showed that the positively answering respondents would accept a released person who returned from prison, because he belongs to a group of close persons and needs help and support.

2.7. Reasons for Not Accepting a Person Who Returned From Prison among the Close Persons

The question was answered only by the respondents who answered the question 8 negatively. Out of the total number of the respondents (121, 100 %), the stated group consisted of up to 86 respondents. They found out that from the negatively answering respondents, the most numerous group would consist of those who would not be able to accept their close person back, because they would be in fear of their lives and lives of their closest persons – their family. This group was represented by up to 21 addressed respondents (24.40 %). The second most numerous group consisted of the respondents who justified not accepting a person among the close persons by stating they are in fear for themselves (18 respondents, 20.92 %). There were 15 respondents (17.43 %) who stated they would be in fear for their reputation among people; 13 respondents (15.11 %) would be afraid that the close person who returned from prison would commit crime again, and 12 respondents would be in fear for their possessions (14.01 %). An interesting finding was that only seven respondents (8.13 %) stated they would be in fear for their close persons as a reason for not accepting a person among their close persons. The findings showed that the negatively answering respondents would not accept a released person who returned from prison among their close persons mainly because they would be in fear for their and their family's lives.

2.8. The Need of Special Care for Persons Released From Prison

The answer to the question was of a positive nature, because up to 87 respondents (71.86 %) stated that the need of special care for persons released from prison is more than necessary. As many as 19 respondents (15.69 %) do not consider post-penitentiary care important. Up to 15 respondents (12.45 %) were not able to give their opinion on the issue. By the findings we came to the conclusion that more than half of the respondents consider post-penitentiary care for persons released from prison very important.

2.9. Reasons for Assistance to Persons Released From Prison

The respondents could state several answers to this questions. In total, we obtained 215 answers from 121 respondents (100 %). We found out that according to the majority of the respondents, the persons released from prison need assistance of an expert with finding a job and accommodation. The stated phenomenon was stated by 35 respondents (28.91 % of the total number of the respondents). The second most numerous group consisted of the

respondents who stated that a reason for assistance to a person released from prison is mainly prevention of pathologic phenomena (33 addressed respondents, 27.25 % of the total number). There were 22 respondents (18.71 % of the total number of the respondents) who stated that they need assistance due to their integration into the society. Out of the total number of the respondents, 19 addressed stated (15.69 %) they require assistance due to prevention of recurrent crime. As many as 18 addressed stated that the released need assistance because of their adaptation to new conditions. This group consisted of 18 respondents (14.87 % of the total number of the addressed). Making the transition from prison to freedom easier was stated by 21 respondents (17.34 % of the total number of the addressed). Out of the total number of the addressed, 25 stated that a reason for assistance to the released is contacting the close persons. This group included (20.65 %). As many as 19 respondents stated that the released need to have someone who stands by them (15.69 %). There were 12 respondents who stated that the citizens released from the execution of a sentence need protection from their former friends from an underworld. This group was represented by 9.21 % of the addressed. An interesting finding was that the least numerous group of the respondents consisted of the addressed who stated that the released do not need assistance. This group was represented only by 11 addressed respondents of the total number (9.08 %). The findings showed that according to the respondents' subjective conviction, the persons released from the execution of a sentence need assistance of an expert mainly in finding a job and accommodation, in prevention of pathologic phenomena, or contacting with their close persons.

2.10. Respondents' Subjective Opinion on Social Assistance

We found out that the respondents were not convinced if social assistance through post-penitentiary care helps a person released from prison. The indecisive statement was preferred by 39 respondents (32.12 %). According to the statements by 17 respondents (14.04 %), social assistance through post-penitentiary care might help to a person released from prison. There were 28 respondents (23.13 %) who stated that assistance by an expert through post-penitentiary care would certainly help a person released from prison. Up to 21 addressed respondents (17.40 %) were negative about the question. There were 16 respondents (13.22 %) who expressed vague negativity in the respondents' subjective opinion on social assistance. We found out that social assistance through post-penitentiary care would rather help persons released from prison, according to the respondents. After counting the positive answers, we found out that more than half of the respondents (62.83 %) answered positively.

2.11. Respondents' Subjective Opinion on Post-Penitentiary Care Assistance

The respondents could state several answers to this questions. In total, we obtained 227 answers from 121 respondents (100 %). A negative finding was that according to 42.12 % (51) of the respondents of the total number of the participants, post-penitentiary care would not help a person released from prison. That answer was given by the highest number of the respondents. The second most numerous group consisted of the respondents who stated that post-penitentiary care would help a person to adapt to new living conditions. There were 36 addressed (32.21 % of the total number of the addressed respondents) included in this group. According to 15 respondents (12.39 % of the total number of the respondents), post-penitentiary care would help a released person in the integration into the society. According to 19 respondents (15.69 % of the total number of the respondents), the given form of care would help prevent recurring crime. There were 21 respondents (17.34 % of the total number of the respondents) who stated that expert assistance through post-penitentiary care would help a person released from prison in finding accommodation. Another numerous group included the respondents who stated that it could be easier for them to contact close persons through post-penitentiary care. There were 35 addressed (28.91 % of the total number of the respondents) included in this group. As many as 22 respondents (18.17 %) stated that an assistance after the release from the execution of a sentence would partially protect them from their former friends. According to 18 respondents (14.87 %), post-penitentiary care might help a person released from the execution of a sentence from using alcohol, drugs or pathological gambling. The least represented answer oriented on post-penitentiary assistance was represented by the respondents who stated that an expert would help them find a job after their release. There were ten respondents (8.26 % of the total number of the addressed) included in this group. Our results showed the respondents' scepticism, because the respondents' subjective opinions about post-penitentiary care were rather in a negative light.

2.12. Satisfaction with Awareness of Post-Penitentiary Care

We found out that satisfaction with awareness of post-penitentiary care was stated with certainty only by 15 respondents (12.39 %). Partial satisfaction related to post-penitentiary care was stated by 21 respondents (17.34 %). Dissatisfaction with awareness of post-penitentiary care was stated by up to 36 respondents; thus, they made the most numerous group (29.81 %). There were 31 respondents (25.60 %) who were not able to answer with certain accuracy. In the study, we found out that up to 66 respondents (55.41 %) were not satisfied with awareness of post-penitentiary care. The observed phenomenon indicates the insufficiency of the stated phenomenon, because more than half of the respondents did not have enough knowledge and information about post-penitentiary care.

2.13. Awareness of the Issue of Post-Penitentiary Care

The findings related to awareness of the issue of post-penitentiary care were not surprising. The findings showed that awareness of the issue of post-penitentiary care among the respondents was very low, because up to 70 respondents (57.82 %) stated they were not sufficiently informed about the given problem. Satisfaction with the

issue of post-penitentiary care was stated only by 30 respondents (24.78 %). An interesting finding was that up to 21 respondents (17.40 %) were not interested in this problem at all. Other findings showed low awareness of the issue of post-penitentiary care.

2.14. A Preferred Form of Gathering Information About Post-Penitentiary Care

The findings were very interesting but also negative. We found out that in most cases the respondents were not interested in the information related to post-penitentiary care. Up to 53 respondents (43.84 %) were included in this category. The second most numerous group consisted of the respondents who stated that the issue of post-penitentiary care should be publicised mainly on television. This group included 21 respondents (17.34 %). The Internet, as a tool of publication, would be preferred by 20 respondents (16.52 %). There were 15 respondents (12.39 %) who stated that the given issue should be more written about in the newspapers. The least represented group consisted of the respondents who stated that mainly the information materials and leaflets should be used to inform about post-penitentiary care. This group consisted of 12 respondents (9.91 %). The findings suggested scepticism and disinterest among the public in the given issue, which is a negative finding indicating the attitude and rejection of the society of people released from the execution of a prison sentence.

2.15. Gathering Information About Post-Penitentiary Care

By the last study question, we wanted to find out where the respondents found the information about post-penitentiary care. We found out that 55 respondents were not interested in the information of the given character; they made the most numerous group with 45.43 % representation. The respondents stated that they found the information mostly in the media. This group consisted of 19 respondents with 15.69 % attendance. There were 12 respondents (9.91 %) who found the information on the Internet, eight respondents (6.61 %) in newspapers, and ten respondents (8.26 %) in books. There were 17 respondents (14.10 %) who found the information about post-penitentiary care on the radio. We found out that almost half of the respondents were not interested in the information related to post-penitentiary care. The stated phenomenon shows the public's disinterest in the issue of care for persons released from the execution of a prison sentence.

2.16. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1

H0(1): We assume there is no statistically significant dependence between respondents' age and knowledge of the meaning of the term post-penitentiary care.

H1(1): We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between respondents' age and knowledge of the meaning of the term post-penitentiary care.

Testing is at the 5 % significance level ($p = 0.05$).

Table-20 Relationship between age and knowing the term post-penitentiary care

Relationship between age and knowing the term			
Statistical test	Tested criterion value	sv	Signification – p
Pearson's chi-square	1.65	6	0.9489

Table-21. Knowing the term post-penitentiary care and respondents' age

Knowing the term post-penitentiary care and respondents' age							
Respondents' age	Met		Did not meet		Could not answer		Total
	n	%	N	%	N	%	
18 - 30 years	11	37.84%	24	30.76%	5	7.15%	40
31 - 50 years	9	31.03%	23	29.48%	3	30.95%	35
51 - 65 years	6	20.64%	19	24.32%	3	30.95%	28
> 65 years	3	10.49%	12	15.44%	3	30.95%	18
Total	29	100%	78	100%	14	100%	121

Since $p > 0.05$, we accept the null hypothesis. We found out that there is no statistically significant dependence ($p = 0.9489$) between the variables. The testing results confirmed there is no statistically significant dependence between respondents' age and knowing the term post-penitentiary care.

The hypothesis H1 was not proved.

Hypothesis 2

H0(2): We assume there is no statistically significant dependence between gender and willingness of the respondents to accept a person released from prison back among their close persons.

H1(2): We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between gender and willingness of the respondents to accept a person released from prison back among their close persons.

Testing is at the 5 % significance level ($p = 0.05$).

Table-22. Relationship between gender and willingness to accept a person released from prison

Relationship between gender and willingness to accept a person released from prison			
Statistical test	Tested criterion value	sv	Signification – p
Pearson’s chi-square	11.51	3	0.0093

Table-23. Willingness to accept a person released from prison and respondents’ gender

Willingness to accept a person released from prison and respondents’ gender									
Respondents’ gender	Yes		Maybe		No		Do not know		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Man	17	73.91%	8	66.66%	22	37.93%	18	64.28%	65
Woman	6	26.09%	4	33.34%	36	62.07%	10	35.72%	56
Total	23	100%	12	100%	58	100%	28	100%	121

Since $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis. We found out that there is a statistically significant dependence ($p = 0.0093$) between the variables. The testing results confirmed there is a statistically significant dependence between respondents’ gender and willingness to accept a person released from prison among their close persons.

The hypothesis H2 was proved.

Hypothesis 3

H0(3): We assume there is no statistically significant dependence between education and willingness of citizens to help persons released from prison.

H1(3): We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between education and willingness of citizens to help persons released from prison.

Testing is at the 5 % significance level ($p = 0.05$).

Table-24. Relationship between education and willingness to help persons released from prison

Relationship between education and willingness to help persons released from prison			
Statistical test	Tested criterion value	sv	Signification – p
Pearson’s chi-square	31.24	6	<0001

Table-25. Willingness to help persons released from prison and relationship between education

Willingness to help persons released from prison and relationship between education							
Respondents’ education	Yes		No		Do not know		Total
	n	%	n	%	N	%	
Elementary	7	8.04%	7	36.84%	8	53.28%	22
Without school-leaving exam	26	29.88%	7	36.84%	6	40.06%	39
With school-leaving exam	36	37.14%	5	26.32%	1	6.66%	42
University	18	24.94%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	18
Total	87	100%	19	100%	15	100%	121

Since $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis. We found out that there is a statistically significant dependence ($p < 0001$) between the variables. The testing results confirmed there is a statistically significant dependence between education and willingness of citizens to help persons released from prison.

The hypothesis H3 was proved.

Hypothesis 4

H0(4): We assume there is no statistically significant dependence between type of residence and awareness of post-penitentiary care among the public.

H1(4): We assume there is a statistically significant dependence between type of residence and awareness of post-penitentiary care among the public.

Testing is at the 5 % significance level ($p = 0.05$).

Table-26. Relationship between type of residence and awareness of post-penitentiary care

Relationship between type of residence and awareness of post-penitentiary care			
Statistical test	Tested criterion value	sv	Signification – p
Pearson’s chi-square	33.14	2	<0001

Table-27. Awareness of post-penitentiary care and type of residence

Awareness of post-penitentiary care and type of residence							
Type of residence	Yes		No		Disinterest		Total
	n	%	n	%	N	%	
Village	13	18.57%	21	69.99%	15	71.42%	49
Town	57	81.43%	9	30.01%	6	28.58%	72
Total	70	100%	30	100%	21	100%	121

Since $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis. We found out that there is a statistically significant dependence ($p < 0001$) between the variables. The testing results confirmed there is a statistically significant dependence between type of residence and awareness of post-penitentiary care among the public.

The hypothesis H4 was proved.

3. Discussion

An individual who served a prison sentence is negatively influenced. His lifestyle, role, hierarchy of needs, attitudes, relationship to duties, sense of responsibility, and contact with a new environment and surrounding world change.

The conducted study was intended for adult respondents in the whole territory of the Slovak Republic, particularly for the age limit from 18 years of age of an individual. To acquire the data, we chose a questionnaire method containing a set of unambiguously formulated questions. We applied the closed-ended questionnaire items in a number of 18 questions.

Out of the total number of the respondents, 46.25 % of women and 53.75 % of men participated in the study; the most numerous group included the respondents aged 18 – 30 years. This group was represented by 33.40 % of the respondents. The least represented group was represented by the respondents with university education 24.93 %, which was reflected in the respondents' answers related to knowing the meaning of the term post-penitentiary care. The respondents participating in the study came mainly from town. This group was represented by 72 respondents, which was more than half of the respondents (59.53 %).

When asking about the meaning of the term post-penitentiary care, the study indicated the insufficiencies related to knowing the meaning of the term post-penitentiary care related to a specific target group – criminal offenders. Therefore, we think that the public should know the nature of post-penitentiary care, because in relation to the convicted, it has an attribute of a purposeful, planned and long-term preparation oriented on their release and problem solving with focus on successful management of their integration into the society. Related to willingness to accept a person released from prison among the close persons, the study clearly showed us that criminal labelling makes a person's adaptation to normal life more difficult, which is manifested in unsuccessful job or accommodation search, because people mostly do not trust the released persons and denounce their fixed undesirable behaviours. We should, however, realise that the rejecting behaviour of our society can contribute to the development of a life-long criminal career in a person who has just returned from the execution of a prison sentence or the execution of a custody. What the willingness to help persons released from prison is: The study shows scepticism in the respondents, because the respondents' subjective opinions about post-penitentiary care assistance were rather in a negative light. Social disadvantage is not only a predisposition to criminal behaviour. According to Vágnerová (2004), disadvantaged are the individuals released from the execution of a prison sentence mostly accepting a "career of a recidivist" as their life-long orientation as a result of complex social and economic deprivation. If we think about the stated findings and statements, is a released person condemned to a failure in his life? And in the end, is post-penitentiary care sufficiently developed and active to help these people?

Furthermore, we found out awareness of post-penitentiary care among our respondents. Awareness of the issue of post-penitentiary care among the respondents was very low, because up to 57.82 % of the respondents stated they were not sufficiently informed about the given problem. An interesting finding was that up to 17.40 % of the respondents were not interested in this problem at all. Our study suggested the scepticism and disinterest of the public in the given issue, which is a negative finding indicating an attitude and rejection by the society related to persons released from the execution of a sentence and it presents the public's disinterest in the issue of care related to persons released from the execution of a prison sentence. The reality occurring behind the institutions' gates shows the necessity to inform about post-penitentiary care, because the conventional majority society does not know the needs of the released, but on the other hand it makes an enormous burden on each individual with a high potential of his failure. And here comes a very important role of post-penitentiary social care which, in its complexity, is able to master the crucial stages of resocialisation. The stated reality, therefore, should also be known by the public so that it is able to adequately react to the given issue. The citizens should know that regress increases due to an inadequate adaptation of a released individual, and recurring criminality, in general, hinders the development of the society, destroys social and human capital, and, in the end, also decreases a quality of life. Also, a fragile relationship of trust between people is weakened, which threatens functioning in the country. Therefore, it is necessary for all involved entities of the society to create such conditions that would lead to a greater acceptance of the citizens released from the execution of a prison sentence and crime prevention in order to increase the quality of life in all citizens of our country.

3.1. Several Recommendations for Practice

After studying the issue about subjective perceptions of the lay public about the need, opinions and provision of post-penitentiary care to persons released from the execution of a prison sentence, we found out as if the society overlooked the given problem. The topic did not appear as attractive for them, and they even did not feel they should be interested in the given problem. Based on the context above, we partially managed to reveal the weaknesses which are present in the given area. In order to achieve increased awareness of the problems of the citizens released from the execution of a sentence and post-penitentiary care among the public, it would be suitable:

- In the media, to provide more space for the issue of prisons and care for the released (documentary series, comments),
- To include volunteers in the process of post-penitentiary care to unburden the social curators and other experts in provision of post-penitentiary care,
- To provide more space for the third sector to participate in care for the released,
- To financially support the organisations that would provide post-penitentiary care,
- To publicise interesting reports about the achievements of the released to make the public aware of the problems of this nature,
- To design a web portal for the given group of citizens (the released from the execution of a prison sentence) with an online forum for the released and the lay public to share their opinions and observations,
- To publish more articles about post-penitentiary care in well-known tabloids,
- To increase awareness of crime prevention and the process of care for prisoners and persons released from the execution of a prison sentence among school-aged children through various lectures.

We think that an implementation of the above stated interventions would increase the public's interest in this disadvantaged group of citizens and the area of post-penitentiary care whose task is to support persons released from the execution of a prison sentence and assist them in their difficult life situation. Citizens' awareness would bring more light into the issue and would provide them with more information which many lay people do not have at the present. Also, an angle of perceiving the persons released from the execution of a prison sentence, who are perceived very negatively at the present, might change.

4. Conclusions

Post-penitentiary care has multiple dimensions. Mainly social and personal dimensions, which are finished by successful resocialisation of the released, are constitutive for social care. For this reason, each intervention implemented in favour of post-penitentiary care means a good investment into material, human and social value of our country. Complex post-penitentiary care has a potential to prevent relapse, and thus, in the sharp contrast with a repressive approach offers a sustainable solution. As we have stated in the study itself, the issue of the stated form of care is relatively complicated and requires extensive knowledge mainly from the area of legislation. It relates to all involved entities providing post-penitentiary care, but mainly probation and mediation officers in courts, or social curators in labour offices. Working with the citizens released from the execution of a prison sentence is very demanding, because the professionals assist people who are considerably disadvantaged. For this reason, a special approach by social curators, probation and mediation officers towards these people as well as adequately provided social services should be a matter of course. The released citizens need a specific approach that proceeds from criminal activity and follow-up execution of a prison sentence. Mostly, but it is not a rule, they are illiterate individuals from poor social conditions who mostly grew up in an environment lacking stimuli. And these are the clients who require high levels of professionalism, expert knowledge and practical abilities and skills from workers providing penitentiary and post-penitentiary care.

Citizens living in ordinary life do not realise hardships of a released person's return back to the society which is mostly accompanied by problems. In most cases, a person released from the execution of a prison sentence has no place to return to, is jobless, homeless, and his closest family, friends and acquaintances turned their backs to him. When it comes to the social environment in which the client lived for several years and which formed him, his integration without any assistance is a very difficult process for him. For this reason, it is necessary to emphasise post-penitentiary care which should support and assist the persons released from the execution of a prison sentence in their difficult life situation. The necessity of post-penitentiary care is not only about the auspices of society; it focuses mainly on a person who was isolated from the society for a long period of time and without its primary assistance he might get to its edge. The role of post-penitentiary care as well as supportive social services is to finish a process of social learning during which a released person acquires a cultural society in which he should live as a social, cause-setting being able to acquire the social norms. The significance of post-penitentiary care and social services provided to the released persons is in continuous effective socialisation of a person released from the execution of a prison sentence. We think that meeting the roles and goals of post-penitentiary care may create the conditions particularly to deepen an adequate treatment of the persons released from the execution of a prison sentence, increase the safety of the country, which – following the system changes of the country's criminal policy and multisource funding of force requirements – supports meeting the legitimate responsibilities in the jurisdiction of prison service on an adequate level of social needs.

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