
Professional Training of Prison Service Officers in the Republic of Poland

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Abstract:

Purpose: This article specifies improvement actions which could enhance process of professional training of prison service officers.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Theoretical methods such as analysis and synthesis were used, as well as empirical research methods, diagnostic survey performed with questionnaire technique.

Findings: Performed empirical research proved that changes in prison service officers' professional trainings organization within the number of training hours, the length of the training, classes planning, the number of people in groups, as well as changes in the process of teaching connected with realized contents may contribute to prison service training process facilitation.

Practical implications: Applying facilitations in reference to training base, professional practice, within professionalization of trainers may contribute to improvement of professional training process preparing prison service officers to perform duties in certain corps of prison service.

Originality/value: Directions of improvements were indicated. They may significantly contribute to enhancement of professional training process preparing prison service officers to perform responsibilities in certain corps of prison services.

Keywords: Prison Service, Training, Pareto-Lorenz diagram.

JEL codes: M53, M54, Y1.

Paper type: A research paper.

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1. Introduction

Prison Service, uniformed and armed formation subordinated to the Minister of Justice, fulfills an important role in actions taken to ensure public order and security (OJ 2021, item 1064). It constitutes an indispensable part of national security system, not only in reference to provisional arrest or imprisonment, but also connected with rehabilitating and restoring law-abiding, rules and norms following individuals to society.

Prison Service effectively performs its responsibilities ensuring national security when processes functioning within these forces are logically designed and realized. It also concerns training process, which should facilitate gaining knowledge and skills by officers conditioning effective realization of work responsibilities. The level of prison services officers' competences is strongly correlated with the quality of performed duties within the area of national security.

However, their professional preparation to work is not possible without appropriate trainings, which are an important element of human resources managing in every organization. Trained Prison Service officers are first of all people who fully understand the sense of their profession, integrate with organization, recognizing their value for an employer.

The employer eliminates the risk of making costly mistakes (Kałabuk, 2012). Negligence within preparing staff to perform certain responsibilities at work or implementing solutions without consideration, lowers preparation level to perform entrusted tasks.

Permanent transformations connected with Prison Services involve the need to facilitate the process of officers' training, which undergoes changes of an organizational and program character. Following these changes became possible when the author of this article got acquainted with the content of publications which referred to the educational process of prison service officers (Szczepaniak, 2013; Strzelec, 2015; Poklek, 2016; Pich, 2014; Szczepaniak, 2015; Jędrzejak, 2009; Jędrzejak, 1998; Strzelec, 2016; Poklek, 2015; Kaczmarek, 1999; Poklek, 2014; Łapiński and Markuszewski, 2014).

Some of these publications considered the whole preparation to service, others concentrated only on choices of professional trainings and specialist trainings. The results arising from performed analysis of these publications and changes which appeared within the training of professional training of prison service officers in 2017, encouraged the author of this research to undertake activities aiming at evaluation of the process efficiency.

It is worth noticing that, notwithstanding numerous publications connected with educational process of prison services, it was impossible to reach research which

would refer to professional training preparing officers to be employed in both corps of N.C.O., warrant officers, as well as in officers corps after reorganization of this process in 2017.

Thus, the author of this article assumed the process of prison services training as a research problem. Taking into consideration formulated subject of research, the main aim was indicating the possibilities of improving this process.

The research question was condensed to the question: What kinds of actions should be taken, to facilitate realization of prison services training process? Adopted subject, aim and problem of research allowed to formulate a working hypothesis: Change in organization of professional education and change in the process of teaching should improve prison services training.

2. Materials and Methods

Theoretical and empirical research methods were applied in this research process. The analysis of subject literature, scientific studies, as well and normative documents in the form of acts of law, resolutions and ordinances regulating Prison Service operations constituted a starting point to make theoretical arrangements. Synthesis was used to formulate final conclusions which resulted from utility of research methods. It also allowed to formulate postulated solutions proposals in the context of professional training of Prison Service officers.

Empirical research has been realized with tools such as author's survey questionnaires. Diagnostic survey was performed among participants of Prison Service professional training (group I) and academic staff (group II) of Central Prison Service Training Facility in Kalisz, which was the only facility in Poland preparing officers to occupy positions in warrant officers and officers' corps.

Survey technique research included 588 Prison Service professional training participants in group I, which is 97% of all participants of trainings realized and completed by Central Prison Service Training Facility in Kalisz in 2019. This research was performed in April, June and in September 2019.

After checking the surveys $n_1 = 578$ questionnaires were qualified. Conclusions drawn on the basis of gathered statistical material were only referred to the surveyed people because the research group did not meet requirements of representativeness of Prison Service.

The kind of professional training constituted criteria differentiating the researched people. Participants of professional training preparing to a position in officers' corps were a dominant group. They constituted almost half of all respondents (284). There were only 68 participants taking part in a training preparing to a position in N.C.O corps, which is 11,76% of all respondents (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of trainings participants according to the kind of training

The kind of Prison Services training	The number of participants	Structure (%)
Professional training preparing to a position in N.C.O corps	68	11,76
Professional training preparing to a position in warrant officers corps	226	39,10
Professional training preparing to a position in officers corps	284	49,14
Total	578	100,00

Source: Own study

The second group of respondents consisted of 31 people. It was academic staff of Central Prison Service Training Facility in Kalisz. It is worth noticing that the research performed in April 2019 included $\frac{3}{4}$ of people from this group employed in a certain facility. Some participants did not fill in respondents' particulars and this is the reason why the research material has been divided into two parts.

The first group (group IIa) included 20 surveys with filled respondents' particulars (64,5% of academic staff in general). The features differentiating Central Prison Service Training Facility in Kalisz academic staff members in this group were: work experience in Prison Services, didactic experience in this formation. Average work experience of academic staff conducting classes for Prison Services was 16,2 years. Scientific and didactic work period was definitely shorter (arithmetic average 9,9 years). The second group (group IIb) constituted of surveys without respondents' particulars filled in.

3. Results

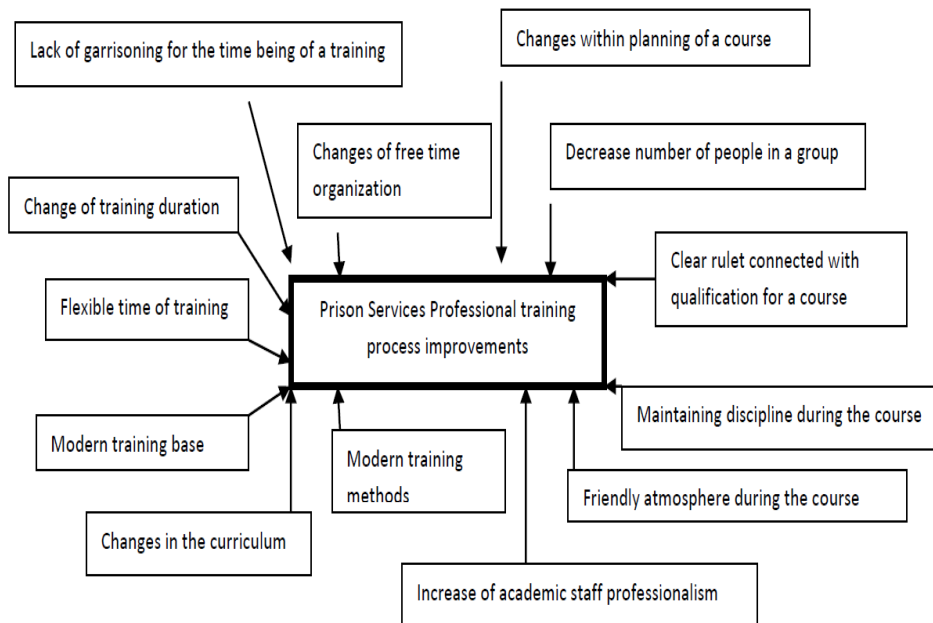
Empirical research results developed by the author of this article were used to define actions which should be taken for effective realization of Prison Service officers professional training. In the survey addressed to participants of professional training, the respondents were asked to indicate three most important factors which, according to them, would facilitate analyzed process.

The need to order received answers due to their quantity (1013 answers) caused that received information has been presented in variant system. The collection of postulated by the participants of professional training for Prison Services factors, facilitating the discussed process is presented below (Figure 1).

A Pareto-Lorenz diagram has been used to present factors which would have the greatest influence on the training process facilitation. This tool allows to separate significant factors from the insignificant ones. For this purpose, data was arranged in the descending order; percentage shares of particular factors were calculated; cumulated share of indicated improvements was calculated and the chart was drawn

(Stadnicka, 2016). Taking into consideration independent variable – the kind of professional training, the above mentioned factors have been selected for each Prison Services corps. Figure 2 presents factors improving training, preparing officers to N.C.O. corps, according to their frequency of occurrence.

Figure 1. Factors facilitating professional training for Prison Services according to respondents opinions.



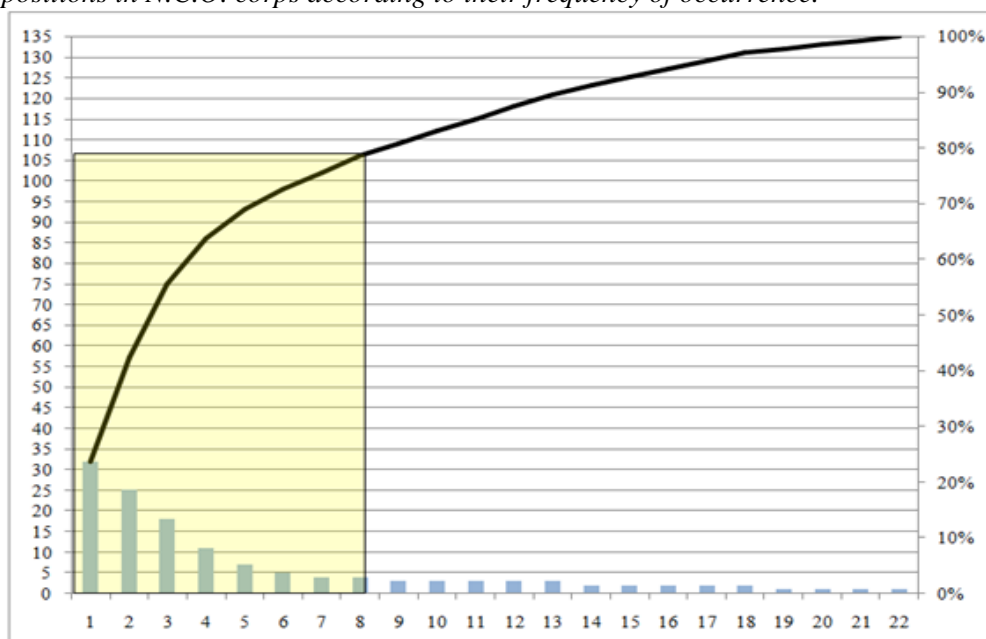
Source: Own study on the basis of empirical research.

Using Pareto-Lorenz diagram allowed for indicating the direction of operations which may effectively contribute to training process improvement preparing prison officers to positions in N.C.O. corps in Prison Services. In opinions of respondents, improvement of the analyzed process requires paying special attention to:

- Training duration shortening through, for example, breaks shortening or extending realized hours within a day;
- Paying special attention to practical classes, as well as joining practice with theory. Respondents emphasized not only gaining knowledge, but first of all skills indispensable to perform work responsibilities;
- Increasing the number of hours for professional practice and for improvement of apprenticeship quality;
- Change within the process of planning classes, among others, lack of breaks between seminars;
- Increasing the number of hours for realization specialists part of the training;

- Increasing the number of hours for self-defense with health-promoting elements of physical activity;
- Meals quality improvement;
- Eliminating the following subjects from the curriculum: historic and patriotic knowledge, criminology, prison techniques.

Figure 2. Pareto-Lorenz diagram for factors improving course preparing to positions in N.C.O. corps according to their frequency of occurrence.



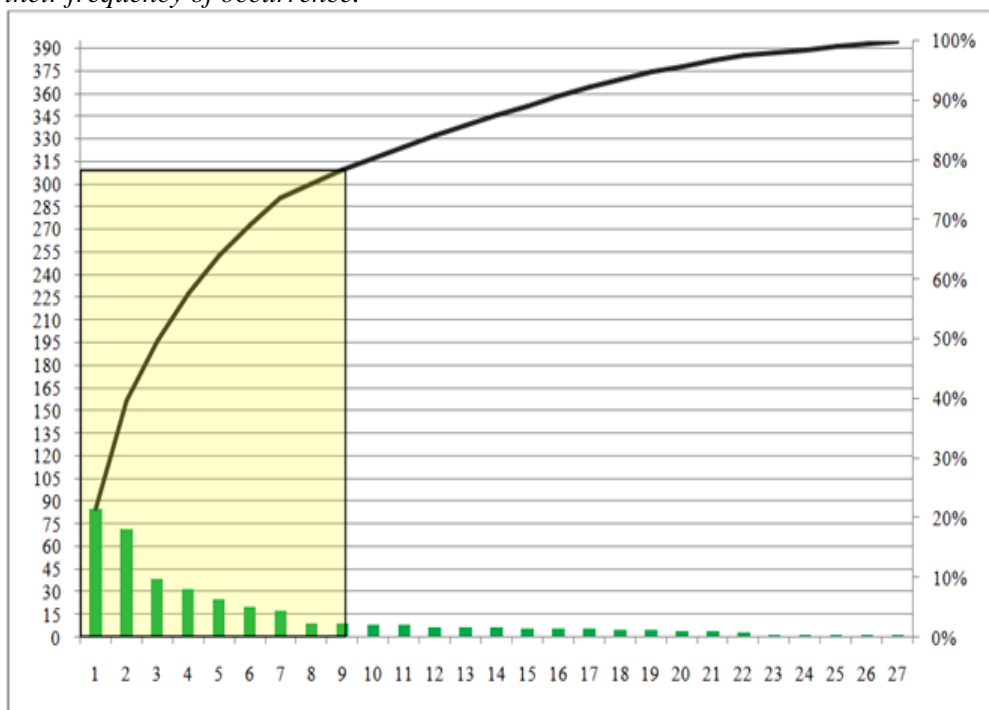
Note: 1. Training duration shortening. 2. Joining theory with practice, with the prevalence of practical classes. 3. Increasing the number of hours within vocational apprenticeship. 4. Changes within planning classes. 5. Increasing the number of hours for realization of specialists part of the training. 6. Increasing the number of hours for self-defense with elements of health-promoting physical activity. 7. Meals quality. 8. Eliminating the following subjects from the curriculum: history, criminology, prison techniques. 9. Elimination of garrisoning. 10. Functional shooting range in the facility. 11. Decreasing the number of hours of realization of the training unitary part. 12. Increasing the number of hours of shooting training. 13. Didactic base quality improvement. 14. Accommodation quality improvement. 15. Consultations with practitioners. 16. Free time organization. 17. E-learning. 18. Atmosphere, approach towards training participant. 19. Implementing foreign language education. 20. Smaller groups (squads). 21. Access to scientific bases, scripts. 22. Instructional videos implementation

Source: Own study on the basis of empirical research.

Mentioned elements constitute 36% of whole indicated factors and, according to N.C.O., decide upon about 79% (78,5%) of the facilities.

Figure 3 presents factors facilitating the training preparing prison officers to positions in Prison Services warrant officers corps, according to the frequency of occurrence.

Figure 3. Pareto-Lorenz diagram for factors facilitating the training preparing prison officers to positions in Prison Services warrant officers corps, according to their frequency of occurrence.



Note: 1. Joining theory with practice with prevalence of practical classes. 2. Course duration shortening. 3. Increase of the number of hours within the part connected with practical classes. 4. Didactic staff professionalism. 5. Increase of the number of hours of training specialists part realization. 6. Free time organization. 7. Decrease of the number of hours in a unitary part of the training. 8. Elimination of the following subjects from the curriculum: patriotic knowledge, didactic trips to basic units, relaxation classes with a psychologist. 9. Increase of the number of hours of shooting training. 10. Functional shooting range in the facility. 11. Access to scientific bases, scripts. 12. Didactic base improvement. 13. Increase of the number of hours with a psychologist. 14. Implementation of foreign language education. 15. Training groups up to 10-12 people. 16. Greater trust to students. 17. Maintaining discipline. 18. Clear rules of qualification for a training. 19. Instructional videos utilization. 20. Consultations with practitioners. 21. Elimination of garrisoning. 22. Decrease of the number of exams. 23. Assuming test as a form of exam. 24. Increase of behaviors simulation in emergency situations. 25. meals quality improvement. 26. E-learning. 27. Increase of the number of hours of evidence issues with elements of Noe.NET.

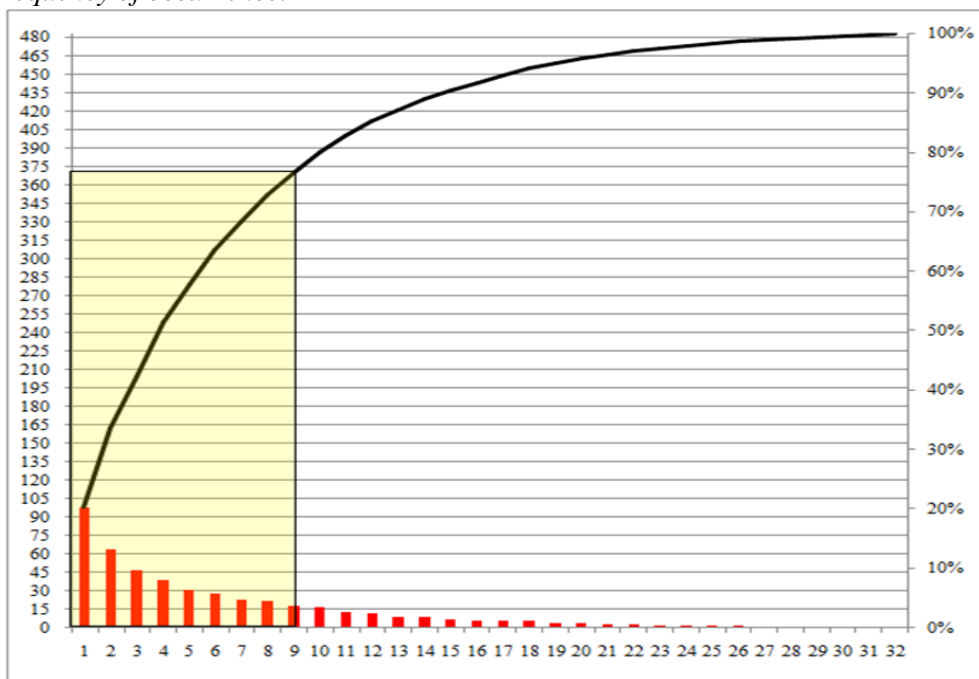
Source: Own study on the basis of empirical research.

The majority – 78,5% of improvements of professional process of training preparing to positions in Prison Services warrant officers corps, according to students, is connected with the following factors. They constitute about 33% of the whole factors. These are:

- The necessity to join theory with practice with the prevalence of practice;
- Training duration shortening through, for example, breaks shortening or extending realized hours within a day;
- Increasing the number of hours of vocational practice;
- Increasing professionalism of didactic staff;
- Increasing the number of hours of specialists part of the training;
- Free time organization, among others specifying a place for integration;
- Decreasing the number of hours of unitary part of the training;
- Elimination of the following subjects from the curriculum: patriotic knowledge, didactic trips to basic units, relaxation classes with a psychologist.
- Increasing the number of hours of shooting training.

Figure 4 presents factors facilitating the training preparing prison officers to positions in Prison Services officers corps, according to the frequency of occurrence.

Figure 4. Pareto-Lorenz diagram for factors facilitating the training preparing prison officers to positions in Prison Services officers corps, according to their frequency of occurrence.



Note: 1. Joining practice with theory with prevalence of practical classes. 2. Training duration shortening. 3. Increasing the number of hours for vocational practice and its

quality improvement. 4. Increasing the number of hours of training's specialists part realization. 5. Changes within the process of planning classes. 6. Shortening the period of waiting for the training. 7. Functional shooting range in the facility. 8. Didactic staff professionalism. 9. Increasing the number of shooting training. 10. E-learning. 11. Decreasing the number of hours of unitary part of the training. 12. Didactic base quality improvement. 13. Clear rules of recruitment for the training. 14. Increasing the number of hours for self-defense with elements of physical activity promoting health. 15. Consultations with practitioners. 16. Greater trust to students. 17. Elimination of garrisoning. 18. Atmosphere, approach towards training participants. 19. Free time organization. 20. Reducing the number of exams. 21. Maintaining discipline. 22. Accommodation conditions improvement. 23. Training groups up to 10-12 people. 24. The same number of classes for all specializations. 25. Increasing the number of hours with a psychologist. 26. Meals quality improvement. 27. Elimination of the following subject from the curriculum: situational workshops. 28. Increase of the number of hours connected with organizational and law regulations. 29. The possibility to acquire skills in a parent unit. 30. Utilization of multimedia presentations. 31. Curriculum adjusted to specialization. 32. Didactic trips to other organizational units

Source: Own study on the basis of empirical research.

About 77% (76,6%) of improvements of professional process of training preparing to positions in Prison Services warrant officers corps, according to students, is connected with the following factors. They constitute about 33% of the whole factors. These are:

- The necessity to join theory with practice with the prevalence of practice;
- Training duration shortening through, among others, increasing the number of hours within a day and eliminating some subjects;
- Increasing the number of hours within the vocational practice and improvement of its quality; apprenticeship realization according to a specialization;
- Increasing the number of hours devoted to specialists issues including the increase of the number of thematic blocks;
- Changes within the process of classes planning, for example, shortening of breaks, realization of classes within one day in one building without the necessity to relocate;
- Shortening waiting time for a training;
- Functional shooting range in the facility, its renovation was the cause of shooting training realization in a different facility;
- Didactic staff professionalism improvement;
- Increasing the number of hours of shooting training.

Academic staff also indicated the most important factors which, according to them, can improve the process of vocational training in certain Prison Services corps. It is worth noticing that hereinbelow mentioned improvements apply to all Prison Services corps.

These are increasing the number of didactic hours without specified thematic areas indication, increasing the share of practical classes within the training, changing so called class workshop for a workshop performed in conditions imitating prison, even workload of every lecturer, shortening the duration of a training through, for example, increase of training hours within the day, partial replacement of 'burned out' staff.

In warrant officers and officers' corps, scientific and didactic staff proposed establishing the number of 12 to 15 people in groups, as well as the possibility for the prison officers to take part in a training within 3 first years of service in a formation. During vocational training preparing to positions in N.C.O and warrant officers corps, scientific and didactic staff paid attention to the necessity of improving places for non-shooting training.

During the research process there were also voices saying that introductory training for N.C.O. should be replaced with vocational training preparing for the position in N.C.O. corps. Academic staff which did not specify neither work experience, nor didactic experience, indicated rather different factors, taking into consideration trainings in the following areas: increasing discipline during vocational training of Prison service, increasing students' engagement in didactic process, the necessity of using training methods, such as instructive films, increasing the number of the following subjects within the curriculum, self-defense with elements of healthy physical activities, intervention actions and shooting practice for all corps and drill for N.C.O.

They also proposed focusing on improving the quality of vocational practices which should take place in several organizational units of Prison Service.

4. Discussion

Discussed issue of vocational training of Prison Service is very significant from the point of view of appropriate functioning of this formation and effective realization of demands (Act of law). Prison Service, as a public institution is inseparably connected with functioning of the country and its citizens. It is responsible for realization of actions of penitentiary and rehabilitation character towards people sentenced for imprisonment, as well as for supervision of people temporary arrested.

Professionally prepared penitentiary staff is an indispensable requirement to be met by Prison Services to realize tasks supporting prison system mission. Prison staff is a very specific group, responsible for performing crucial tasks from the perspective of public interest. Prison services should also give its officers the possibility of professional development by means of professional education. Professional trainings are one of the forms of vocational education. Their aim is equipping Prison Service in competencies indispensable from the point of view of work responsibilities.

The increase of demands towards prison officers and new law regulations and new organizational solutions and procedures are the reason for broadening qualifications by Prison Services, which consequence is participation in trainings. The necessity of educating prison officers also arises from the fact that already gained knowledge and skills are gradually lost and needs complementing.

Thus, a condition of adjusting to requirements of changing environment is continuous improvement of qualifications (Horyń and Maciejewski, 2010). The role of trainings in Prison Services officers specialization is accurately perceived by H. Machel and J. Zagórski, who express the opinion that such trainings create good organization, adequate level of professional staff, reaction skills and abilities of preparing the imprisoned for living outside prison (Machel and Zagórski, 1998).

Polish Prison Services are at the disposal of own staff education model which, however, continuously undergoes evolutions and reorganizations. In 2017 new solutions concerning organization and ways of conducting vocational trainings for Prison Services officers were implemented (Resolution no. 1/2017).

Training leading to achievement of the first grade in corps of N.C.O, warrant officers and officers has been performed according to the same methodological and organizational assumptions since 2017. It is composed of two parts: unitary, the same for all corps and specialist. Implementing block training and replacing subjects with modules has also been a novelty.

Using a method of diagnostic survey among training participants and academic staff proved that process of Prison Services officers vocational training requires improvements in different areas in reference to all Prison Services corps. Repetitive factors, which influence the improvement of training would be the greatest are as follows:

- Shortening the durance of trainings;
- Joining practice with theory with prevalence of practical classes;
- Increasing the number of hours in the part encompassing apprenticeship;
- Increasing the number of hours of specialists training realization.

The author of this article postulates also the following directions of improving the process of vocational courses:

- Due to the specifics of Prison Service officer and related level of stress, the waiting time for the training should be shortened by means of increasing the limits of admissions to the training. Equipping officers of Prison Service in skills and indispensable psychosocial competences as fast as possible after employment seems to be reasonable due to necessity of facilitating performing assigned work duties. It is probable that such solution causes lower level of discomfort connected with work in Prison Services;

- Emphasis should be put on improvement actions aimed at consolidating and gaining new work experiences by staff conducting trainings. These actions should be of apprenticeship character, during which didactic staff would perform typical work duties on particular positions, preferably in direct contact with the imprisoned. Such propositions should contribute to reduction of didactic encyclopedism;
- Unitary part of vocational training, in the context of discussed contents, as well as number of realized hours, is the same for all officers, no matter of the kind of corps in Prison Services. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that officers constitute managing staff, which plays a very important role in the whole formation. Due to this fact it would be advisable to settle and conduct the unitary part of vocational training separately for officers corps. Similar step should be performed with unitary part in N.C.O. and warrant officers corp. It ought to be realized with relation to discussed contents in separately for N.C.O. and warrant officers due to their various competencies;
- It should be also emphasized that vocational apprenticeship, without changing the time range, should not be realized as just doing service in a stereotypical way. It ought to include many more educational elements, especially new activities, performed with the use of different equipment, with different group of imprisoned and in different conditions of service. The above described actions should contribute to professional development of Prison Service officers participating in vocational trainings.

5. Conclusions

The performed research allows to draw a conclusion that changes in Prison Services vocational trainings within the number of hours, training duration, planning classes, the number of people in groups and changes in educational process can contribute to improvements in the process of prison officers training.

Answering formulated research problem: What kind of activities should be performed to improve the process of Prison Services vocational training? It should be assumed that presented propositions of changes ought to lead to improvement of efficiency of the process hereinabove characterized.

However, it should be noticed that undertaking improvement actions may be difficult due to many existing barriers. Appropriate realization of mentioned improvements require acceptance on the part of decision-makers and representatives of central authorities.

Implementing propositions and solutions in this scope should be taken into account, since they may contribute to Prison Services professionalism improvement and subsequently influence increase of not only security in penitentiary units, but first and foremost public security.

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