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Features of the administrative activity of the psychological service of penitentiary institutions in the context of ensuring the rights of convicts

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Abstract

The relevance of this study is conditioned by the search for effective ways to influence the process of optimising the administrative activities of psychological services of the penitentiary system in connection with the ongoing reform of the penitentiary system of Ukraine as of 2024. This determined the purpose of this study, which was to identify current problems of the psychological service in the system of penitentiary organisation and to identify approaches to their transformation according to the world's leading practices, aimed at ensuring humane treatment of prisoners and securing their rights. The theoretical and methodological framework of this study included the use of qualitative methods of structural and functional analysis of the problem of psychological support services in penitentiary institutions and analytical research of the professional competence of a

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psychologist in working with convicts. The findings of the study reflect the problem of management and administration of psychological services of the penal system. The study also highlighted the issues of the specifics of professional activity of correctional facility staff, approaches and ways to improve the administrative legal methods of the psychological service and forms of implementation of staff competencies in professional activity. Specifically, the findings covered the issues of developing the professional competence of practical psychologists of correctional institutions, their responsibilities in working with prisoners and the problems associated with psychological support for staff regarding professional burnout and their subjective safety. The obtained data also covered the specific features of resocialisation of convicts and the problems of their rehabilitation in penal institutions. Furthermore, the study presented a model of the process of improving the administrative activities of psychological departments of the penitentiary system. The results obtained during the study can be used by psychologists of correctional institutions and the management of such institutions to improve the work of psychological services, develop training programmes for specialists

Keywords: penitentiary system; resocialisation; executive authorities; legislative regulations; professional competence

Introduction

Ensuring the effective functioning of psychological services of penal institutions is carried out in the context of executive and administrative actions, specifically through compliance with administrative legal forms and methods of work aimed at developing and making decisions to improve the activities of departments of the state penitentiary service. Furthermore, it is important to provide these services with information, coordinate and control them on the part of the state, as well as to attract competent personnel and optimise the material and technical base. Therewith, the successful administrative activity of the psychological service is characterised by management processes in the systematisation of legal relations, where professional training of specialists is necessary (Almeida *et al.*, 2022).

Investigating the problem of forming competence in future employees of criminal executive services, O.S. Sklyar (2020) identified the need to create relevant psychological and pedagogical

conditions for students in their educational activities, specifically the integration of social, humanitarian, legal, and specialised subjects. O.A. Gerasymenko and T.G. Kharina (2021), in their study of the problem of professional training of personnel of executive authorities, note that an integrated approach to the formation of professional competence in future specialists is needed, where significant elements are the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, practical experience, personal development, as well as the development of certain psychological qualities in the practical training of specialists. At the same time, investigating the problem of professional development of penitentiary system employees, O.V. Oksenyuk (2020) emphasised the need to develop specialised communication skills and practical training in typical emotionally charged situations that may occur in the work of a future specialist.

According to V.S. Medvedev *et al.* (2022), the ability to manage psychological processes in the

team and cooperate with other services of the penitentiary system is important in the professional activity of specialists of the psychological service of penitentiary institutions. Investigating the specific features of the functioning of the psychological service in the law enforcement system, the researcher notes that these organisations are called upon to assess the mental health of convicts, predict the risks of committing new crimes, provide psychological support to employees, and implement research on the penitentiary system. Studying the problem of administrative support in this context, V.V. Nagorniy (2022) noted that apart from these areas of work, psychological services carry out organisational and coordination activities. According to the researcher, the administrative activity of social and psychological services involves developing strategies and planning the work of their organisations, defining their tasks and functions, implementing training and professional development of psychologists of the service and monitoring compliance with the requirements for ensuring psychological safety in institutions. Thus, studying the role of the psychological climate in correctional institutions, specifically the atmosphere in the team and in the work of staff with convicts, H. Palmén *et al.* (2022) noted that the effective performance of the duties assigned to the psychological service largely depends on the sense of security of the staff. The researcher emphasised that the level of subjective security of employees of these services is interrelated with the stability of a person's mental health, where stress and burnout can lead to incorrect work with prisoners, increased anxiety, aggression, hostility, and reduced performance in general.

The problem of successful administrative activity of psychological services of penitentiary institutions is made relevant by the issues of professional staffing, specifically, high-quality

specialised training of specialists, improvement of professional skills and knowledge of employees, their motivation, and the need for safe performance of their duties. This determines the relevance of investigating the content of modern problems in the professional activity of a psychologist in correctional institutions and determines the primary purpose of the study, which was to cover the specific features of psychological services' implementation of their goals, objectives, and functions, as well as to develop a model for improving the work of these organisations to better ensure the exercise of the right of convicts to medical care.

Materials and Methods

The leading aspect of the theoretical and methodological approach to determining the peculiarities of the management activities of psychological services of penitentiary institutions was a qualitative combination of methods of systematic analysis of the work of psychological services of penitentiary institutions, in particular, the study of issues related to the performance of their duties, tasks and functions, as well as the analytical method of determining the cause and effect relationships of the process of developing the professional competence of a psychologist in the penitentiary system. This involved identifying the conditions for the development of professional competencies of psychological service staff and the specifics of their work with prisoners in penal institutions. Specifically, the study was planned and its tasks were implemented through the systematisation, unification, and structuring of the world experience of investigating the problem of administrative activities of psychological services of correctional institutions, which helped to investigate the specific features of providing psychological support to convicts and became the fundamental basis

or covering the content of modern approaches to addressing issues related to the level of recidivism and suicide prevention in penal institutions.

The organisational structure of the research was based on the concept of identifying the factors that influence the decrease in the effectiveness of psychologists' work in these institutions and ways to improve approaches to performing the requirements for resocialisation and correction of convicts defined by the legislation. The formulated purpose of the study and theoretical analysis of sources on the functioning of executive authorities in the context of the penitentiary system determined the vector of the study, which involved the use of abstraction and induction methods. This facilitated a comparative analysis of the data obtained with the conclusions of scientists who were engaged in practical research on the problem of administrative activities of the psychological service in correctional institutions and the identification of ways to improve the work of psychologists with prisoners. Furthermore, the content and provisions of various legislative documents related to ensuring the solution of the problems of the penitentiary system in Ukraine were investigated, specifically the Criminal and Executive Code of Ukraine (2003), Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 921/5 "On the Approval of the List of Names of Bodies, Penal Institutions, Pre-trial Detention Centres, Educational Institutions and Medical Rehabilitation Centres Belonging to the Sphere of Administration of the State Criminal Enforcement Service of Ukraine, in the New Edition" (2020). The study also analysed the regulations governing the internal activities of the state correctional institutions, specifically Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 145/34428 "On the Approval of the Instruction on Organisational and Staff Work in Penal Institutions, Pre-trial Detention Centres,

Paramilitary Formations, Educational Institutions, other Enterprises, Institutions and Organisations Created to Ensure the Fulfilment of the Tasks of the State Criminal Enforcement Service of Ukraine" (2020), as well as Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 1010/32462 "On Approval of the Rules of Internal Procedure of Penitentiary Institutions" (2018). To identify promising vectors for the development of the penitentiary system of Ukraine, the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1153-p "On the Approval of the Penitentiary System Reform Strategy for the Period Until 2026 and the Approval of the Operational Plan for its Implementation in 2022-2024" (2022), as well as "Strategy for Reforming the Penitentiary System until 2026" (2023) were considered. Thus, it contributed to the analysis of the regulatory framework of penitentiary institutions and their units, specifically the psychological service departments of the state correctional institutions.

The scientific approach used in this study helped to substantiate the key areas and leading methods of work of psychological organisations in penitentiary institutions, as well as to identify the negative consequences of reducing the subjective safety of employees and professional burnout of psychologists in practical activity. The study also helped to identify ways to improve the effectiveness of psychologists in educational institutions and to develop a model for improving the administrative activities of psychological services.

Results

The psychological support and maintenance of the execution of sentences is the responsibility of the psychologist. However, apart from providing psychological support to convicts, a psychological service specialist also needs to support the staff of the correctional institution. This involves

implementing a set of measures based on scientific, methodological, and practical recommendations for working with different categories of people. Thus, the professional activity of a psychologist in correctional facilities is aimed at helping prisoners reduce psychological problems at the beginning and during the process of serving their sentence (depression, fear, etc.), facilitate the preservation and restoration of family ties, and develop skills in prisoners that will help them avoid recidivism in the future. Furthermore, the psychologist's work should ensure understanding of the reasons that led to the crime, provide support in the development of the convict's social skills (communication, cooperation), help to form internal resources for the transformation of destructive behavioural patterns and restore self-respect and self-esteem (Johnson *et al.*, 2021).

At the same time, the psychologist is also responsible for conducting preventive conversations and activities for the staff of the correctional facility to prevent the negative impact of working conditions on the psyche of employees and to prevent professional burnout and psycho-emotional changes in the personality structure (Malik *et al.*, 2023).

For the international community, the issue of the spread of crime is of exceptional significance (Crime Rate by Country..., 2023). Preventing future recidivism is particularly important in this regard. This is what makes the issue of psychological support to prisoners in penitentiary institutions so important. The rapid pace of transformation processes in the legislative system, its digitalisation and modernisation in line with the current conditions of society opens the possibility of innovative approaches to psychological support in the penitentiary system. The role and significance of psychological services is growing rapidly. Thus, forensic psychological examination

helps law enforcement officers to obtain a conclusion about a person's mental state at the time of the offence (affect, self-defence, depression, frustration, etc.), understand the nature of the actions committed, establish the motives for destructive behaviour and identify individual psychological characteristics (Van Es *et al.*, 2023).

Investigating the problem of the administrative activities of psychological services in the system of penitentiary institutions, P.R.S. Burton (2021), M.S. Johnston *et al.* (2022) considered the activities of a psychologist in correctional institutions and their work with prisoners as a process of the latter's correction and resocialisation. At the same time, the researchers emphasised that the administrative activity of psychological support services consists in the exercise by these organisations of executive and administrative powers, which should be ensured by streamlining the activities of the penitentiary system departments. Researchers also see the administrative work of psychological services as a form of activity regulated by law and implemented within the administrative and legal system. However, the success of the psychological service of correctional institutions is viewed not only through the lens of performing its legal duties, but also through the achievement of goals to prevent complications of the stay of convicts in institutions and optimise the work of employees. Thus, when investigating the provision of psychological support to prisoners and staff of penitentiary institutions, Kothari *et al.* (2020), K.L. Appelbaum *et al.* (2021) and H. Palmén *et al.* (2022) point out that psychological work is a rather complex and lengthy process that requires a prominent level of professional qualification, patience, and the ability to individualise approaches and methods for each person. Furthermore, the researchers believe that a psychologist needs to possess the skills of

ethical standards regardless of the client's identity. At the same time, the researchers emphasise that it is significant to ensure confidentiality and build trusting relationships in psychological work. Considering the prevalence of crime in the world, it is important to understand the process of psychological support in penal institutions (Crime rate by country..., 2023).

The key goals of social and educational work in correctional facilities are the correction of convicts and their resocialisation. This is regulated by penal legislation and is achieved through educational (correction of behavioural patterns, influence on spiritual development), social (support in solving social problems), and psychological work (reduction of the traumatic impact of isolation, psychological support) (Duwe, 2017). Specifically, social and educational activities are aimed at correcting the destructive behaviour of prisoners, developing their respect for life and other people, fostering a desire for legal work, initiative in employment and motivation in educational work following the rules of conduct in society, the constitution, and laws. Therewith, it is important to consider the characteristics of the prisoner's nature, their mental state and psychological specificity, the level of social neglect and the crime committed (Testoni, 2021). The organisation of social and educational work in correctional facilities is entrusted to psychological services and is based on the development of specialised methodological recommendations by specialists in the psychological and pedagogical fields, as well as specialists in criminal executive law.

The work of a psychologist in the penitentiary system involves investigating the behaviour of prisoners, conducting psychodiagnostics and correctional work, as well as preventing suicide among prisoners. Therewith, the purpose of the specialist's psychological work is to create a positive impact on the convict's mind to repent and

prevent recidivism (Lo *et al.*, 2020). At the same time, psychological work requires increased attention from a specialist in relation to prisoners with a tendency to mental personality disorders, narcotic substance addiction, self-harm (eating disorders, auto-aggression) or suicide, conflict, hostility towards others, and antagonism towards administrative staff. These categories of prisoners are subject to increased control of psychological services (psychodiagnostics, correction, individual counselling) to ensure the prevention of negative events in the environment of the correctional facility (Luke *et al.*, 2021). Therewith, adherence to clear principles of psychological support to prisoners allows achieving the goals set for the penitentiary system.

The rights of convicts to receive psychological support are clearly regulated by the legislation of Ukraine. According to Article 107 of the Penal Code of Ukraine (2003), convicts have the right to psychological support, including rehabilitation and psycho-correctional programmes, psychological counselling, opportunities for independent mastery of psychological knowledge and skills, etc. Furthermore, Item 7.3 of the Internal Regulations of Penitentiary Institutions guarantees convicts the right to psychological counselling and individual support (Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 1010/32462, 2018).

An important aspect is the mechanisms for protecting the rights of convicts in case of inadequate psychological support. An example of judicial protection of this right is the Judgement of the Sixth Court of Appeal in Case No. 826/17689/18 (2023). In this case, the convict appealed against the inaction of the administration of the penal colony, which consisted of not providing him with psychological support for a long time. The court upheld the claim and ordered the colony administration to provide the convict with the necessary psychological support.

Another example is the Decision of Vinnytsia District Administrative Court in Case No. 120/8688/23 (2024). In this case, the convict appealed against the refusal of the administration of the penal colony to provide him with individual psychological counselling. The court found the administration's inaction to be unlawful and ordered it to provide the convict with the necessary psychological support in the form of individual counselling. Apart from judicial protection, the rights of prisoners to psychological support can be protected by appealing to human rights organisations, such as the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT). In its reports, the CPT has repeatedly stressed the significance of ensuring adequate psychological support for prisoners and provided recommendations for improving the situation.

In 2023, The Ministry of Health of Ukraine approved a new Procedure for the provision of psychological care in inpatient settings (Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine No. 122/41467, 2023). This document defines the requirements for the organisation and provision of psychological support to persons in inpatient healthcare facilities, including penitentiary institutions. The implementation of the new Procedure should help improve the quality and accessibility of psychological support for convicts. However, despite the legislative regulation and protection mechanisms, the implementation of the right of convicts to psychological support in Ukraine still faces problems. Judicial practice and reports of human rights defenders document cases of violations due to understaffing of psychological services in colonies, inadequate working conditions, etc. This requires further improvement of the system of psychological support in penal institutions.

Ensuring the right of convicts to psychological support is critical considering the goals of the execution of their sentence – resocialisation and

the development of skills necessary for successful reintegration into society after release. Violation of this right can undermine the effectiveness of the process of correction of convicts. Therefore, the provision of proper psychological support should be based on compliance with the current legislation and include effective mechanisms for monitoring and protecting the rights of convicts. The court decisions analysed above demonstrate that in case of violation of their rights, convicts can protect their right to psychological support by applying to the court. At the same time, court practice also shows that there are systematic problems in this area in Ukraine that need to be addressed systematically.

Ensuring an adequate level of psychological support to prisoners is an important task for penal authorities and institutions. This requires allocating sufficient resources to staff psychological services with qualified specialists, creating suitable conditions for their work, establishing effective procedures for providing psychological support and introducing effective mechanisms for monitoring the observance of prisoners' rights in this area. Only through a comprehensive approach to solving the existing problems can the full realisation of the legally consolidated right of prisoners to receive psychological support in prisons be achieved. This, in turn, will help to increase the effectiveness of the process of correction and resocialisation of convicts, which is a key purpose of the penitentiary system. The analysed previous studies indicate that the objects of administrative activity of the psychological service are convicts and employees of correctional institutions. At the same time, essential elements of administrative work are the ways of influencing them and the goals that should be achieved in the activity of the psychological service. The structure of the administrative activities of the psychological service is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Administrative activities of the psychological service of correctional institutions

Object	Purpose	Method of influence	Means of achievement
Convicts	Resocialisation; Suicide prevention; Adaptation to new conditions; Reducing recidivism; Transforming behaviour	Consultation Psychodiagnostics Prevention Forecasting Education Research Correction	Individual and group psychotherapy; Educational activities; Social and educational work
Employees	Ensuring objective security; Increasing psychological stability; Reducing the risk of professional burnout		Trainings; Individual counselling; Situation modelling

Source: compiled by the authors based on J. Lo (2020), H. Palmen *et al.* (2022), M.S. Johnston *et al.* (2022), I. Testoni *et al.* (2023)

At the same time, the work of a psychologist in correctional institutions covers a number of job tasks, including the development and implementation (together with other psychological service staff) of psychocorrection programmes for individual and group counselling, improving the psychological skills of staff, introducing the latest methods of influencing the mental activity of prisoners, assessing the risks of recidivism and preventing it. Furthermore, the psychological service worker is obliged to know and follow the legal requirements for the regulation of their professional activities, provide psychological characteristics and professional recommendations for the development of individual programmes of psychodiagnosis, rehabilitation and correction of the convict's personality (Testoni *et al.*, 2023).

When formulating an individual programme of psychodiagnosis and correction for each

convicted person, the psychologist should determine the goals of work with them, the measures and responsible persons for their implementation and monitoring, as well as clear terms of psychological support or therapy. Therewith, responsibility for the implementation of the social and educational individual programme rests with the convict, the staff of the correctional facility, as well as additional participants from state or non-state institutions involved in the work with the prisoner. Thus, the analysis of scientific sources (Sulitsky, 2020) and the study of legislative documents (Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 921/5, 2020; Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 145/34428, 2020) on the subject of the study indicates that in Ukraine, correctional facilities employ an average of one to several practical psychologists, depending on the number of convicts in the institution. These indicators are presented in greater detail in Table 2.

Table 2. Typical staffing standards for practical psychologists of psychological services departments in correctional facilities in Ukraine

The average number of persons on the list of persons in P, PTDC, and PI	Number of full-time employees	Department of social, educational, and psychological work with convicts		Human resources department
		Number of practical psychologists for P and PTDC	Number of practical psychologists for PI	Number of practical psychologists
under 300	89	2	1	1

Table 2. Continued

The average number of persons on the list of persons in P, PTDC, and PI	Number of full-time employees	Department of social, educational, and psychological work with convicts		Human resources department
		Number of practical psychologists for P and PTDC	Number of practical psychologists for PI	Number of practical psychologists
301-600	112	2	1-2	1
601-900	139	2	2-3	1
901-1,200	152	For institutions with more than 1,000 inmates, an additional position of a practical psychologist is introduced for every 450 inmates	2-3	1
1,201-1,500	155		2-3	1
1,501-2,000	161		3-4	1
2,001-2,500	71 (P only)		4-5	1
Over 2,501	73 (P only)		5-6	1

Notes: P – prisons; PTDC – pre-trial detention centres; PI – penal institutions

Source: compiled by the authors based on Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 1010/32462 (2018)

Thus, the results of the study of the issue of staffing of penitentiary institutions show a discrepancy in the number of psychological staff to the number of inmates in the penitentiary institution. However, the problem of staffing correctional facilities is not based solely on the high workload per specialist. Furthermore, it is also difficult to attract highly qualified staff who can ensure the effectiveness of rehabilitation, correction, and resocialisation of prisoners. At the same time, challenging working conditions and lack of professional development can also be attributed to the reasons for unwillingness to work as a full-time psychologist in penal institutions. However, this problem can be solved through a set of measures aimed at increasing the motivation of qualified professionals, including the introduction of a system of professional development for employees, the involvement of experts, thematic seminars and trainings, sufficient salaries, and adequate logistical and methodological support (Fletcher *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the low staffing of practical psychologists in penitentiary institutions raises the need to cover the specific

features of the professional competence of psychological workers and the risks of their professional burnout. This issue also raises the question of employee self-regulation and their objective safety in performing their professional duties.

The administrative activities of psychological services ensure that psychologists follow administrative legal norms and use modern methods, tools, and technologies in their work with prisoners. Thus, the work of a psychologist involves the use of various techniques to influence the behavioural and emotional determinants of deviations in prisoners, individual and group consultations, trainings, and psychotherapy sessions using various methods of influence (art therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, etc.). This allows changing not only the convicted person's views on the crime committed, but also helping them restore adequate ties with society.

Particular attention should be paid to international practices in the development of penitentiary systems and, accordingly, the activities of psychological services in correctional institutions. Thus, in Norway's correctional facilities,

administrative activities are based on the principles of security, transparency and innovation, where the performance of social tasks related to the correction of prisoners is at the heart of the penitentiary system (Higgins, 2021). Specifically, the proper enforcement of sentences is based on the safety of all citizens and an attempt to prevent future recidivism, and the initiative to change criminal behaviour is vested in the offender. However, strategic operational plans are based on a dynamic approach and involve close cooperation between all departments of the correctional institution, including the psychological service. Therewith, the purpose of punishment is to transform a person's criminal behaviour, thinking, perception of reality, and conscious attitude towards causes and consequences. In this country, administrative activities are organised according to the needs, requirements, and expectations of the external environment. Notably, Norway has an electronic monitoring system (introduced in 2014), where the target group is persons who have been sentenced to imprisonment for up to 4 months or those who have 4 months left to serve their sentence. In Denmark, the Department of Prisons and Probation is responsible for monitoring the execution of sentences, where court decisions are categorised according to the criteria of electronic monitoring, supervised release, supervised probation, community sentences, supervision of persons with mental disorders, and supervision with alcohol treatment (Arbour *et al.*, 2021). Electronic monitoring involves serving a sentence outside a penal institution, but with the establishment of the accused's place of residence, occupation (work, school, etc.), and prohibition of alcohol or narcotic substance use. Electronic equipment is used to monitor prisoners in the country (introduced in 2005), which allows recording violations of certain restrictions. As of the beginning of 2023, Italy was experiencing an excess of operational

capacity in penitentiary institutions. Therewith, the country has experience of changing the sentence for some categories of convicts (Zhang & Wang, 2021). Thus, in 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in Taranto, the government decided to release some prisoners under supervision to reduce overcrowding and the risk of infection. Notably, in 2017, the country revised its Criminal Code and introduced a special crime prohibiting the torture of prisoners, which helped to reduce ill-treatment of prisoners and rethink the method of solving social problems and problematic situations in penitentiary institutions (About the Norwegian Correctional..., 2024). The country also has an organisation that investigates the treatment of prisoners and issues periodic reports and impartial proposals for reforming the penal system.

In contrast to Italy, in Thailand, prison conditions are still below international standards (Kristoffersen, 2022). The penitentiary system of this country, apart from overcrowding in correctional facilities, has problems of inadequate accommodation of prisoners, ill-treatment, unsanitary accommodation of prisoners with poor quality drinking water and food. It is also difficult for convicts to receive medical care in penal institutions, and human rights organisations have limited access to monitor their conditions of detention. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, Thailand's prisons have managed release some prisoners early, which has helped reduce not only the spread of the disease but also prison overcrowding. However, as of 2023, most of the measures have been eased or cancelled.

The Italian penitentiary system has many problems related to the maintenance of prisoners (Prison population and capacity..., 2023). Specifically, correctional facilities, under the guise of treatment and rehabilitation, use violent methods without offering convicts opportunities for correction and positive change. The country's

penitentiary institutions do not follow legal norms to prevent violence and eradicate racism and evade rehabilitation measures to correct prisoners and reintegrate them into the community after release. In Italy, the situation with the penitentiary system has a number of complications, including the absence of a unified criminal justice system, instead the country has federal, state, local, and tribal systems (Bitetto, 2021).

Based on the successful practices of foreign countries, Ukraine has developed a modern Strategy for Reforming the Penitentiary System until 2026 (2023). The key goal of this Strategy is to create a humanistic penal system that can ensure the social adaptation of offenders and guarantee public safety. The implementation of the Reform Strategy in the country's penal system should guarantee the creation of appropriate conditions in penal institutions, counteract ill-treatment of convicts, increase the development of probation bodies, improve methods of influencing the process of correction and resocialisation of convicts, as well as expand the possibilities of digitalisation of executive authorities, create an appropriate level of security in correctional facilities and develop effective models for training and retraining of penitentiary system employees. This legislative document also identifies the problems to be solved after the Strategy is implemented. Specifically, these problems include the formal approach to social, educational, and psychological work with prisoners, which reduces the probability of the effectiveness of correction and resocialisation of detainees. Notably, there is a certain inconsistency in the use of psychodiagnostic tools for the study and assessment of prisoners, which also complicates the educational impact on them. Therewith, modern approaches to research methods and impact on prisoners are only beginning to emerge (Magaletta *et al.*, 2020). Digitalisation and the need to analyse large information flows,

including the positive experience of other countries in reforming the penitentiary system, require the introduction of new methods and tools in the work of penitentiary services. This raises the issue of raising the level of information and digital literacy of penitentiary system employees, introducing modern software solutions (databases, online platforms) for the secure exchange of information, its processing, structuring, and analysis. The Ministry of Justice of Ukraine is responsible for developing the operational plan, monitoring the implementation and evaluation of the Strategy for Reforming the Penitentiary System (Strategy for Reforming the Penitentiary..., 2023). This allows the executive body to involve representatives of other state bodies (MPs, human rights commissioners, NGOs, etc.) to effectively monitor, analyse, and control the implementation of the Strategy. The state is responsible for financing the implementation of this strategy, with the right to raise funds from other sources not prohibited by Ukrainian legislation.

Proceeding from the above, the administrative activities of the psychological service of a correctional institution are aimed specifically at solving the psychological problems of institution staff and prisoners, where an essential element of this activity is the regulation of their relationships and interaction with other units of the penitentiary system.

Discussion

The problem of administrative activity of psychological services operating on the basis of correctional institutions raises the issue of providing professional psychological support to convicts for their rehabilitation and resocialisation. Insufficient staffing of psychological services in penitentiary institutions can lead to an increase in recidivism and a decrease in the performance of other employees of the penitentiary institution (professional

burnout, mental disorders, phobias, stress, etc.). However, this is not the only problem with the psychological departments of the penitentiary system. Specifically, psychological services may face difficulties in interacting with other correctional units or ethical dilemmas regarding the performance of professional duties by other staff.

Resocialisation and correction of convicts as processes of transformation of pathological behavioural patterns are considered in many modern studies. Thus, G. Duwe (2017) and I. Testoni *et al.* (2023), who investigated the problem of correction, resocialisation, and rehabilitation of prisoners, indicate that the involvement of psychological services in the penitentiary system plays a key role in achieving the goals of reducing recidivism and restoring social ties with society. In common with the findings of the present study is the conclusion that working with a psychologist on resocialisation allows a person to return to normal life in society after serving a sentence for a crime. M. Ma (2022) argues that the correction of convicts is aimed at transforming the individual and developing practical skills of self-regulation. In this case, it should be emphasised that psychological support in both processes allows the convicted person to understand the problem of their destructive behaviour, its cause and effect, and to plan step-by-step actions to avoid the temptation of relapse.

According to K. Heseltine *et al.* (2011), correctional and resocialisation processes are designed to ensure the rehabilitation of the prisoner by teaching them new skills, developing their sporting abilities and culture. This study emphasised that the rehabilitation of offenders in prison should be clearly planned and systematic. In this regard, the general conclusion is that the involvement of interdisciplinary specialists (social and psychological workers, doctors, lawyers) contributes to the fulfilment of the purpose of

resocialisation and correction. At the same time, M. Arcuri (2021) emphasised that an individualised approach to the development of a rehabilitation programme is important in reforming a convicted person, where the specific features of a person's mental activity, needs, and goals should be considered. Both studies emphasised the close relationship between education and rehabilitation in the context of correctional institutions. Thus, it is possible to identify commonalities between the studies, specifically, the fact that restoring connections with family or close people is important for the correction of a convicted person. Furthermore, the study examined the effectiveness and targeting of prisoner rehabilitation programmes. By comparing the findings, it can be determined that individual rehabilitation programmes for convicts contribute to ensuring security in penal institutions. It was also found that this helps to highlight the features of individualised programmes for convicts. These features include an assessment of the needs and potential of the prisoner, a targeted outcome, an individual approach, the involvement of interdisciplinary specialists, an assessment of the rehabilitation process, preparation for adaptation in society after serving a sentence, flexibility and adaptability to the emotional and behavioural changes of the prisoner, and psychological support after release. The correlation of the findings obtained is also observed in the studies of I. Testoni *et al.* (2023), M.S. Johnston *et al.* (2022), where the researchers emphasise the need to adapt the convict to new living conditions and psychological work with them in the context of improving and restoring the mental health of the prisoner during the sentence and in their resocialisation.

The findings also indicate the need to introduce an effective model for improving the administrative activities of psychological services in the penitentiary system. This includes creating conditions under which a practical psychologist can

individualise the correction of a prisoner, adapting methods and approaches to the concrete needs of each individual. Such a model will enable psychologists to perform a comprehensive assessment of the psycho-emotional state of prisoners, develop individual therapy and counselling plans, accommodating the personal characteristics and life experience of prisoners.

Conclusions

The specificity of cognition of the objects of the penitentiary system is determined by the complex nature of correctional work with prisoners, the specific features of the professional activity of social and psychological workers who study the mental processes of prisoners, as well as by the features of approaches to educational influence on them and tools for correction and resocialisation of prisoners.

The study indicated that the administrative activities of psychological services in penitentiary institutions are aimed at providing psychological support to staff and prisoners. Thus, administrative activities are designed to prevent complications in the work of employees and difficulties in serving sentences by prisoners. Specifically, the work of a correctional psychologist should help prisoners adapt to new conditions, reduce recidivism, ensure the objective safety of staff, increase psychological stability, and reduce the risk of burnout among staff. Another key aspect of the administrative work of the psychological service in penitentiary institutions is to change the mindset of the prisoner and transform their behavioural patterns. Improvement of the administrative activities of psychological services should take place in the context of staff development, individualisation of rehabilitation programmes for prisoners, and the development of a clear plan for cooperation between the service and other departments of the penitentiary system.

Furthermore, it was found that the psychological service plays a key role in ensuring that the rights of prisoners in penal institutions are respected. Psychologists facilitate the adaptation of prisoners to the conditions of detention, help them overcome psychological difficulties and provide access to the necessary rehabilitation programmes. Therewith, as of 2024, there are certain problems in the field of ensuring the rights of convicts, such as overcrowding in penitentiary institutions, lack of resources for psychological support and rehabilitation, as well as cases of ill-treatment of prisoners. Improving the efficiency of the psychological service, expanding its powers, and strengthening cooperation with other structures of the penitentiary system are necessary to address these problems and fully exercise the rights of prisoners.

The investigation of international practices on the research problem contributed to the development of a model for the improvement of the administrative activities of psychological services in correctional institutions, specifically, to ensure their effective functioning and implementation of their obligations to reform convicts and reduce recidivism in the country. However, in the context of investigating the problem of administrative activity of the psychological service, the study of programmes for the rehabilitation of convicts stays relevant. This creates the prospect of further research related to the analysis of individual programmes of psychological work with prisoners and the evaluation of their effectiveness after therapeutic intervention.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors of this study declare no conflict of interest.

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Особливості адміністративної діяльності психологічної служби установ виконання покарань в контексті забезпечення прав засуджених

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Анотація

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена пошуком ефективних шляхів впливу на процес оптимізації адміністративної діяльності психологічних служб пенітенціарної системи у зв'язку з триваючою станом на 2024 рік реформою пенітенціарної системи України. Це обумовило мету науково-дослідної роботи, яка полягала у визначенні сучасних проблем функціонування психологічної служби в системі організації здійснення покарань та виявлення підходів щодо їх трансформації відповідно до провідних світових практик, метою яких є забезпечення гуманного ставлення до засуджених та забезпечення їх прав. Теоретико-методологічною основою даної наукової статті постало використання якісних методів структурно-функціонального аналізу проблеми діяльності служб психологічної допомоги в закладах виконання покарань та аналітичного дослідження професійної компетентності психолога в роботі із засудженими. Результати дослідження відображують проблему управління та адміністрування психологічних служб кримінально-виконавчої системи. У статті були висвітлені питання специфіки професійної діяльності персоналу виправних закладів, підходи й шляхи покращення адміністративно-правових методів роботи психологічної служби та форми реалізації компетенцій персоналу в професійній діяльності. Зокрема одержані результати розкривають питання формування фахової компетентності практичних психологів виправних закладів, їх обов'язків в роботі із засудженими та проблем, які пов'язані з психологічною підтримкою персоналу щодо професійного вигорання співробітників та їх суб'єктивної безпеки. Отримані дані розкривають особливості ресоціалізації засуджених та проблеми їх реабілітації в установах виконання покарань. Окрім цього в науково-дослідній роботі представлена модель процесу вдосконалення адміністративної діяльності психологічних відділів пенітенціарної системи. Отримані під час дослідження результати можуть бути використаними психологами виправних закладів та керівництвом таких установ для вдосконалення роботи психологічних служб, розробки програм підготовки фахівців

Ключові слова: пенітенціарна система; ресоціалізація; органи виконавчої влади; законодавчі розпорядження; професійна компетентність