

Optimisation of Training of Prison Staff in Ukraine According to the International Standards

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Abstract

The aim of the work is to optimise the training of prison staff in Ukraine according to international standards. The aim was achieved through the use of analysis, comparison, consistency coefficient, coefficient of efficiency, Spearman coefficient. The authors found that orientation to the system of training prison staff in Sweden can be used to transform the Ukrainian training system (0.93). This contributed to the development of learning mechanisms that included a combination of organisational, social, and psychological principles; ensured the relationship between theoretical and practical training. The development of practical skills and digital competence was also taken into account. It was revealed that the respondents achieved professional competence (7.2) and acquired skills in learning theoretical material (6.8) while solving situational problems. Solving real situations primarily affected the development of professional competence (7.3) and psychological skills (7.0). The practical significance of the work is transforming the prison staff training system based on innovative approaches.

Keywords: humanisation of punishment, ethical behaviour, social work, psychological immunity, situational tasks, artificial intelligence.

Introduction

The work of the prison staff is aimed at executing criminal punishments and interacting with public (state) institutions, which ensures the achievement of goals limited by legislative requirements. Therefore, the penitentiary system needs modernisation, considering the state's interests (Svyrydenko, 2020). One of the

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categories of distribution of the prison staff is managerial and administrative prison staff. The activities of the management staff are aimed at managing the institution and ensuring indirect communication with an educational purpose. Administrative prison staff ensure direct execution of sentences (Beaudry et al., 2021). During the execution of punishments, it is necessary to ensure that the criminal law and the legitimate interests of the convicts are taken into account. One of the options for implementing such an approach as a result of training is taking into account the experience of other countries, focusing on international standards. Therefore, optimising the training of prison staff is an urgent issue that requires a comprehensive approach.

The educational process for training prison staff should be based on the processes of integrity and constructiveness, thereby ensuring the interaction of social, legal, and democratic aspects (Becker-Pestka, 2022). Orientation in the educational process should be aimed at developing theoretical and practical knowledge. They relate not only to the direct execution of criminal proceedings but also study the conditions of detention of convicts, the standards of reconstruction of detention centres and compliance with sanitary conditions (Mazurek, 2021). Following international standards, considerable attention is paid to protecting the rights of convicts, which contributes to developing the penitentiary system at a higher level (Prots, 2020). It is also possible to ensure joint internships, which, to a greater extent, are aimed at developing practical skills (Lazorko et al., 2020). At the same time, it is necessary to focus on the methods of working with convicts and other persons in custody (Khotamov, 2022). It is also necessary to ensure an understanding of the principles of humanisation, which implies objectivity during the execution of decisions in criminal cases.

Setting objectives

A detailed study of the theoretical material identified gaps in the specific mechanisms for implementing international mechanisms for training prison staff. Therefore, the aim of the article is to provide approaches to optimise the training of prison staff in Ukraine according to international standards.

The aim involved the fulfilment of the following research objectives:

- Determine the features of the international penitentiary system to understand the approaches that must be taken into account in the training process;
- Develop mechanisms for training prison staff, which will be oriented to international approaches;

- Determine the effectiveness of penitentiary workers' knowledge acquired during training, focusing on developing professional competence, theoretical material knowledge, and psychological skills development.

Literature review

The training of prison staff in Poland, based on the principles of United Kingdom, relied on the principles of ecological validity. The training was intended to ensure a targeted impact on the development of practical skills; conducting a permanent audit of acquired skills; providing constant consultations. Such training was aimed at improving communication mechanisms, reflective development, and ensuring joint work. Emphasis was also placed on expanding decision-making capabilities in relevant situations (Perry et al., 2023). The training of prison staff in the Czech Republic is based on philosophical and pedagogical theories, which provide for the study of the theoretical part and initial practical training. Attention is paid to systematic initial training, use of experience from other countries (such as France and Latvia) and provision of final exams. This ensured the development of the professional potential of future employees of the penitentiary service (Jůzl & Vlach, 2022).

The activities of the prison staff may be associated with special psycho-traumatic aspects that must be taken into account in the training process. During training, developing a stable psychological state to perform professional tasks is necessary. At the initial stage of admission to an educational institution, it is necessary to develop psychological readiness in the initial training process. Implementation is possible due to focusing on the employees' support of the criminal enforcement system, which will contribute to developing important qualities as the basis of psychohygienic training (Malinowski, 2021).

The training of prison staff should be based on the information exchange, which allows for the taking into account of the experiences of other countries. Emphasis must be placed on human rights, taking into account international standards. Compliance with the criminal enforcement policy must be ensured, the peculiarities of communication with prisoners must be considered during training (Dünkel et al., 2022). A flexible approach is required for the development of professional skills of prison staff. This should involve strict discipline and regulation of interactions with prisoners. It is necessary to provide regimes for ensuring positive communication with prisoners (Polaschek, 2023). The professional development of prison staff should focus on prisoners and their needs. It is also worth providing psychological training, which will reduce the pressure on officers that can be caused by stress, physical and mental health

deterioration. The training process should be based on the provision of emotional support, planned learning models that promote moral spirit (Forsyth et al., 2022).

The analysis of academic articles revealed the widespread study of approaches to ensuring the psychological development of prison staff in the training process. Research gaps are related to providing a comprehensive approach to the development of professional skills that have a high effectiveness.

Methods

Research design

The first stage of the research involved determining the peculiarities of the optimisation of the prison staff in Ukraine by identifying the peculiarities of the penitentiary system in other countries. The focus was on existing regulatory legal acts (Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, 2024; National Corrections Academy, 2024; European Court of Human Rights, 1950; Legifrance, 2022; LOVDATA, 2021; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2017) and analysis of related academic articles (Becker-Pestka, 2017; Proca, 2021). The second stage of the research was related to determining the peculiarities of training prison staff in other countries, focusing on the expanded geography. The third stage of the study involved the development of mechanisms for training prison staff, focusing on specific features in other countries. The fourth stage of the study was aimed at determining the effectiveness of training for future employees of the penitentiary service.

Sampling

The study involved 150 future employees of the penitentiary service who were studying in their third and fourth year. The respondents studied at the Academy of the State Penitentiary Service. The choice of respondents was determined by the need to involve participants who understood the training approaches of prison staff. Senior students had already formed knowledge that could influence achieving correct results. A test was first conducted to determine the respondents' knowledge level so they could be included in the study. This required understanding the basic terminology, the legal system, and the free use of the acquired knowledge.

Methods

General theoretical methods of analysis and comparison were used to determine the features of international standards of the functioning of the penitentiary system. The research involved determining the most pronounced features characteristic of more than 45% of the analysed materials. Differences with the Ukrainian penitentiary system were also taken into account.

Determining the peculiarities of the use of approaches to training prison staff in different countries was aimed at ensuring the possibility of their use in Ukraine. Emphasis was placed on the possibility of applying the peculiarities of training in a separate country and for their adaptation to the developed author's mechanisms. The most favourable training approaches were determined through consistency coefficient calculations (Prots, 2020).

$$W = \frac{12 \times S}{m^2(n^3 - n)}, (1)$$

m – an indicator that reflects the possibility of adapting the experience of a particular country in Ukraine;

S – the sum of squared deviations, which include the significance of the experience of all countries (depends on conditional estimates);

n – the number of parameters used in the calculations.

The general theoretical method of comparison was used to develop the mechanisms for professional training of prison staff within the scope of the study. The study of the features of different materials contributed to the development of the most favourable mechanisms that can be introduced into the education system. The approved university programmes delivered the training programme, but the author's approaches to its implementation were used. The training was delivered for 4 months.

It was also planned to determine the effectiveness of the knowledge obtained in the process of training by future employees of the penitentiary service. The effectiveness was divided into the definition of professional competence, the level of knowledge of theoretical material, and the development of psychological skills. The distribution of effectiveness aspects was established due to orientation to the significant features of training in other countries. The calculations were carried out using the coefficient of efficiency developed by the authors of the article.

$$r_k = \frac{p_t + c_e + x_p}{h_{max}} \quad (2)$$

p_t – the level of practical application of theoretical knowledge by the respondents;

c_e – the level of ensuring reliable communication during the educational process;

x_p – an approach to completing the assignments depending on the level of complexity;

h_{max} – the largest maximum score that was possible to achieve during training.

Data analysis

The analysis of the results involved using statistical calculations of the Spearman coefficient (Curtis-Ham et al., 2023) for the correct confirmation of the obtained data. Statistical calculations are more important for the analysis, as they exclude possible errors in the results. The ratio of the obtained data is possible if the calculated Spearman coefficient does not exceed 1.

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6\sum_i d^2}{N(N^2-1)}, \quad (3)$$

N – a quantitative indicator that shows the interaction of numerical results;

d – a systematised tabular value.

Ethical criteria

Ethical criteria complied with The Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology (2016). By ethical norms, the research was conducted and also complied with internal requirements in educational institutions. It was also ensured that all respondents met equal requirements, which precluded obtaining incorrect results.

Results

The functioning of the penitentiary system in accordance with international standards is characterised by diversity. Therefore, the authors determined the most pronounced features of the international penitentiary service system to provide the appropriate training process (Figure 1).

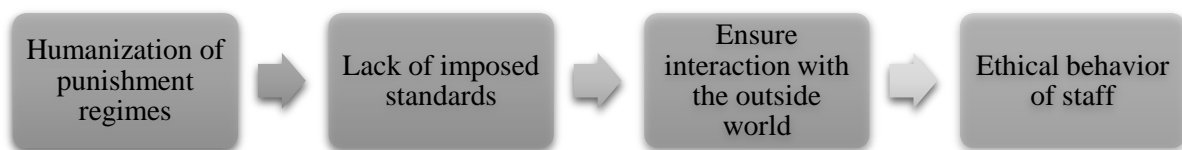


Figure 1. Characteristic parameters of the penitentiary service according to the international criteria

The principles of humanisation are among the most widespread in European rules and provide for the possibility of the prisoner's return to society. Humanisation of punishment regimes excludes discrimination and harsh treatment but provides for proper medical and social security. Ethical standards provide for

personal integrity and non-discrimination. Following international norms, it is also important not to impose certain standards. This implies the absence of orientation towards model norms but the creation of humane conditions during detention. Humane conditions also include proper treatment of convicts, which ensures respect for human dignity based on international legal standards. The process consists of providing mechanisms of social re-education. An important aspect of the penitentiary system regarding the treatment of prisoners is ensuring interaction with the outside world. This parameter is aimed at providing the possibility of returning prisoners to a normal life. This process is practically implemented through communication with families and other persons, representatives of external organisations. It is also necessary to allow visits, which should be built on the most natural interaction. The system provides for receiving information from newspapers, periodicals, television, etc. The staff must exclude violations of human rights and promote the observance of law and order. This can be implemented by focusing on the principles of humanity, honesty, and discipline. They should also provide educational work, prevent possible offences.

The work determined the peculiarities of penitentiary staff training in different countries. The greatest importance for the possibility of their use in transforming the penitentiary staff training system in Ukraine was represented by the calculations of the consistency coefficient (Figure 2).

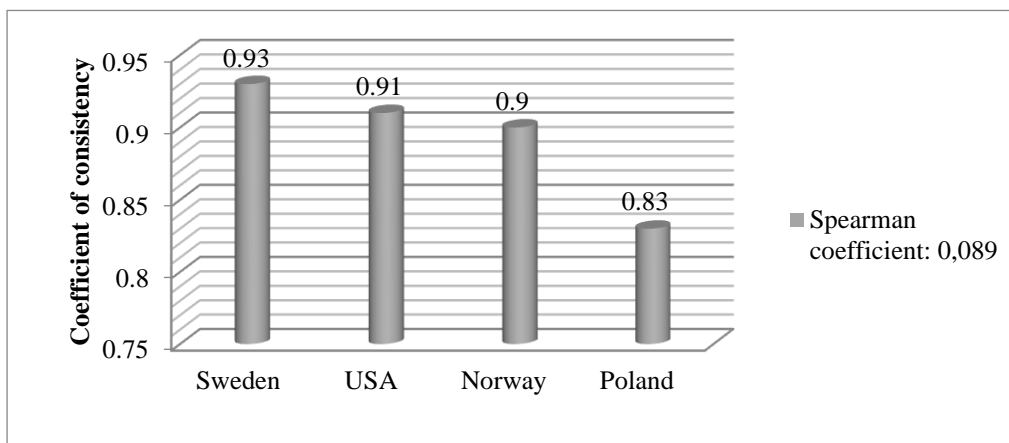


Figure 2. The influence of the experience of different countries on the possibility of developing the training of prison staff in Ukraine

Swedish legislation on the penitentiary system is also characterised by the use of principles of humanity. A characteristic feature of training prison staff, who will execute criminal punishments without deprivation of liberty, is the acquisition of social education. The learning process involves the study of psychology, social

pedagogy, jurisprudence, state management, etc. Theoretical training is inseparable from practical training. Practical skills can be acquired during interviews and social work with clients who are prone to aggression. The learning process is structured so that students acquire practical knowledge independently, excluding the provision of ready-made materials in practice.

The prison staff training system in the USA was formed over a long historical period. The training system is characterised by multifunctionality, which is connected with the variety of correctional institutions. The training process provides for the study of penitentiary pedagogy, psychology, communication development, and ethnic peculiarities of states. Staff training is carried out based on the order of state bodies, primarily the US Department of Justice. Basic skills are acquired as a result of studying information directly in the institution of punishment execution. The emphasis of the training process is on mentoring. Learning at least two languages at the A1 level is also necessary, which helps establish verbal communication with convicts. The acquired knowledge is narrowly oriented, aimed at work in a particular state.

Norway's experience also differs from the Ukrainian system of training prison staff. In Norway, admission to the Penitentiary Academy is provided only due to having a minimum work experience of 1 year. This approach is made to ensure the availability of social experience. During training, attention is paid to the development of tolerance and empathy. Practical classes also take place on the territory of a certain correctional institution, which is aimed at the need to ensure independent work. Seminar classes are also provided, which are aimed at discussing theoretical material, usually in groups. Emphasis in training is placed on the possibility of developing trusting relations with convicts, which will contribute to their correction. The final control of knowledge involves the completion of assignments related to interaction with a separate group of persons who need correction. The Norwegian training system places great emphasis on humanity, which excludes the use of force on convicts.

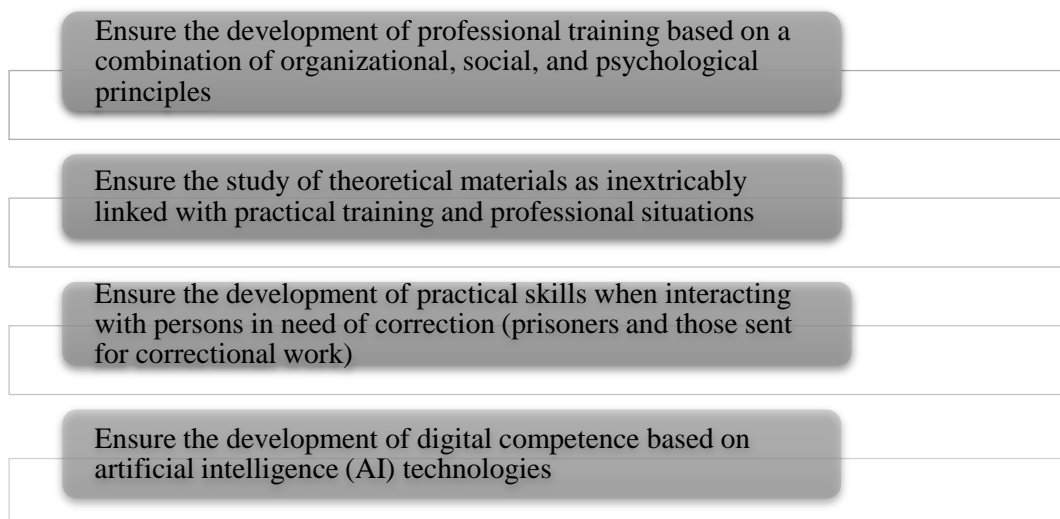
During the training of penitentiary service workers in Poland, it is necessary to provide general and professional training, considering the high moral level of upbringing. The training process involves the creation of specialised programmes for working with convicts (adaptation to the social environment, provide for cultural and social work). The mechanisms for resolving conflicts, preventing negative situations, and solving existing problems of prisoners are explained during training. The training in Poland can be characterised as resocialisation pedagogy, which is aimed at consciously restoring the social status of the convicts. The training includes studying theoretical information and taking

practical classes directly in penal institutions. The control exam includes an oral, written, and practical part.

Based on the data established during the research, the authors developed their own mechanisms for training prison staff. The mechanisms were developed based on international criteria (Figure 3).

Following international norms, the professional training was developed on the basis of a combination of organisational, social, and psychological principles. These mechanisms are aimed at ensuring humane treatment of persons who will be under the control of prison staff. Training mechanisms were aimed at providing information to future specialists about work specifics to ensure conflict-free communication. During the training, it was planned to ensure that future employees of the penitentiary service understand the peculiarities of different types of criminals, psychological methods of communicating with them. The training provided for the use of traditional and innovative approaches. Traditional approaches involved a theoretical study of various aspects of the humane treatment of prisoners. Innovative approaches involved the creation of individual situations, which contributed to a practical understanding of the principles of the treatment of prisoners. This training mechanism was also intended to form methods of resistance to psychological pressure, various types of manipulations on the part of criminals. During the training period, it was planned to ensure the formation of psychological immunity of prison staff during communication with criminals, while preserving the principles of humanity.

Figure 3. Penitentiary staff training mechanisms based on international experience



The study of theoretical material in the educational process involved an inseparable relationship with practical training and professional situations. The interaction of future prison staff in groups was ensured during the training for the purpose of discussing theoretical material and the exchange of experience. The mentoring principles were used to learn the theoretical material, which enabled discussion and understanding of the material. The theoretical material was related to the solution of pedagogical, psychological, social and educational issues, which meets international standards. Theoretical materials also provided studying the peculiarities of correctional techniques, peculiarities of self-defence and fire training, legal norms of legislation. Theoretical knowledge was aimed at ensuring professionalisation.

Special attention was paid to developing practical skills when interacting with persons needing correction (prisoners and those in correctional facilities). Developing practical skills involves training during interaction with individuals or in correctional institutions. Dialogues with persons who have committed certain offences (working with alcoholics, homeless people, etc.) were provided during training. Further training was aimed at developing practical skills in correctional institutions, solving problem situations. The training was intended to provide an understanding of techniques for moving objects of aggression, solving problems of individuals, and motivating them to socialise. This approach was aimed at accumulating one's own experience, as well as determining high and low levels of knowledge. The approach allows for the building of professional skills for future penitentiary service employees, considering European standards, personal skills, and abilities.

The AI-cased development of digital competence expands the possibilities of professional competence and the educational environment. It was planned to use AI-based mechanisms during the training to get acquainted with the convicts' data, possible risks, and needs. This contributes to developing an effective approach to ensuring the socialisation process. Different simulation training programmes were considered during the training to create emergency response plans. For example, Autodesk 3ds Max graphic editors were used. This also involved taking into account additional risks. The training provided for conducting online seminars and discussions remotely was focused on the solution of situational problems. The peculiarities of visual inertial odometry technologies were also studied, which involved tracking a person's geolocation (for example, a person under house arrest). Studying the basics of electronic monitoring helps to understand the principles of tracking the convict's location and movements. This approach is project-oriented, providing an opportunity to acquire current knowledge. For example, the Justiphone programme, which enables the

identification of language signs, may be used. This helps to understand the psychological state of another person by using spectroanalyzers.

The general effectiveness of future penitentiary service employees was also evaluated during the research. The results were obtained through developing practical skills from solving situational problems and real situations (Table 1).

Table 1

Performance of future penitentiary service employees during training

Evaluation parameter	Professional competence	Knowledge of theoretical material	Development of psychological skills	Spearman coefficient
Solving situational problems	7.2	6.8	6.5	0.074
Solving real situations	7.3	6.4	7.0	0.079

The established effectiveness showed that future penitentiary service employees were able to achieve high results during training. Professional competence was achieved at an equally high level during real interaction with criminals and when solving situational problems. A high level of professional competence is associated with the combination of theoretical and practical knowledge and the direct consolidation of theoretical knowledge in practice. During the solution of situational problems, future prison staff could use the acquired theoretical knowledge more freely. This is due to the calm atmosphere and interaction with another group of future prison staff, who complemented each other's knowledge. The psychological skills were developed at a high level. However, deeper knowledge was obtained by solving real situations in correctional institutions.

Discussion

The process of training prison staff should be based on an understanding of the connections between particular offences. This makes it possible to provide an understanding of theories of crime, their models, which contributes to the study of the spatial behaviour of criminals. This approach enables assessing possible risks and ensure their proper preparation (Curtis-Ham et al., 2023). The training of prison staff must be based on maintaining a balance between the care and well-being of prisoners while limiting their freedoms. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the elimination of tensions while maintaining well-being in the prison environment and developing professionalisation. The professional skills of prison staff can be developed through orientation to different practices (Fletcher et al.,

2021). The issues of maintaining a balance between interaction and limiting the rights of convicts are studied in the presented works. In our study, the peculiarities of the penitentiary system were determined, which influenced the development of training mechanisms.

The growing role of training specialised staff is connected with the orientation towards international criteria and is aimed at ensuring the level of public safety. Based on the experience of the USA, the education system in Ukraine can be aimed at providing an innovative educational environment and updating educational programmes. Professional orientation should consider the specific skills required to perform professional duties. Implementing this approach is possible through internships, which will allow to develop professional skills (Anishchenko, 2023). The activities of the prison staff should be aimed at risk management, which ensures the reintegration of prisoners. Ensuring an effective process is possible due to the provision of rehabilitation conditions in the prison and the provision of semi-open conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to consider all possible details in the training process, which will contribute to the prison staff's professional performance of the duties (Symkovych, 2022). Penitentiary staff must recognise the radicalisation of prisoners, which must be taken into account in the training process. To eliminate gaps in knowledge and skills, it is necessary to focus on learning approaches in different countries, which will allow identifying possible problems. The training should involve the establishment of possible risks, which will be aimed at strengthening social stability (Vejvodová & Kolář, 2020). The presented works consider the possible risks of the prison staff. Our article emphasises the possibility of developing practical skills, which is ensured by solving situational problems and real situations.

The research of the specifics of the studies established the advantages of providing international mechanisms for the training of prison staff. Emphasis is placed on the need to apply humanisation approaches, but there are no specific mechanisms in the research. In our article, emphasis was also placed on the international standards of training of penitentiary staff, but at the same time, our training mechanisms were developed. In addition, the experiences of Sweden, the USA, Norway, and Poland were studied, considering their significance for the Ukrainian training system.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are related to determining the influence of international approaches to the training of penitentiary service employees because of the influence of different countries. But the impact of each country on the possibility of applying its system in Ukraine was not determined. Implementing

such an approach within the scope of this research was not possible, as it requires additional tools. Despite this, specific training mechanisms were developed at work, which are based on international standards.

Conclusion

The authors achieved the aim set during the research, as the features of the international system of prison staff training were analysed. The research found similar features in the international penitentiary service system. The authors found that the example of Sweden (0.93) can have the greatest impact on changing the penitentiary staff training system in Ukraine. During training, an important component is the interaction of theoretical and practical training, which is the development of independence while acquiring practical knowledge.

The authors developed mechanisms for training prison staff based on international criteria. It was planned to ensure the interaction of organisational, social, and psychological principles during training, considering all the features of future professional activity. The theoretical materials were studied during the training, which are connected with practical training involving interaction in groups. The practical skills were acquired through interaction with individuals who needed correction, which developed students' independence. The development of digital competence was aimed at solving situational problems. Completing training following the developed mechanisms required the respondents to achieve high results when solving situational problems and real situations.

Research prospects may be the study of the possibility of including individual country training approaches to determine their practical effectiveness.

Recommendations

The possibility of improving the processes of training penitentiary staff in Ukraine can be realized with the help of the following recommendations:

- ensure orientation to international approaches to the training of penitentiary workers, taking into account innovative training mechanisms;
- to reorganize the educational process, focusing on compliance with international legislation;
- to focus on ethical principles and principles of humanity during the training of penitentiary staff;
- ensure the search for new educational mechanisms that will contribute to the development of the interest of future employees of the penitentiary system in the perception and assimilation of educational material;
- ensure the inseparability of theoretical and practical training.

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