

Personnel Policy of Social Service Organizations

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Abstract: The article aims at discovering the latest trends, principles, and methods of implementing the personnel policies of social service organizations. The article states the reasons for the possibility to improve the personnel policies of social service organizations that are taken as an example based on the studies of the principles and methods of implementing such policies. Monitoring revealed the dynamics changes of directions, principles and methods of personnel policy. The positive and negative aspects of personnel policy are determined. The priority directions of personnel policy are defined; the methods and principles of implementing personnel policy are specified. Personnel selection, evaluation and certification, and creating a favorable work climate remain the focal points of personnel policy; the administrative methods are named as the most effective. The priority principle of personnel policy is the principle of improving professional skills. Key findings of the article can be used in scientific and pedagogical activities for managerial decision-making.

1. Introduction

The change in the social and economic position of Russia that took place at the turn of the century, as well as the enhancement of its integration into the global space, requires a significant improvement in the quality of the country's personnel potential. New business conditions boosted the development of management culture making it possible to use it as a factor in improving competitiveness, production efficiency, and management of the social sphere.

The relevance of studying the problem of personnel policies of social service organizations is preconditioned by the following reasons:

1. First, the increasing number of social service organizations in Russia and, as a result, the increased need to identify existing problems and to apply in practice the modern forms and methods of personnel management in social service organizations;

2. Second, the increased number of social programs and social services implemented by social service organizations that leads to increasing the load on personnel who provide social services to the population increases, and the need for highly qualified specialists in social work.

Personnel policy is one of the leading activities of any organization. Personnel policy covers the development of organizational principles of working with people, the formation and use of human resources, and ensuring the effective development of human resources. Personnel is the most valuable and important part of the productive forces of society. The effectiveness of any organization depends on the qualifications of staff, their training, and business skills.

2. Materials

Personnel policy is the main direction of working with staff. Currently, the concept of “personnel policy” is interpreted in a rather broad sense. According to Davies [1], for managers to gain maximum control over subordinates’ work, it is necessary to concentrate important decision making in their hands.

Zhuravlev, Kartashev and Odegov [2, 3] define personnel policy as a strategy. Kibanov [4] interprets the concept of “personnel policy” with an emphasis on the methodological side: “Personnel policy is a system of knowledge, views, principles, methods, and practical measures of state bodies and organizations of the main management level aimed at setting goals, tasks, forms, and methods of personnel management in all areas of the human activity”. This definition integrates two aspects of personnel management: theoretical and practical.

Sheppard [5] defines management as “a set of beliefs and practices at the core of which is the assumption that better management will provide an effective solvent to a wide range of economic and social ills”.

Littler [6] considers personnel policy within the framework of the activity approach. In his opinion, the personnel policy of an organization is a complex of substantive and organizational measures that are aimed at the more efficient use of the abilities and professional skills of each individual employee in implementing the final goals of an organization, company, or enterprise. The ethos of managerialism is historically an attempt to justify the authority of one group (managers) over another group (workers).

Shkaratan [7] defines the list of qualities that an employee needs to implement effective management solutions:

- readiness for continuous innovation;
- preparedness for processing and evaluating information;
- ability to navigate in extreme situations, make non-standard decisions, analyze emerging problems;
- readiness to combine personal and group interests, establish contacts within the group;
- initiative, business acumen;
- inclusion in the system of continuing education;
- professional, qualification, territorial mobility.

Upon analyzing a number of definitions proposed by researchers in the framework of various scientific approaches [8, 9, 10, 11] the authors conclude that personnel policy can be defined as work with personnel that includes a system of principles, directions, forms, and methods. Personnel policy is a focused activity to create a workforce that would best contribute to combining the goals and priorities of the organization and its employees, which is especially important for social service organizations in the context of new legislation and standardization of professional activity.

3. Methods and Procedure of the Research

The research was conducted at the premises of the following three organizations – the Municipal Budgetary Institution “Social Rehabilitation Center for Minors”, the State Budgetary Institution of

the Kemerovo Region “The Regional Social Services Center – the Regional Veterans’ House”, and the Municipal Budgetary Institution “The Rehabilitation Center for Children and Teenagers with Disabilities”.

A questionnaire survey of 190 respondents, employees of the above-mentioned organizations was used as a research method.

To study the areas, principles, and methods of personnel policy, a questionnaire was developed on the basis of the methodology and research by Bashmakov [12] that allowed revealing the dynamics of their changes [13]. The questionnaire consists of three blocks: “Areas of personnel policy”, “Principles of personnel policy”, and “Methods of personnel policy”. Respondents were asked to evaluate the relevance of the proposed areas, principles, and methods of personnel policy on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is “not at all relevant” and 10 is “very important”.

The study was conducted in several stages.

At the first stage of the study, the scientific literature was studied; the scientific research apparatus was formulated, and the tools were developed.

At the second stage of the study, direct data collection on the research topic was carried out: a questionnaire was organized and conducted in order to identify the most and the least relevant areas, principles, and methods of personnel policy of social service organizations.

The final stage of the study included processing, analyzing, and summarizing the results obtained during the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Changes, both in the economic sphere and at the legislative level, could not but affect the personnel policy of social service organizations. Based on the results of the monitoring conducted by Bashmakov, as well as on the results of the conducted study, the dynamics of changes in the relevance of areas of personnel policy was identified.

In 1990 the most relevant areas of personnel policy (over 8 points) were professional recruitment and placement; labor incentives; personnel development; the creation of favorable working conditions; and the awareness of the staff members. In 2003, the level of relevance of these areas remains as high, while the importance of such areas as reducing staff turnover and adaptation of new employees increases. In 2009, the same areas remain the most relevant, but the relevance of the following areas is significantly reduced – the creation of favorable working conditions (from 8.8 to 6.3) and reducing staff turnover (from 8.8 to 4.6). In 2017, the priority areas of personnel policy have not changed. Yet the problem of personnel development becomes more popular (9 points). In 2017, a new area was added – “Evaluating the results of the personnel activity. Performance review” – (it was not included in the previous studies). This area is included in the group of personnel policy areas with the highest points in 2017, and has 9 points. It is believed that the relevance of these two areas is explained by the fact that the employees themselves are interested in constantly improving their professional level, developing new skills and becoming professionals in their field.

In 1990 and 2003, labor incentives had the highest number of points (9.3) according to the results of all studies. For quite a long time, staff dissatisfaction with wages was a significant problem. The results of the 2017 study show that at present the problem of stimulating the work of social work professionals does not come to the fore (8.2 points compared to 9.3), but it still remains as relevant. In addition, compared with previous years, there is a decrease in the relevance of labor motivation (up to 7.5 points). The authors believe that this trend is associated with a salary increase, as well as the availability of additional incentive payments and methods of moral encouragement of social work professionals and social workers.

The relevance of such personnel policy area as the adaptation of new employees has increased (from 6.5 in 1990 to 7.7 in 2017). Perhaps this is due to the fact that economic, legal, organizational and technological innovations complicate the process of employees' adaptation, which is confirmed by the increasing importance of the social aspects of implementing new technologies. Improving the work on new employees' adaptation is especially necessary for the State Budgetary Institution of the Kemerovo Region "The Regional Social Services Center – the Regional Veterans' House", since the results of the questionnaire showed that the length of employment of half of the respondents amounts to 1 year or less (46 %), the length of employment of 27% of employees amounts to 1 to 5 years, and the remaining 27 % of employees have worked in the organization from 5 to 10 years. The presented data indicate a high staff turnover rate in the organization, and the employees themselves talk about the relevance of this problem.

Compared with the data obtained in 2009, the importance of such personnel policy area as creating favorable working conditions increases again (8.7 points compared to 6.7). The respondents understand working conditions as not only the sanitary and hygienic aspects of work organization or the organization of their workplace but also (to a greater extent) such factors as tension, labor intensity, nature of control, performance assessment.

The least relevant personnel policy areas in 2017 are development and succession (6.4); the release and employment of staff (5.7). These areas had relatively low scores on the results of the previous years' research. The authors believe that low policy scores can be associated with work experience in the organization: 56 % of those surveyed have a continuous length of employment with the organization – over 5 years and 20 % over 10 years.

As for the current principles of personnel policy of social services the most relevant principles of personnel policy are as follows: the principle of advanced training; the principle of compliance with the labor laws; the principle of professional competence of staff; the principle of compliance of professional knowledge and skills with the capabilities of an employee; and the principle of labor discipline.

The priority of the principles related to professional activity can be logically explained by the fact that social services personnel are focused on improving their professional skills and abilities, which positively affects the performance of organizations.

The principles of compliance with labor legislation and labor discipline also have a fairly high position. The authors believe that this can be explained by the fact that the observance of these principles by the management allows employees to feel protected from unreasonable sanctions and to carry out professional activities at the proper level. In turn, the management of the organization can be confident that by observing these principles, employees will fulfill their duties in good faith.

The lowest scores were given to the principle of selecting personnel on a competitive basis and the principle of staff rotation. Some respondents noted that the system of personnel promotion is poorly developed in their institutions. An employee does not see any further prospects for career growth and development in the workplace, which may adversely affect the results of his or her work.

Among the most relevant methods of personnel policy the administrative methods received the highest scores. The respondents consider administrative methods (37.5%) that are implemented in setting standards for decision-making and monitoring their implementation to be the most effective. The economic methods are second (29.2%). The social and psychological methods are the third (20.8%) – these are the methods of influencing the consciousness and behavior of staff aimed at creating a business environment and creative attitude to work. The moral and ethical methods are the last (12.5%). None of the respondents mentioned legal methods, which shows the limited and incomplete use of the entire arsenal of methods of influencing personnel. This greatly reduces the effectiveness of management. Traditional groups of methods occupy the first places. This has both positive and negative effects: the positive being that the result of applying these methods is known

and guaranteed, and the negative – that managers do not search for new ways to influence personnel that can be more efficient and less costly from a material point of view. Such methods include social and psychological methods, which should play an important role in personnel policy as they contribute to the identification and elimination of problems existing in a team and create a favorable work climate.

In general, the scores for all the presented groups of methods do not vary greatly, which allows making a conclusion that the personnel policy of social service organizations is implemented using a variety of methods and does not focus on any specific methods. Responding to open questionnaire questions, the respondents highlighted the strengths and shortcomings of the organization's personnel policy. Thus, the majority of respondents noted the following among the most strong points of the personnel policy of the organization:

- selection of employees according to professional standards;
- professional recruitment;
- availability of highly qualified employees;
- advanced training;
- staff development, mentoring.

The main shortcomings noted by the respondents are the following:

- lack of personnel specialists;
- low level of material incentives;
- dissatisfaction with the management of the organization;
- adverse climate in the team.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the research results allows making the following conclusions.

1. The personnel policy of social service organizations is aimed at creating a stable workforce, regular and systematic updating and replenishment of the professional knowledge and skills of all categories of employees, continuous professional and qualification growth of personnel.

2. Currently, the most relevant areas of personnel policy are the aspects of professional selection and placement; evaluating the results of an employee's activity and performance review; and development of personnel. Such area of personnel policy as creating a favorable climate in the team is relevant as well as it requires the intensified use of the methods that contribute to creating a positive climate in the team. The lack of mutual understanding or a favorable, benevolent climate in the team affects not only the performance of a particular employee but may also affect the performance of the organization.

3. To improve the performance of new employees, it is important to develop and implement adaptive measures in practical activities. These activities will allow minimizing the stress of new employees associated with the change of place of work and contribute to the establishment of relationships with the team.

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