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# QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL SOCIAL SHELTERS SERVICES PROVIDED TO CHILDREN

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### *Abstract*

The relevance of the study is explained by a steady scientific and practical interest to the problem of assessing the quality of social services to the population, including psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations. There is no unified approach to or sufficiently developed methodology of determining the quality of these services in modern science. The article reveals the stages, content and results of the experiment on the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in social shelters and testing of the author's methodology for assessing their quality. The leading research method is a socio-pedagogical experiment which allows to identify the problems of socialization of children in social shelters, to implement an experimental rehabilitation program and to assess the quality of services provided to children, using the developed methodology. The research justifies the idea that the assessment should be based on monitoring the dynamics and quality of indicators of personal and social development of children. The results of the research are following: we identified children's main socio-pedagogical and psychological problems, justified the list and quality indicators of psychological and pedagogical services, developed a methodology for assessing the quality of these services provision to children in difficult life situations. The research materials may be useful for researchers in measuring and assessing the quality of social processes, in particular social services, as well as for specialists in children social protection.

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**Keywords:** Assessment of services quality, children in difficult life situations, methodology for assessing services quality, psychological and pedagogical services, social shelter.



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## 1. Introduction

The socialization of children in difficult life situations is currently considered as one of the most important tasks of the state policy in the field of education (Frost & Parton, 2009; Jordan, 2006; Zakirova, Gaysina, & Reykova, 2016). Getting of high-quality psychological and pedagogical services by children is one of the basic and indispensable conditions for their successful social rehabilitation and socialization, effective self-fulfillment in various types of social activities. The authors of the article consider psychological and pedagogical services as a result of the integrated approach to the system of professional activity and interaction of workers in social services, educational institutions and children in difficult life situations in order to meet individual needs and improve children's lives. Therefore, the study considers such components of psychological and pedagogical services as psychological, pedagogical, correctional ones, rehabilitation and adaptation.

In Russia, psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations are provided in specialized institutions for juveniles in need of social rehabilitation: in social rehabilitation centers for juveniles, social shelters for children, support centers for children without parental care. Social shelters for children and adolescents belong to the institutions of social services and provide emergency assistance to children in difficult life situations. They provide public services related to children's early social rehabilitation without which it is impossible to minimize the negative consequences of their stay in dysfunctional or socially dangerous families.

The main task in the field of assessing the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations is the creation of conditions for getting services by all children in this category taking into account their psychophysical and personal characteristics. A priority of this activity is the earliest possible identification of deviations in the social and personal development of children, the organization of correctional and rehabilitation work with children with social, pedagogical and psychological problems. Timely and qualitative provision of the necessary psychological and pedagogical support allows for the correction of children's main shortcomings. The services are provided by organizing a rehabilitation space that allows unsupervised children to get pedagogical, psychological and social support (Bocharova, 2004).

The assessment of services quality lies in identifying the indicators of services quality taking into account the reliability and/or accuracy of quantitative values. Assessing the quality and effectiveness of psychological and pedagogical services is a procedure of checking and correlating specific indicators with the highest cost savings using various tools for analysis and evaluation of social and pedagogical activities organized for children in difficult life situations. It helps not only to monitor the service quality, provide a basis for analysis and management decisions, but also to provide the feedback necessary for any stable system capable of development.

## 2. Problem Statement

Assessment of the quality of social services has not been an object of special theoretical research for a long time, however, its individual aspects were considered in the scientific literature (Albegova, Serova, & Shamatonova, 2015; Fazlyeva, 2014; Khusainova, Shilova, & Curteva, 2016; Romanychev, Strelnikova,

& Topchij, 2014). There have been developed two leading scientific schools of service marketing that deal with issues related to the service quality: the American school using the SERVQUAL methodology (Service Quality) and the Scandinavian (Nordic) school with its two-factor model of service quality.

Assessment of the quality of the services provision to the various categories of children in difficult life situations is one of the priority areas of modern state policy. In doing so, the service quality should be understood as a set of characteristics or indicators of the service quality which determine its ability to satisfy the identified or expected needs of the consumer. Identifying the service quality indicators taking into account the reliability and/or accuracy of quantitative values is an assessment of the services quality. However, the study showed that there is no universal formula for assessing psychological and pedagogical services for children, as well as an arrangement of separate methods in practice (Fazlyeva, 2014; Frost & Parton, 2009).

At the same time, the lack of clear understanding of what we evaluate leads to a vague activity strategy, as well as different interpretations of the results. The authors of the article believe that if the assessment of the service quality, in general, implies a one-time analysis, then the assessment of social services quality is aimed at assessing the process of providing services itself.

Thus, the relevance of the study is caused by the contradiction between the increasing demands of the state and society for the realization of the rights of children of various categories to get publicly available services of high quality as well as the insufficient development of methodological foundations for managing the quality of psychological and pedagogical services for children in difficult life situations. In this regard, there was raised a research problem to justify the development of scientific and methodological support for assessing the quality of psychological and pedagogical services for children in difficult life situations, for children in social shelters in particular.

### **3. Research Questions**

The stated problem raised the following research questions: what is the necessary and sufficient list of psychological and pedagogical services for children in a social shelter? What criteria and indicators should meet the methodology for assessing the services quality? What are the tools for analyzing and assessing the quality of psychological and pedagogical services for children?

Research hypothesis is the following: the methodology for assessing the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in a social shelter will be effective under the conditions below.

1. Individual rehabilitation programs are developed for each child.
2. The results of the development of children's personal qualities and social competencies are taken into account.
3. Minimum and average indicators of personal and social qualities building are used to determine the effectiveness of the social rehabilitation of children in a social shelter.

To achieve this goal and test the hypothesis, the following research tasks were identified:

- a) to determine the theoretical approaches to the analysis of assessing the quality of psychological and pedagogical services for children in difficult life situations;

b) to develop criteria and quality indicators to create a methodology for assessing provided psychological and pedagogical services;

c) to analyze the content of the activities of the specialists providing psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations;

d) to conduct experiment on the development and verification of the effectiveness of the methodology for assessing the quality of the psychological and pedagogical services provided to the children in shelters.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The research purpose is to develop, justify and experimentally test a methodology for assessing the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in social shelters.

Realization of the research purpose presupposed observance of the logic of scientific and pedagogical research, that is, identification of leading theoretical positions as a theoretical and methodological base of the research, initial diagnosis of the problem sampling (stating stage); development and implementation of the experimental research program (formative stage); re-diagnosing of the problem sample (evaluation-and-productivity stage).

#### **5. Research Methods**

To achieve the goal and solve the tasks, the following research methods were used: theoretical (analysis; synthesis; comparison; generalization); *interrogatory* (questionnaire; testing; expert assessment; interview); empirical (observation; documentation study; study of products of children's activities); pedagogical experiment; methods of mathematical processing of the findings.

The experimental study included the following three stages: stating, formative and evaluative-effective. Initially, in accordance with the purpose and hypothesis of the study, the list of psychological and pedagogical services provided to children in a social shelter and the quality indicators in the process of working with children were specified. We drew up a detailed table with the characteristics of psychological and pedagogical services for children including:

- type of a social service;
- a description of the social service and its volume;
- conditions for the social services provision;
- quality indicators and assessment of the results of the social services provision.

The novelty of the study is the development of quality indicators and methods for assessing the psychological and pedagogical services provided to children in difficult life situations.

The *stating* stage of the study included the initial diagnosis of indicators of personal and social development of children, the systematization of children's identified problems, the development of individual correction and rehabilitation programs, the selection of appropriate methods and forms of work. This stage consisted of the following research methods: observation, individual interview, testing, examination of documentation, etc. There were diagnostic examinations of the children carried out using Thomas Kilmann's Diagnostics of Personal Predisposition to Conflict Behavior, methodology for detecting

dependent behavior “RAFFT Test”, methods for monitoring children’s behavior in a shelter, etc. In addition, a methodology was developed for assessing quantitative indicators of children’s activity, as well as a method for assessing qualitative indicators of a child’s personal development consisting of express methods.

The results of the stating stage of the study made it possible to conclude that the level of quality indicators of the personal development of children in a social shelter is quite low. The initial diagnostics showed that these children have many personal development problems (low level of self-esteem and responsibility, anxiety, isolation, aggression, emotional depletion, weakness of will, hysteria). The children fall behind in mental, emotional and intellectual development. In the socio-pedagogical aspect they are pedagogically uncared and have no positive experience interacting with adults and peers (Waterhouse, 2000). They have ill-formed basic concepts, moral and cultural habits of behavior and communication.

The lowest indicators of children’s activity are performance (poorly formed motivation and independence in performing any activity), school performance (low level of knowledge, lack of learning motivation, learning skills), lack of success in previous life activities.

The personal records and individual life plans of the children in shelters who took part in the study were analyzed. These documents particularly reflected difficult life situations of the children when they lived in their biological families. The analysis showed that the main risk factor in most children’s life situations was the personal moral and social characteristics of their parents. It was concluded that most of the children entering the shelter are in a “vacuum” of care and protection. The children are in a state of socio-pedagogical neglect, have mental retardation and impaired physical development (Osion, 2016).

Based on the data obtained, it was assumed that in order to improve the process of children’s socio-pedagogical and psychological correction and rehabilitation it is necessary to more actively introduce a complex of psychological and pedagogical services into the correctional and rehabilitation process of the social shelter reflecting the general strategy and specific tasks of specialists. At the same time, the efforts of the researchers and specialists from three shelters were aimed at developing a methodology for assessing the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children. This methodology was supposed to help assess the quality of the state psychological and pedagogical services provided to children objectively.

Based on the data obtained, within the framework of the provision of a range of psychological and pedagogical services, there were developed individual personality-oriented programs of psychological correction and socio-pedagogical rehabilitation of children.

In accordance with these programs, a comprehensive correctional and rehabilitation work with children was carried out at the *formative* stage of the study. The implementation of the experimental program included the following forms of correctional and rehabilitation work: correction-and-development classes, games (didactic, story, imitating, computer), conversations, trainings, practical classes, walking, trips, observation, reading of books, watching movies and videos, communication with peers, classes in circles, sports sections, various competitions.

Specialists used various methods of educational impact such as methods of forming consciousness (persuasion, verbal explanation, example giving, requirement), methods of organizing activity (training,

exercise, assignment, creating a situation of success, playing, integration in developing activities), methods of behavior stimulation (encouragement, reprehension).

At this stage, all diagnostic procedures, individual and group exercises, forms and methods of correctional and rehabilitation work were reflected in individual rehabilitation programs for children. In addition, teachers and psychologists noted behavioral signs of personal changes in the children.

The *evaluation-and-productivity* stage included re-diagnostics of the children, analysis of the dynamics of changes in the development of their personal and social qualities, comparison and analysis of the data of the starting and final stages of the study, discussion of the results of the work, making final psychological and pedagogical conclusions, identification and assessment of the effectiveness and quality of the psychological and pedagogical services provided.

At the final stage of the study, the main attention was paid to implementation of the methodology developed by the authors for assessing the quality of the psychological and pedagogical services provided to the children in shelters. An integrated methodology included:

1. The methodology for monitoring the quantitative indicators of children's activities in a social shelter, which made it possible to identify individual and group problems.

2. The methodology for assessing the quality indicators of a child's personal development, which consists of express methods. Using a complex of express diagnostics, we were able to combine them into a single whole and present calculation formulas for various indicators, which makes this method valuable.

3. The methodology of expert assessment of psychological and pedagogical services provided to children in difficult life situations.

*1. Methodology for monitoring the quantitative indicators of children's activities in a social shelter.*

The purpose is to assess the level of children's social competencies.

Assessment of quantitative indicators of children's activity in a social shelter was carried out according to the following criteria:

- attendance (at a social shelter, school);
- activity success (school performance, positive changes in life in a social shelter);
- performance (the amount of time a child spends on individual work);
- interaction (with peers, social shelter staff, teachers, biological or adoptive parents, strangers, shelter group mates);
- discipline (the number of delays, violation of internal rules, administrative penalties).

Qualitative indicators of the children's activity obtained at the initial level:

1. Attendance – p1
2. Success – u1
3. Performance – r1
4. Interaction – o1
5. Discipline – d1

The average level of quality indicators was within 50%.

Qualitative indicators of the children's activity at the final stage of work amounted to:

1. Attendance – p2
2. Success – u2

3. Performance – r2

4. Interaction – o2

5. Discipline – d2

The results of the analysis were presented in the form of standard units:

0 points – no progress;

1 point – minimum progress;

2 points – average progress;

3 points – significant advance.

The social counselor, teachers and educators were suggested to evaluate the quantitative indicators of the activities of the children in the social shelter at the beginning and at the end of the academic year, 2017-2018. Quantitative indicators were assessed by attendance books, academic performance, success and achievement portfolios.

Processing the monitoring results, a total score are calculated for each child individually. Determining a quantitative indicator, the total score and percentage are calculated. Identifying children with a low and critical level of performance indicators, the teacher draws up an individual plan to work with the children on this problem. According to the results of evaluation at the end of the academic year, the goal and tasks of further socialization of the children for the next academic year are determined.

We calculated the average level of quality indicators using the following formula:

$$\Sigma = (p2+u2+r2+o2+d2):5 / (p1+u1+r1+o1+d1):5$$

*2. The methodology for assessing the quality indicators of a child's personal development, which consists of express methods.*

The purpose is to assess the level of development of children's personal qualities:

– level of general self-esteem;

– satisfaction with one's own activity and achievements;

– satisfaction with one's own ability to solve interpersonal problems;

– level of independence, self-confidence, responsibility;

– ability to control one's emotions.

Qualitative indicators are identified on the basis of the diagnosis of the child's personal development which are recorded in the child's individual social rehabilitation program. The following encoded components are presented in the methodology:

j1 – the sequence number of the methodology;

m – the methodology;

u – levels of development;

uv – high level of development;

us – average level of development;

un – low level of development;

b – points;

p – recipients of services;

$\Sigma$  – the total sum.

The average level of quality indicators was within 76%.

The value of this methodology is that using a group of express diagnostics, we were able to combine them into a single whole and present formulae for calculating various indicators.

$$\Sigma = (j_1 + j_2 + j_3 + j_4 + j_5) : 5$$

3. *The methodology of expert qualitative assessment of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations.*

The purpose is to assess the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations.

There were external experts (guardianship specialists, school teachers, educators, psychologists) involved in assessing the quality of psychological and pedagogical services provided to children in social shelters. The assessment was carried out by conducting an expert survey according to the non-material criterion (level of social competencies, intensity of prosocial personal qualities and degree of improvement in the psycho-emotional and physical condition of children in difficult life situations as a result of interaction with the service provider).

As a result of the analysis of the presented expert questionnaires, we found out that the range varies from 49 to 54 points out of a maximum 64. This indicator shows a rather high level of professional competence of shelter specialists and the quality of their services to the children. Nevertheless, experts had a number of difficulties in filling out the assessment sheets. This suggests the need for further adjustment of the quality attributes of a particular service and its points in the questionnaire.

The study sample was presented by 130 children and adolescents aged 7 to 17 years who are pupils of three social shelters in rural areas of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia. These shelters provide such public service as “Social services for children and adolescents in difficult life situations, in stationary conditions”. In these public institutions children aged 3 to 18 experiencing difficult life situations are held. The study also involved psychologists, social counselors, health workers, educators and other specialists in social shelters, as well as school teachers in a total of 36 people.

## 6. Findings

The study developed, justified and implemented a methodology for assessing the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations. It includes the results of a diagnostic study of the stating and control stages of the experiment.

The results of the study proved the effectiveness of the psychological and pedagogical services provided to children in difficult life situations. The information obtained allowed us to conclude that this type of service is an important tool in the social rehabilitation of children, as well as in assessing the quality of the provision of services, provided that the average indicator of children’s activity exceeds the norm by 1.5 times, and personal qualities – by 3.5 times (table 01).



**Table 01.** Results of the assessment of quantitative indicators of children’s activity in a social shelter (%) n=130

| Year     | Attendance | Success | Performance | Communication | Discipline |
|----------|------------|---------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| 2017     | 47.7       | 43.8    | 38.5        | 67.7          | 51.5       |
| 2018     | 84.6       | 73.1    | 54.6        | 94.6          | 73.1       |
| Dynamics | +36.9      | +29.3   | +16.1       | +26.9         | +21.6      |

According to the quantitative indicators of the studied children’s activity at the end of the experiment, the following results were obtained. The performance indicators of the children have positive dynamics: attendance + 36.9%; academic performance + 29.3%; performance +16.1%; interaction +26.9%; discipline +21.6%. Life in a social shelter has successfully developed children’s many positive qualities. The adult’s control, specialists’ work with parents improved such an indicator as student’s performance. The complex of classes allowed children to increase efficiency and perseverance. Certainly, adolescents pay much attention to such an indicator of personal development, as interaction. The methodology made it possible to assess the level of children's effective communicative skills necessary for the further successful building of interpersonal relationships.

The study of the children’s personal development indicators revealed a positive dynamics (table 02).

**Table 02.** Results of assessing the quality indicators of the personal development of children in a social shelter (%) n=130

| Year     | Levels of quality indicators of personal development |         |      |
|----------|--|---------|------|
|          | High   | Average | Low  |
| 2017     | 6.2  | 36.9    | 56.9 |
| 2018     | 20.8   | 53.8    | 15.4 |
| Dynamics | 13.5   | 45.4    | 36.2 |

Children’s personal development indicators showed improved level of self-esteem, responsibility, independence and the ability to interact with other children, teachers and adults. The study allows us to conclude that the content and methods of providing psychological and pedagogical services to children in a social shelter contributed to positive changes at all levels of their personal development. The number of children with a high level of personal development increased by 13.5%, with an average level – by 45.4%, with a low level decreased by 36.2%.

## 7. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to develop, justify and experimentally test the methodology for assessing the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations. This methodology was based on the results of a diagnostic study of the stating and evaluation-and-productivity stages of the experiment which were obtained by the following methods: “Monitoring of quantitative indicators of children’s activity in a social shelter”, “Monitoring of the assessment of

qualitative indicators of personal development of a child”, “Methodology of expert evaluation of the quality of provision psychological and pedagogical services for children in difficult life situations”.

Analyzing the obtained data, we came to the conclusion that the developed methodology for assessing the quality of the provision of psychological and pedagogical services to children in difficult life situations is a comprehensive work that allows one to objectively and adequately assess the quality and results of preventive, correctional and rehabilitation activities of social shelter specialists with children.

As a result, we received data on the level of quality indicators of children’s activity in a social shelter which exceeded 1.5 times. Children’s personal indicator on average exceeded 3 times. Positive results indicate a rather high quality of psychological and pedagogical services provided to children in social shelters.

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