

ADVICES OF PROBATION OFFICER IN EXPERIENCE OF FORMER MINOR DELINQUENT

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SUMMARY

On the sample of 83 pairs of juvenile probation officers charged with implementation of pedagogical measure of intensive care and supervision and their former wards as the sample of the urban (Zagreb) juvenile delinquent population, the author is testing the hypothesis of high degree conformity of their statements regarding the intensity of probation officers' use of advices in direct contact with the juvenile offender.

Although the hypothesis was basically confirmed, the author indicates the problem of different experiences of probation officers and juvenile offenders regarding the advice giving frequency, particularly the problem of advices which the probation officers are not sufficiently aware of giving, but which the juvenile offenders recognize as such.

The author directs the attention to the necessity of utmost caution in giving advices, reminding of the necessary condition that the advice is asked for and that probation officer has previously established an appropriate relationship with his ward.

Key words: advice, intensive care and supervision, probation

1. PROBLEM

As a variation of probation increased care and supervision is passed over on delinquents who, according to M. Singer (1998, page 75), committed an "occasional criminal act" or we can talk about "accidental delinquents", namely "delinquents whose criminal act is result of temporary condition and temptation". Probation is penal-judicial frame for mutual communication between an educator and a delinquent, within designated, different, not equal role.

A role of probation officer in process of delinquent behavior transformation especially in mutual communication is very important. The stimuli which the officer is sending in communication with the minor are basic to the educational process.-

Let me remind you that probation is a penal sanction towards minor delinquents which more than any other sanction, counts on the minors participation in the process of transformation of his social behavior from unacceptable to acceptable behavior in society. In that sense this non-

institutional method is more demanding towards a minor than institutional sanction. Arguments to support this thesis lie in a simple fact that a minor delinquent who has been penalized with a punishment which does not include institutionalization (which an increased care and supervision is) is still exposed to more or less the same social factors which contributed to his criminal behavior in the first place, while in cases of institutionalization an effort to reduce such negative influences from the social environment is implied (see more in F. Hirjan & M. Singer, 1978, O. Petak & S. Uzelac, 1984, V.D. Laan, 1991, K. Hamai 1995). An educator in direct communication with a minor, and a relatively limited repertoire of pedagogical methods at his disposal, is practically the only the only respectable, expert instance expected to take care of the minor's behavior and supervise it.

However, does the minor understand the messages and their intentions? In other words, does he recognize the type and intensity of the message?

This and similar questions open the gates to deeper understanding of a complex subject matter

of interaction and communication in education. This subject matter, as a micropedagogical problem, has been discussed and written about for many years by V. Troha (1969), B. Rakic (1976) and especially M. Bratanic (1993) and they offered a clear terminology and well-defined relationships on this subject. These and similar publications discuss questions about communication in general, as well as educational communication, and they mainly rely on the famous Watzlawick Theory (P. Brajsa, 1979; A. Zizak, 1991; J. Basic, 1994;).

Advice is one of the most frequent pedagogical messages that an educator is trying to send to a minor (V. Durek, 1989). This is so frequent that the function of the educator often comes down to that of an adviser. However, some authors justly question the rationale behinds this social-pedagogical practice.

Namely, frequent, or, rather, too frequent use of advice in education has been subject of many recent scientific papers (e.g. D. Stakic, 1980; A. Zizak, 1990; N. Koller-Trbovic, 1990).

Among them for this problem very interesting are those that have a certain critical ambition concerning advice and counseling and use of advice as a method in education.

Most of critical works presuppose that a wide spectrum of people, laymen as well as professionals, are into giving advice and counseling today. The same is the case in educational process.

There is no real need to back this up. Advice is a very popular method, but the value of adviser is more important than advice itself. A doubt about using advice too often in probation is question of counseling advice toward minor.

Our problem is the minor's recognition of the intensity of advice in the educator-minor communication.

A question of recognition of advice is logically impacted into a problem in the way that it is treated as a *conditio sine qua non* of analytical sinking into the problem.

There is something else. We research this problem through experience of probation educator and their former minors. Research of the experience means confrontation with subjectivity of minor. In our research this confrontation has double meaning. Is it about educator of probation or previous minors that stimulus is assigned to it is important. The usual question is to what extent subjectivity can fog the objective truth.

In this case the question is whether the educator sends stimuli for which he claims that he does? Did he do it as often as he claimed? Did the former minor recognize what he declared that he had recognized? These questions are not the subject of our interest. We are not interested in the objective

truth. We are interested in educator's subjective truth and its (non)closeness with the subjective truth of former minor. Both educator and minor take their subjective truth as the only one and they behave accordingly.

Probation officer made professional moves, former minor draws today, from subjective truth, his own life instructions. It is exactly their subjective truths, regardless how removed from the real, objective truth, what had decisive impact on their practical social behavior.

2. HYPOTHESIS

If, generally speaking we did not expect difficulties in probation officer-former minor communication we would give a hypothesis which would say there was a complete conformity between intensity of using advice by both probation officer and minor as well. This hypothesis would come as a consequence of a simple process of conclusion which would assume that transferred message will be recognized for the quality and quantity which had been sent. However, counting on the earlier mentioned results and in accordance with various similar communicational researches, we can give a careful hypothesis. Statements made by probation officer regarding intensity of using advice often correspond with the statements of the former minors.

3. METHODS

In this research we are dealing with the problem of subjective truth and have chosen a method of self-assessment. That method, in spite of some drawbacks, is the best one in this kind of research (M. Hindelan i dr. 1981. M. Ajdukovic, 1984 & 1986, R. Prislin and B. Wolf, 1988.).

3.1. Samples of persons

Research has been made on two connected samples and they are connected through pairs: educator of probation - former minor. Sample counts 83 pairs of persons.

Minors belong to the group which District Court has declared probation in period between 01. 10. 1982. up to 15. 01. 1985; probation was going for 12 months and minors volunteered in research.

3.2. Variable

Basic variable which describes intensity of using advice is in same form with identical categories applied with description estimated by educator about intensity of advice in the first 12 months of probation. Variable in both cases includes 4 identi-

cal categories: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) often, (4) every time.

3.3. Time of research

Collecting the basic information started on 01. 10. 1983. and in different fases lasted up to the end of 1992, and continued to logical control, check-up and elaboration of information. Estimate about using methods officer s were given up on one year of working, and previous minors four to nine years after probation time.

3.4. Evaluation of informations

Hypothesis has been tested with HI-Q test. The number of gradation of freedom when we make statistic signification of relation between variable (HI-Q test) has been reduced for number for which theoretical frequency is less then one.

4. RESULT

Table: **Relation between statement of officer and statement of former minor about intensity of using an advice**

	never used	rarely used	used very often	every time used	total
never used	1 12,5 100,0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	1 1,2
rarely used	1 12,5 9,1	1 9,1 9,1	7 14,3 63,4	2 13,3 18,2	11 13,3
used very often	5 62,5 10,9	8 72,7 17,4	24 49,0 52,2	9 60,0 19,6	46 55,4
every time used	1 12,5 4,0	2 18,2 8,0	18 36,7 72,0	4 26,7 16,0	25 30,1
total	8 9,6	11 13,3	49 59,0	15 18,1	83 100,0

HI Q = 12,7

(By 9-4=5 gradation of freedom value of HI Q should be at least 11,1).

Statistical value by presented table initiated general conclusion about statistical connection between variable.

Tablica: **Relacije između iskaza voditelja i negdašnjeg maloljetnika o intenzitetu korištenja savjeta**

	nikada	rijetko je koristio	često je koristio	svaki put je koristio	ukupno
nikada nisam koristio	1 12,5 100,0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	1 1,2
rijetko sam koristio	1 12,5 9,1	1 9,1 9,1	7 14,3 63,4	2 13,3 18,2	11 13,3
često sam koristio	5 62,5 10,9	8 72,7 17,4	24 49,0 52,2	9 60,0 19,6	46 55,4
svaki put sam koristio	1 12,5 4,0	2 18,2 8,0	18 36,7 72,0	4 26,7 16,0	25 30,1
ukupno	8 9,6	11 13,3	49 59,0	15 18,1	83 100,0

Hi-kvadrat = 12,7

(Uz 9 - 4 = 5 stupnjeva slobode vrijednost hi-kvadrata trebala bi biti najmanje 11,1)

This result has been expected in proportion with made hypothesis. If we pay attention to the direction between variable we will notice some interesting things which will open some further questions.

More than half of the educators (59,0%) answered that they used advice very often and 18% advised the minors in every contact, which makes total of 77,1%. Generally speaking minors recognize them very well: 55,4% recognized "often" advice, regularly 30,1%, which makes total of 85,5%.

Concordance is complete in category "rarely" (13,3%).

Distinction is significant on the category from opposite side. It is disagreement on category "never". Only one minor choosing this category and among educators are even eight. That is basic space of misunderstanding. These minors recognized advice even when it was not sent directly to them.

It is most interesting question where seven different answers are situated which make difference in category "never" between educators and minors.

There is no doubt that "advice" by educators, which means advice that educators didn't even

think to send, minors have recognized in categories "rarely", "often" even "every time".

5. CONCLUSION

Correspondence of high level is expected and given. It stays, an open question of not a non-significant part of results which show on correspondence between statements of educators and minors.

Considering this, and otherwise confirmed hypothesis, opens new questions rather than giving answers to the questions raised.

Although part of these dissonant results are due to accidental statistical dispersion, their grouping around the problem of minor's recognition of advice that did not exist on the part of the educator opens the ground for additional questions. This result also the tendency on the part of educator to use advice widely. So much that they are not aware of it any more.

It should therefore be an additional warning to the educators to use advice sparingly. It seems useful to give a well known maxim as a reminder: "Advice should be given only when it is clearly asked for, and it is not worth as much as that specific advice is worth. It is worth as much as (for the person to whom the advice is intended) the adviser.

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