

## THE CULTURE OF CHILDREN SOCIALIZATION CENTERS AS THE ASSUMPTION FOR SUCCESSFUL STUDENT RESOCIALIZATION: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

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### Abstract

The term *student* in this article is used meaning a member of formal education who lives and educates in a children socialization center.

**Purpose** – discuss the culture of children socialization centers as a theoretical assumption for successful student resocialization.

**Methodology/approach** – the concept of student resocialization process used in the article is based on the idea of social constructivism (Berger, Luckmann, 1966) which says that students construct their subjective reality by the interaction in a social system and a specific environment. The correlation between the culture of children socialization centers and student resocialization process is based on the principle of operating system (Targamadzė, 2006) where changes in the system’s one structural element affect other structural elements. Methods: analysis of documents and scientific literature, comparison.

**Findings:** The composition of children socialization center culture is determined by historical context, non-traditional structure and features of operation. According to researchers communities of children socialization centers have *authoritarianism-oriented attitude that is demonstrated by discipline, hierarchical relationship, punishments, isolation from society etc. Humanistic attitude is needed for successful student resocialization; this is proved by scientists and established by the legislation.* During the process of resocialization students adopt values, norms, behavioral models, roles existing in the culture of children socialization centers. In addition to this, the culture of these institutions must be harmonized with the culture of the society. As a result, children socialization centers have to make reasonable analysis of their culture, recognize limitations and try to change it, external factors cannot make transformations.

**Research limitations/implications** – only theoretical assumptions were made which have to be proved empirically.

**Practical implications** – preconditions of successful student resocialization were discussed as guidelines for the process of changing the culture.

**Originality/Value** – the features for the culture of children socialization centers were highlighted. Based on the conclusions, problems for new researches can be created.

**Keywords:** children socialization centers, culture, student resocialization.

**Research type:** literature review.

## Introduction

A successful resocialization of potential delinquents and delinquents is the essential precondition for their favorable future that is the integral element in the future of the whole society. During the process of criminal law making every country takes its own direction in order to find a way to avoid juvenile delinquent misbehavior, however, regardless of different experience levels, they are focusing on education and prevention. Lithuania has implemented the system of minimal and medium care that is based on the help for children in their nearest environment and on the priority of child interests; yet should a legal ground arise, juveniles are often separated from their family and sent to children socialization centers (The law of the Republic of Lithuania on children minimal and medium care, Official publication, 2007-07-19, No. 80–3214; 2010, No. 31–1473). The legislation defines the objectives for these non-traditional schools of general education, however, they are both complicated to implement and substantiate, i. e. these schools are meant for helping students to undergo their misbehavior, preparing them for independent life and successful integration into the society. According to this, during the implementation of children minimal and medium care measures the culture of children socialization centers (defined as a set of values, norms, attitudes, rules of behavior, rituals and other elements that prevails in the behavior of students and is declared to be a correct way of thinking and acting) is assumed to have the biggest influence on student personal changes.

According to Duoblienė (2011) researchers and school community members had long too narrow understanding about the culture of schools as a complex phenomenon. However, more and more attention is paid to school microclimate, prevailing attitudes, values and other cultural elements, despite the fact that these cultural elements are not attributed to the organizational culture. The image of the culture of children socialization centers can be drawn referring to writings of different researchers: Merkys et al (2002) give a quite detailed description of different cultural elements; Alifanovienė and Šapelytė (2009) describe attitudes and viewpoints of pedagogues concerning implementation of medium care measures that are directly related to their practical experience; Bieliūnė et al (2010) analyze rules and norms of children socialization centers as viewed by students and pedagogues; Indrašiene et al (2011) analyze the principles for the creation of family related environment, organization of educational activities etc. A fragmentary analysis of issues concerning the culture of children socialization centers show that this complex phenomenon is still not treated as the essential part for the mission of educational institution. The culture is considered to be the core element not only in the relationship between the communities of children socialization centers, principles of activity, limits of control and personal individuality, and educational environment, but also in the results of institution operation that are really complicated. In order to prove this position the article gives grounds on the relationship between culture and student resocialization process and gives reasons for treating the culture as a precondition for the increase of efficiency of the medium care measures.

### Discussion on Children Socialization Centers Culture

Researchers Trice and Beyer (1984), Schein (1990), Hofstede (1994), Jucevičienė (1996), Stoner et al (2000), Robbins (2006), Ravasi and Schultz (2006), Amstrong (2009) gives a different interpretation of the definition for organizational culture, however, most of them say that the object of this phenomenon is values, norms and attitudes adopted by the organization members and evident in their behavior. Vveinhardt (2012), conducting a deep analysis of definition for organizational culture, names the following elements: believes, habits, norms, principles, attitudes, values, expectations and ideals of people group that are expressed through philosophy, symbols, climate, rituals, ceremonies, traditions, stories, myths and physical environment. It is obvious that culture as a complex phenomenon cannot be simple to assess and to understand; organization members on the whole can be unconscious about some of its elements, but these elements can be constant and accepted as unquestionable truth. As a result this not only makes the institution unique, but also creates a necessity to preserve and transfer existing attitudes, traditions and certain behavioral models. A distinctive culture of these institutions can be identified outwardly by non-traditional process of education, school buildings, the level of isolation from the society, existing myths known by local community and media – this presuppose the linkage between a culture expression and discipline, order and obedience. However, based on the law the philosophy of these organizations should be dominated by the essentials of national consciousness, transfer of society accepted values, education about national maturity, and all this should emphasize humanistic idea of child’s self-realization (The law of the Republic of Lithuania on children minimal and medium care, Official publication, 2007-07-19, No. 80–3214; 2010, No. 31–1473).

Having analyzed the features of organizational culture researchers (Hofstede et al (1990), Trice and Beyer (1993), Jucevičienė et al (2000)) underline the culture links to the anthropological concept; they especially emphasize the importance of external circumstances and social relationship. The formation of children socialization center culture is likely to be significantly influenced by historical context (ideologies of different epochs, legislation in place), non-traditional circumstances, structure, and principles of operation management. Merkys et al (2002) who made a research on student supervision and rehabilitation concepts in children socialization centers drew a conclusion that paradigms of punishment (isolation) and education (integration) identified in the culture of these institutions contradict one another. Referring to the ideas of M. Foucault and E. Goffman this research identifies strict routines, compulsory employment, detailed regulation of behavior rules, unified living spaces, permanent supervision etc. Alifanovienė and Šapelytė (2009) analyzed the attitude of pedagogues working in children socialization centers and found that cultures of these general education schools are authoritarianism-based because they express the need of strict punishments in the process of rehabilitation to maintain order, structured environment and detailed regulation of operation management. In addition to this they exhibit a strong orientation to isolation from the family, community and society while expressing

trust in their institution’s process of “normalizing” the students. Other researches (Bieliūnė et al (2010), Indrašienė et al (2011)) also identify the same above mentioned features of children socialization center culture. Hence taking into account children socialization center culture related features of preservation and reproduction through the socialization of new members an assumption can be made that today these characteristics is still attributed to the composition of culture in children socialization centers. Languid changes in the culture of these general education schools are supposed to be related not only to lack of in-house initiatives but also to institutional insularity, absence of competitiveness indicators and stability that is backed by the applicable law.

An international establishment of humanistic ideas in juvenile delinquency prevention and resocialization was made as far back as 1990 in the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules). After changing the mission of children socialization centers in the law of the Republic of Lithuania on children minimal and medium care (Official publication, 2007-07-19, No. 80–3214; 2010, No. 31–1473) the staff of children socialization centers are obliged to know student individuality, allow their self-expression, make unfold their abilities, develop their professional skills, respect their rights etc. This is a humanistic orientation to the renouncement of the authoritarian relationship with delinquents and to the enforcement of their rights and interests. Probably in order to make an external influence on the cultural composition of these general education schools a description of operating model for children socialization centers (Official publication, 2011, No. 62–2946) gives detailed provisions that must be followed by the staff (neutralize a negative children past experience; eliminate the elements of criminal subculture in children communication; suggest models of socially accepted behavior and give examples; avoid criticizing children and public dispute of their misbehavior or personal traits); suggests a possible attitude towards students (following the principles of individualization, involving children into the decision-making related to them, priority of children interests and cooperation); names values of conduct(respect, honesty, goodwill, cooperation, share and exchange of information, innovation, creativity, professional development, flexibility, adaptation to change etc.). Legal regulations are obviously not relevant measures for changing the culture of children socialization centers as changes cannot be forced they have to be accepted by the community and determined by awareness. However, these regulations are still a clear instruction on objectives that have to be set by organization administrations as guidelines for better performance in their work.

### **Resocialization in the Children Socialization Centers**

Many researchers give a similar concept of juvenile resocialization: Prakapas and Katinaitė (2008) treat resocialization as a period of learning new values, norms and roles that comes after a desocialization; Juodaitytė (2002) says that the core element of this process is a transformation of own knowledge, values, norms, status, roles and skills, and accepting new ones. Other researches (Merkys et al (2002), Mathiesen (1999), Mardoyan

et al (2010) etc.) also emphasize redeeming of previous social status through a set of assistive instruments while the success of this process is related to the ability to integrate among society members. In order to define critical objectives that come in parallel with ideas of educational work, complex assistance and discipline the term *resocialization* is synonymously used with such terms as rehabilitation, repeated socialization, reformation and adaptation. Although some researchers (Liaudanskienė and Leliūginė (2007); Lengvinas (2009); Žilinskienė and Tumilaitė (2011) etc.) treat the idea of resocialization as controversial because of the preparation for the independent life outside the institution while being isolated from the society, however, the situation in children socialization centers is a bit more favorable. These institutions of general education have a possibility to partly ensure the successful resocialization because students can test their adopted values, roles and behavioral models outside children socialization centers. The question is whether these organizations use this possibility while creating cooperative networks, close relationship with student families and local community.

It seems that there is no clear national policy for juvenile resocialization; however, there is set of individual programs that lacks alternative punishments, assistance in the process of integration into the society and local community initiatives. Although children socialization centers are institutions of education they are assigned a function of resocialization that is in detail described in the legislation and refers to the development of socially valuable skills, the change of values and attitudes in order to gain personal benefits for students and to contribute to the community well being. After an in-deep analysis of Risk-Need-Responsivity and Good Lives resocialization models Žilinskienė and Tumilaitė (2011) give theoretical insights on resocialization practice in Lithuania which show that the focus is still on risk management and the main objective is benefits to the society. Although the resocialization is usually carried out in closed institutions, the declining of the alternative punishments in places of imprisonment creates preconditions for the model of good lives. As a result more and more programs oriented to the skill development and encouragement to change are implemented. One of such programs is the cognitive behavioral program *Equip* that currently is implemented in children socialization centers. An assumption can be made that these programs are used to help those schools efficiently realize the objectives set in the legislation.

Analyzing the factors of successful student resocialization emphasis should be put on individual needs, abilities, experience and motivation of every student as these elements are of great importance in the resocialization process. According to Merkys (2002) a successful resocialization in children socialization centers is possible only when students are able to see and critically rethink the whole spectrum of values predominant in the society, when examples of socially accepted behavior are presented in the natural environment and when students are purposely assigned certain roles, they have a possibility to adopt socially acceptable cultural models and combinations of these models. Valickas (1997) stresses that attitudes and values of asocial juveniles are often faintly interiorized, their expression needs certain social environment. The author believes that demonstration of human-shared values, presentation of acceptable behavior examples, favorable circumstances, speech and conduct of pedagogues that motivates and helps to

change are the most important prerequisites for the successful resocialization. A conclusion can be made that student preparation for successful integration into the society is closely related to the adoption of socially accepted norms, values, attitudes, ideals etc. and the transformation of perceived cultural elements. All this should be purposely planned and implemented while evaluating individual achievements and reflecting on the conduct of students and administration members. Therefore an assumption can be made that during the process of resocialization in children socialization centers the main focus should be given to relationship, attitudes, and values in the conduct of educators, created environment and applied educational policy.

### **The importance of children socialization center culture in student resocialization**

Academic writings analyze different aspects of socialization process of organization members and its relation to the organization culture. Some researchers (Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003); Morrison (1993)) seek for factors of successful socialization and one of these factors is a comprehension and adoption of organizational culture, while other (Van Maanen, Schein (1979); Allen (2006); Žukauskaitė (2009)) provide methods and strategies for favorable socialization that helps to improve psychological and emotional status of new members, to get necessary information, to make new connections and to accept new roles. Considering the status of assumed organization, its field of operation and its objectives researchers (Cooley (1999); Jucevičienė et al (2000); Targamadžė (2006)) named the factors that promote and hinder the socialization of organization members. Hence the culture is obviously important both to the socialization of organization members and to the results of their activity. If the resocialization is treated as a repeated socialization, the results of these researches is applicable to the aspect discussed in this article in order to point out the importance of culture to organization members (students and pedagogues) and their results of activity.

Having analyzed the concepts of children socialization center culture and resocialization, these components proved to be related by values, norms, rules of behavior, rituals etc. The culture is assumed to be a purposely built strategy or a naturally formed phenomenon that is extremely important in the process of resocialization: it basically determines the rules of behavior for organization members, their norms, attitudes, ways of encouragement and punishment that are used for the change of asocial attitudes, adopted roles and models of behavior. The relationship between the two shows that the successful resocialization and meaningful future relies on the composition of the organizational culture. Therefore these schools of general education, as institutions of nontraditional education and the ones that have complicated objectives, have to be aware of the culture complexity and foster its willful changes.

The Ministry of education and science initiated the implementation of cognitive behavioral program *Equip* where one of the most important objectives is the creation of positive culture in children socialization centers that is based on mutual understanding between communities and cooperation. The main focus in the creation of positive culture here is put on formation of positive attitudes towards students, demonstration and

promotion of prosocial behavior, identification of student abilities and cooperation. This is also established by the law. Meanwhile Alifanovienė and Šapelytė (2009) say that the juvenile resocialization policy implemented in children socialization centers is not clear, first of all, with regard to paradigms: the attitudes of pedagogues are prevailed by both humanistic ideas and authoritarian tendencies. This shows that the culture of children socialization centers is built on conflicting components that are often the reasons for non-efficient performance. Supervision and structured environment that is believed to be of great importance in the process of resocialization should be linked to the control of the environment that would not encourage or provoke the expression of asocial student behavior rather than to authoritarianism-based relationship. The change in the principles of organizational culture related educational process organization, evaluation of children behavior, provision of assistance and other principles is likely to create preconditions that would lead to student motivation for change and is likely to improve the performance efficiency in these schools of general education.

### Conclusions

The culture of children socialization centers as a complex phenomenon consists of organization values, norms, attitudes, beliefs etc. that are prevailing in the institution's philosophy, the behavior of its members and environment. Academic writings give a fragmented analysis of the culture phenomenon, however, researchers emphasize that communities in children socialization centers have *authoritarianism-oriented attitude that is demonstrated by discipline, hierarchical relationship, punishments, isolation from the society and etc. Meanwhile, the legislation encourages humanistic attitude towards juvenile delinquents, declares the importance of cooperation, giving credit to student abilities, ensuring their rights and mutual assistance.*

The composition of the culture is determined by historical context, non-traditional structure and features of operation. The culture of children socialization centers is preserved and reproduced through the socialization of new organization members. Although the culture has a feature of preservation and reproduction, cultural changes are advisable and should be implemented, but this should be done by the organization itself being aware of limitations and changing only certain its components. The legislation and international programs implemented to make resocialization more successful is also significantly important in the process of changing the organization culture.

A successful student resocialization is determined by creating suitable environment for students to adopt internationalized values, accepted models of behavior and accepted roles, and then giving a possibility to test these cultural elements outside the children socialization center. In this situation a great emphasis should be put on suitable educational environment, relationship between students and pedagogues, and individualized educational policies. In addition to this, the culture of these institutions must be harmonized with the culture of society.

The relation between children socialization center culture and student resocialization is identified by values, norms, rules of behavior, rituals etc., therefore the

composition of these organizational cultures has a direct linkage with efficiency of student behavior correction and the successful student integration into the society. The unified principles for organization of education process, evaluation of children behavior, provision of assistance etc. are assumed as important ensuring suitable environment for children to feel safe, motivated to change and willing for positive behavior correction.

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