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Readiness to Change in Penitentiary Employees in Legal and Professional Terms

Gotowość do zmiany u pracowników penitencjarnych w aspekcie prawnym i zawodowym

ABSTRACT

The transformations of the modern world impose the changes on an individual. The readiness to implement them is, in turn, the prerequisite for his further social and professional development. The changing process and its course of events is conditional upon various factors. Prison Service officers are susceptible to stress and professional burnout due to the nature and specificity of their work, which consequently discourages them from introducing changes and in this way their development is thwarted. The objective of the authors' own research consisted in establishing the level at which penitentiary workers are ready to change. The studies were conducted on a group of 70 officers of the Prison Service, half of whom were prison security officers and penitentiary educators. As part of the research, the Change Readiness Questionnaire by R. Kriegel and D. Brandt, in the Polish adaptation by E. Brzezińska and A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, was used. It can be inferred from the gathered data that prison security officers have more strength in comparison with penitentiary educators. The studies have also confirmed that the individuals with lower age and work experience

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are to a larger extent ready for changes and display greater resourcefulness and passion for work. The findings divulge the necessity to carry out diverse supportive activities, particularly in the groups of older officers.

Keywords: readiness to change; Prison Service officers; penitentiary workers; legal; professional

INTRODUCTION

The Prison Service is a uniformed formation, armed and carrying out tasks resulting from the execution of imprisonment. It is subordinate to the Minister of Justice and has its own organizational structure. Its main activities and scope of tasks are regulated by the Act on the Prison Service.[1] In addition to this Act, officers are obliged to perform tasks and comply with the provisions resulting from: the Act on measures of direct coercion and firearms,[2] the Act on property liability of public officials for gross violations of the law,[3] the Executive Penal Code,[4] the Criminal Procedure Code,[5] the Penal Code,[6] the Regulation of the Minister of Justice on organizational and order regulations for the execution of pre-trial detention,[7] the Regulation of the Minister on organizational and order regulations for the execution of imprisonment,[8] the Regulation of the Minister of Justice on methods of protecting the organizational units of the Prison Service,[9] and the Regulation of the Minister of Justice on defense of organizational units of the Prison Service.[10] The number of laws and regulations that officers are subject to and have to comply with is very large. The changes in regulations and the introduction of new acts and regulations will force them to constantly learn and be ready to adopt and apply them.

The contemporary world and the manner in which people function inevitably imply the introduction of changes in the field of professional and personal activ-

[1] Act of 9 April 2004 on the Prison Service (Journal of Laws 2004, no. 279, item 523).

[2] Act of 24 May 2013 on measures of direct coercion and firearms (Journal of Laws 2019, item 2418), in force from 5 June 2013.

[3] Act of 20 January 2011 on property liability of public officials for gross violations of the law (Journal of Laws 2016, item 1169).

[4] Act of 6 June 1997 – Executive Penal Code (Journal of Laws 2021, item 53).

[5] Act of 6 June 1997 – Criminal Procedure Code (Journal of Laws 2021, item 534).

[6] Act of 6 June 1997 – Penal Code (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1444, as amended).

[7] Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 21 December 2016 on organizational and order regulations for the execution of pre-trial detention (Journal of Laws 2016, item 2290).

[8] Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 21 December 2016 on organizational and order regulations for the execution of imprisonment (Journal of Laws 2016, item 2231).

[9] Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 17 October 2016 on methods of protecting the organizational units of the Prison Service (Journal of Laws 2016, item 1804).

[10] Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 31 October 2003 on defense of organizational units of the Prison Service (Journal of Laws 2003, no. 194, item 1903).

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ity. The transformations are an inherent component of our lives. The readiness to undertake them is a complex process, quite frequently the difficult and time-consuming one.[11] In a sense, the ongoing progress imposes certain changes on us. The readiness thereto is sometimes the prerequisite for maintaining the current position. The attitude of the individual, his engagement and personal beliefs considerably affect this process.[12]

Officers of the Prison Service perform the profession of social trust.[13] Therefore, they should be characterized by certain features that allow them to fulfill their professional duties well and responsibly. Performing them is associated with the readiness to change in various professional situations. Regardless of their position, officers should be ready to change and develop, including improving their competences and professional qualifications. Pursuant to Article 43a of the Act on the Prison Service of officers, initial, vocational and specialist education as well as professional training and postgraduate studies at the university are obligatory. In accordance with Article 43e of the Act on the Prison Service, these trainings are to raise and shape competences relating to: coping with difficult situations; developing empathy and assertiveness; learning discipline and cooperation; creative problem solving; act in accordance with ethics and legal regulations.

The approach of a given person towards the changes and readiness to introduce them is connected with one's general attitude. When perceiving the future from the negative angle the readiness to change process is being hindered, whereas the positive evaluation of the reality escalates this process, and simultaneously contributes to better adjustment to the things that are new, making them more flexible too. The appropriate satisfaction of the basic needs, the readiness to change and optimistic as well as positive perception of one's own future foster the development of an individual and his adaptation to new conditions.[14]

R.W. Griffin has distinguished two types of changes – the planned change that is being "prepared and introduced in an ordered and timely manner, preceding the anticipated events, and the reactive change, which is defined as the reaction to the

[11] A. Rogozińska-Pawełczyk, *Osobowościowe uwarunkowania gotowości pracowników do zmian organizacyjnych*, "Human Resource Management" 2013, vol. 2, p. 95; R. Burge, *Ready set change: Reducing resistance to Six Sigma projects*, "Industrial Engineer" 2008, vol. 40(10), p. 35.

[12] E. Wiśniewska-Placheta, *Determinanty gotowości przedsiębiorstwa do zmiany*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej. Organizacja i Zarządzanie" 2015, vol. 77, p. 264.

[13] K. Muszyński, P. Skuczyński, *Changing Legal and Social Role of Professional Self-Governments During Systemic Transformation in Poland*, "Krytyka Prawa. Niezależne Studia nad Prawem" 2020, vol. 12(1), p. 164.

[14] A. Oleszkiewicz, K. Gwiżdż, *Formowanie się tożsamości osobistej w okresie stającej się dorosłości w kontekście poczucia bezpieczeństwa i gotowości do zmian*, "Polskie Forum Psychologiczne" 2019, vol. 24(2), pp. 190–191.

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circumstances appearing in a given moment and which occurs gradually rather than entirely".[15]

In the literature on the subject, it is indicated that the perception of the change by an individual (worker) can be of the negative, uncertain or positive character. The persons with a positive mindset can adopt three attitudes:

- the conservative attitude, which is connected with the unwillingness for changes. Most frequently it refers to the persons with stable professional standing. The daily routine performance of duties does not require substantial commitment and is reliant on the acquired habits and customs. In this case, the implementation of changes triggers stress, uncertainty and coerces the persons into changing their attitudes and adopting the new ones,
- the anticipatory attitude, characteristics of which is the positive approach towards changes as long as the introduced changes are not linked to some risk and they concurrently boost the financial standing of the organisation. The additional incentive, i.e. the presentation of the positive benefits, is indispensable in case of the persons with anticipatory attitude. Such persons are open to searching for new ideas and solutions,
- the innovative attitude, in which the change is perceived as something new, good and original. The person displaying the innovative attitude searches for new solutions, wants to acquire new knowledge, experience and yet to improve his professional competencies, qualifications and, at the same time, the scope of duties.[16]

The changes and the positive benefits resulting from the introduction thereof are considerably conditional upon the general attitude and approach of a given individual. The change represents a significant component of the modification of any structure or organisation.[17] Resistance, reluctance and negative attitude towards the change may be the outcome of individual personal qualities and negative experiences from the past. Many times these are the internal barriers that are the most difficult, and they frequently obstruct the change.[18]

In a difficult situation, the reluctance and lack of readiness to change are certain defensive mechanisms, which may be accompanied by contradiction, rationalization and procrastination. Contradiction is a conscious way of inadmissibility of

[15] M. Strykowska, *Psychologiczne aspekty wdrażania zmian organizacyjnych*, "Organizacja i Kierowanie" 2010, vol. 1(140), p. 8.

[16] A. Rogozińska-Pawełczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[17] *Ibidem*; F. Drzensky, N. Egold, R. van Dick, *Ready for a Change? A Longitudinal Study of Antecedents, Consequences and Contingencies of Readiness for Change*, "Journal of Change Management" 2012, vol. 12(1), p. 95.

[18] I. Nowakowska-Buryła, *Gotowość do zmian a nabywanie kompetencji międzykulturowych przez nauczycieli wczesnej edukacji – o potrzebie eksploracji zagadnienia*, "Annales UMCS. Sectio J" 2019, vol. 32(2), p. 98.

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certain facts to oneself. The persons who contradict the existence of new things most frequently do not want the changes. This mechanism sometimes gives rise to both presenting the changes from the negative perspective and attempting to persuade oneself that it is not worth making them. The second defensive mechanism is rationalization, which consists in certain justification of oneself, the quest for rational explanations of the decisions made, at the same time hiding the accurate motive of action. The last mechanism is procrastination, i.e. the avoidance of certain decisions, which are associated with the change and, hence, cause anxiety and uncertainty. Procrastination is also the delay of specific activities that prompt negative or unpleasant emotions. Most often such an action leads to resignation from undertaking any kind of activities.[19]

The risk of professional burnout, in particular, relates to the persons employed in the professions reliant on interpersonal relationships with other people. Working with persons deprived of liberty requires a strong emotional involvement. Lack of self-fulfilment, continuous stress and inability to cope with excessive duties demotivate and deprive of the willingness to improve oneself, increase qualifications, and in this way the lack of readiness to change is being fostered.[20] Prison Service officer plays a pivotal role in the process of social rehabilitation of the persons deprived of liberty and in the area of the satisfaction of the sense of security need of the society members. As a consequence, they are continually subject to assessment as well as prone to stress and professional burnout, which is proved by numerous studies.[21] Work in prison, which is a specific place, requiring absolute compliance with the rules, imposes on officers certain obligations related to the provisions of the labor code in the field of occupational health and safety. According to § 7 of the Regulation of the Minister of Justice on application of the provisions of the Labor Code to the officers of the Prison Service in the field of occupational health and safety,[22] officers are required to comply with safety rules, take care of equipment and other items related to the daily performance of duties, respect the recommendations of an occupational medicine doctor, as well as use protective measures, protective

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 103.

[20] D. Adamczyk, *Wypalenia zawodowe nauczyciela – w perspektywie odpowiedzialności i troski o człowieka*, "Seminare" 2013, vol. 34, p. 242.

[21] N. Singhal, *Job Stress, Job Satisfaction and Burnout among Prison Guards in Kolkata and Namibia: A Comparative Study*, Mumbai 2019, p. 6; W.B. Schaufeli, M.C.W. Peeters, *Job Stress and Burnout among Correctional Officers: A Literature Review*, "International Journal of Stress Management" 2000, vol. 7, p. 19; J.R. Carlson, G. Thomas, *Burnout Among Prison Caseworkers and Corrections Officers*, "Journal of Offender Rehabilitation" 2006, vol. 43(3), p. 19.

[22] Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 5 August 2010 on application of the provisions of the Labor Code to the officers of the Prison Service in the field of occupational health and safety (Journal of Laws 2014, items 173, 502 and 616).

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clothing as intended, especially as regards the performance of tasks related to the performance of official activities in relation to the inmate.

In accordance with the law in force, especially the Act on Prison Service, Prison Service officers are obliged to absolutely discharge the duties as stipulated by statutory requirements. The fundamental duties primarily encompass: conducting penitentiary and social rehabilitation interactions, observing the law and dignity of the persons deprived of liberty, supervising the security and order with respect to the convicted persons and the society. Furthermore, with a view to ensure the protection for the society and the persons deprived of liberty, the officers are obliged to perform the tasks and adhere to the provisions prescribed by: the Executive Penal Code, the Regulation of the Minister of Justice on organisational and order regulations for serving the prison sentence,[23] and the Regulation of the Minister of Justice on organisational and order regulations for serving the pre-trial detention.[24] This wide range of tasks, which the penitentiary workers are expected to perform, constitutes a substantial burden – not only in the physical dimension but, first and foremost, in the mental one. In fact, they work with a specific group of socially maladjusted persons, at which point tremendous cognitive and emotional effort is required, which is also connected with the intensified stress.

METHODOLOGICAL BASES OF THE AUTHORS' OWN STUDY

The objective of the authors' own study consisted in establishing the readiness of penitentiary workers to change. The main problem was incorporated into the following question: What is the extent to which penitentiary workers are ready to change?

With a view to address the problem, the detailed questions have been put forward:

1. What is the scope of penitentiary workers' readiness to change?
2. What are the dimensions in which penitentiary workers are not ready to change?
3. Are there any differences in readiness to change with respect to various dimensions between: penitentiary educators and prison security officers, persons with different work experience and workers at different age levels?

The working hypothesis has been formulated with reference to the very last detailed question. Due to the lack of research on readiness of penitentiary workers

[23] Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 21 December 2016 on organisational and order regulations for serving the prison sentence (Journal of Laws 2016, item 2231).

[24] Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 22 December 2016 on organisational and order regulations for serving the pre-trial detention (Journal of Laws 2016, item 2290).

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to change, it has been assumed that penitentiary educators will disclose greater difficulties in introducing changes, which may stem from the nature of their work. It is tough to get a job at this position because of the considerable interest therein. It is commonly believed that this job is stable and well-paid. The job at the position of a Prison Security officer is, as it follows from the opinion of Polish people, better for younger persons who may change it for the more desirable one in the future. This job does not enjoy social prestige either. Moreover, there is the supposition that the persons with shorter work experience and younger persons will be more ready to change on account of being less attached to work, more flexible as well as open to change, or even having larger opportunities of finding such a job that will better address their needs.[25]

The studies involved 70 workers from four penitentiary units (from Lublin and Podlasie Voivodeship), half of whom were penitentiary educators and the other half – prison security officers. They were aged between 21 and 45 years of old (M = 35; SD = 6.92). Their work experience fell within the range of one year to 22 years (M = 7.58; SD = 5.03). The vast majority of the studied individuals was represented by males (80%). Among the studied group of prison officers, there were 84% of those who had their own families, which may constitute a significant social resource. There were 11% of the single individuals, whereas 4.3% of the prison officers admitted to having been divorced.

The research was conducted in 2019 using a diagnostic survey method. The research tool used was the Change Readiness Questionnaire by R. Kriegel and D. Brandt, in the Polish adaptation by E. Brzezińska and A. Paszkowska-Rogacz. Its application allowed for the assessment of seven 5-item dimensions of the readiness to change: resourcefulness, passion, confidence, optimism, adventurousness, adaptability, tolerance for ambiguity. The penitentiary educators and prison security officers (n = 70) have supplemented the Change Readiness Questionnaire by assessing 35 items pertaining to their beliefs, behaviour and attitude on a 6-item scale. The readiness to change means a subjective perception of the requirements of the environment, compatible with certain emotions, cognitive processes and specific behaviour, all of which constitute the outcome of interpreting the reality in an objective manner.[26]

[25] P. Arak, *Wejście młodych ludzi na rynek pracy. Oczekiwania i możliwości realizacji*, "Polityka Społeczna" 2013, vol. 10, pp. 5–10.

[26] R. Kriegel, D. Brandt, *Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers. Developing Change-ready People and Organizations*, New York 1996, pp. 279–287; E. Brzezińska, A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *Kształtowanie relacji pracowniczych*, Łódź 2000, pp. 183–148.

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RESULTS OF THE AUTHORS' OWN RESEARCH

The descriptive statistics were calculated for all the studied individuals as part of the first step of the statistical analysis.

Table 1. The summary of the descriptive statistics for the "readiness to change" variable in the group of 70 penitentiary workers

Dimensions of readiness to change	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Resourcefulness	19.414	4.825	–0.342	–0.538
Passion	18.085	4.924	0.867	3.723
Confidence	19.942	3.999	–0.249	–0.305
Optimism	22.471	4.506	–0.365	–0.009
Adventurousness	19.371	4.347	–0.140	–0.326
Adaptability	18.742	4.272	–0.221	–0.178
Tolerance for ambiguity	15.885	4.137	0.219	0.324

Note: M – mean; SD – standard deviation.

Source: own elaboration.

Most of the studied persons rated the particular items of the Readiness Change Questionnaire at the level of 3–4 points out of 6 possible ones. To the least extent, they consented to: impossibility of their dreams coming true, lack of influence over the things that may not go well and putting tremendous effort into confrontation with the reality (2 points). On the other hand, most often they consented to find the solution to making things work out once they do not go well, the ability to cope with everything that the day brings and that they are full of vigour and passion (5 points).

The authors of the tool claim that the scores falling within the range from 22 to 26 points prove an optimal readiness level, which means that the persons working in direct contact with the convicts have obtained satisfactory results in the dimension of optimism, which in turn positively correlates with the readiness to introduce changes. Therefore, it can be admitted that the studied individuals adopt a positive attitude towards new activities. They search for new possibilities in new situations. They approach reality with the belief that things will go smoothly.

The results of the remaining dimensions of the readiness to change should be considered unsatisfactory. The least satisfactory result concerned the tolerance for ambiguity. It may be presumed that penitentiary workers do not accept changes and uncertainty connected therewith. It may be difficult for them to find themselves in new surprising situations, which stems from their being impatient and expecting quick and simple solutions that are not always possible.

Kurtosis, as a measure of concentrating the results around the central value, indicates that the distribution is leptokurtic in the passion scale. As regards this scale, skewness is higher than zero, which points to a positively skewed distribution. The values of the kurtosis and skewness have slightly exceeded the zero value with respect to the remaining dimensions of readiness to change.

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Table 2. Comparison of average values obtained by penitentiary educators (n = 35) and prison security officers (n = 35) in the specific dimensions of readiness to change

Dimensions of readiness to change	Group	M	SD	t-distribution	p
Resourcefulness	E	18.057	4.575	–2.435	0.017**
	S	20.771	4.747		
Passion	E	17.885	3.893	–0.338	0.737
	S	18.285	5.828		
Confidence	E	18.800	3.716	–2.478	0.016**
	S	21.085	3.995		
Optimism	E	21.971	4.792	–0.927	0.357
	S	22.971	4.211		
Adventurousness	E	19.600	4.181	0.437	0.663
	S	19.142	4.557		
Adaptability	E	18.457	4.175	–0.557	0.580
	S	19.028	4.409		
Tolerance for ambiguity	E	15.685	4.275	–0.402	0.689
	S	16.085	4.046		

Note: E – penitentiary educators; S – prison security officers; t-distribution – test value for independent samples; p – level of statistical significance; ** $p < 0.05$.

Source: own elaboration.

Between the average results of penitentiary workers and prison security officers, there were statistically significant differences concerning the two dimensions of readiness to change ($p < 0.05$). The educators have obtained considerably lower average values in the resourcefulness scale (M = 18.06; SD = 4.58) and confidence scale (M = 18.80; SD = 3.72), as compared to prison security officers (M = 20.77; SD = 4.75 and M = 21.09; SD = 4.00 respectively). The workers who are directly concerned with the social rehabilitation of the convicts admitted that they encounter larger difficulties with inactivity and rest ($p < 0.01$), though to a lesser extent they consented to deal well with everyday obstacles ($p < 0.05$). These persons were also less confident about finding the solution to making things work out once they do not go well ($p < 0.001$), and not so often do they take advantage of the well-known patterns of behaviour in life, in contrast to the unconventional ones ($p < 0.05$).

The persons forming the comparable groups have achieved optimal results in the dimension of optimism. Besides, prison security officers obtained the average value of M = 20.77 in the dimension of adventurousness, which means that they can make use of every situation with a view to fulfil their goals. They are effective in looking for ways to reach them. They are characterised by great innovativeness and unconventionality. They approach the difficulties as the challenges they have to face. Apart from that, the average M = 21.09 in the dimension of confidence in the group of prison security officers may show that they place trust in their own resources and possibilities. They attempt to learn from mistakes and not to lose their belief in themselves. They rather recognize their own value.

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In the scale of adventurousness, both groups have obtained an average value exceeding 19 points, which proves that the studied individuals do not truly appreciate the challenges. They prefer routine, stagnation and, hence, rarely do they undertake new activities. They may encounter difficulties with effective performance in the environment in which so much happens.

In the dimension of adaptability, both the educators and the officers have achieved comparable results (M = 18.46 and M = 19.03 respectively), which entails the conviction that they may have problems with adjustment to the changing requirements of the surroundings, which is frequently accompanied by frustration. They may display the tendency for living in the past. The status as well as social and professional functions are significant for them.

The lowest average values have been obtained by the studied persons in the dimension of passion and tolerance for ambiguity, which implies that they are deprived of the energy to act. They are exhausted and deprived of enthusiasm. Furthermore, they expect firm stabilization and planned actions. Simple solutions are essential for them and, therefore, they do not feel well in the fast-changing and unpredictable situations.

There have been conducted statistical analyses with the use of student's t-distribution for independent samples, introducing the variable "work experience", and dividing the studied individuals into two groups – the persons working in the Prison Service up to 10 years and the persons working over the period of 10 years.

Table 3. Comparison of average values as obtained by penitentiary workers serving in the Prison Service for 10 years (n = 42) and over 10 years (n = 28) in the specific dimensions of readiness to change

Dimensions of readiness to change	Group	M	SD	t-distribution	p
Resourcefulness	up to 10 years	19.976	4.896	2.047	0.045**
	over 10 years	18.571	4.677		
Passion	up to10 years	19.047	5.170	1.187	0.239
	over 10 years	16.642	4.218		
Confidence	up to 10 years	20.404	4.054	0.876	0.384
	over 10 years	19.250	3.883		
Optimism	up to 10 years	22.857	4.604	0.581	0.563
	over 10 years	21.892	4.374		
Adventurousness	up to10 years	19.619	3.831	0.386	0.701
	over 10 years	19.000	5.077		
Adaptability	up to 10 years	18.904	3.405	0.812	0.420
	over 10 years	18.500	5.378		
Tolerance for ambiguity	up to 10 years	16.214	3.712	0.814	0.418
	over 10 years	15.392	4.732		

Note: ** $p < 0.05$.

Source: own elaboration.

Between the average results of penitentiary workers with different work experience there were statistically significant differences obtained with reference to

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one particular readiness to change dimension ($p < 0.05$). The persons working in the Prison Service shorter than for 10 years have achieved considerably higher average values in the resourcefulness scale ($M = 19.98$; $SD = 4.90$), as compared to their workmates employed in the Prison Service for over 10 years ($M = 18.57$; $SD = 4.68$). In spite of the above, the average values were not optimal in none of the groups. However, it may be presumed that the persons with longer work experience perform the tasks commissioned to them in a less innovative and creative manner. They more often act in a stereotypical way and are more intensely attached to common, checked and reproduced ways of reacting in difficult situations. It is worth highlighting though that the persons participating in studies display huge optimism irrespective of work experience. At the same time, the largest deficits are noticeable in the dimension of tolerance for ambiguity.

Table 4. Comparison of average values obtained by penitentiary workers up to the age of 35 (n = 26) and over the age of 35 (n = 44) in the specific dimensions of readiness to change

Dimensions of readiness to change	Group	M	SD	t-distribution	p
Resourcefulness	under 35 years	18.615	4.418	–1.066	0.290
	over 35 years	19.886	5.040		
Passion	under 35 years	20.307	5.221	3.074	0.003*
	over 35 years	16.772	4.280		
Confidence	under 35 years	20.346	3.708	0.646	0.521
	over 35 years	19.704	4.185		
Optimism	under 35 years	23.461	4.734	1.423	0.159
	over 35 years	21.886	4.314		
Adventurousness	under 35 years	20.000	4.039	0.929	0.356
	over 35 years	19.000	4.523		
Adaptability	under 35 years	19.576	3.087	1.261	0.212
	over 35 years	18.250	4.803		
Tolerance for ambiguity	under 35 years	16.769	4.082	1.382	0.171
	over 35 years	15.363	4.126		

Note: * $p < 0.01$.

Source: own elaboration.

Between the average results of penitentiary workers at different ages, there were statistically significant differences obtained with reference to one particular readiness to change dimension ($p < 0.01$). The younger individuals, under 35 years of age, have achieved substantially higher average results in the passion scale ($M = 20.31$; $SD = 5.22$), as compared to older workmates aged over 35 years ($M = 16.77$; $SD = 4.28$). The differences between the average results turned out to be statistically significant in case of four items (no. 4, 11, 23, 27) from the Readiness Change Questionnaire ($p < 0.05$). To a greater extent, the penitentiary workers under 35 years of age cannot wait the day in which they would be able to commence something new, they experience larger difficulties with enduring inactivity as well as rest, and are far more focused on their strengths rather than weaknesses. Optimism is

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considered to be the strongest resource of penitentiary workers regardless of their age. The younger individuals, in turn, disclose the highest deficits in the dimensions of intolerance for ambiguity and resourcefulness, whereas older individuals in the dimensions of intolerance for ambiguity, passion and adaptability.

CONCLUSIONS

In the original method, the scores falling within the range from 22 to 26 points indicate the optimal level of readiness to change. Nevertheless, the preliminary standardized studies carried out on the group of 125 Polish workers revealed that the optimum is difficult for being reached.

The obtained research results have enabled to both address the formulated research problems and confirm the assumed hypothesis. It has been established that prison security officers have more strength in comparison with penitentiary workers, whose nature of work requires greater emotional engagement and empathy in work with the persons deprived of liberty.[27] The studies have also confirmed that younger aged individuals with shorter work experience in the Prison Service handle the change more efficiently and are to a greater extent prepared for it, as they have more ideas and passion for work. This reveals the necessity to implement diverse activities, especially among older workers.

As part of the carried out research, the Prison Service officers have achieved optimal results in the dimension of optimism. As for the remaining dimensions, the gathered data are not within the optimal range of the readiness to change. This means that the studied individuals are ready to introduce changes and take a positive attitude towards reality. They do not concentrate themselves on difficulties and problems. However, the low score in the dimension of resourcefulness shows that the studied persons are used to certain things and situations, and that not always do they appropriately take advantage of their personal resources in the fulfilment of their plans. The lack of courage and adventurousness may, in turn, point to a strong need of a sense of safety and stabilization, which may be recognised as a resource in the work with convicts. The low scores achieved in the dimension referring to adaptability unveil the difficulties with the adjustment to the changing conditions or to the assigned professional requirements. The persons with a low adaptability level treat their failures very personally, which may represent the cause of the quick professional burnout. Optimists perceive reality in a positive way, however, the lack

[27] The studies conducted by A. Lewicka-Zelent and A. Pytka show that Prison Service Officers can adopt the perspective of other persons and can imagine the emotions experienced by them. The authors have also pinpointed in their studies that there is no connection between the empathy and a professional burnout among Prison Service Officers.

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of confidence and belief in their own possibilities and capabilities may contribute to low self-esteem and may trigger difficulties in dealing with failures, which may subsequently arouse anxiety and frustration. The low scores pertaining to tolerance for ambiguity indicate that the studied officers lack patience and that they evaluate certain situations too hastily. The change in behaviour and the attempt to accept new reality may turn out to be the remedy for changing the attitude towards different situations. Passion is the very last out of all the readiness to change dimensions. Its low level among the studied officers may stem from: boredom, tiredness and professional burnout. They probably experience anxiety and uncertainty while performing some of the official duties.[28]

The readiness to change is made conditional upon various factors. Both personality traits, the acquired knowledge as well as experience and the received support determine the positive completion of the changing process.[29] A. Oleszkiewicz and K. Gwiżdż prove in their studies that a sense of safety is linked to the positive approach towards one's own future and readiness to change. The sense of safety translates into consistent and positive picture of the future. The persons having positive approach are more likely to undertake new tasks and challenges. Higher sense of safety implies larger readiness to change, e.g. improving one's own professional qualifications, gaining new experiences, meeting new people, but also the ability to adjust to new conditions in a better way.[30] S.R. Madsen, D. Miller and C.R. John indicate in their own studies the connection between readiness to change and engagement as well as the maintenance of social relationships.[31] Moreover, A. Rogozińska-Pawełczyk in her own studies reveals the strong connection between readiness to change and personality traits. The author claims that persons who are characterised by neuroticism (anxiety, lack of sense of safety, low sense of self-esteem) display negative attitude towards the change. By contrast, the persons assigned such traits as: extraversion (openness to others and to new experiences), openness to experiences and conscientiousness adopt the positive approach towards changes. Additionally, the sense of stabilization, openness to others, the ability to set new goals and the pursuit in attaining them help to develop the innovative attitude and positive approach towards the introduced changes.[32]

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[28] A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, M. Tarkowska, *Metody pracy z grupą w poradnictwie zawodowym*, Warszawa 2004; A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *Kulturowe i osobowościowe determinanty radzenia sobie pracowników banków ze zmianami organizacyjnymi*, "Przegląd Psychologiczny" 2004, vol. 47(4).

[29] I. Nowakowska-Buryła, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[30] A. Oleszkiewicz, K. Gwiżdż, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[31] S.R. Madsen, D. Miller, C.R. John, *Readiness for organizational change: Do organizational commitment and social relationships in the workplace make a difference?*, "Human Resource Development Quarterly" 2005, vol. 16(2), p. 213.

[32] A. Rogozińska-Pawełczyk, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104.

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To conclude, based on the obtained results it can be presumed that Prison Service officers participating in research should take part in the activities which: develop cognitive empathy and creativity, increase engagement and counteract professional burnout, boost self-esteem, help in coping with stress and solve conflicts in a constructive way.[33] Supervision may also be helpful.[34] The conducted research may be treated as a certain incentive for further explorations in this regard and verification of the obtained results with other studies, carried out on a larger number of persons, and with the distinguishment of other variables, e.g. sex or educational background.

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ABSTRAKT

Przemiany współczesnego świata wymuszają na jednostce zmiany. Z kolei gotowość do ich podjęcia warunkuje jej dalszy rozwój społeczny i zawodowy. Proces zmiany i sposób jej przebiegu zależy od wielu czynników. Funkcjonariusze Służby Więziennej ze względu na charakter i specyfikę pracy są narażeni na stres i wypalenie zawodowe, co w konsekwencji zniechęca ich do dokonywania zmian i w ten sposób wstrzymuje ich rozwój. W badaniu własnym postanowiono sprawdzić, w jakim stopniu pracownicy penitencjarni są gotowi na zmiany. Badania przeprowadzono na grupie 70 funkcjonariuszy Służby Więziennej, wśród których połowę stanowią funkcjonariusze działu ochrony i wychowawcy penitencjarni. W badaniach wykorzystano Kwestionariusz Gotowości do Zmiany autorstwa R. Krygiela i D. Brandta w polskiej adaptacji E. Brzezińskiej i A. Paszkowskiej-Rogacz. Z uzyskanych danych wynika, że więcej siły mają funkcjonariusze działu ochrony w porównaniu do wychowawców penitencjarnych. Badania potwierdziły również, że osoby młodsze wiekiem i stażem pracy w większym stopniu są gotowe na zmianę oraz wykazują większą pomysłowość i przejawiają pasję do pracy. Wyniki te wskazują na konieczność prowadzenia różnorodnych zajęć wspierających, szczególnie w grupach starszych funkcjonariuszy.

Słowa kluczowe: gotowość do zmiany; funkcjonariusze Służby Więziennej; pracownicy penitencjarni; prawny; zawodowy