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## Selected social skills and their position in professionals perception in social work

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## **SELECTED SOCIAL SKILLS AND THEIR POSITION IN PROFESSIONALS PERCEPTION IN SOCIAL WORK**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Human life has two forms. The first one is the successful management of private, professional life, the second one is in certain moments inability to harmonize their states and processes with the environment. Here we can see the effect of the social worker and his client. Client - an individual who at some point cannot understand the meaning of his own actions, gets into situations that seem to be so difficult to manage and he is not able even think about possible strategies for solutions. Social worker - a person who has such a wide range of options to address the adverse situations that at one point he is capable to offer and apply several solutions. The social worker is, therefore a person who has theoretical knowledge and social skills, knows how to react and propose a solution. Career opportunities in practice are wide and necessary due to the increasing number of socio-pathological phenomena, problems and vulnerable groups. Social skills are trainable. It is, therefore necessary to appeal to the development of these skills, which influence the future direction of personality and career opportunities in the field of social work.*

**KEY WORDS:** *social communication, social skills, social worker*

### **SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

In every word in a sentence, in the transmission of information through verbal and non-verbal elements of communication, gestures, facial expressions and other ingredients is an emotion that leaves man in a positive or a negative reference. Proper communication leads in helping professions is important for broadcasting information, its adoption and the importance of selecting words, expressions and gestures. The client selects naturally in the situation which he or she is put in. But he or she must be seen as a supporting social worker – adviser, who can express in verbal and nonverbal what is important for the client to see as a solution.

We agree with Gabura, Gabura<sup>1</sup>, who explains effective communication as the ongoing process of perception of information. The perception leads to receiving information that are consciously and unconsciously selected and it brings a different

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Gabura, P. Gabura, *Social communication*, Bratislava 2004, p. 117.

nature and importance, depending on how a person is treated. It may be seen in individuals receiving diversity.

Verbal communication, however, is accompanied by prosodic phenomena that must be taken into account in the exercise of a profession which purpose is caring for a person in a holistic approach. However Rebaták says that in supplying the information is contained in the verbal component of 7 percent, nonverbal – phenomena that accompany speech, at 38 percent and non-verbal, which is called – body only at 55 percent<sup>2</sup>.

Three principles of talk about the implementation of speech communication and lexical, syntactic and modulation effects. In addition they are given the characteristics which are based on cultural influences, the ability to replace action by, or opportunities to degrade negative internal feelings<sup>3</sup>. „When communicating feelings and survival, 90% of the information obtained by decrypting nonverbal communication, and only 10% of words. When communication is optimal match of verbal (word) and non-verbal elements of communication in their discrepancy is a double bond“<sup>4</sup>.

It is appropriate that synchronization verbal and nonverbal communication components was at social worker - adviser to automate the extent that the professional did not have control because if the concentration is diverted to himself and not the customers problem situation. It is therefore the subject of much debate, scientific, and lay fora directed the relationships between social worker – client and consultant and aspects that determine the optimal direction of the relationship.

### **ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WORKERS - CLIENT**

Relationship between client and social worker – adviser influences by many factors. The relationship is built by both participating from the first contact to the completion of the case. At each meeting, bringing both the process and the relationship to something new, influenced by the current status, situation, communication, listening and own personality.

Rarely aware of the importance of personality in the building of relationships between social worker – adviser and the client. Professional public appeals to the individual components of the relationship, but very natural personality is reflected in every attribute relationship. To be a professional capable of reflection at all times, first of all we must be able to look at ourselves critically on our own actions in the exercise of the profession, the communication process on our own skills and abilities.

Štětovská identifies as self-reflection and self-presentation. On this basis the individual is aware of his own people before the presentation of the wide surroundings and the world around you from the most important presentation. Here there is an overlap of attention on self-presentation and perception of others. So he knows the person his own attitudes and how to accept others. This link talks about

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. T. Matulayova, *Social work in social services*. Prešov 2010, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 43.

the indivisibility of the personality as part of the social world in which the progress of relation 89+012, Aadland, Matulayová<sup>5</sup> speaks in this context of ethical decision in the exercise of the profession. They focus attention on the human dignity, autonomy and equality of opportunity.

Hrehová<sup>6</sup> describes the highest ethical value, which is the answer to the question why in the social field as a facilitator, as a person who expresses solidarity, support, help, who do it acute need. It is love and justice, to ensure a peaceful and fulfilling life, and thus the progress of societies. This deep conviction of the good stored inside helping, given to him even before birth.

Social work presents humanistic understanding of man. This approach understands the nature of man as free, rational, ideological - unique creatures that live life creatively and claim freedom. By social workers - consultant is requested respect for humans, to protect its rights and interests, taking note of the unique nature of man, that altruistic moral orientation. So there is a foundation established to help man in his unfavorable situation, in order to improve his life, the activation of his forces. Here to fore empathetic approach, experience and opportunities presented by the client himself<sup>7</sup>.

What should be professional providing customer support like? The eternal question that seeks to answer the client itself, and professional, and the public, and Campus. From every point of view it is clear that what the professional „emits“ must be in the very personality but having regard to the trainable skills and abilities through which the client receives the assistance. Empathy is in various forums much discussed topic, especially in terms of where the line between empathy and compassion.

The importance of empathy in the context of communication skills speaks also Matulayová<sup>8</sup>, reminiscent of empathy to the feelings, problems and attitudes of others, within the meaning of disembodied from their understanding, reading from the client's verbal and non-verbal expressions, in order to understand the essence of the situation, problem. Here, however, the author points out that it is not a social worker - adviser completely absorbed vision problem from the client's side, but I try to perceive his attitude toward the situation, while at professional requires clear thinking and finding solutions. Therefore, it is in place and compassion when helping a suitable position in terms of moral support and understanding of the underpinnings's ability to act, thus solve the problem.

Empathy presents Buda<sup>9</sup> as empathy into another mental state, based on the communication between two participants. This is about understanding such, status and attitudes that a person does not represent a direct verbal expressions, or are not

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. Aadland, T. Matulayova, *Ethical reflection in the helping professions*, Prešov 2011, p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. H. Hrehova, *Ethics - social relations - society*, Bratislava 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. E. Aadland, T. Matulayová, op. cit.; P. Mazur, *Pedagogika wobec problemów socjalnych i patologii społecznych – z doświadczeń ośrodka „Oratorium św. Jana Bosco” w Soli*, in: *Rodziny problemowe i możliwości ich wspomagania*, red. R. Stojcka-Zuber, A. Róg, Tarnobrzeg 2007, s. 168-170.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. T. Matulayova, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> B. Buda, *Empathy - empathy psychology and take on the other*, New Castle 1994.

derived from human relations. On the basis of empathy thus helping states gets to whom it is necessary to help and sees himself in the form of a second. But empathy alone is not indicative of empathy, which occurs when we understand reality, name and draw conclusions. There is a need for direct contact established between person, who is one that applies empathy and a person who is empathically understood.

Hájek<sup>10</sup> draws attention to the level of empathic perception of the client. At the lowest level you can not speak complete understanding of the client, there can be mistakes and errors in perception, focusing on the content of the statement, not on what the client actually experiences. Mid-level assisting starts to notice less obvious visible processes with clients is that you must not repeat the survey confirm. At a higher level of empathy is helping himself, also sees its client's feelings hidden, but not deciphered their meaning. The high level is based on strong sensibility, understanding and perception of conditions for which even he does not know the client and at the moment it is not appropriate to present them to him. This may disrupt the relationship. But to acquire a high level of empathy can be a lot of experience, performance in practice, in direct contact and continuous development and social skills training.

Assertive behavior in communication requires precisely for reasons of full acceptance of the client as well as its guidance on positive goals, then the solution of the situation. The importance of assertiveness declares Žiaková two grounds. Terms of awareness of their own rights and the rights of the client, as well as managing unwanted moods and attitudes in client's negotiations<sup>11</sup>.

Within understandable expression it is in place appropriate argument, to promote ideas and plans appropriate form, without insults degrade and others. Elements to present assertive communication, includes such skills, through which the object is to present their own feelings and emotions, able to express demand, need and be able to say no, without insults. Emphasis is placed on the presentation of constructive criticism as well as praise. These aspects induced in social worker - adviser atmosphere of trust that the client needs to grow. At the same time assertive behavior defines the boundaries of the relationship<sup>12</sup>.

Mátel, Olah, Schavel<sup>13</sup> appointed assertive human rights through which it is possible to act on the client's use of different communication styles. How we work and practice assertive communication, so on that basis we eliminate non-assertive communication and aggression. Antoničová expressed assertiveness as the ability to "cultural" level express the views and opinions without prejudice to the other party, while preserving and respecting the rights. While the opposite is neasertívna communication, which is based on indistinct expression, denial of opinions and attitudes when in a speech dominated disparage the rights of others. The aggression can be

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<sup>10</sup> K. Hajek, *Working with emotions for the helping professions: physically embodied experience*, Praha 2006.

<sup>11</sup> T. Matulayova, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> A. Matel, M.Olah, M. Schavel, *Selected Topics in social work methods*, Bratislava 2011, p. 212.

observed inappropriate presentation of ideas and attitudes which starts ruthlessly denying the rights of others<sup>14</sup>.

Briar sees knowledge as assertiveness, expression, promote, namely the ability to „3P“. Knowledge is focused on their own feelings and needs that must be reflected in terms of expression and subsequently enforce, therefore, to move to their acceptance, that such a requirement or desire<sup>15</sup>.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The reality of the exercise of the profession is now different. Objective today shall university degree in social work many graduates, but their application and concrete practice, in real terms losing. On the one hand it causes a loss of motivation, but the other is the inability to see the specific work of a social worker in practice. Public perception of the performance of the profession rather than administrative staff based functions entrusted to take decisions in the institutions. Students based on the knowledge gained during the studies are in favor of further development in this area. No disappointment of barriers that do not allow them to come into direct contact with the client, make it impossible for them to practice social skills in specific situations to solve specific problems with a specific client. Based on the practical exercise direct process with the client shall enter into a student beliefs, which aims to upgrade procedures and methods of social work.

In 2013 we did our research that was focused on expertise and professionalism and the associated individual components of worker - client, at the level of their employees serving clients in social service and university students who are trained to practice under received the knowledge and training skills needed when working with clients.

From 310 questionnaires distributed 233 (75.16%) questionnaires were returned. The data used in the graphs were processed statistically relevant number of 147 (98%) of the total number of students who are engaged in research and relevant 86 (57.33%) of employees in the total number of questionnaires offered, and we expect to be more involved employees.

In the methodology of research there was collecting of material very important for us. On the basis of familiarity pedagogical documentation of education in the different areas we focus on practical methods, in which we observed the students, their statements and attitudes.

It was therefore essential in quantitative research to use such a method through which we concluded, at the same level of students and professionals. The main method of data collection was our best interview.

Based on a pilot to test the questionnaire, we have compiled a questionnaire, which consisted of a header, introduction, instructions that were given according to what

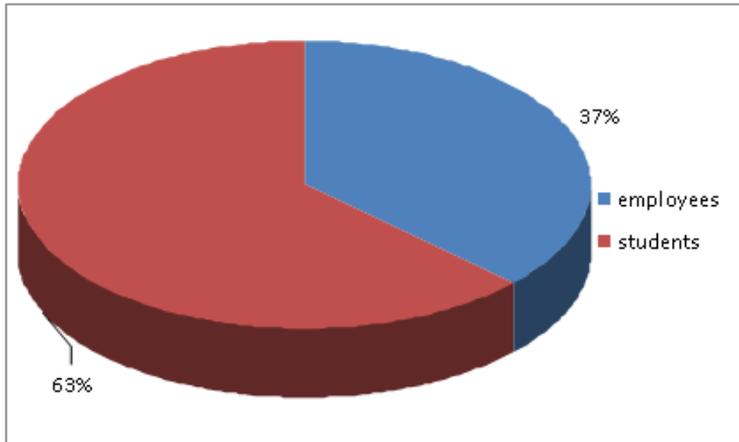
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<sup>14</sup> V. Kubani, L. Končekova, *Socio-psychological training*, Prešov 2003, p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> R. Komarkova, I. Slamenik, J. Vyrost, *Applied Social Psychology III. (Socio-psychological training)*, Praha 2001.

offers are concerned. The middle part consisted of closed and semi-closed lines which we offered the order of hierarchy, simple selection, multiple selection and scaling, ie ordinal scale, interval scale and Likert scale. In the final part of the questionnaire respondents, we thank you. We obtained data using statistical and logical methods analyzed in the graph below, where the discussion we synthesized the results with respect to the objectives of the research. Out of the research we choose for the needs of the theory presented following components relationships between social worker – adviser and client perception and interviewed.

Graph 1: Distribution of respondents to students and staff and a comparison



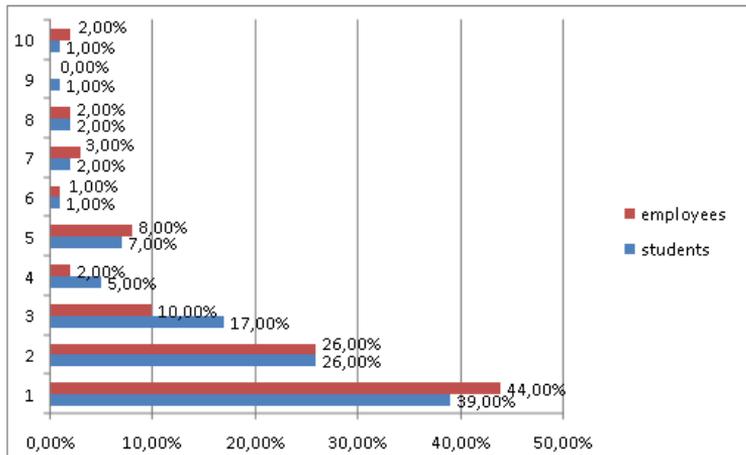
From 233 respondents (100%) there were 147 students (63.09%) and 86 employees (36.91%).

### RESEARCH RESULTS

The following chart presents the answers of respondents who identified after the division position of professional communication skills on a scale of one to ten, one was ten most important and least important.

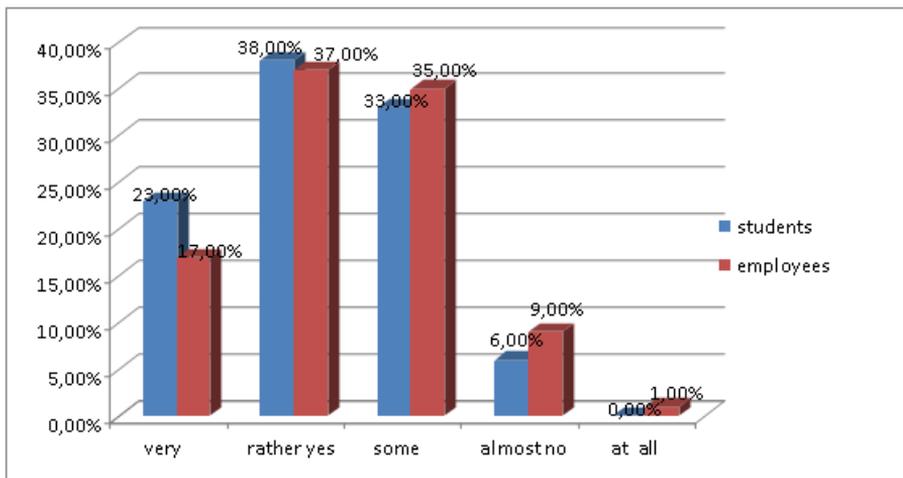
Communication skills are labeled respondents assigning a numerical value, and no one was the highest score and the lowest ranking number 10. No. 1 has assigned 57 (39%) students and 38 (44%) of employees, number 2 marked the 38 (26%) students and 22 (26%) of employees, number 3 recorded 25 (17%) of students and 9 (10%) of employees number 4 marked the 7 (5%) of students and 2 (2%) of employees, number 5 it was 10 (7%) of students and 7 (8%) of employees, number 6 has assigned one (1%) of students and staff, number 7 recorded 3 (2%) students and 3 (3%) of employees, number 8 said 3 (2%) of students and 2 (2%) of employees, number 9, it was one (1%) of students and 0 (0%) employees and number 10 said the two (1%) of students and 2 (2%) of employees, the number of 147 (100%) and 86 students (100%) of employees.

Graph 2: Position of communication skills and compare



We mention a graph in which the data are processed, where respondents responded to the theme of the extent to which it affects the relationships between social worker - adviser - client, just professional personality.

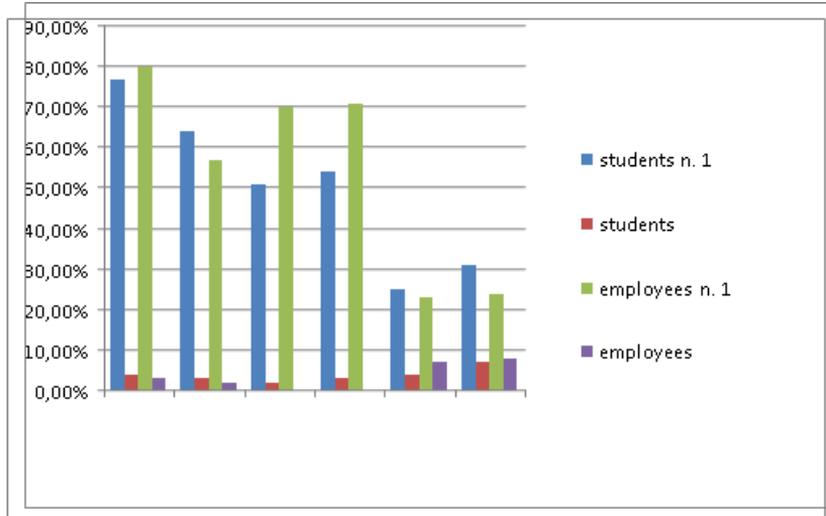
Graph 3: The respondents' attitudes to the importance of personality in relation professional – client



Very answered 34 (23%) students and 15 (17%) of employees rather yes 56 (38%) students and 32 (37%) of employees, some 48 (33%) students and 30 (35%) of employees, almost no 9 (6%) and 8 students (9%) of employees at all 0 (0%) students and one (1%) of employees, the number of 147 (100%) and 86 (100%) of employees.

What should be the relationship, ie the respondents considered the most important and least important was the question of the realized research. The following chart presents the answers of respondents.

Graph 4: rate the importance of aspects related professional – client and comparison



All aspects of the relationship were designated by number 1 – as the most important issue after 5 – as the least important.

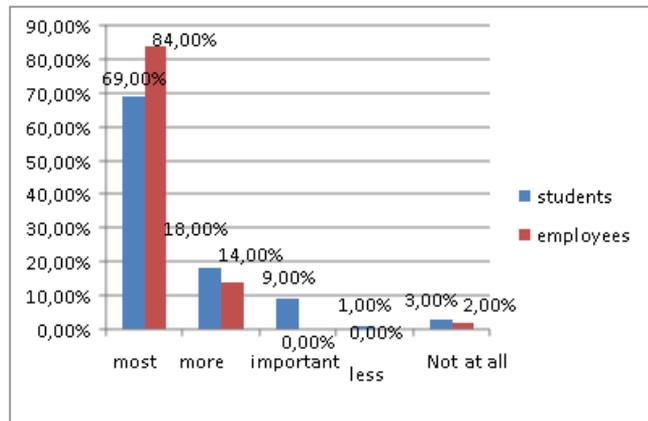
Trust under 1 identified 113 (77%) students and 69 (80%) of employees, number 2 19 (13%) students and 10 (12%) of employees, the number 3 has assigned 9 (6%) students and 3 (3%) employees, said the number 4 0 (0%) students and one (1%) of employees, number 5 has assigned 6 (4%) students and 3 (3%) employees. Sincerity ranked the number one in the number of 94 (64%) students and 49 (57%) of employees, the number two of 41 (28%) students and 23 (27%) of employees, number 3, it was 5 (3%) students and 9 (10%) of employees, number 4 marked 2 (1%) students and 3 (3%) employees and number 5 in number 5 (3%) students and 2 (2%) employees.

Cooperation ranked the number 1 75 (51%) students and 60 (70%) of employees, the number 2 in number of 51 (35%) students and 19 (22%) of employees, the number 3, it was 12 (8%) of students and 5 (6%) of employees, the number 4 in number 6 (4%) students and 2 (2%) of employees, the figure was 5 to 3 (2%) of students and 0 (0%) employees. Empathy under 1 identified 79 (54%) students and 61 (71%) of employees, the number 2 has assigned 44 (30%) students and 16 (19%) of employees under 3 it was 15 (10%) of students and 7 (8%) of employees under number 4 in 4 (3%) students and 2 (2%) of employees, the number 5 it was 5 (3%) of students and 0 (0%) employees.

Imagination said in section 1 of the 36 (25%) students and 20 (23%) of employees, the number 2 it was 37 (25%) students and 19 (22%) of employees, the number 3 has assigned 60 (41%) of students and 30 (35%) of employees, the number 4, it was seven (5%) and 11 students (13%) of employees, the number 5 in number 6 (4%) of students and 6 (7%) employees. Creativity marked the number 1 to number 45 (31%) students and 21 (24%) of employees, the number 2 it was 33 (22%) students and 24 (28%) of employees, the number 3 in number of 52 (35%) of students and 27 (31%) of employees under 4 and was 6 (4%) students and 7 (8%) of employees if the number 5 in the number 11 (7%) of students and 7 (8%) employees.

All data resulting from the number of respondents 147 (100%) and 86 students (100%) of employees. The chart describes the most important aspect of the relationship on the part of students and staff, that many respondents identified the forefront of which aspects and to the last place. Regarding the communicative and its importance, the following chart presents the level of importance of the skills being observable difference in perception between students and staff, thus professionals who understand communication skills fully, that all components of the communication.

Graph 5: Selected social skills and their importance – communicative and comparison

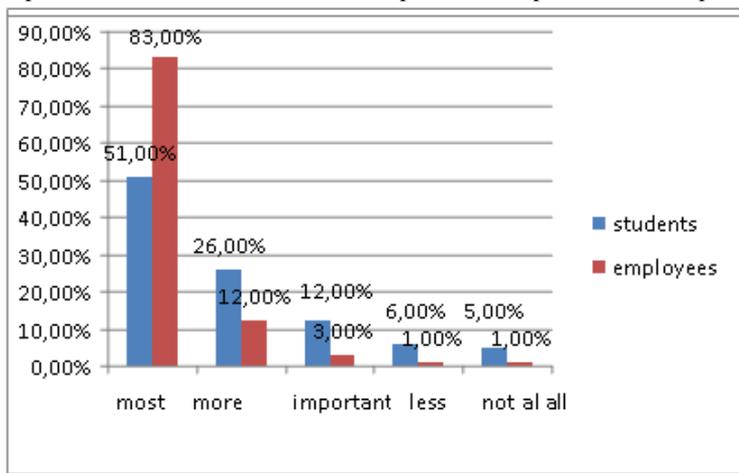


Communication skills as the most important capability said they were 102 (69%) students and 72 (84%) of employees for more important 26 (18%) students and 12 (14%) of employees, an important 13 (9%) of students and 0 (0%) employees less important 1 (1%) of students and 0 (0%) employees and not at all important 5 (3%) students and 2 (2%) of employees, the number of 147 (100%) students and 86 (100%) employees.

Expression levels of importance of empathy as a professional skill among respondents would be for discussion, because the term is more closely to students at the academic level, as a professional right to practice inclusion. It may take the dimension of lack of time and space for one client and therefore empathy extended to levels as we mentioned academic term.

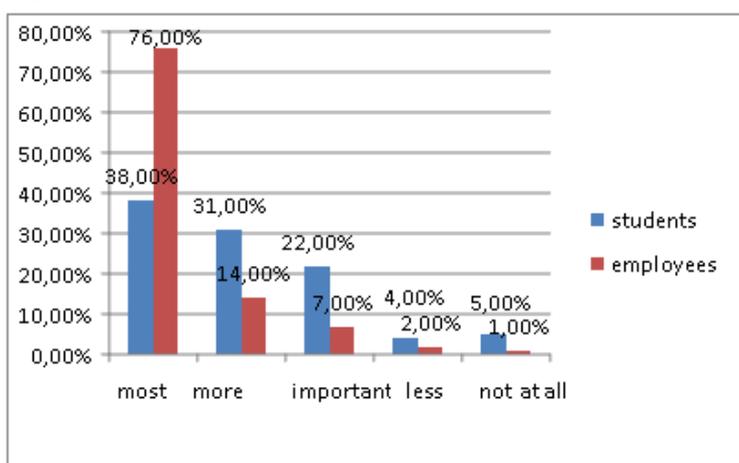
Be empathic as the most important capability said they were 75 (51%) students and 71 (83%) of employees for more important 38 (26%) students and 10 (12%) of employees, an important 17 (12%) students and 3 (3%) employees less important 9 (6%) students and one (1%) of employees and not at all important 8 (5%) students and one (1%) of employees, the number of 147 (100%) students and 86 (100%) employees.

Graph 6: Selected social skills and their importance - empathetic and comparison



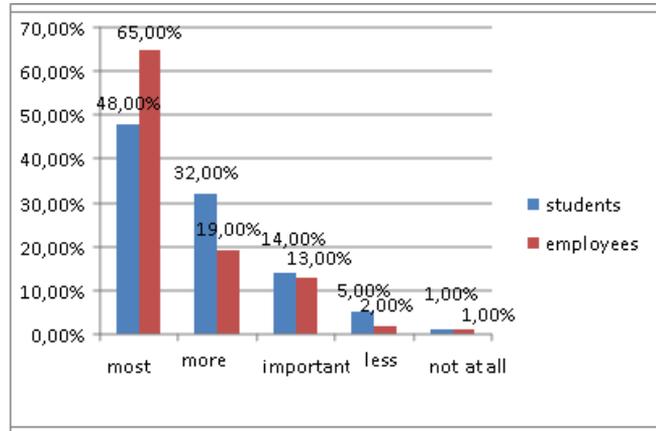
The importance to be assertive responded respondents with respect to the sample differently. This skill is clearly presented in practice, it is important for professionals to a large extent as for students.

Graph 7: Selected social skills and their importance - assertive and comparison



Be assertive as the most important capability said they were 54 (38%) students and 65 (76%) of employees for more important 45 (31%) students and 12 (14%) of employees, an important 32 (22%) of students and 6 (7%) employees less important 6 (4%) students and 2 (2%) of employees and not at all important 7 (5%) students and one (1%) of employees, the number of 147 (100%) of the students did not score this ability three students and the number 86 (100%) of employees are expressed by all.

Graph 8: Selected social skills and their importance – flexible and comparison



Be flexible as the most important capability said they were 70 (48%) students and 56 (65%) of employees for more important 47 (32%) students and 16 (19%) of employees, an important 21 (14%) students and 11 (13%) employees less important 8 (5%) of students and 2 (2%) of employees and not at all important 1 (1%) students and one (1%) of employees, the number of 147 (100%) students and 86 (100%) employees.

## DISCUSSION

Importance of personality in relationships between social worker - client is the discourse of many articles and lectures. The line, which we introduced as interval scale, the students presented, based on the census for our positive results in a ratio of 90 (61%) of employees who consider their own personality in relation important, but less than students, as the number of there were 47 (54%). On this basis, we conclude that the difference is not large, but we expected that employees in its "mechanical power" professions are not put into the foreground figure in the relationship. This is a positive result which leads to the fact that employees are in favor of the fact that their profession is particularly true man in his essence, and social workers are guides who guide the steps of the client. In this respect are essential ingredients for which we asked, and we expect that these components can be more aware of students, they are the subject of their studies, but the results have not confirmed their employees at combating. Within the trust confirmed it as the most important capability in respect of 132 students (90%), with 79 employees (92%). Accordingly, the statement on the same ingredients, with a very small margin of 2% for employees. However, for sincerity, there is a noticeable difference, because students prefer this capability in the number of 135 (92%) and 72 employees (84%). Here we can draw attention to a certain limit the possibility of assistance from the staff, because within the profession may, therefore, varies within the law and on the basis that there may be some ethical issues that will not allow him to help the client at its inner conviction, or it can be the other way around . This means the client has a „legal“ claim, but his situation is no exit for him. Cooperation and empathy again in the forefront staff, and 79 (92%) and 126 employees (86%) students in

cooperation and 77 (90%) and 123 employees (84%) students. On these components we can observe the extent to which students apply these components in practical training. Employees in this regard increasingly aware of the need for cooperation because in practice come into contact with other professionals, as well as the empathy component, which is in the exercise of the profession generally and in helping professions needed foreign exchange and personal attributes. Here we evaluate the students do not come into contact with clients or other professionals to the extent that they can perceive the importance of cooperation and empathy as far as operating systems as volunteers. Imagination again shifted to the forefront of students, the number of 73 (50%) than employees 39 (45%). There is also a small difference, but more students perceive imagination as well as the study itself based on imagination and creativity will know more familiar with the specific work of a social worker. However, with creativity, the results were positive responses, thus the status of the items on the top positions on an equal footing with students and staff, with a 1% difference. And that 78 (23%) and 45 students (52%) of employees. In assessing items that were directed to the research objectives, the students expressed the generalization is achieved within the three items of equal value or a minimum lead they were 2 items, while staff expressed in two lines optimistic than students. Of summarizing the items it shows that students are aware of the relationships between social worker – client more than employees.

As part of our objective perception survey respondents importance of communication skills, we note the following. We expected that the staff recognizes the importance of these skills as guidelines as students. Under, where we asked the social worker communication skills, our respondents were the individual components assign numeric values of importance, the position, in its sole discretion. Communication skills such as identified as one of the most important capabilities, the number was 84 (98%) and 128 employees (87%) of students. It follows that a higher percentage resulted in employees, from a practical point of view. Here we found the need to develop these skills in students in direct practice. Communication in a general sense is discussed in the context of studies on individual school levels. But its specific application, thus in effect "trying out" interviewed to appeal to a particular situation, even if fictitious, in practical training, can not be implemented in the area to the extent that it led to the collection of experiences. Empathy was another capacity in which respondents reported its importance, with 81 employees (95%) and among 113 students (77%). There is a difference in the perception of two variables, which in turn leads us to the specific application of communication skills among students. Assertive social worker is a concept in which most of the students mentioned explanation as "able to say no." However, in the theoretical part of this skill it has several attributes. There was at 77 employees (90%) compared to the importance of attitude as students of 99 (69%). Flexibility as regards social skills and communication, and thus the search of offering several options to address the client's situation. However, in a crisis situation it applies more strongly than in the normal course of operations. Students considered it one of the most important in 117 (80%) cases, while employees in 72 (84%) cases.

The difference is not striking, but beliefs about the nature of the skills prevalent among employees. Respondents were asked to determine the overall position of communication skills in the value chain, according to the perception that these skills with a social worker. Result has been to be the same, with a 1% difference in favor of students, because the census respondents who assigned these competences numerical value expressing the importance was 120 (82%) and 69 students (81%) of employees. That situation was expected because of the presentation of communication within the study, but also in everyday life.

## CONCLUSION

The possibility of applying social worker in practice has given rise to institutions that provide social insurance, assistance, support, or a device whose function is to ensure the man in his unfavorable life situation of all ages. The labor market lacks facilities through which social worker could perform and execute all methods of social work, which were the subject of his study. Use of a wide range of room to roam expert would remain with him, his social skills and the ability to apply knowledge in practical activities. Generally are not available funds through which they were able to be realized in social work, as required by its theory and science as such.

We have tried to emphasize the need for flexible social workers would be fully able to take seats in various sectors as a full qualified professionals. However, even today there is no room for it, so we find, for example, in education, in health care or other areas where the main concern is to help the man and guide the life of those who are unable to cope with social problems.

So here we see the need to appeal to the professional development of social skills which in practical training comes into situations through which personality traits can be corrected, increase positive attitude, is just able to see the deficiencies or conditions for their exercise. On the other hand, also it receives feedback from knowledgeable teachers, but also colleagues. It is important that every social worker personally grow, to acquire more experience, then that direct action could fully exercise the profession, thereby increasing its status.

When communication skills we investigated to what extent the individual characteristics of the interview, that the social worker in the interview are aware, that is the extent to which identification with them. The results presented in the empirical part, we see that the current status of the sometimes „dishonest remaking“ social work public is only a temporary condition. Optimistic view of respondents leads us to greater motivation, to keep in the learning process in this area and also participate in its development.

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