

Public Perception about Social Work Profession

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Abstract

The perception of social work profession is very important, because there are people that are beneficiaries of social services. So, if we have positive perceptions, will have a strong relationship between social workers and people and the quality of services will be better. We have a quantitative study. The main purpose of the paper is to know the public information and perception about the social work profession. The research questions of the paper are: 1. What is the information of Shkodra citizens regarding the social work profession? 2. What is the perception of Shkodra citizens about the social work profession? 3. What is the opinion of Shkodra citizens regarding the areas of social work? 4. What is the opinion of Shkodra citizens regarding the roles of the social worker? The population of the study is composed of residents of the city of Shkodra. The sampling consists of people who have reached the age of 18. It is used the survey method. A questionnaire composed of four parts is used. The first part includes the demographic data of the participants, the second part includes data about the information of participants for social work profession, the third part includes data related to the perception that they have regarding social work profession and the fourth part includes data about the opinion of the participants for the fields and roles of the social workers. The survey was created on the basis of different sources. There are given the conclusions and the appropriate suggestions.

Keywords: Shkodra city, social work, public perception.

1. Introduction

In Albania social work profession is relatively new.

The Social Work School was opened for the first time in Albania in autumn 1992, with VKM No. 348 dt. 10.08.1992 at the University of Tirana as the Faculty of Social Work. During 1992-1996 the first social work program was developed in Albania and in 1996 the first generation of social work students was graduated (Department of Politics and Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, 2015).

Subsequently, there were opened similar study programs in other universities. At the University "Luigj Gurakuqi" of Shkodra the study program "Bachelor in Social Work" started in 2005 and the first students were graduated in 2008. The city of Shkodra is located in northwestern Albania. It is the seat of Shkodra Municipality.

It is very important to clarify the concept of *social work* before moving on to the public perception about social work profession. What is the social work profession? The IFSW (the International Federation of Social Workers) and the IASSW (the International Association of Schools of Social Work) in July 2014 approved the following definition: "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of

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people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing “.

As the public is the main consumer of social work services, raising confidence in professional social work is vital to the success of programs and policies (LeCroy & Stinson, 2004) (cited by Spear A.R., 2016, p.12).

Based on what was cited above, it is very important to be known the perception that the public has about this profession.

2. Literature Review

The perception of social work and social workers is important, because as LeCroy and Stinson (2004) said, social workers cannot fulfill their mission to care for others if the general public is uninformed, confused, or hostile toward the profession. When the public's support for the profession declines, the credibility of the profession also declines. Veigel (2009) indicated that serious consequences could occur if there are negative perceptions of the profession: hurt credibility, stigma for receiving services from social workers, a decline in the number of people entering the profession, and a decrease in services offered (cited by Amann S.C., 2013, p.5).

“The more that social work is perceived positively, the more likely it is to gain support for its programmes, to have its services utilized, to maintain morale, to attract recruits and to have its voice heard” (Kaufman & Raymond, as cited in Reid & Misener, 2001, p. 194) (cited by Jeffrey Olin).

Many of the studies have indicated that there is a perception that social workers are principally involved in child protection, and that, other than this association, there is confusion about what we do (Hackett, Kuronen, Matthies, & Kresal, 2003; LeCroy & Stinson, 2004; Davidson & King, 2005; Krumer-Nevo & Weiss, 2006; Schmid & Benbenishty, 2011; Condie, Hanson, Lang, Moss, & Kane, 1978). This confusion is also reflected in research which has considered how other professions who work alongside social workers, such as physicians and nurses, have perceived the roles of social workers (Netting & Williams, 1996; Black, 2006; Keefe, Geron, & Enguidanos, 2009; Egan & Kadushin, 1995; Postle, 2001) (cited by Staniforth B., Fouché C. and Beddoe L., 2014, p.49).

The findings from the survey on public attitudes and knowledge about social workers in Israel indicated that side by side with fairly high recognition of general areas related to the social work profession, there was a certain lack of comprehension in regard to the roles performed by social workers. Attitudes toward social workers were ambivalent. Although on most parameters examined they received the lowest rankings of all professional fields with which they were compared, a fairly high percentage of respondents rejected critical and biased statements about social workers and defined them as people whose work is based on values, social ideology, and professional ethics, and also believed that it is necessary to increase the number of social workers in Israel and to improve their employment terms and conditions (Kagan M., 2015).

3. Methodology

The main purpose of the paper is to know the public information and perception about the social work profession. It is a quantitative study.

The research questions of the paper are:

1. What is the information of Shkodra citizens regarding the social work profession?
2. What is the perception of Shkodra citizens about the social work profession?
3. What is the opinion of Shkodra citizens regarding the areas of social work?
4. What is the opinion of Shkodra citizens regarding the roles of the social worker?

Sampling. The population of the study is composed of residents of the city of Shkodra. The city of Shkodra is composed of 5 administrative units (regions). The sampling consists of people who have reached the age of 18. It is used the probability sampling. "In probability sampling, each member of the population has some definable probability of being selected for the sample" (Goodwin C.J., 2005, p.405). It was taken a simple random sample. The questionnaires have been distributed to each region, mainly by meeting people in the streets, shops and locales. People have been clarified regarding the content and the purpose of the questionnaire and they have been clarified about the fact that the questionnaire is anonymous. People were free to choose whether or not to fill in the questionnaire. The administration of the surveys was made during the period June-September 2018. Some of the participants completed the questionnaires immediately, the others took the questionnaires at home and promised to bring them tomorrow in that place. In total 400 questionnaires were distributed, given the fact that the city of Shkodra has 5 regions. 57 questionnaires have not been returned back to tomorrow. 38 questionnaires have been considered invalid, because people have left out many items of the questionnaires (four and more).

In the study we had 305 participants, of whom 120 (or 39.3% of the participants) are male, 185 (60.7%) are women. The participants in the study are of different ages. Their age varies from 18 years (1 participant) to 70 years (2 participants). The average age of the participants was 35.33 years. The participants are in different age groups. 205 participants (67.2% of the participants) are of the early adulthood (ages 18-40), 94 participants (30.8% of the participants) are of the middle adulthood (ages 41-65) and 6 participants (2% of the participants) are of the late adulthood (ages 65+). The participants of the study live in 26 neighborhoods of the city, or, alternatively, in the five regions. There are 49 (or 16.1% of participants) residents of the Region 1, 58 (or 19%) are residents of the Region 2, 25 (or 8.2%) are residents of the Region 3, 50 (or 16, 4%) are residents of the Region 4 and 113 (37%) are residents of the Region 5. 10 participants (3.3%) have not given the region where they live. The participants in the study have different statuses. 119 participants (39%) are single, 161 participants (52.8%) are married, 9 participants (3%) are divorced, while 16 participants (5.2%) have not given their answers. The financial status of the participants varies from poor (16 participants or 5.2%) to medium (260 participants or 85.2%) to rich (27 participants or 8.9%). 2 participants (or 0.7%) have not given any answer. The participants in the study have different levels of education. 1 participant (or 0,3%) has elementary education, 15 participants (or 4.9%) have primary education, 126 participants (or 41.4%) have secondary education, 77 participants (or 25.2%) have Bachelor Education, 84

participants (or 27.6%) have Master, 1 participant (0.3%) has the Doctorate and 1 participant (or 0.3%) is Associate Professor. The participants in the study practice different professions. 33 participants (10.9%) are students, 10 participants (3.3%) are sellers, 8 participants (2.6%) are tailors, 16 participants (5.2%) are stay-at-homes, 39 participants (12.8%) are teachers, 4 participants (1.3%) are cooks, 5 participants (1.6%) are retirees, 4 participants (1.3%) are employees, 4 participants (1.3%) are financiers, 4 participants (1.3%) are lawyers, 11 participants (3.6%) are workers in the factory, 11 participants (3.6%) are economists, 6 participants (2%) are electrician technicians, 2 participants (0.7%) are carpenters, 15 participants (5%) are waitresses, 10 participants (3.3%) are unemployed, 3 participants (1%) are masons, 4 participants (1.3%) are police officers, 4 participants (1.3%) are sales managers, 2 participants (0.7%) are entrepreneurs, 4 participants (1.3%) are businessmen, 9 participants (3%) are educators, 7 participants (2.3%) are mechanics, 1 participant (0.3%) is duraluminium worker, 1 participant (0.3%) is supervisor, 8 participants (2.6%) are nurses, 2 participants (0.7%) are dentists, 1 participant (0.3%) is kitchen helper, 4 participants (1.3%) are managers, 2 participants (0.7%) are hairdressers, 1 participant (0.3%) is a blogger, 1 participant (0.3%) is director, 1 participant (0.3%) is football player, 3 participants (1%) are receptionists, 5 participants (1.6%) are journalists, 2 participants (0.7%) are merchants, 1 participant (0.3%) is baker, 2 participants (0.7%) are laboratory technicians, 1 participant (0.3%) is esthetician, 5 participants (1.6%) are drivers, 4 participants (1.3%) are telephone operators, 1 participant (0.3%) is advocate, 2 participants (0.7%) are engineers, 1 participant (0.3%) is a painter, 1 participant (0.3%) is a member of the National Business Center, 3 participants (1%) are sanitary workers, 2 participants (0.7%) are pica specialists, 2 participants (0.7%) are barists, 3 participants (1%) are informaticiens, 4 participants (1.3%) are plumbers, 1 participant (0.3%) is supportive teacher, 2 participants (0.7%) are architects, 4 participants (1.3%) are psychologists, 2 participants (0.7%) are assistants, 1 participant (0.3%) is hydrotechnic, 1 participant (0.3%) is shoemaker, 1 participant (0.3%) is a car painter, 1 participant (0.3%) is a guard, 1 participant (0.3%) is instructor, 1 participant (0.3%) is a painter, while 11 participants (3.6%) have not expressed their profession. 194 participants (or 63.6%) personally recognize one social worker, 110 participants (or 36.1%) do not know any social worker, while 1 participant (or 0.3%) did not answer. 140 participants (or 45.9%) personally recognize a person who has received services from a social worker, 163 participants (or 53.4%) do not know, while 2 participants (or 0.7%) did not given a response.

The measuring instrument. It was used the survey method. A questionnaire composed of four parts was used. The first part includes the demographic data of the participants, the second part includes data about the information of participants for social work profession, the third part includes data related to the perception that they have regarding social work profession and the fourth part includes data about the opinion of the participants for the fields and roles of the social workers. The syrvey was created on the basis of: a) the study made by Bridget Penhale and Julie Young in 2015; b) the thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Social Work in the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University By Leah B. Cramer in 2015; c) the paper of Staniforth B., Fouché C. and Beddoe L. in 2014, d) the thesis of Robert Veigel presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Science in social Work, the University of Texas. Arlington in 2009, and e) the paper of Craig Winston LeCroy and Erica L. Stinson in 2004. The third part of the questionnaire which measures the perception of the participants for social work profession consisted of Likert scale including: “Strongly disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neutral”, “Agree”, “Strongly agree”. This scale was coded from 1 to 5. 1 represented “Strongly disagree”, 2 represented “Disagree”, 3 represented “Neutral”, 4 represented “Agree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree”. In total, there were 25 items. Items that were negatively worded were reverse coded. So, a higher score means a more positive perception of social workers.

In this study is used SPSS 20 software in order to analyse the data. There were utilized Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, Standard Deviations and Anova Table. It was calculated the reliability of the scale. Alpha Cronbach's =0.76.

4. Results

4.1 Data about the information of participants for social work profession

1. The opinion of the participants for the minimum level of education needed to become a social worker.

1 participant (0.3%) thinks is needed primary education. 29 participants (9.5%) think that is needed secondary education. 113 participants (37%) think that Bachelor degree is needed. 146 participants (47.9%) think that is needed Master degree. 11 participants (3.7%) think that is need a PhD. 5 participants (1.6%) have not given any response.

2. The opinion of the participants regarding the licensing of the social workers.

211 (or 69,2%) of respondents answered that social workers should have the license to practice this profession, 86 participants (or 28.2%) answered that the license is not needed and 8 participants (2.6%) did not given a response.

3. The opinion of the participants regarding the need for continuing education of the social workers.

209 participants (or 68.6%) said that for the social workers is necessary to practice continuing education, 95 participants (31.1%) do not consider it necessary and 1 participant (0.3%) did not given the answer.

4. The opinion of the participants regarding the practicing of the social work profession mainly by men or women.

49 participants (16.1%) answered that social workers are mostly males. 255 participants (83.6%) answered that social workers are mostly women, while 1 participant (0.3%) has not responded.

5. Participants impressions for social workers.

1 participant (or 0.3%) has negative impressions for social workers, 78 participants (or 25.6%) gave a neutral answer, 181 participants or 59.3% have positive impressions, 45 participants (or 14.8%) have a very positive impression.

6. The opinion of the participants regarding the institutions they think that is indispensable for a social worker to work.

In the first place are listed *Services for children* (69.2% of participants), in the

second place we have *School* (52.5%), in the third place we have *Asylum* (50.2%), in the fourth place are listed *Hospitals* (37.7%), in the sixth place are listed *Offices* (25.9%) and lastly there are *Restaurants* (0.3%).

7. The opinion of the participants regarding their main sources of information for social workers.

The main sources of information to the public are: The word of Mouth(44.6%), Internet (37%) and televised news broadcasts (25.9%). Other sources are: Personal experience (22.3%), Books (20.7%), TV shows (18.3%), Newspapers (11.5%), Magazines (2.3%) and Cinema (1.6%).

These data are given in the table 1.

Table 1: Data about the information of participants for social work profession

Nr	The opinion of the participants for the minimum level of education needed to become a social worker	Yes	No	Without response
1	Primary education	0.3%	-	-
	Secondary education	9.5%	-	-
	Bachelor degree	37%	-	-
	Master degree	47.9%	-	-
	PhD.	3.7%	-	-
				1.6%
2	The licensing of the social workers	69.2%	28.2%	2.6%
3	The need for continuing education	68.6%	31.1%	0.3%
4	The practicing of the social work profession mainly by			
	Males	16.1%	-	-
	Females	83.6%	-	-
				0.3%
5	The impressions for social workers			
	Negative	0.3%	-	
	Neutral	25.6%	-	
	Positive	59.3%	-	
	Very positive	14.8%	-	
6	The opinion of the participants regarding the institutions they think that is indispensable to work for a social worker			
	Schools	52,5%	46.8%	0,7%
	Hospitals	37.7%	61.6%	0,7%
	Restaurants	0,3%	99%	0,7%
	Prisons	38.7%	60.6%	0,7%
	Offices	25.9%	73.4%	0,7%
	Services for children	69.2%	30.1%	0,7%
	Asylum	50.2%	49.1%	0,7%
7	The opinion of the participants regarding their main sources of information for social workers			
	Personal experience	22.3%	77%	0,7%
	The word of Mouth	44.6%	54.7%	0,7%
	Books	20.7%	78.6%	0,7%
	Cinema	1.6%	97.7%	0,7%
	TV shows	18.3%	81%	0,7%
	Televised news broadcasts	25.9%	73.4%	0,7%
	Newspapers	11.5%	87.8%	0,7%
	Magazines	2.3%	97%	0,7%
	The Internet	37%	62.3%	0,7%

4.2 Data related to the perception of participants about the social work

1. General data

Table 2: General data related to the perception of participants about the social work

	Nr	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Perception	305	87.56	88	94	8.46	65	113
Valid	305						

The minimum of the obtained values is 65 and is achieved by 1 participant (0.3% of the participants in the study), the maximum is 113 and is obtained by 2 participants (0.7%). The mean is 87.56 and the mode is 94. Values of 65-88 were obtained from 165 participants (54%) and the values of 89-113 was obtained from 140 participants (46%).

2. The impact of gender on general perception

Table 3: Data related to the impact of gender on general perception about the social work

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Male	120	86.98	7.88039	65	104
Female	185	87.93	8.81797	66	113
Total	305	87.56	8.46104	65	113

It is used Anova Table. Female participants have a more positive perception (Mean= 87.93) than male participants (Mean=86.98) related to the profession of social work. Such a difference is not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.338), although it should be noted that we do not have an approximate number of participants male and female in the study.

3. The impact of the age group on the general perception

It is used Anova Table. People in middle adulthood have a more positive perception (Mean= 88.35) than people in early adulthood (Mean= 87.23) and people in late adulthood (Mean = 86.16). Such a difference is not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.529), although it should be noted that we do not have an approximate number of participants for each age group.

Table 4: Data related to the age group on the general perception

Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Early adulthood	205	87.23	8.50	66	113
Middle adulthood	94	88.35	8.20	65	106
Late adulthood	6	86.16	11.44	71	103
Total	305	87.56	8.46	65	113

4. The impact of region on general perception

Table 5: Data related to the impact of region on general perception about the social work

Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
I	49	88.18	9.83	65	113
II	58	87.48	8.55	72	106
III	25	86.32	7.58	74	102
IV	50	87.76	8.56	66	106
V	113	87.75	7.9	72	113
Total	295	87.65	8.42	65	113

It is used Anova Table. The residents of Region 1 have more positive perceptions (Mean=88.18) about social work profession, while less positive perceptions have residents of Region 3 (Mean=86.32), but this relationship is not statistically significant (Sig. =0.930).

5. The impact of participants' status on general perception

Table 6: Data related to the impact of status on general perception about the social work

Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Single	119	87.01	8.26	72	113
Married	161	88.14	8.65	65	112
Divorced	9	83.66	7.71	73	94
Total	289	87.54	8.48	65	113

It is used Anova Table. Married persons have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to single and divorced persons, but such a difference is not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.207).

6. The impact of financial status of the participants on general perception

Table 7: Data related to the impact of financial status on general perception about the social work

Financial status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Poor	16	85.25	8.91	73	100
Medium	260	87.96	8.37	65	113
Rich	27	85.00	8.89	72	112
Total	303	87.56	8.47	65	113

Middle class people have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to poor and rich people, but this difference is not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.119), however it should be emphasized the fact that we have no similar number of participants for each category of financial status.

7. The impact of the level of education of the participants on general perception

Table 8: Data related to the impact of education on general perception about the social work

Level of education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-university education	142	87.31	8.08	65	113
University education	163	87.77	8.79	66	113
Total	305	87.56	8.46	65	113

It is used Anova Table. People with university education have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people with pre-university education, but this difference is not statistically significant (Sig.= 0.639).

8. The impact of knowing a social worker on the general perception

Table 9: Data related to the impact of knowing a social worker on general perception about the social work

Knowing a social worker	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Yes	194	87.75	8.84	65	113
No	110	87.12	7.73	72	112
Total	304	87.52	8.45	65	113

It is used Anova Table. The people that know a social worker have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people who don't know, but this relationship is not statistically significant (Sig.=0.536).

9. The impact of knowing a person who has received services from a social worker on the general perception

Table 10: Data related to the impact of knowing a person who has received services from a social worker on general perception about the social work

Knowing a person who has received services	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Yes	140	88.47	8.70	71	113
No	163	86.69	8.19	65	113
Total	303	87.51	8.46	65	113

It is used Anova Table. The people that know a person that has received services from a social worker have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people who don't know, but this relationship is not statistically significant (Sig.=0.067).

4.3 Data related to the opinion of the participants about the areas and roles of the social workers

Table 11: Data related to the opinion of the participants about the areas and roles of the social workers

Areas of the social workers	Yes	No	Without response
Child abuse and neglect	64.6%	24.3%	11.1%
Troubled teenagers	61.3%	25.6%	13.1%
Parents and parenting problems	68.2%	18.7%	13.1%
Mental illness and addiction	37.5%	44.4%	18.1%
Services for elders	77.3%	14.1%	8.6%
Health-adapting to illness	36.2%	42.4%	21.4%
Prison and probation	57.0%	24.3%	18.7%
Roles of the social workers	Yes	No	Without response
Support parents and families	81.6%	7.9%	10.5%
Do counseling with people	65.2%	17.8%	17.0%
Help people to get resources	58.0%	22.3%	19.7%
Help communities to solve problems	70.2%	13.7%	16.1%
Influence social policy	53.4%	22.6%	24%
Speak out against injustice	52.1%	21.0%	26.9%

As we can see, the main areas of social workers focus are: *Services for elders* (77.3%), *Parents and parenting problems* (68.2%), *Child abuse and neglect* (64.6%). The participants list other areas, such as: *Troubled teenagers* (61.3%), *Prison and probation* (57%), *Mental illness and addiction* (37.5%), *Health-adapting to illness* (36.2%).

The respondents have paid attention to the roles of the social workers. They particularly appreciated these roles: *Supports parents and families* (81.6%), *Helps communities to solve problems* (70.2%), *Do counseling with people* (65.2%). Then they listed: *Help people to get resources* (58.0%), *Influence social policy* (53.4%), and *Speak out against injustice* (52.1%).

5. Conclusion

A. Data about the information of participants for social work profession.

Most of the participants in the study think that the minimum level of education needed to become a social worker is university education, mainly they think that Master degree is needed. Regarding the licensing of the social workers public perception is that the social workers should have the license to practice their profession. In fact, In Albania, The Law No. 163/2014 "About the Order of Social Workers in the Republic of Albania" (amended by Law No. 45/2017, dated 6.4.2017) is not active, so we aren't able to say if public information is correct or not. People consider necessary for social workers to practice continuing education. In general, there are biases on the part of the residents of Shkodra city regarding the practicing of the social work profession mainly by women. So there are stereotypes that social workers are mostly females. There is a positive impression for the social workers. The main institutions that the participants think that is indispensable to work for a social worker are: Services for children, School, Asylum and Hospitals. The main sources of information for social workers for the people are: The word of Mouth, the Internet and Televised news broadcasts.

B. Data related to the perception of participants about the social work

In general, the public perception about the social work is good. Female participants have a more positive perception than male participants related to the profession of social work. People in middle adulthood have a more positive perception than people of other age groups. The residents of Region 1 have more positive perceptions about social work profession, while less positive perceptions have residents of Region 3. Married persons have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to single and divorced persons. Middle class people have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to poor and rich people. People with university education have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people with pre-university education. The people that know a social worker have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people who don't know and the people that know a person that has received services from a social worker have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people who don't know. The participants' age influences their perception about the social work profession.

C. Data related to the opinion of the participants about the areas and roles of the social workers

The participants in the study think that the main areas of social workers focus are: Services for elders, Parents and parenting problems, Child abuse and neglect. The participants list other areas, such as: Troubled teenagers, Prison and probation, Mental illness and addiction, Health-adapting to illness.

The respondents have paid attention to the roles of the social workers. They particularly appreciated these roles: Supports parents and families, Helps communities to solve problems, do counseling with people. Then they listed: Help people to get resources, Influence social policy, and speak out against injustice.

6. Discussion of the Results

In general, the findings of the paper are conform to the literature sources and to the findings of other similar studies.

Two common stereotypes permeate the social work profession. Social work is viewed as a female profession and that social workers' primary role is to protect children (Dennison et al, 2007; Lecroy& Stinson, 2004; Mcphail, 2004) (cited by Veigel R., 2009, p.14). Even in Shkoder, the profession of social work is mainly seen as a profession for women and the work with the children is considered among the main areas of social workers focus.

Davidson and King's in 2005 made a study in order to understand public perceptions of social services in Scotland. According to them, 40% of the study's participants had come into contact with social work services, either personally or through a family member. Of this population, 80% were satisfied with the service they received. Despite the significant number of those who had contact with social workers, only half of participants believed that they understood their role. The minority of participants (40%) correctly understood the education requirements of social workers. Most participants could name only one social work service, with children's services (relating to abuse and neglect) and assistance for older people being most regularly cited. A very small minority mentioned services such as respite care and occupational therapy. Young people, older people and disability services were considered as most important. (McCulloch T., Webb S., Clarke D., 2017, p.23-24).

In Shkoder the public perception about the social work is good. Middle class people have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to poor and rich people. People with university education have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people with pre-university education. The people that know a social worker have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people who don't know and the people that know a person that has received services from a social worker have more positive perceptions regarding the social work profession compared to people who don't know any person that has received services from a social worker.

Some findings of the paper matched the findings of the study made by Leah B. Cramer in 2015, in Columbus, Ohio. As the author cited: "The results show that the general public has an average amount of knowledge about social work, with the distribution showing a normal bell curve and the most common result being a correct answer on five out of nine knowledge questions. As for where this knowledge comes from, personally knowing a social worker was significant along with having an Associate's degree or higher. When it comes to perception, the majority of participants have an either neutral or positive view of the profession".

Other findings are:" When it came to credentials, 82.4% of respondents believed that social workers are required to be licensed in the state of Ohio and 79.2% believed that social workers are required practice continuing education. The reports of this study show that the two significant factors in someone's perception of social work are personally knowing a social worker and the amount of knowledge one has about social work. (Cramer L.B. (2015), p.15-17).

7. Suggestions

It is necessary the public should be given more information about the profession of social work. More effort has to be made to change people mentality that social workers can be not just the women, but the men also. More work should be done to provide information about social work profession through books, televised news broadcasts, newspapers and magazines. It is necessary to improve the perception about social work profession in general and mainly to men, to residents of Region 3, to single and divorced persons, to people with pre-university education, to persons who do not know a social worker and to persons who do not know someone who has received services from a social worker.

There is a need to work towards raising awareness among the people about the fact that very important areas of focus of social work include: Troubled teenagers, Prison and probation, Mental illness and addiction, and Health-adapting to illness. There is a need to work towards raising public awareness that the main roles of social workers are also such roles as: Help people to get resources, Influence social policy, and Speak out against injustice.

The literature suggests that the media's portrayal of social work, stereotypes about the profession and a general lack of knowledge of the social work profession contribute to the public's perception of social work (Veigel R., 2009, p.11). So, we should have in consideration, in addition to other sources, the role of the media.

The ways in which social workers are portrayed in the print media may have a large impact on the profession; language used to describe social workers and the work they do in news stories may influence both the way clients view social workers, and the way politicians discuss legislation and funding for social services (Smoley H., 2016, p.8-9). For this purpose, it is very important for social workers to be active participants in the media.

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