

Critique

This study has two major implications for human service professionals. First, it identifies some of the essential ingredients that enable human service agencies to be effective. Second, it provides a basis for further research possibilities among the human service professions.

One of the essential ingredients that effective human service professions must have is data-based information. As shown in this study, gathering and utilizing base line data allow planning to occur from the vantage point of what is known rather than what is inferred. Thus, a data base provides focus and direction for planning, moves beyond informal assessments or progress reports, and can effect positive change.

A second essential ingredient is collaboration in identifying gaps in services. Such a collaborative process permits representatives of agencies involved to examine the scope and sequence of their services. As the study indicates, problems such as duplication of services, limited accessibility, and the absence of essential services do exist. Examining the scope of services collectively, or from a collective data base, results in a more precise assessment for determining which services can be extended, eliminated, dovetailed, or compacted. In terms of sequence for delivery of services, again, collective data enables efficient planning for offering services that are prerequisite to others, that can be delivered simultaneously, that should be extensions of others, or that can reinforce others.

A third essential ingredient provided for human service professionals is a profile of personnel, especially a profile that indicates the individual attitudes toward job commitment. Commitment to one's professional role and responsibilities is crucial to one's effective job performance. Dawkins' study has yielded data which demonstrate commitment to the profession and to the community.

Areas for further research that appear to be beneficial to human service professionals include more extensive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the service providers and additional perceptions of providers and residents. Perceptions related to service providers could focus on self perceptions. Specific research questions might include:

1. What are service providers' perceptions related to belief in self and one's ability to make a difference?

2. What are service providers' perceptions related to belief in their co-workers, coalitions, and the collective ability to make a difference?
3. What characteristics do service providers demonstrate that indicate their effectiveness with clients? How do these characteristics relate to characteristics noted in data on the self-perceptions of service providers?
4. What evidence is there to indicate that service providers are able to empathize with clients? Is there a relationship between that evidence and the characteristics noted in the data on self-perceptions of service providers?
5. What is the relationship (or is there a relationship) between expressed and perceived job commitment and effective job performance?

Data on residents' or clients' perceptions of self might also be gathered. Such perceptions could then be compared with service providers' perceptions of residents. Similarly, service providers' perceptions of self could be compared with clients' perceptions of service providers.

One final area for further research might be to explore how coalitions effect modifications in programs. Researchers might seek: 1) to determine the types of changes that can be actualized; 2) to identify the components of the processes that effect change; 3) to identify the factors that contribute to effecting changes. There are undoubtedly many other areas for further research. However, Dawkins' study is one which makes a contribution to the knowledge base of human service professionals who seek to become increasingly effective in their chosen fields.

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