THE EFFECT OF THE MEDIA ON THE IMAGE FORMATION OF THE POLICE INSTITUTION

Rasa DOBRŽINSKIENĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: rasa.dobrzinskiene@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6590-4164

Rimantė MOCKUTĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: rimante.mockute@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1599-4768

Abstract. The success of every organization and institution partly depends on image formation in society. The formation of the opinions of individuals in modern society is also influenced by the increasingly popular online media. These days, information on the Internet spreads much faster than through other sources of public information. Means of public information are very important nowadays in our society, they form an opinion about a certain object or create an image of a certain institution. The mass media, having an influence on public opinion, easily creates images about certain institutions. Having the right image and the trust of the citizens of the state, the institution can communicate properly and achieve its goals. Therefore, the goal of many organizations is to have a great image. It is not easy to do, it requires a lot of effort. The police, like every organization, has the goal of working usefully and having the public's trust, and with trust, the image of the institution can be created. In order to achieve this, the police often publish public information about the institution's activities, achievements or good works done to the largest possible audience of people, in this way the aim is to form a better reputation of the institution. The already existing image of the organization is like a representation, because it describes the institution itself, allows to evaluate and receive feedback, evaluates the favorability of the person, the behavior towards the organization.
A police institution also strives to create an image and strives to make it a good one. This is quite difficult to do, but with a lot of effort not only from the organization itself, but also from its employees, it becomes an easier task. Employees are one of the links in creating the image of the organization in society. Employees of a police agency have rules that they must follow in order to ensure that their behavior is appropriate both when dealing with the media and with the public. Thus, the purpose of this article is to evaluate the influence of the media on the image of the police institution.
The research reveals the influence of the media on the image of the police institution, but the media is not the only influencing tool. Personal experience when dealing with this institution is also extremely important. And the most frequently mentioned means of public information are social networks, where respondents find both positive and negative information about the police institution.

Keywords: police institution, image, influence, mass media.

Introduction

The success of every organization and institution partly depends on image formation in society. Having the trust of the citizens of the state, the institution can communicate properly and achieve its goals. In order to form a positive public opinion, it is necessary to put a lot of effort into proper communication with the media. Because constantly published media information affects the public's attitude towards the police institution and its work. Public information media influence public opinion by disseminating information. In addition, the police institution, in accordance with the procedure established by law, must constantly disclose information about crimes or problems occurring in the country to the public. The

formation of the opinions of individuals in modern society is also influenced by the increasingly popular online media. These days, information on the Internet spreads much faster than through other sources of public information. Posting a publication online takes less time and effort, making information related to policing more readily available to the public.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to evaluate the influence of the media on the image of the police institution.

To achieve the goal of the work, the following tasks are set:

1. Reveal the concept of media influence.

2. Describe the concept of the image of a police institution.

3. To analyze the public's attitude towards the media's influence on the police institution.

Methods. The work is written based on the descriptive method, intended to discuss scientific material, legal acts related to the concept of the image of the media and the police institution. The quantitative research method is used to analyze the influence of the media on the image of the police institution. The results of the questionnaire survey were processed by graphical representation of the results.

The concept of media

Tools of public information are very important nowadays in our society, they form an opinion about a certain object or create an image of a certain institution. Glossaries, legislation, and creator's works describe the concept of media, which is usually understood very similarly. The concept of mass media is defined as the dissemination of organized information in the system of public information producers and public information tools; preparers of public information, means of public information; publications published in the press, radio and television programs (Žurnalistikos enciklopedija, 1997).

The Law on Public Information of the Republic of Lithuania states that means of public information are a newspaper, magazine, bulletin or other publication, book, television program, radio program, film or other audio and video studio production, means of informing the information society and other means by which information is publicly disseminated (Lietuvos Respublikos visuomenės informavimo įstatymas).

According to S. Mamedaitytė, the media can be treated both as an audience and as a means of implementing the public relations program (2003). This author stands out from other sources in her interpretation of the concept of media. S. Mamedaitytė emphasizes the media more as a tool used for relations with the public (2003). It also claims that the media can be understood as an audience that collects and publishes relevant information. It is claiming that it is a modern information technology that is firmly established in many media that disseminate information. Integrating digital information creations into the daily activities of a person rightly gives rise to the term - new media (Taraila, 2007).

The influence of the media can be varied and understandable. It can affect certain things positively and others negatively. Publishing articles to the public creates a multi-faceted opinion that can be bad or good about an organization, institution or just a person. However, public information measures only give meaning and strengthen existing social attitudes of the society, and do not suddenly change them, except in special cases.

Public information tools have a really significant influence on the opinion of individuals, by providing information, they shape attitudes. „The media has taken over the lives of modern people and has become not so much a means of information transmission, but a more powerful tool of manipulation. Manipulation can be two-fold: it can aim to influence

the user's attitude or to attract the user's attention by choosing between different types of media, in other words, for media trying to survive in the face of fierce competition, which in turn is only possible if the media has a large number of users" (Dobržinskienė, 2017). In order to remain popular public information media, a lot of effort has to be made to attract readers, listeners or viewers who would be interested in the information being disseminated and thus form their own opinions based on the material presented.

Today's media not only inform, but at the same time shape attitudes towards certain things. When the media covers events, it tells people what is important. Public information tools often focus only on a few important aspects and completely forget others. Thus forcing the public to believe that only what is mentioned is relevant and important, and only the opinion that is taught is correct. Media outlets publish information that attracts more readers. Public information tools are able to transmit information to a wide circle of society. Media content is a transmitted image of reality, so if some events are not described in public, they are considered as if they did not happen. It is believed that this is how the media shapes public opinio (Taraila, 2007). In most cases, the public receives information about global issues only from the media and does not have a preconceived opinion about it. It can be seen that public information tools influence the formation of public opinion. R. Dobržinskienė claims that the media has taken over the lives of modern people and has become not so much a means of information transmission, but a powerful means of manipulation. This is especially true of online media. This new kind of media i.e. internet or online media is the youngest these days, it has spread rapidly and gained acceptance among users. The newly emerged species changed the ways and forms of publishing information and the very understanding of journalism. Online media quickly accustomed users to presenting information using minimal means a short text, a photo or video, and a catchy headline (Dobržinskienė, 2017).

The mass media, having an influence on public opinion, easily creates images about certain institutions. However, in this case, the media also shape the image of the institutions accordingly. If a representative of a certain institution behaves properly and it is described, the society gets a much better image, and if an employee of the organization appears badly or does something that was inappropriate and it is described in the media, the public has a bad attitude towards this organization. James Schultz argues that the public's blind belief in the implicit bias created by the media only complicates the relationship between law enforcement and the people they protect (Schultz, 2019).

Concept of the image of the police institution

The goal of many people, organizations or companies is to have a great image. „Important here is the image of an organization that is the public perception that it has on the organization. Therefore, we can say that the image of an organization is the totality of perceptions that the public has about it" (Vid, 2016). The police, like every organization, has the goal of working usefully and having the public's trust, and with trust, the image of the institution can be created. In order to achieve this, the police often publish public information about the institution's activities, achievements or good works done to the largest possible audience of people, in this way the aim is to form a better reputation of the institution. The already existing image of the organization is like a representation, because it describes the institution itself, allows to evaluate and receive feedback, evaluates the favorability of the person, the behavior towards the organization. An examination of the concept of organizational image is very wide (Massey, 2016; Frandsen, 2017).

The meaning of the concept of image is discussed by many authors, various opinions and elements of image understanding prevail. In order to describe the concept of image, it is important to understand what it is in general and how society, human consciousness understands it. It is believed that the concept of image is a direct translation of this term from the English language (image) meaning image, picture, image, reflection or form. When evaluating scientific positions, it is considered that the concept of image originates from the Latin concept "imago". This concept has two meanings - "aemulor" (to aim for something) and "imitsari" (to imitate) (Drūteikienė, 2007). An image is like an image that is created to represent an object, i.e. person, organization, institution, etc. According to M. Čeikauskienė, an image is like a picture or a reflection, a representation, a form, a likeness, although all these descriptions cannot reveal the true form of this concept (1997). The image is never constant, it is dynamic, constantly changing, because opinions can change in people's minds, and external factors are not constant either. A. Glosienė describes the image in a very similar way, she states that "an image is a purposefully created or spontaneously created form that reflects a certain object in people's consciousness. Image is a dynamic phenomenon that changes depending on changes in the consciousness of an object or a group of people. <...> By its essence, the image can be active, i.e. to affect the consciousness, emotions, activities and actions of both individuals and groups" (1999). V. Titenienė, G. Žukauskienė say that image formation is a very complex and long process, one of the most complex organizational aspirations, which is implemented over a long period of time (2019). So creating an image is not an easy process, it requires a lot of effort. It takes a lot of time to achieve the result of a good image.

The image of the organization is interpreted as „the imagination of the audience, the formed opinion about the organization. It can be formed due to purposeful communication of the organization (how the organization presents itself) or spontaneously, randomly. It is determined by the totality of knowledge, experiences, feelings, impressions related to the organization of the organization's audiences" (Lipskytė, 2019) Therefore, the image of the organization usually depends on the public's opinion, and it is formed by means of communication through means of public information, social networks, advertising - on television, on the Internet. On the contrary, D. A. Gioia and others write that the image of an institution is how the members of that organization think about it (2000). According to these authors, the image of the organization does not depend on the surrounding attitudes towards this institution, but on the members of the organization themselves. This is a more unconventional opinion, when it is stated that the image depends on the members of the organization themselves, and not on the society's attitude towards the institution.

A police institution also strives to create an image and strives to make it a good one. This is quite difficult to do, but with a lot of effort not only from the organization itself, but also from its employees, it becomes an easier task. Employees are one of the links in creating the image of the organization in society. Employees of a police agency have rules that they must follow in order to ensure that their behavior is appropriate both when dealing with the media and with the public. However, there are cases when the bad side of the image of the police institution is heard in the media. The offense is committed by one employee, but the society does not think that it is the fault of one person, it says that it is a problem of the whole organization. Most of the time, how the mass media shows the organization, such an opinion is formed by the majority of the society. The institution must understand the importance of interaction between other organizations and external factors, because the communication of the institution depends on it, which helps to create the image of the company. The majority of the public trusts the police, as evidenced by the 2021 October 15-22, "Vilmorus" survey data:
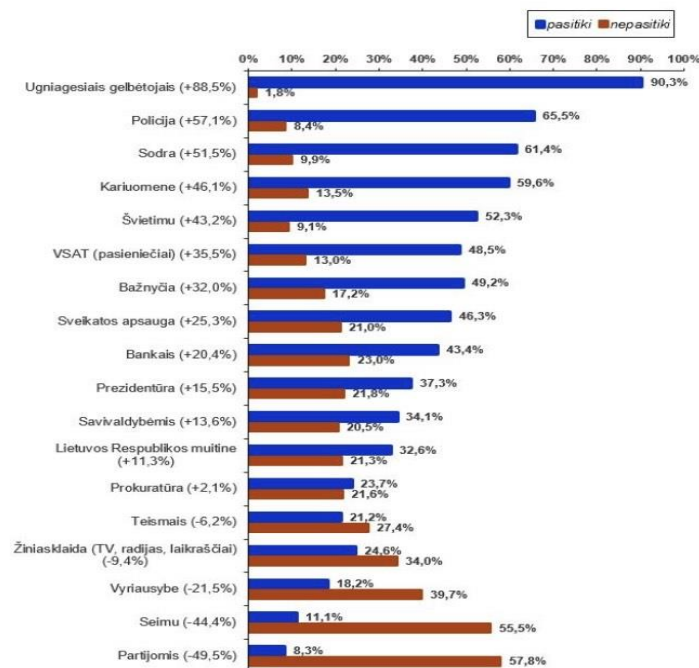
Figure 1. Public trust in institutions (Vilmorus, „Pasitikėjimas institucijomis", 2021)

The police is the second most trusted institution. Respondents who made up 65.5% said that they trust the police, while 8.4% of the respondents said that they do not trust the police. Thus, the overall coefficient of trust in the police institution reaches 57.1%. The survey also mentions the media, but according to the respondents, it is more distrusted than trusted.

Police officers cooperate with the producers and disseminators of public information in accordance with the procedure established by laws and/or other legal acts. The police can prepare and publish public information measures themselves, which provide information about measures for the prevention of criminal acts and administrative law violations (misdemeanors), the implementation of police tasks and publish other information related to police activities (Lietuvos Respublikos policijos įstatymas). Communication and relations with the public help the institution to achieve a better image. Professional image strengthening is permanent, public relations, specialist work, the employee improves, adapts and expands professional activities, and creates public respect and trust in that organization (Dennis L. Et al., 2007). The success of an organization's image depends on systematic communication with the public and the media.

A police institution is a public institution that is accountable to both the government and citizens. Their activities are limited by law. When communicating with media representatives, the most important thing is to provide information only that corresponds to competence. The competence of officials is described in the official regulations. Relations between police officers and representatives of public information media must be based on mutual understanding, respect for duties and rights, and tolerance.

Representatives of every profession have personal freedom of speech, which is why people, who speak in putlic, should remember that public information tools have a "strong, indirect and long-term influence" on the opinion of the population. According to S. Rimkutė and R. Dobržinskienė, when communicating with society, the rules applicable to police

officers are exceptional. When communicating with the media, the employees of the police institution must inform the public about the police activities, because the police activities and other laws provide for such an obligation. The police publicize their activities through public information tools, and also seek the support and assistance of the population in crime prevention and investigation. However, it is important to pay attention to the fact that policemen's communication with media representatives is limited by the procedure established by laws and normative legal acts (2017). The General Commissioner of the Lithuanian Police in 2008 December 23 in order no. 5-V-796 "On the Approval of the Regulation on the Provision of Information to Compilers and Distributors of Public Information" specifies who are and can be entities providing information to the media, representing the Police Department, a police institution and specialized police and police professional education institutions. The order also specifies who and what information can be provided. Legal regulation is a very important factor in providing information to the public. If there was no legal regulation, then it would not be determined what information can and cannot be provided to media representatives. Police officers in particular need legal acts that regulate their public speech. Legislation restricts the provision of information, with the aim of not disclosing data that are personal and confidential - material of the pre-trial investigation, when the investigation is not completed, personal data of the participants in the case.

Aspects of the influence of the media on the image of the police institution

After conducting a public survey, an exploratory study, an attempt was made to assess the influence of the media on the image of the police institution. The survey was conducted on the website www.apklausa.lt and 130 respondents answered the questionnaire. The majority of respondents (66%) belong to the age group under 25 years, the second largest is the group of respondents aged 26-40 (22%). Other age groups form small groups in terms of percentages: middle-aged (41-50 years old) persons who took part in the survey were 6%, and the lowest percentages were older persons - 51-60 years old and over 60 years old - 3% of the respondents each (see Figure 1).
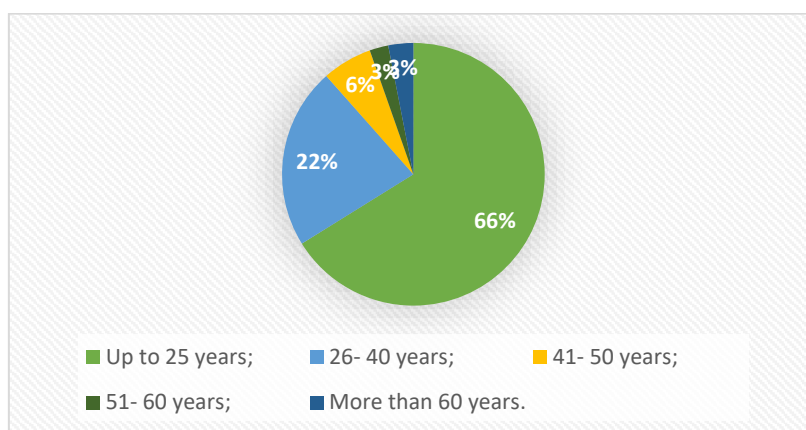
**Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by the age groups**

The distribution of respondents by gender is also not proportional: 70% of respondents are women, 30% are men. Out of all the respondents, 82% do not always believe the information provided by the media, even 10% of the respondents completely believe the

information provided by the media and only 8% do not believe the information that is published by public media.
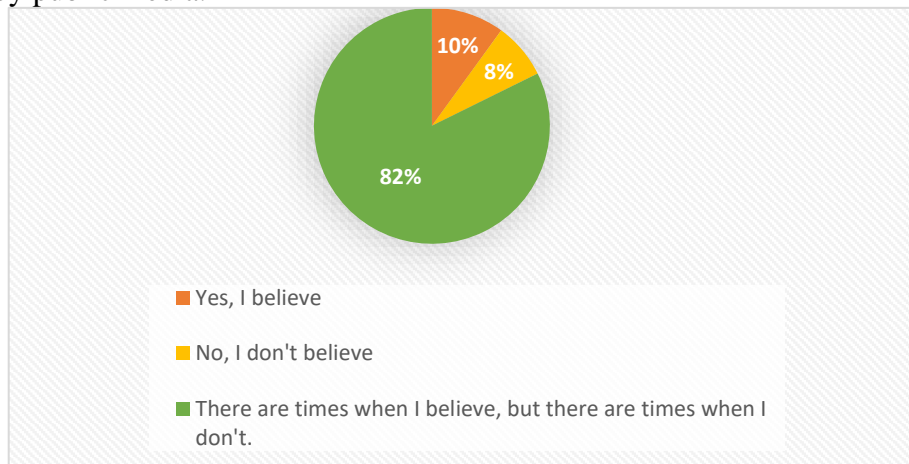

Figure 3. Trust in the information provided by the media

When the respondents were asked what influence the media has on creating the image of the police institution, even more than half of the respondents (52%) said that the influence of the media on the image of the police institution, in their opinion, is average; it depends on the situation. However, a considerable number of respondents (46%) said that the media has a great influence on creating the image of the police institution, only 2% of respondents answered that public information tools have little influence on the image of the police institution. that the public thinks that media influence plays an important role in creating the image of the police institution.
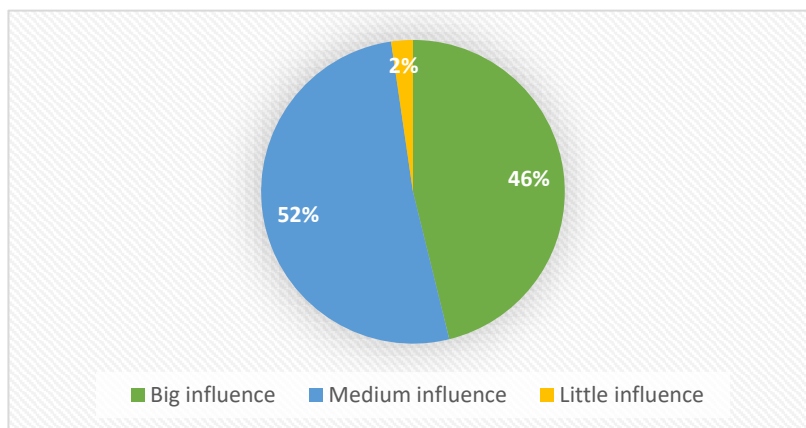

Figure 4. The influence of the media in creating the image of the police institution.

According to 69% of respondents, the most common influence on the image of the police institution through public information means is various - both positive and negative. As many as 31% of the respondents had a strong opinion that the media has only a positive or negative influence: 19% of the respondents noted that the media has a positive influence on the image of the police institution, while 12% say that the influence exerted by public information tools is of a negative nature.
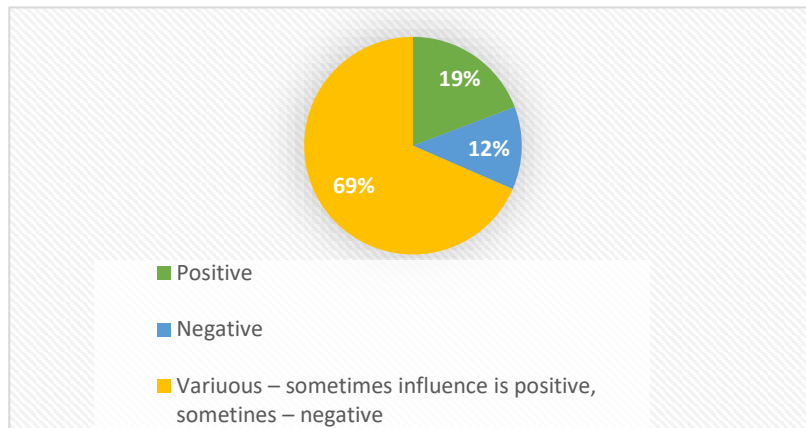
Figure 5. The image of the police institution is influenced by the media

The majority of the respondents who took part in the survey (85%) use online media, its popularity depends on one of the factors that it is the fastest and most conveniently available means of informing the public, and the survey involves a young audience. Television is characterized by a very low rate - only 13% of the respondents expressed the opinion that they mostly use this source to get information. As times change, so does the relevance of public information tools, they change with each other, some become popular, once at the bottom of the list, while others fall from the top of the list to the bottom. According to the survey data, it can be assumed that this happened specifically to the press and radio. These two public information tools each collected only 1% of respondents' answers. Summarizing this issue, it is concluded that the Internet is becoming an increasingly popular platform for disseminating relevant information to the public.
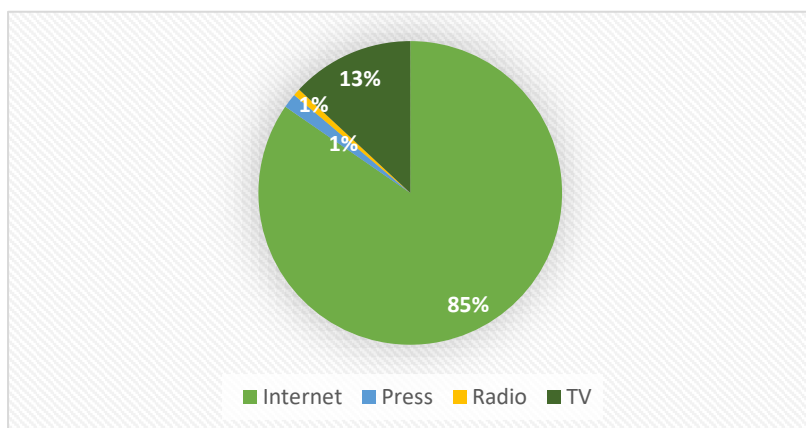

Figure 6. Public information tools mostly used by the respondents.

When assessing the importance of image for the police institution, more than half of the respondents (52%) say that image is important because it influences trust in the police institution. The respondents, who make up 42%, answered that image is important to the police because it shapes public opinion. The remaining 6% state two more reasons about the importance of image: 1% of respondents say that image has no influence, and 5% of those who took part in the survey believe that image is not particularly important, but it is really

necessary to take care of it. According to the received answers, it can be assumed that the public believes that the image of the police is really important, but different reasons are given.
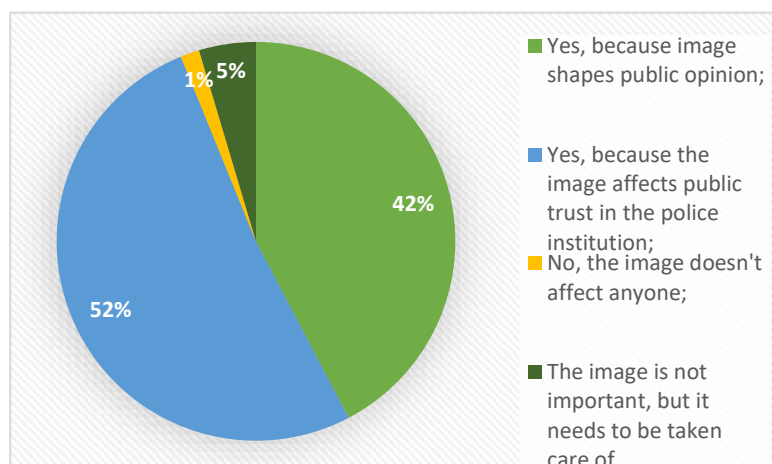
Figure 7. The importance of image for a police institution.

Respondents expressing their opinions about the influence of information published by the media on their personal opinion about the police institution were divided into two parts with very similar proportions: 51% of respondents say that information published by the media does not influence them because of their personal opinion about the police, while 49% of respondents believe that the public the information disseminated by the media affects their personal opinion.

And the opinion of the respondents about the police is shaped by their personal experience with this institution (54%), 40% of those who took part in the survey say that their opinion about the police is influenced by the media: internet, press, television, radio. Only 5% of the respondents mentioned the opinion of the people they know about this institution, and 1% of the respondents answered that all the given answers are acceptable to them.
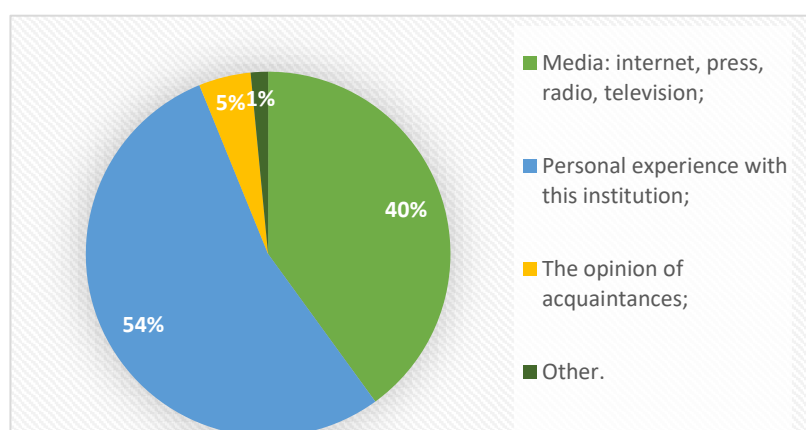
**Figure 8. Factors influencing respondents' personal opinion about the image of the police**

Respondents find the most positive information about the police and its activities in social networks, news portals and television. 39% of respondents notice a lot of positive

information about the police on social networks, and 25% of those who answered the question about positive information about the image of the police institution say that they hear and see the information on television. Meanwhile, a significant number of respondents who took part in the survey answered that news portals help them find positive information about the police (15%). The press is mentioned by 9% of the respondents, while only 4% of the respondents mentioned the benefit of the radio in receiving positive information about the police. The other 2% chose to record their answer themselves. One of the answers from the other option was that positive emotions and impressions for the respondent are created by actions during which flowers are distributed on March 8, and reflectors are distributed to schoolchildren on September 1. The second of the answers of the other option was that the respondent finds positive information on the official police websites. They describe the events that took place or actions organized by the police, which create the image of positive information.
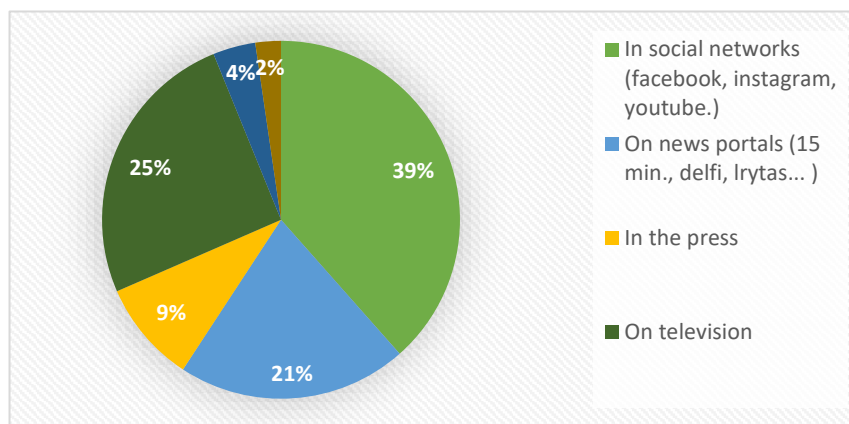
Figure 9. According to respondents, sources of positive information about the police

The respondents were also asked about the sources of information where they find negative information about the police. One of the most common answers (60%) is again social networks. In second place according to the answers given are news portals, chosen by 29% of the respondents. Only 6% go to TV and only 3% chose print. Also, 2% of those who took part in the survey gave their version that negative information is found in all mentioned sources. Radio did not collect a single percent on this issue.
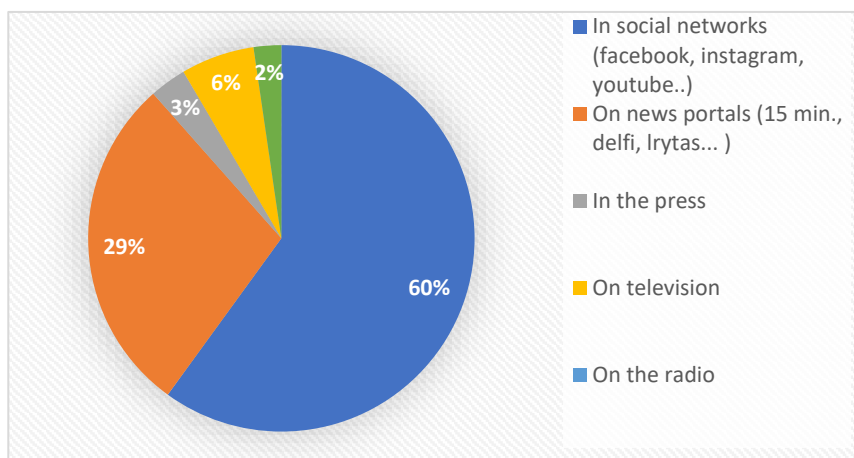
Figure 10. Sources of negative information about the police

The conducted research showed that many respondents learn about the police institution from online sources. The information published by the media has a moderate influence on the image of this institution. Public information tools influence the image of the police institution, but the influence exerted is not very strong compared to the public's personal experience of encountering this institution. More than half of the people who took part in the survey say that their opinion about the police is formed by personal contact, and not by the media. Therefore, the image of a police institution depends not only on the influence of the media, but also on people's personal experience with this institution.

Conclusions

After conducting a review of the scientific literature, aspects of the concept of media and the concept of media influence on the police institution emerged. As technology advances and society changes, so does the influence of the media on the image of the police institution. In today's society, online media is very common, which influences people's opinion about the police. The influence of the media on the image of the police institution is usually not direct through the formation of public opinion. Adequate legal regulation is necessary because police officers are guided by the relevant legislation when providing information to the media. The research revealed the influence of the media on the image of the police institution, but the media is not the only influencing tool. For many, personal experience when dealing with this institution is important. And the most frequently mentioned means of public information are social networks, where respondents find both positive and negative information about the police institution.

References

1. „Lietuvos Respublikos policijos įstatymas". LRS, žiūrėta 2021 m. lapkričio 17 d.

2. https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.111665/asr.

3. „Lietuvos Respublikos visuomenės informavimo įstatymas", žiūrėta 2021 m. spalio 18 d.

4. https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.29884/asr.

5. „Pasitikėjimas institucijomis". Vilmorus, žiūrėta 2021 m. lapkričio 19 d. http://www.vilmorus.lt/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=2&cntnt01returnid=20.

6. Čeikauskienė, Marytė. *Reklama ir firmos įvaizdis*, Vilnius: Lietuvos informacijos institutas, 1997.

7. Dennis A. G., Majken Schultz, ir Kevin G. Corley, „Organizational Identity, Image, and Adaptive Instability", *The Academy of Management Review* 25, 1, 2000,

8. https://www.jstor.org/stable/259263.

9. Dobržinskienė, Rasa. „Assessing criminal incidents through headlines of electronic media", *Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka*, 19, 2017, https://ojs.mruni.eu/ojs/vsvt/article/view/5604.

10. Drūteikienė, Greta. *Organizacijos įvaizdžio valdymas*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2007.

11. Frandsen, Sanne. „Organizational Image". In Scott, C., & Lewis, L. (Eds.) *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication, 4 Volume Set*. John Wiley & Sons, 2017.

12. Glosienė, Audronė. *Ryšių su visuomene ABC bibliotekininkams*, Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinė M. Mažvydo biblioteka, 1999.

13. Lipskytė, Toma, Renata Matkevičienė Orinta Barkauskaitė, Gabija Vaičeliūnaitė, ir Birutė Norvaišienė. *LTKA terminų žodynas*. Vilnius: Lietuvos komunikacijos asociacija, 2018,

14. https://www.ltka.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/LTKA-termin%C5%B3-%C5%BEodynas.pdf

15. Mamedaitytė, Sevilė. *Ryšiai su visuomene*, Vilnius, 2003,

16. http://www.mediaclub.lt/resursai/vrstudija/Rysiai_su_visuomene_S.Mamedaityte.pdf

17. Massey, Joseph Eric. „A Theory Of Organizational Image Management", *International Journal of Management and Applied Science*, 2 (1), 2016.

18. Rimkutė, Simona ir Rasa Dobržinskienė. „Policijos pareigūnų kalbinė kompetencija kitų kompetencijų kontekste", Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka, 18, 2017,

19. https://ojs.mruni.eu/ojs/vsvt/article/view/5634/4840.

20. Schultz, James. „Media Coverage of Law Enforcement and Effects of the Image Created", 2019, https://scholar.dominican.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1150&context=senior-theses

21. Taraila, Rytis. *Lietuvos žiniasklaida jaunųjų tyrėjų akimis*, Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla, 2007.

22. Titenienė Virgilija ir Žukauskienė, Gražina. „Viešosios bibliotekos įvaizdis vartotojų požiūriu", *Įžvalgos*, 1, 2019.

23. Vid, Ioana „The Image Crisis of the Organization", *Professional Communication And Translation Studies*, 9, 2016.

24. Wilcox, Dennis L., Glen T. Cameron, Philip H. Ault, ir Warren K. Agee. *Ryšiai su visuomene: strategija ir taktika*. Vilnius: Poligrafija ir informatika, 2007.

25. *Žurnalistikos enciklopedija*. Vilnius: Pradai, 1997, http://www.kf.vu.lt/dokumentai/publikacijos/Zurnalistikos-enciklopedija.pdf