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VIEŠOJO SAUGUMO AKADEMIJA



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Mokslinis žurnalas

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SPECIFIC FEATURES OF COMMUNICATING WITH PERSONS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR

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Abstract. *The article analyses the peculiarities of communication with delinquent persons. Delinquent behaviour is a violation of social, moral and legal norms, which is most often characteristic of minors. Previous works of researchers have addressed the problem of juvenile delinquency, its causes, possibilities of prevention, and have examined interrogations conducted by pre-trial investigators with juveniles. The current relevance of the article is determined by the changes in the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code on the procedure for conducting interrogations with minors, as well as the growing and developing system of protection of children's rights in Lithuania. Therefore, the object of this study is the tactical methods used in the questioning process when communicating with a delinquent person and the aim is to distinguish the appropriate tactical methods of questioning when questioning a minor with delinquent behaviour in administrative and criminal proceedings. The survey found that most police officers agree that interrogations with juvenile delinquents are more difficult than with adults. Furthermore, in the light of the results of the study, it is recommended to define the exact functions and powers of the representative of the State Office for Protection of Child Rights and Adoption (hereinafter referred to SOPCRA) during the interrogation of a minor, and to establish at the level of the law the cases in which the person conducting the interrogation should invite the representative of the SOPCRA to interrogation a suspect who is underage. In addition, the law should provide for the place where the interrogation of a minor suspect is to take place in order to safeguard the rights and legitimate interests of the child.*

Keywords: *interrogation, communication, delinquent behavior, teenagers.*

Introduction

Communication is an important everyday social activity, as we communicate every day in order to satisfy our social needs, such as self-actualisation, feelings of attachment, the need to belong to a group of people, a community, etc. (Lekavičienė and Antinienė 2019). However, the goals of communication are not always limited to the satisfaction of social needs. For most professions, communication becomes a permanent and indispensable tool for the proper and efficient performance of their duties. One of these professions is pre-trial investigation officers, who often have to conduct interrogations in order to carry out their duties of detecting criminal offences quickly and thoroughly Code of Criminal Procedure (hereinafter CCP).

Pre-trial investigators have to deal with victims and witnesses as well as suspects. The latter are the most procedural and practical problems due to their unique procedural position in criminal proceedings. Even more problems arise when the suspect is a minor, as the procedure for interrogating minors is specific and has particularities which are set out in the CPC and other legislation. Moreover, when dealing with a delinquent minor, it is important for the officer to take into account the minor's psychological and social maturity and to choose the

interrogation tactics accordingly, which will lead to a successful investigation and will not harm the minor's psyche and his/her further behaviour.

Pre-trial investigation officers, when conducting interrogations and other necessary procedural steps with juvenile delinquents, must use their knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that the juvenile is not only punished for the criminal offence or misdemeanour, but also to help him or her to understand the reasons for his or her behaviour and to prevent delinquent behaviour. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that the minor is a specific participant in criminal/administrative proceedings due to his/her social and psychological maturity, which means that he/she is not always able to understand his/her rights and to exercise them. Therefore, it is very important for pre-trial investigation officers dealing with delinquent minors to ensure a safe atmosphere and maintain professionalism during interrogations (On Ensuring the Rights and Legitimate Interests of the Child in Administrative Proceedings 2016).

Juvenile delinquency has always been a sensitive and topical social issue. Laurinaitytė (2020), Sakalauskas (2011), Sakalauskas, Kalpokas et al. (2021, 2022), Justickaja (2011, 2015), and others. The literature has extensively and comprehensively addressed the causes of delinquency, its manifestation through violations of the law, and has paid considerable attention to the prevention of juvenile delinquency. It should be noted that the topic of the peculiarities of communication with delinquents has not been as extensively addressed. At the theoretical level, the specific nature of interrogations with minors is clear, but at the legal level there is no specific distinction between the procedure for conducting interrogations with an adult and a juvenile suspect. Although the authors provide methodological recommendations on how to interact with minors during interrogations, it should be noted that the scientific literature focuses more on the tactics and psychological recommendations for interrogating witnesses and juvenile victims than on the interrogation of suspects (Kavoliūnaitė-Ragauskienė 2016). It is important to note that even the recommendations of the Prosecutor General only take into account the tactics of interrogating a minor witness and victim (On the Approval of the Recommendations on the Interrogating of a Minor Witness and Victim 2009). It is understood that juvenile suspects are interrogated using the same tactics as adult suspects.

The article **object** is the tactical techniques and procedural rules used communicating with delinquent persons

The **aim** of the article is to highlight the peculiarities of communication with delinquents during interrogations.

To achieve this goal the following **tasks** are set:

1. To discuss the concept of delinquency.
2. To review the concept of interrogation and the procedural and tactical rules of interrogation of juvenile suspects.
3. To highlight the tactical and procedural difficulties of interrogating juveniles and their causes, following a questionnaire survey of police investigators.

Methods used:

1. Analytical - national legislation, scientific literature were analysed.
2. Empirical research - a survey (questionnaire survey) - aimed at interrogating police investigators in order to clarify the difficulties encountered in practice when interrogating juvenile suspects.

Concept of delinquency

The concept of delinquency is formulated differently in both Lithuanian and foreign scientific literature, and there is no single precise definition to describe this phenomenon.

However, the authors who deal with the problem of delinquency (Sakalauskas et al. 2021, Žukauskienė 2006, Ch. A. Mallett and M. F. Tedor 2019, Terence P. Thornberry (1997), and others) agree that delinquency is mostly confined to minors. The Dictionary of Psychology (2013) offers succinct definitions of delinquency and delinquent: delinquency - juvenile delinquency. Delinquent - a criminal, lawbreaker (usually a teenager). These definitions, albeit brief, reveal the nature of delinquency - criminal behaviour that violates legal norms - and identify the subject of such behaviour - the adolescent.

Sakalauskas (2013) takes a slightly broader view, describing delinquent behaviour as behaviour of young people that deviates from established norms. The author also stresses that such behaviour is not necessarily only a violation of the law, but can also be an act that does not constitute a criminal offence, such as skipping school. However, delinquent behaviour can also coincide with a breach of the law. Often, minors commit acts that are illegal because of their age. It is behaviour that is illegal only because the person who commits it is a minor. Actions such as breaking alcohol limits, running away from home, disobeying parents, skipping school can be considered illegal only for minors (Mallett and Tedor 2019).

According to Žukauskienė (2006), delinquent behaviour is a psychological tendency to violate existing behavioural norms. She distinguishes between two forms of delinquency: committing crimes and breaking the law. The latter can be described in this context as experimental behaviour, which is typical of almost all young people under the age of 18 and is not dangerous to society. The author also refers to this form of delinquency as a violation of social and moral norms, such as confrontational behaviour, running away from home, disobedience, etc. Sakalauskas et al. (2021) divide these forms of delinquency according to the degree of seriousness: the most serious form is criminal behaviour (offences described in the Criminal Code (CC) and the mild and most frequent form among minors is administrative offences (offences described in the Code of Administrative Offences (CAOOA)).

As mentioned above, authors explain delinquent behaviour not only in terms of violations of legal norms, but also in terms of violations of moral and social norms. Morizot and Kazemian (2015) distinguish four categories that show the diversity of delinquent behaviour. Two of them refer to violations of legal norms: covert (theft, fraud) and overt delinquency (violent crimes, vandalism, etc.). The other two categories reflect violations of social norms: reckless behaviour (risky sexual behaviour, gambling) and conflicts with authority (conflicts at school, with parents, etc.) (Morizot & Kazemian, 2015). Parents, social workers and educators need to work with adolescents with emotional difficulties, who are prone to conflicts at school, angry outbursts and persistent violations of social rules. In order to effectively deal with mild delinquency, it is necessary to have complex knowledge, to understand the problems of adolescents and to help them (Barkauskiene and Zacharevičienė 2019). When adolescents violate the rights of other persons or values protected by rights, in addition to all of the above-mentioned persons, law enforcement officials are also involved in the complex assistance of the minor. It is not only their duty to punish the minor, but also to help him/her to change his/her behaviour and to prevent him/her from committing new offences (Art. 42 of the CAOOA).

The scientific literature does not precisely define the age at which delinquency is most likely to occur in minors. According to Terence P. Thornberry (1997), delinquent behaviour in childhood is not common. The onset of delinquency and criminal behaviour occurs in late childhood and early adolescence, approximately between the ages of ten and fourteen. Involvement in criminal behaviour peaks in late adolescence, around 16 to 17 years of age. Thereafter, the incidence of criminal behaviour decreases after the age of 20. The risk of re-offending increases when a juvenile starts committing his/her first offences at a very young age

(Jung and Rawana 1999). The definition of 'very young age' is not defined, but it is suggested that it could be younger than the usual age of onset of delinquency: that is, less than 10 years.

Most minors "grow out" of delinquent behaviour. Only a very small proportion become "chronic offenders". Foreign authors (Steinberg and Cauffman 1996; Brezina 2000; Laub and Samson 2001; Steinberg 2010) who have studied the problem of delinquency have identified several reasons for this 'outgrowth' of delinquency: firstly, as a person matures socially, he or she finds a stable job, a partner, starts a family, and there is no more time to engage in criminal or socially unacceptable behaviour (Laub and Samson 2001). Moreover, as individuals reach adulthood, they start to realise that they are now responsible for their own actions and are more aware of the risks that come with committing offences. During adolescence, due to incomplete maturity, the individual is unable to fully control his or her behaviour and is more prone to impulsivity (Steinberg 2010). It is also associated with a greater sense of responsibility and increased self-control (Steinberg and Cauffman 1996; Brezina 2000).

In summary, delinquency is a characteristic of juvenile delinquency, and it tends to disappear after adulthood, when the individual's attitude changes as he or she matures. Delinquency is not only manifested in violations of social and moral norms, but delinquent adolescents often tend to violate legal norms, most often in the form of administrative offences, but there are also records of criminal offences.

Concept and tactic of the interrogation

In forensic terms, an interrogation is a communication between an interrogator (pre-trial investigation officer, judge, court, prosecutor, etc.) and a person being interrogated, with the aim of collecting, recording or verifying information useful for the interrogator. Interrogation is described as a "special process of verbal communication" due to its non-routine nature and its unique communicative goals and objectives (Kurapka et al. 2013). The effectiveness of interrogation as one of the ways of establishing the truth depends on the professionalism of the investigator and the observance of the legal norms on interrogation procedures. Since it is one of the most frequently performed actions in pre-trial investigations or court proceedings, it is important to conduct interrogation responsibly, to choose tactical methods and techniques in a targeted manner, as all the testimonies given by the interrogator will determine the further course of the case (Ancelis et al. 2011).

The Lithuanian Law on Criminal Procedure does not explain the concept of interrogation. However, the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) specifies the rules for conducting interrogation of witnesses (Article 183 of the CCP), victims (Article 185 of the CCP), witnesses and victims who are minors (Article 186 of the CCP), and suspects (Article 188 of the CCP), as well as the objectives of the interrogations, which reveal the content and substance of the interrogation. It may be assumed from the provisions of criminal procedure law that an interrogation is a procedural investigative act during which the rights and obligations of the interrogated person are explained to the interrogator (irrespective of the i interrogated person's procedural position) by the pre-trial investigation officer, the public prosecutor or, in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure, other entities and the interrogated person are invited to tell about the circumstances of the incident known to him or her and to record the circumstances of the event in an interrogation report. Thus, both in the forensic literature and in the law, the purpose of the interrogation is the same: to clarify, in accordance with the legal provisions, all the circumstances of the event that are relevant to the investigation.

A minor, regardless of his or her procedural status in criminal or administrative proceedings, is uniquely protected by the law against adverse psychological effects and possible violation of human rights. The law provides the minor with additional procedural safeguards throughout the legal process and during individual investigative steps, including questioning, due to his/her young age and greater vulnerability. This is also enshrined in the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which states that "the child, in view of his or her physical and mental immaturity, is in need of special protection and care, including appropriate legal protection, both before and after birth". Additional procedural safeguards for a minor suspect are regulated by the provisions of the CPC. These include the presence of a legal representative, the necessary presence of a defence counsel, and the possibility for a psychologist and/or a representative of the State authority for the protection of the rights of the child to be present during the interrogation. All these procedural guarantees must ensure the smooth running of the proceedings and protect the minor from the adverse effects of the legal process and from the violation of his/her rights and legitimate interests.

Article 45 (1) of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania states that "a child who has infringed a right shall be treated with care, diligence, fairness and respect at all stages of the process of application of legal responsibility, taking into account his or her age and level of maturity, with particular attention being paid to the assessment of the needs of the child, and to the protection of his or her rights and legitimate interests". Thus, notwithstanding the fact that the minor has violated the values protected by the law, he or she must be treated and interacted with in the same way as any other party to the proceedings. A suspect, regardless of his age, is characterised by fear and anxiety about the outcome of a case that is unfavourable to him, as well as hostility and mistrust towards other participants in the proceedings, especially law enforcement officials. The suspect is often inclined to lie in order to avoid responsibility and to give false testimony. Although it is sometimes easier to detect lies by minors than by adults (Edelstein, Robin. S. 2006), it is still important to prepare properly for the interrogation in order to prevent lies and contradictions between the testimony and the facts of the case. With juvenile offenders, this first stage of the interrogation is perhaps the most important, as the preparation of the interrogator will determine the psychological state of the juvenile during the interrogation and his/her willingness to cooperate. In order to gauge the direction of the interrogation and to reduce the interviewee's stress, it is important for the officer to try to establish a psychological rapport with the juvenile. This can be done by enquiring about the minor's hobbies, interests and areas of interest, thus maintaining a neutral conversation (Grigutytė et al. 2006). Already at the preparatory stage, the officer should, without prejudice to human rights, collect information about the minor's family and their relationships, as well as about the child's social life - friends, hobbies. A profile of the child can be requested from the educational institution, information on the child's behaviour at school, his/her achievements or failures can be gathered (Burda and Kuklianskis 2007). Such preparation allows the officer to get to know the interviewee better and think about questions that would encourage an informal, tension-relieving conversation.

In the preparatory stage, it is necessary not only to study the case, the characteristics of the offender, his environment, but also to consider the place of interrogation. A comfortable environment helps to establish a better psychological connection with the minor suspect and effectively implement the purpose of interrogation – to obtain accurate, informative and correct testimony (Grigutytė et al. 2006). Article 45, paragraph 2 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of the Child states that all procedural actions regarding a child who has violated the law shall be carried out in a child-friendly physical environment. What constitutes a friendly environment is not specified in the

law, but the forensic literature recommends choosing a place of interrogation that would not cause stress to the minor (regardless of his procedural status), that is, choosing a less formal environment – this could be school, home or other places that give the minor a sense of security. However, such places can have a negative impact on the minor suspect, since a conversation with police officers in front of other people can cause shame and humiliation (Child Rights Ombudsman Office 2016). Therefore, the best solution is children's interrogation rooms. They maintain formality, but at the same time create a cozy, friendly environment (Juškevičiūtė et al. 2014). Article 186 the part 2 of the Criminal Procedure Code imperatively states that minor victims and witnesses must be questioned in rooms adapted for children, but the law does not provide for a specialized interrogation room for a minor suspect. However, it would be appropriate to question a minor suspect at least in another free office in the case when the interrogator works in the same room with several other investigators. This would ensure and protect the minor's privacy, provide security and courage to tell about the circumstances of the incident. According to the European Commission's review of the legal process for children involved in crime (2014), it is noteworthy that countries such as Cyprus, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and part of the United Kingdom have interrogation rooms for minor suspects that are adapted to the needs and legal interests of the suspects.

After completing the informal conversation with the offender, it is necessary to move on to the circumstances relevant to the investigation. Even before conducting the interrogation of the suspect, the interrogating officer must always familiarize him with article 21 the part 4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The rights of the suspect are specified, which also include the right to have a lawyer from the moment of detention or the first interrogation, the right to testify or remain silent and (or) refuse to testify about his own possible criminal act, etc. As in the interrogation of adult suspects, it is very important to present and explain to the minor his rights and obligations as a suspect. However, a minor, due to his young age and lack of maturity, may not properly understand the content of his rights. Subjects interrogating a minor suspect must adapt the questions to suit their age, social maturity, and mental abilities. The Supreme Court of Lithuania (2022) has explained that social maturity is revealed through abilities, attitude towards the rules accepted by society and their assessment, perception of causality, self-control. All these things must be assessed by the police investigator at the preparatory stage of the interrogation and/or during an informal conversation, in order to avoid asking overly complex, confusing questions to the minor. Taking into account the characteristics of the minor's personality, questions must be asked avoiding legal definitions, long, complex sentences. It is also not advisable to formulate the question in several parts, that is, one specific question must be asked at a time. It is very important to give the interviewee the opportunity to give testimony in a free form, to let him tell everything he knows about the event, to listen to him patiently and in no case to interrupt him or try to move on to another topic before he has finished telling (International Association of Chiefs of Police 2012). The tone chosen by the interrogating officer when communicating with the delinquent is also a significant factor. A threatening, raised voice can cause pressure and fear, so the interrogation should be conducted in a calm, non-judgmental tone, in order to create a sincere, open atmosphere (Burda and Kuklianskis 2007, 219). When communicating with a delinquent minor, false promises or threats should not be made during the interrogation. For example, the interviewee should not be promised that if he confesses to having committed a criminal act or misdemeanour, the officer will do everything so that the minor does not have to answer for it. Otherwise, the minor may confess to things he did not do. Due to his young age and immaturity, the minor is much more vulnerable, it is more difficult to resist pressure from adults. Also, a minor is less oriented towards the future consequences of his actions, unlike an adult (Steinberg and Scott 2003). Due

to external factors and incomplete maturity, the interviewee cannot make the right decisions regarding himself, therefore it is necessary to ensure that during the interrogation the minor experiences as little pressure and negative influence on his decisions as possible.

Thus, it can be stated that in order to ensure the effectiveness of this procedural action, responsible and purposeful preparation, professionalism of the subject conducting the interrogation, and knowledge of the basics of child psychology are required. Due to the exceptional vulnerability of a minor suspect, before interrogating a minor offender, the officer must inquire about the child's close environment, relationships with them, and interests in order to prepare for the establishment of a psychological connection during future contact. Throughout the interrogation, the officer must try to maintain the established connection, not to provide opportunities for the child to withdraw, fear, or even violate his legitimate interests.

Tactical and procedural difficulties in interrogation of juveniles and their causes

Research methodology, sample and instrument

A quantitative study was conducted to determine the most commonly used interrogation tactics by Lithuanian police investigators, compliance with procedural rules/recommendations, and the very characteristics of communication with delinquent minors during legal proceedings. The study was prepared using the survey method. Respondents to the questionnaire survey were Lithuanian county police investigators who had interrogated a minor at least once during their work experience during a pre-trial investigation or when investigating an administrative offence. A non-probability sampling sample was selected for the questionnaire survey. The selected non-probability sampling type was purposive sampling, during which the authors relied on certain sampling criteria (competence, experience) (Rupšienė, 2007, 19).

Sample selection criteria:

1. Police investigators working in Lithuania;
2. Only those investigators who, while conducting pre-trial investigations or investigating administrative offense cases, have at least once in their work experience interrogated a minor as a suspect in a case.

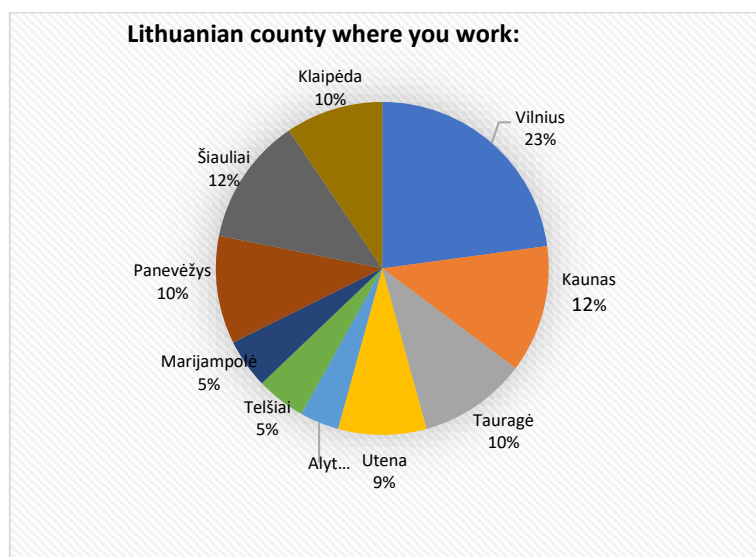


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by Lithuanian counties, percent.

During the questionnaire survey, responses from 105 respondents were collected. Of these, 59% were women, the remaining 41% were men. The survey was attended by police investigators from Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Marijampolė, Tauragė, Telšiai, Alytus and Utena county police stations (Fig. 1)

The activity of respondents was unevenly distributed - most of the respondents were from the largest counties of Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Panevėžys), as well as Tauragė. The largest number of respondents in the survey were investigators with the longest work experience, i.e. more than 20 years. (36.2 %), 28.6 % of investigators with 11–20 years of experience participated in the survey, 21 % with 5–10 years, and the fewest respondents were police investigators with the shortest work experience, i.e. 14.3 %.

The questionnaire survey consisted of 19 questions, which could be divided into 4 blocks: demographic-social questions (1–3), questions revealing the experience of police investigators in interrogating juvenile suspects (4–7); questions reflecting the participation of police investigators in professional training related to communication with delinquent juveniles (8–11); questions reflecting compliance with procedural recommendations for interrogation and the choice of tactical interrogation methods in interrogations with juvenile suspects (12–20).

Police investigators' experience in interrogating offenders

In order to find out the experience of police investigators in interrogating delinquents, the first question was asked: “In your opinion, is it more difficult to interrogation a minor suspect than an adult suspect?”, to which the majority of respondents (76.2%) answered positively. A small part of the study participants (14.3%) indicated that there is no difference between interrogating a minor and an adult. In the opinion of the remaining respondents, interrogating a minor suspect is not more difficult than an adult (7.6%) or they have no opinion on this research question (1.9%). It is noteworthy that more respondents who answered positively are police investigators with more work experience. The results obtained can be partly explained by the fact that police investigators with more experience have interacted with individuals with delinquent behaviour more times, and therefore have seen more different situations and investigated more complex cases, during which different tactical methods had to be used when interrogating minor suspects. In addition, police investigators, due to their greater work experience, are more familiar with the procedural procedure for questioning juvenile suspects, and therefore better understand the difficulties arising from this. This distribution of respondents could also be due to the fact that slightly more police investigators with greater work experience participated in the study itself. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the vast majority of study participants, regardless of their work experience, find it more difficult to question juvenile suspects than adults.

Those respondents who indicated that it is more difficult to question juvenile suspects were asked to indicate the reasons for the difficulty of such interrogations (Figure 2).

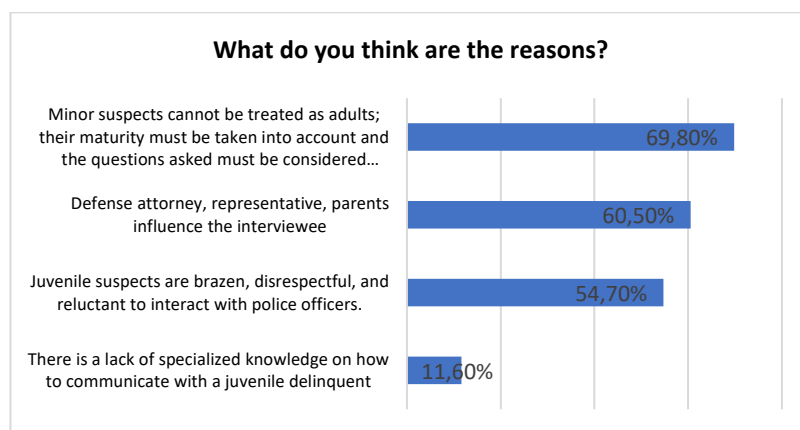


Figure 2. Respondents' answers about the reasons for the complexity of interrogations, percent.

Most of the study participants (69.8%) agree that juvenile suspects are specific participants in the legal process and that communication with them during interrogations is different. In the opinion of police investigators, interrogations of juvenile delinquents are complicated by the fact that the questions asked need to be carefully thought out and adapted to the age, maturity, and perception of the interviewee. A slightly smaller proportion of respondents (60.5%) also chose an answer based on the influence of other persons participating in the interrogation on the interviewee. The negative behavior and reclusiveness of juveniles during the interrogations appeared to 54.7% of the respondents as one of the factors determining the complexity of interrogations of delinquents. The smallest part of the responses (11.6%) was the problem of knowledge about interrogations of delinquents.

Respondents could also write their own answer to this question. Several respondents shared what, in their opinion, determines the complexity of questioning delinquents: "Questioning a minor requires the participation of other participants specified in the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Lithuania in the questioning and special equipment (video and audio recording), therefore planning the questioning is more complicated than a regular questioning"; "Children's rights specialists who defend insufferable minors interfere"; "More procedural requirements"; "There are more procedural rules that need to be remembered and strictly followed."

Another reason why it may be difficult to interrogation a minor is that, according to the majority of respondents (61.9%), minors lie more than adults and it is more difficult to extract the truth from them. However, according to 19% of respondents, minor suspects often confess themselves or are easier to influence to tell the truth than adults. The same number of respondents have no opinion on this issue. It should be added that influencing a minor to tell the truth can only be done by choosing the right tactical methods: some police investigators prefer to observe body language, others try to establish a psychological connection, ask appropriate questions.

Summarizing the results of these questions, it can be stated that the most important reasons determining the complexity of conducting interrogations with delinquents are: the need to assess the maturity of the delinquent and consider the questions (choice of tactical methods), compliance with additional procedural rules/recommendations, the influence of parents/guardians, and defense attorneys during the interrogations, and the fact that minors, according to respondents, are more likely to lie.

The benefits of professional training on interrogating juvenile suspects for police investigators

In a survey of officers conducted by the National Audit Office in 2021 on the relevance of all training courses and the use of knowledge in practice, only 15 percent of officers responded that more than 80 percent of the knowledge was applicable. Officers also stated that the training consists of “unnecessary theory” and is of a universal nature, without taking into account the nature of the specific work (State Audit Report 2021). Therefore, respondents were asked whether they had had the opportunity to participate in training courses designed to acquire knowledge about the effective conduct of interrogations of minor suspects and the peculiarities of communication with delinquent minors? Slightly more than half (57.1%) of the respondents responded that they had participated in professional training of this type, while the remaining part (42.9%) indicated that they had not had the opportunity to participate in such training courses. The majority (71.4%) of respondents who participated in the training courses responded that the training helped them understand how to communicate with delinquent persons and how to properly conduct their interrogations. Only 28.6% of respondents found the training useless and unimplementable in practice.

In the survey, the participants were asked to briefly share what they learned from the training when conducting interrogations with minors suspected of committing a criminal act or administrative offense (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' answers about the knowledge acquired during the training

<i>How to communicate with minors and gain their trust.</i>
<i>Survey tactics.</i>
<i>Principles and methods of starting a conversation.</i>
<i>The training was useful in that I gained skills in conducting interrogation with minors with various disorders, such as a minor who stutters.</i>
<i>Establishing contact with a minor, the specifics of the questions asked to the minor, understanding the answers provided by the minor, etc.</i>
<i>How to properly conduct a survey, what questions are best to ask and which ones to avoid, etc.</i>
<i>Establishing psychological contact.</i>
<i>Which participants in the process must participate and which can only participate. Formulation of questions to be asked to the minor.</i>
<i>The essential thing learned through years of training is to ask the right questions to a person and read body language.</i>
<i>Competency training helped to understand the subtleties of juvenile behavior.</i>
<i>General rules for interrogations with minors, but the training was more aimed at minor victims and witnesses.</i>
<i>Recognition and assessment of behavior and personality, the ability to choose the appropriate method of questioning and communication.</i>
<i>Child psychology, how to communicate with minors in general, what impact the legal process has on the child, etc.</i>

As can be seen from the responses, mainly during the training, police investigators learned the features of communication with minors, learned about their psychology, and the subtleties of behaviour. In addition, the training was useful for knowledge about the features of formulating questions when interrogating a minor, and establishing a psychological connection. It is important to note that the training focused more on how to communicate with a minor victim or witness than with a suspect. Given this, it is likely that most of the interrogation tactics intended for interrogating minor witnesses or victims may also be suitable for interrogating minor suspects, depending on the situation.

Compliance with procedural rules (recommendations) and choice of tactical methods in interrogations of juvenile suspects

The survey participants were asked, “When investigating a criminal offense, do you invite a psychologist to participate in the interrogation of a minor suspect?” (Figure 3). The respondents could select several appropriate options.

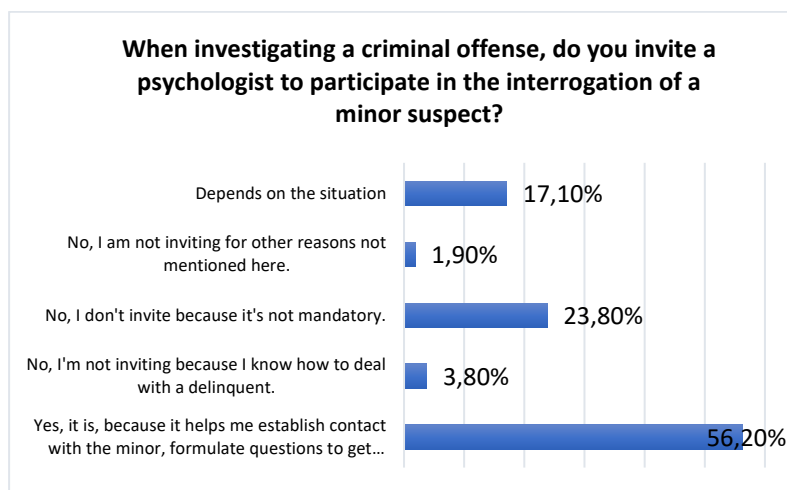


Figure 3. Respondents' responses regarding the invitation of a psychologist to participate in the interrogation of a minor suspect

The data in this figure show that more than half of the respondents (56.2%) follow the procedural recommendations that were indicated in the theoretical part and invite a psychologist to participate in the interrogation. However, 23.8% of the police investigators who participated in the survey indicate that they do not invite a psychologist because it is not required by law. A smaller part (19%) of the respondents indicates that they invite a psychologist depending on the situation or do not invite him for other reasons not mentioned in the questionnaire survey. The smallest part of the responses (3.8%) was made up of respondents who do not see the necessity of a psychologist's participation in the interrogation of an offender. Some of the respondents provided their answers as to the reasons why they do not invite a psychologist to participate in the interrogation: "because the parents are involved", "because they may negatively influence the interrogation", "the psychologist does not know the circumstances of the investigation, in many cases his participation is formal, the interests of the suspected minor are ensured by the defense lawyer". Another part of the respondents shared the situations in which they call for a psychologist: "maturity, perception, each situation is different", "I only use a psychologist when it is impossible to establish contact with a minor", "I only call in if the criminal act is serious, there are many unclear circumstances, the child is not open", "it depends on the complexity of the committed activity, other circumstances, the maturity of the suspect, and willingness to cooperate".

Very similar data were obtained when respondents were asked about the participation of a state child protection representative (Figure 4).

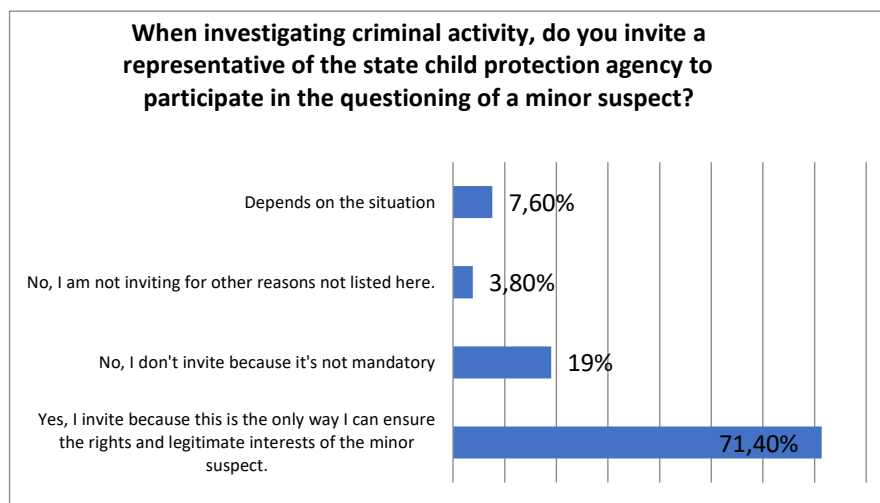


Figure 4. Respondents' answers regarding the invitation of a state child protection representative to participate in the interrogation of a minor suspect

Respondents provided their answers as to why they do not invite a representative of the state child protection agency to the interrogation of a delinquent or in what situations they invite him/her: “the process takes so long, the more people, the more difficult it is to agree on a deadline. Besides, they are only there for the sake of appearance”, “they are not invited if the parents as legal representatives agree and willingly participate in the process”, “participation is formal”, “I do not invite them because the invitation procedure is complicated and takes time”. These respondents’ answers confirm the problem of ineffective participation of representatives of SOPCRA in the interrogation of a minor, analyzed in the theoretical part.

The same answer options were given when asked about inviting specialists to participate in a survey when investigating an administrative offense case. The answer options were distributed somewhat differently: the majority (41%) indicated that they do not invite them, because this is not mandatory. Slightly fewer (32.4%) believe that a psychologist and/or a child rights protection representative is necessary when conducting a survey in an administrative process. The remaining 28.5% of respondents chose not to invite them or invite them, depending on the situation. In addition to the options provided in the survey, 4 respondents indicated that they do not investigate administrative offense cases, therefore they do not know how surveys are conducted during this study. Another part of the respondents shared their answer options: “one of the parents must participate in the administrative investigation of a minor's offense, therefore, a psychologist or child rights representative is not needed in this case”, “I only invite them when I see that they will not come out to talk to the minor”, “there is a lack of human resources”, “I do not invite them because the administrative process is often simpler and does not have any impact on the minor suspect”. After analyzing the respondents' answers, it can be hypothesized that most police investigators do not invite specialists to participate in an administrative offense case for two main reasons: 1) the investigation of an administrative offense is simpler than in a criminal case, therefore the minor is less likely to experience negative experiences 2) excessive time and financial costs.

To the question “How do you assess cooperation with specialists in the interrogation?” more than half (57.3%) of the respondents answered positively, the other part (42.7%) indicated that it is difficult to quickly call a specialist to participate in the interrogation, which affects the efficiency of the interrogation. In addition to the answer options provided in the questionnaire,

the respondents also provided their own answers: “the participation of child rights protection specialists is zero”, “if a psychologist is involved, representatives of the SOPCRA are not needed at all”, “it is easy to call them, but their participation is a hindrance”.

The respondents were asked about the influence of a legal representative and a defense attorney on the effectiveness of the interrogation of a minor suspect. The most common answers given by the respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' opinions on the influence of parents/guardians and/or a lawyer on the effectiveness of the interrogation

POSITIVE INFLUENCE	NEGATIVE INFLUENCE
<i>Controls the course of the interrogation, ensures the interests of the child</i>	<i>They have already decided in advance what and how to say to the minor, even though the minor is not in the same room with them during the interrogation.</i>
<i>Maybe a kind of shame from other adults' legal representatives or a defender for the violation committed, as a prevention not to behave like that again</i>	<i>Rarely has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the survey. Often, the more participants, the more closed off the minor is</i>
<i>It depends on the situation, sometimes disciplining a minor helps to clarify all the circumstances, and sometimes they are not open and keep quiet about certain circumstances as a representative under the law.</i>	<i>The child may have difficulty answering questions.</i>
<i>Often, parents influence a minor, as a result of which he is afraid to tell all the circumstances, but there are certainly cases when parents encourage the child, tell him to be honest. It depends a lot on the situation.</i>	<i>The minor is competing and does not always provide complete information.</i>
<i>Protection from unnecessary exposure, both for the minor and the researcher</i>	<i>The child feels more closed off around his parents, does not tell the investigator everything because he is probably afraid or ashamed, and the lawyer has no influence on the effectiveness of the interrogation.</i>
<i>Defends his interests</i>	<i>I think that sometimes minors would open up more alone than in front of their parents or a defense attorney.</i>
<i>Gives the minor a sense of security</i>	<i>Parents often defend their child, they don't want him to tell everything, some of the investigator's questions are too strict according to the parents, so you have to maneuver a lot between how you question a minor and ensuring that everything is investigated correctly.</i>
<i>It is more effective because with the participation of several people, not only does the minor behave more respectfully towards the investigator, but the interrogation itself also passes faster.</i>	<i>Interferes with the interrogation. Often minors themselves ask that their parents not participate.</i>
<i>The child feels safe.</i>	<i>Parents most often do not believe the child's violation and try to deny the fact, and then the child gives false testimony.</i>
<i><...> however, there are certainly cases when parents help officers by disciplining a minor and telling them not to lie.</i>	<i>On the one hand, the minor feels safer, on the other hand, when parents are involved, you sometimes focus more on procedural matters than on questions aimed at clarifying the criminal act.</i>
<i>The defense attorney has a positive influence, i.e. helps the minor to tell all the circumstances, <...></i>	<i>Parents from antisocial families usually put pressure on their child during interrogations, turning them against the officer.</i>

Of these, more than half (63.4%) noted that parents/guardians and/or a defense attorney have a negative impact on the effectiveness of questioning a juvenile delinquent. However, it is noteworthy that more respondents emphasized the negative impact of parents/guardians than of a defense attorney. A smaller proportion (17.8%) of police investigators participating in the study believe that everything depends on the parents' relationship with the child and the parents' awareness. Slightly more than a tenth (11.9%) of respondents indicated that third parties have absolutely no influence on the questioning. The smallest proportion (6.9%) of study participants chose the position that parents/guardians and a defence attorney have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the questioning. These results confirm the negative impact of parents/guardians on the effectiveness of the questioning discussed in the theoretical part - very often, parents/guardians, participating in the questioning of a juvenile suspect, defend their child, do not allow him to tell all the circumstances known to him, or the child is ashamed or afraid to tell his parents about them.

In addition to questions about compliance with procedural rules and the difficulties arising from them, the survey participants were also asked a question about the choice of tactical methods in interrogations of juvenile suspects (Table 3). Respondents could select several appropriate options.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents' answers according to the interrogation tactics they choose when interrogating juvenile suspects

Before the interrogation, I inquire about the minor's social life; relationships with relatives	64,8%
Before the interrogation, I make a plan, formulate and carefully consider the questions I will ask the minor.	67,6%
I try to establish a psychological connection with him, i.e., before conducting the survey, I will ask about his hobbies, areas of interest, etc.	56,2%
During the interrogation, I avoid legal concepts, long sentences that are incomprehensible to a teenager.	68,6%
I avoid making promises or threats during the interrogation.	43,8%
I maintain a calm, non-judgmental tone of voice.	63,8%
Before starting the interrogation, I take enough time to explain his rights and ask him to describe them in his own words.	32,4%
I put psychological pressure on the interviewee if I suspect that the interviewee is lying.	8,6%
I observe a minor's body language and from that I can/learn to decide whether the minor is lying.	58,1%
I avoid conducting the survey at school, in a club, or in another public place.	42,9%
During or after the interrogation, I allocate time for an informal conversation with the minor about the consequences and reasons for the act committed, in order to prevent further offenses by the interviewee.	32,4%

Most of the interrogation tactics discussed in the theoretical part of this article are used by police investigators. However, there are also mentioned tactics that are not so often used in interrogations of minor suspects. For example, less than half (43.8%) of police investigators answered that they avoid promising or threatening something during interrogation. According to the study, only 32.4% of respondents explain their rights to the interrogated person in detail and ask them to describe them in their own words. It can be assumed that each police investigator, having assessed the situation and the maturity of the minor, determines that the interrogated person is mature enough to understand the content of their rights, and therefore does not spend much time on this procedural formality. In addition, participating representatives under the law or a defence attorney can help the child exercise their rights.

However, it is important to note that before conducting an interrogation, the investigator must assess the minor's ability to understand their rights, since regardless of the participation of the representatives, the minor suspect is an independent participant in the process who has the inherent right to realize his or her rights and duties. Slightly more than half (58.1%) of the survey participants rely on the body language of the minor and judge the insincerity of the minor from it. The last answer option provided was intended to assess the preventive function performed by police investigators during interrogations. A small part of the respondents (32.4%) devote sufficient time to an informal conversation about the consequences and reasons for the minor's actions, in order to prevent further offenses by the interviewee.

Thus, summarizing the results of the study, it can be stated that most police investigators have difficulties in questioning minor suspects. The most frequently mentioned reasons are: more procedural rules/recommendations and negative influence of parents/guardians on the effectiveness of the questioning. The results of the study revealed that the majority of police investigators invite specialists (psychologist and representative of the State Criminal Investigation Service) to questioning minor suspects, although the law does not necessarily provide for this. It also turned out that more than half of the police investigators have encountered parents/guardians obstructing the questioning, the minor's fear, and shame in telling all the circumstances known to him to his representative according to the law.

Conclusions

Delinquency is an episodic violation of social, moral and legal norms, characteristic of minors. When delinquent behaviour leads to violations of legal norms, appropriate legal actions must be taken, one of which is interrogation. Juvenile suspects, due to their young age, incomplete maturity and “negative” procedural status, are specific participants in the legal process; therefore it is important to be able to choose appropriate tactical methods of interrogation in order not to violate the rights and legitimate interests of the minor and, at the same time, to clarify the truth in the case.

Empirical research has shown that most police investigators find it more difficult to communicate with juvenile delinquents during interrogations than with adult suspects due to the young age of the minor and additional procedural rules and problems arising from them. The majority of police investigators have learned about the features of communicating with delinquents during professional training and successfully use them in interrogations. Most often, police investigators take an interest in the minor's environment and relationships with the family before the interrogation; they select questions based on the minor's maturity; during the interrogation, they do not shy away from making promises in exchange for a confession; they keep their tone of voice calm and non-judgmental; they observe the minor's body language; sometimes they choose to conduct the interrogation at school or at home.

Therefore, it can be assumed that despite the existing uncertainties and certain obstacles, many police investigators are able to communicate with adolescents with delinquent behavior. However, certain clarifications to the law would bring more clarity and facilitate the work of investigators.

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PROBLEMS OF THE MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVE SYSTEM FOR OFFICERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. *Work motivation determines employee productivity, satisfaction with professional activities, and long-term loyalty to the organization. Therefore, an effectively designed and implemented motivation and incentive system is a key factor to the success of an organization, especially in law enforcement institutions, where working conditions are difficult and require special commitment. Therefore, motivation and incentivization of statutory employees is an extremely relevant topic. The empirical research conducted in this article has allowed us to more broadly reveal the problems in the incentive system for statutory employees of law enforcement institutions, such as: insufficient adaptation of the system, without taking into account the expectations of employees; insufficiently objective assessment of results; uncompetitive wages, which are not proportional to the workload; applied incentive measures are more formal than material and do not meet the expectations of employees; lack of opportunities for professional development; and often experienced stress and psychological pressure in the service, as well as insufficient information about confidential psychological assistance that statutory employees can use. Therefore, the purpose of this scientific article is to reveal the theoretical and practical aspects of the motivation and incentive system for law enforcement officers.*

Keywords: *law enforcement institutions, officer motivation, incentive system, challenges*

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. The role of law enforcement institutions in modern society is significant, as they ensure security and law and order. Employees of statutory institutions – the Lithuanian Police, the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the MIA of the LR), the Financial Crimes Investigation Service under the MIA of the LR, the Special Investigation Service and other statutory civil servants – face special challenges and dangerous, difficult working conditions every day. Their activities guarantee the well-being and safety of society. Therefore, motivation and incentivization of statutory civil servants is a particularly important and relevant topic, as it is necessary to ensure that these employees are properly motivated and encouraged to perform their duties effectively and professionally. The most important factors that increase motivation are recognition, responsibility, achievements, the nature of the work, opportunities for development and personal growth (Hilal, Litsey, 2019). Motivation is an internal process that encourages an individual to achieve certain goals and perform tasks in a certain way. Self-determination theory states that people are motivated when the activities they engage in are consistent with their interests, values, and sense of autonomy. This theory also emphasizes such intrinsic motivators as the ability to make independent decisions, satisfaction and personal well-being, the importance of increasing engagement, and pleasure and curiosity (Deci, Ryan, 2008,

cited in Din Bandhu et al., 2024). In recent years, the activities of law enforcement institutions have become increasingly complex due to various social, economic and technological changes. Public expectations regarding the high quality of law enforcement activities encourage reflection on the system of motivation and incentivization of employees of law enforcement institutions, because *"motivated statutory civil servants are the guarantor of the security and stability of the Republic of Lithuania"* (Marozas, Guščinskienė, 2020).

Novelty of the topic. The issue of motivation has been studied by a number of scientists in the mid-20th century, but in the 21st century, fewer and fewer researchers are choosing to analyze this topic. Although there are many theoretical theories of motivation created by foreign scientists, for example, A.Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McLeod, 2024), F.Herzberg's two-factor theory (Nickerson, 2024), V.Vroom's expectancy theory (Sutton, 2024), J.Adams' theory of justice (Davlembayeva, Alamanos, 2023), etc., difficulties are often encountered when applying them in statutory institutions. In recent foreign literature, one can find a number of publications that aim to identify modern employee motivation factors, including the choice of the public sector and the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This is discussed by authors such as Asseburg and Homberg (2018) and Rida and Siddiqui (2019). Motivation and its influence on individual behavior and measures to promote employee productivity in their work were examined by Asaari, Desa, and Subramaniam (2019), Shahid, Haq, Iqbal, and Munir (2020), Haryono, Supardi, and Udina. (2020).

This scientific article presents a new approach to the already studied motivation of statutory civil servants and related problems. When conducting new empirical research, the aim is to clarify not only the shortcomings of motivation, but also the problems related to incentivization, including in the study not only statutory civil servants, but also the opinion of the head of all police about the current system in the Lithuanian police.

Lithuanian scientists have studied employee motivation, but there is a noticeable lack of new scientific work. There are almost no specific studies or publications dedicated to analyzing problems related to motivation and incentivization of officials. Nevertheless, several new scientific publications are worth mentioning, which examine various theoretical and practical factors influencing statutory civil servants. Dudenaitė and Radzevičienė (2023), Marozas and Guščinskienė (2020), Morkevičiūtė, Endriulaitienė and Jočienė (2018). So are previous scientific works. Vitkauskas (2012), Žaptorius (2007), Palidaukaitė (2007), Sakalas (2001), Šilingienė (2001) analyzed aspects of motivation, while Marcinkevičiūtė (2010) focused mainly on motivation models.

The analyzed issues implied the purpose of the scientific article: to reveal the theoretical and practical aspects of the motivation and incentive system for law enforcement officers and, taking into account the specifics of the activities and nature of work of law enforcement officers, to present solutions for improvement.

Concepts of motivation and incentive

The concept of motivation and incentive consists of a number of strategies and methods that aim to motivate and encourage people to achieve better prospects and set goals in one or another field of work. The specifics of working in an institution and such individual needs of employees as emotional well-being, recognition, free decision-making, career opportunities, good working conditions and high salary are important for people to perform their work more productively. However, it is not easy to understand how to correctly implement this process, because each person's motivation is formed within them, and incentivization is determined by external factors, which, unfortunately, do not always meet the expectations of employees.

Although the public sector is tirelessly looking for different alternatives and applying new motivational measures to employees, this is still not enough, because over time, motivation changes and the measures used lose their effectiveness, which makes it necessary to look for new ones. Marcinkevičiūtė (2010), writing about employee motivation models, states that *"it is generally accepted that motivation is not constant, it constantly changes depending on the circumstances and the person himself, therefore it is difficult to answer unequivocally what means are best for motivation"*. She also emphasizes that *"different motives may dominate in different situations, and one motive may be replaced by another, therefore it is necessary to constantly monitor and investigate the reasons for employee motivation"*. As authors Asaari, Desa, and Subramaniam (2019) state, employees perceive that rewards such as salary and recognition are significant in promoting motivation and satisfaction with professional activities. However, reward is a stimulus that encourages individuals to work more productively. The authors emphasize that, as a result, the institution must create a flexible and effective incentive system that would motivate employees. Similar insights were shared by Diržytė, Patapas, and Mikelionytė (2010). However, the most influential factor is wages and other factors that differ between the private and public sectors. The aforementioned authors emphasize that good remuneration, image, prestige, and responsibility are often the most important components that inspire people to choose management positions in the private sector. According to Diskienė (2008), in the public sector, the budget of institutions is one of the fundamental constraints that prevents managers from satisfying not only basic but also developmental needs, taking into account the shortcomings of the existing evaluation system, which is regulated by a regulatory legal act and is prescriptively formalized. Also, the aforementioned authors Diržytė, Patapas and Mikelionytė (2010) note that the priority goal of public sector organizations is to ensure quality services, while that of private organizations is to pursue profit.

Motivation is perceived through content visualization as intrinsic and extrinsic (see Chart 1). And incentivization is perceived through different means of influence and advantages, which influence the employee, which in turn strengthens his motivation, creates a desire to achieve better results and increases work productivity (see Chart 2). However, there are various external factors that do not motivate. As state Marcinkevičiūtė and Petrauskienė (2009), low remuneration for work, disproportionately distributed workload, and the absence of an incentive system for properly performed work can have a negative impact on productivity.



Chart 1. Visualization of the Concept of Motivation

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the aforementioned scientific source

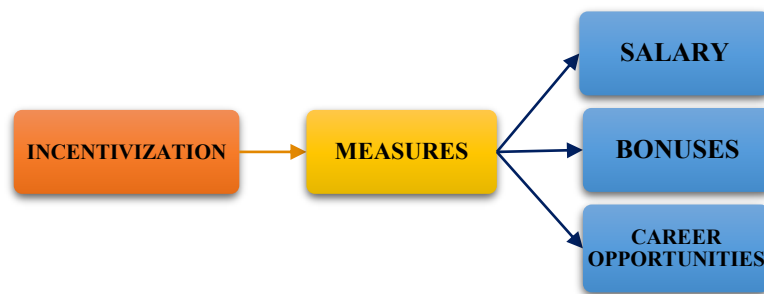


Chart 2. Visualization of the Concept of Incentive

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the aforementioned scientific sources

The motivation and incentive system must be consistent and meet both the institution's expectations and the needs of employees, because human resources are the most important thing. A manager should be able to identify the needs of the employee and meet them, as this will help achieve goals and create a harmonious team. According to Morkevičiūtė, Endriulaitienė and Jočienė (2018), in order to feel skilled and increase self-esteem and form a desired image, an employee must strive to receive the most favorable evaluation possible. However, the responsibility of the organization's manager is not only to evaluate the results achieved, but also to create a work environment in which the employee feels valued and involved in the organization's activities. According to Adamonienė (2015), “[...] a manager, in order to involve subordinates in management, must create conditions that encourage the desire to improve and assume greater responsibility”. Therefore, in order for human resources activities to be consistent and the system to be long-term and effective, managers should pay more attention to developing human resources management strategies, motivating employees, creating conditions for improving their skills, ensuring constant communication between colleagues, encouraging their cooperation, and resolving emerging conflicts. Thus, the concept of motivation and incentive encompasses a multifaceted approach that highlights both the individual needs and goals of employees and the general organizational factors that determine the effectiveness of encouragement, thus distinguishing factors that have a negative impact on the employee and the organization.

Peculiarities of motivation and incentive of employees of law enforcement institutions

The motivation process is an individual phenomenon that each person experiences in their own way and which depends on their motives, personal values, attitudes, goals, and social environment. All of this determines the direction of actions and certain choices of a person seeking to realize their intended goals. The main difference between intrinsic motivation, where an activity is performed because it is inherently interesting or pleasurable, and extrinsic motivation, where an activity is performed for some external benefit (Ryan and Deci, 2000). According to Žaptorius (2007), “work efficiency is determined by both material incentives (cash bonuses, etc.) and moral factors (favorite activities, good relationships with colleagues and managers, etc.). An incentive is effective only when the recipient is convinced that it was due to his or her appropriate efforts”. Thus, it can be assumed that material and non-material means act as stimulating incentives, complementing each other, because the interaction of these means keeps the individual motivated. The differentiation of motivation factors and their structural content are described and presented below, including internal elements that are oriented towards the officer's personal value aspirations and self-expression, as well as external

factors that are conditioned by the environment and act as an incentive and social stimulus. This differentiation allows us to identify the totality of various motivational factors and their influence on an individual's behavior, helps us understand the expectations of a person's choice of profession and the nature of work.

First of all, the motivation of statutory civil servants is divided into two main forms - internal and external factors. Internal motivation factors include: honest and honorable work, the desire to maintain order, protect weaker members of society, professional challenges related to the specifics of the work, career opportunities, recognition, self-realization, a sense of responsibility, work diversity, leadership quality, favorable micro-climate, feedback, and higher responsibilities. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation factors include: salary, salary supplements, social guarantees provided by the state, job stability, incentives for impeccable service, early retirement, feedback, work-life balance, positive reputation, and working conditions.

Considering the presented motivation factors, it can be understood that individuals working in statutory institutions seek meaningful work. Their motivation is further enhanced by reasons such as a sense of service and a desire to contribute to the well-being of others, thereby nurturing society. Thus, their expectations coincide with the institution's goal - to guarantee law and order. Article 5(3) of the Constitution enshrines the principle that *"government institutions serve the people"*. This constitutional imperative stipulates the purpose of state institutions and their servants - to ensure the protection of public interests, public order and other important aspects in relation to citizens. As the authors of Lithuanian constitutional law state (2017), *"the institute of fundamental rights does not allow excessive state dominance over an individual and requires that state institutions and officials protect and defend fundamental rights, not violate them and not allow others to commit such violations"*. In other words, officials of state institutions must not only protect and ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, but also not violate them themselves and not allow others to do so.

The desire to uphold and ensure justice, arising from intrinsic motivation, and insight into the meaning of work provide more motivation, because when a person performs useful work, he feels the benefits of the efforts made and the results achieved. This is also confirmed by Balčiūnas (2021): *"In addition to diversity and professionalism, it is necessary that highly motivated people work in the civil service, for whom service to society (not only to the state, because society is often forgotten in Lithuania) is not just "work for a salary", but a little more, i.e. meaningful, interesting and difficult activity, the results of which are important not only for the official, civil servant, state, but primarily for society."* Thus, a statutory civil servant should perceive service as a meaningful activity, not forget the interests of citizens and direct their efforts primarily towards the general welfare of the state.

Intrinsic motivation is a natural need of an individual; in other words, people willingly seek to engage in something that interests them or is enjoyable. Intrinsic motivation is understood as an employee's desire to do their job better, because a job well done gives them a sense of pride in themselves, they enjoy completing assigned tasks, and they find them interesting. The sources of this motivation are the employee's intellectual curiosity, desire to improve and pursue a career, desire to do interesting and responsible work, desire to have freedom of choice, and pursuit of meaning in life (Lipinskienė, 2012). However, personal determination alone is not enough; even with strong intrinsic motivation, it can decrease if there is no support from the environment and no appreciation for the work done. Therefore, external influence is no less important; for intrinsic motivation to increase, a favorable environment is also needed in which employees can realize their potential. In order for intrinsic motivation to flourish, the social environment must foster it. Social context has an impact on the development

of intrinsic motivation, influencing perceived competence and autonomy (Legault, 2016). For this reason, the intrinsic motivation of civil servants depends not only on their calling and desire to serve, but also on the work environment and society. Civil servants feel appreciated after receiving feedback. In order to maintain intrinsic motivation, management should constantly evaluate employees' achievements and work quality, and encourage them by granting them higher positions or providing salary bonuses. This way, the employee would feel more motivated. Qualitative data analysis conducted by Uka and Prendi (2021) revealed that employees feel greater satisfaction and become more motivated when they are given additional benefits, higher responsibilities, greater responsibility, and when their efforts are appreciated by others, especially management.

Analyzing the scientific literature, it can be noted that in addition to financial incentives, employees are also motivated by socio-psychological methods of incentivization, for example, by ensuring career prospects, democratic leadership in the organization, more flexible work schedules, work-rest balance, and providing opportunities for competence development. However, when it comes to the benefits of the work of officials, their career and self-expression prospects, when examining the legal acts regulating statutory bodies, it is noticeable that their career and personal development opportunities depend on legal regulation. As a result, officers can only pursue professional development within the limits set by law. Training for professional qualifications is provided for in Article 19, Part 1 of the Law on Amendments to the Statute of the Internal Service of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Statute), which provides that *"officials must constantly improve their qualifications. The procedure for training for professional qualifications of officials shall be established by the Minister of the Interior, in coordination with the Ministers of Justice and Finance"*. Although the Statute defines mandatory professional development in detail, it limits the ability of statutory servants to freely choose the direction of development, as this depends on the provisions of the executive branch and other entities. Career opportunities are also enshrined (in Article 26 of the Statute), which states that *"officials may be promoted to higher posts on the basis of performance evaluation or selection [...]"*. Consequently, the implementation of officials' professional goals is dependent on a strictly defined legal order, which may not in all cases satisfy employees' needs and meet goals, especially if their internal aspirations are related to larger future plans. Although intrinsic motivation stems from personal aspirations and needs, it is not sustainable in itself; its maintenance requires the involvement of the organization so that the employee is properly valued and receives the necessary support for professional growth and unconditional involvement in the organization.

The essence of extrinsic motivation is aptly defined by Adomaitytė, Girdvainytė and Martinkienė (2016), stating that *"extrinsic motivation, simply put, is the pursuit of external reward [...]"*. Speaking about the priority of incentivization for civil servants, Vitkauskas (2012) emphasizes that incentive is an integral part of the performance evaluation of every statutory servant and one of the extrinsic motivators for working in the service. The right of an official to be encouraged must be established not only formally, but also legally protected, and if necessary, its judicial protection must be ensured. It is important that in this regard, incentives are truly ensured and clear criteria are established according to which statutory civil servants would be motivated, while also creating conditions for an objective assessment of their performance. When examining the legal acts that determine the activities and conditions of internal service officers, it can be noted that (Article 39 of the Statute) establishes the procedure for promoting and rewarding officers and the grounds on which incentives are granted to civil servants. The aforementioned (Article 39, Part 1 of the Statute) states that *"for impeccable and exemplary performance of official duties, officials may be encouraged and rewarded"*. Also,

Part 2 of the same article establishes how *"officials may be encouraged:"* 1) *an acknowledgment;* 2) *a one-time cash payment not exceeding the amount of 2 average salaries of the official (except for the case specified in Part 4 of this Article), awarded and paid in accordance with the procedure established by the Government;* 3) *by granting additional paid leave in accordance with the procedure established in Parts 1 and 2 of Article 53 of the Statute;* 4) *a nominal gift;* 5) *a cash payment in the amount of 1 to 2 official salaries for a personal exceptional contribution to the implementation of the goals set for the statutory institution or the achieved results and implemented tasks (however, not more often than 2 times per calendar year)".* Also, Part 3 of the legal norm under discussion establishes that *"officials may be awarded":* 1) *with an official insignia;* 2) *with a presentation firearm",* and Part 4 provides that *"officials who have directly participated in the disclosure or investigation of criminal acts and other violations of the law may, under the conditions and procedure established by the Government, be encouraged with a one-time cash payment of an amount established by the Government".* It can be stated that the certainty of incentive measures is sufficient, and the legal act clearly defines the grounds for their granting, i.e. sets out specific cases when an award or other incentive may be granted. These measures are diverse and can indeed motivate a statutory employee. However, the question remains whether they are sufficiently useful and whether their administration always serves its intended purpose and provides tangible benefits.

When analyzing scientific literature, it is noticeable that the necessity of material incentives is emphasized taking into account the fact that the work of statutory civil servants is not easy and that considerable stress is experienced while performing it. According to Rahman and Shanjabin (2022), work-related stress and motivation may interact. Jobs that cause more stress should be associated with stronger motivation, such as bonuses or other incentives, to ensure employee satisfaction. The greater the risk of the job, the correspondingly greater the incentives or rewards should be. In other words, employees are less likely to do stressful work if they are not given adequate remuneration or motivation. (Article 54 of the Statute) sets out the salary structure of an official. (Part 1 and paragraphs) of this article state, that *"the salary of civil servants consists of: 1) official salary; 2) a supplement for years of service to the State of Lithuania (this supplement is not awarded to the head of a central statutory institution); 3) bonuses; 4) payment for work on days off and holidays, night work and overtime and on-call work".* Considering the statutory regulation of the salary structure of civil servants, it can be concluded that the current procedure has advantages and creates opportunities for additional earnings. This is particularly significant because statutory institutions are budgetary and have limited financial resources. The current salary arrangement procedure creates conditions for gaining financial stability and the opportunity to receive additional income. However, the question arises as to whether this arrangement satisfies employees and meets their working conditions and needs. If the salary is not competitive enough and does not match the workload, employees may be inclined to leave the service and look for a better-paying job.

Authors Dudenaitė and Radzevičienė (2023) emphasize that every state must create opportunities for companies and organizations to properly motivate their employees, because not only the efficiency of the company's activities, but also the level of welfare of the entire state depends on this. Therefore, improving the motivational system must be a continuous process in order to achieve this well-being. Such constant communication allows us to identify problems that have arisen in the team and find appropriate solutions to prevent tension at work. However, officials themselves must also be involved in solving problems on greater individualization through the application of incentive measures. To maintain employee motivation, managers, using one or another tool, must know exactly which motivation tool would best motivate the employee (see Table 1).

Table 1. Main Methods of Employee Incentives
Source: K. Dudėnaitė and A. Radzevičienė, 2023, p. 224.

Economic / material employee incentive methods		Organizational, administrative, and legal employee incentive methods	Socio-psychological employee incentive methods
Monetary	Non-monetary		
Salary, bonuses based on team or organizational performance, holiday/loyalty bonuses, reimbursement of commuting expenses	Free meals or snacks during work, a company vehicle that can also be used for personal needs, gifts, leisure activities	Regulation of work activities (positions, rights, responsibilities), precise delegation of job functions, optimal coordination of tasks, clear instructions and their execution	Career opportunities, job security, engaging work, flexible working hours, possibility to work from home, opportunities for development and self-expression

Summarizing the analyzed scientific literature and relevant legal acts, it can be concluded that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors are essential and affect the performance efficiency of statutory employees. Intrinsic motivation is related to the pursuit of meaning, a sense of responsibility, the granting of higher positions, and recognition, while extrinsic motivation is related to salary, social guarantees provided by the state, salary supplements, and awards. However, all these motivational factors are strictly regulated by legal norms. For this reason, the pursuit of professional goals by officials, wages calculated using the basic salary, and incentive measures are limited by legal regulation. Furthermore, these factors – both intrinsic and extrinsic – are constantly changing, and the needs of each statutory employee are individual and different. Therefore, regular updating of motivational measures is necessary in order to maintain the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees of statutory institutions.

Research methodology and results

The scientific article presents the results of empirical research aimed at determining the advantages of the motivation and incentive system and identifying the main problems and challenges faced by law enforcement officers. Two law enforcement agencies and a police chief were selected for the research, and the results of quantitative and qualitative research are presented. However, due to methodological limitations, only essential data from the anonymous survey, in which 247 respondents participated, are presented; the questionnaire was anonymous. Also, the interview data is only summarized by presenting the identified problem areas.

Results of a quantitative research in a law enforcement institution (police)

The study aimed to find out what factors determine the motivation and incentive of officers and what are the shortcomings and advantages of the motivation and incentive system applied to them. Respondents were asked about the motivation and incentive system already created and applied in the law enforcement institution. The aim was to find out how officers evaluate the motivation and incentive system that has already been created and applied in one of the law enforcement institutions under investigation. The results obtained showed that the

majority (39.3%) of respondents rated it satisfactorily. Also, a significant portion (24.7%) of the respondents rated the motivation and incentive system poorly, while 15.0% rated it very poorly.

We also wanted to know the respondents' job satisfaction, so using the provided six-point scale, they had to rate their job satisfaction on a scale from 1 to 6. Next to the numbers, statements describing the assessment were presented. From the results obtained, it can be assumed that the majority of respondents (30%) chose the statement *"I am neither dissatisfied nor satisfied"* to describe their job satisfaction. Almost the same proportion (29.1%), with a difference of 1 percentage point, said *"I am quite dissatisfied"*. Also, 20.6 percent of respondents indicated that *"I am very satisfied"*.

In order to find out whether officers feel adequately encouraged and how they evaluate the incentives given to them, the question was asked *"How would you evaluate the current system of encouraging and rewarding officers in your institution as a motivating factor for performance?" (choose one of the options provided): excellent, good, middling, bad.* Based on the data, it can be noted that as many as 56.7% of respondents rate the incentives applied to them as *middling*. Just over a quarter (29.1%) of respondents believe that the system is *good*. 13% of the officers who participated in the study stated that the incentive system is *bad*.

The next goal was to find out what incentives officers have earned during their service. They were presented with options indicating possible incentives and asked to choose one or several. From the data obtained, it can be concluded that 85% of statutory employees were encouraged with *acknowledgments*, which indicates that acknowledgment is the main and most commonly used form of encouragement. 55.9% of respondents indicated that they were given a material incentive - *a one-time cash payment not exceeding the average salary of the official*. 47.4% of officials were given *official insignia*, and 39.3% - a *nominal gift*. Only 8.9% of the respondents have received a *higher degree*. The least frequently used incentive measure is *presentation firearms*, which were issued to only 0.8% of statutory employees.

In order to better understand the officers' attitude towards the opportunities provided to them to improve their professional skills and improve their qualifications, respondents were asked the question *"How do you assess your opportunity as an officer to improve your professional skills and qualifications while working in this law enforcement institution?"* Based on the survey results, it can be seen that (42.5%) of the respondents assessed their opportunities to improve their qualifications as *middling*. This indicates that a significant proportion of statutory employees are not sufficiently satisfied with their professional development opportunities. However, 31.6% of respondents assessed their professional growth prospects by choosing the answer as *good*, thus presenting a positive attitude towards the professional development opportunities provided. The difference between these estimates is 10.9%. Meanwhile, 18.6% chose the answer as *bad*. This may indicate that officials lack opportunities to improve their qualifications or that sufficient conditions are not created for this. Only 5.3% of survey participants rated the opportunities to improve their professional skills and qualifications as *excellent*. This result shows that only a small proportion of officers are satisfied with the currently available opportunities. Also, 2.0% of respondents decided to share their opinion (see Chart 1).

Considering that salary is one of the main motivational factors, the aim was to find out the attitude of statutory employees towards the salary they receive. Respondents had to rate their salary using a six-point scale from 1 to 6. The survey showed that the majority of respondents, 39.7%, rated their salary as 3. It can be assumed that officials believe that their salary is insufficient and does not meet their expectations. 21.9% of respondents chose the number 2. This result reveals that more than a fifth of the respondents evaluate their salary

negatively. 19.8% of respondents evaluated their salary as 4, and 13.0% - as 1. It is noteworthy that none of the survey participants rated their salary as the highest number - 6. This may mean that officials do not consider the salary they receive to be fully adequate and in line with their needs and the nature of the work they do (see Chart 2).

Emotional well-being is also very important and can influence officers' emotional well-being and their motivation. Therefore, the participants of the study were asked the question *"Do you, as a statutory civil servant of this institution, experience psychological pressure from the work environment, i.e. management or colleagues, which demotivates you to continue working in this institution, even though you like your work? However, do these factors prevent you from further realizing yourself in this field?"*

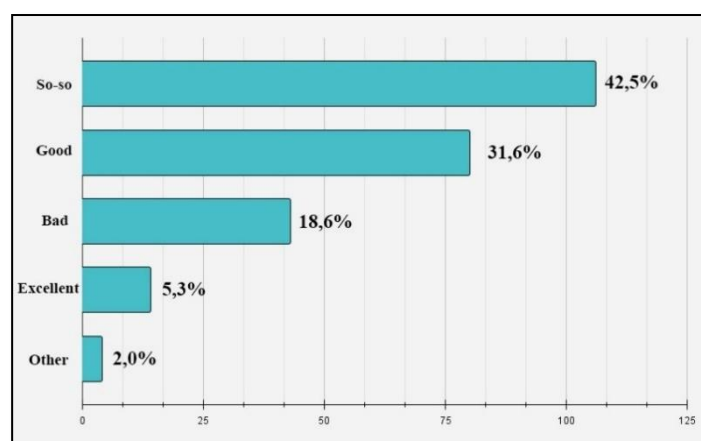


Chart 1. Assessment of Officers' Qualification Opportunities

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results obtained during the study, n=247

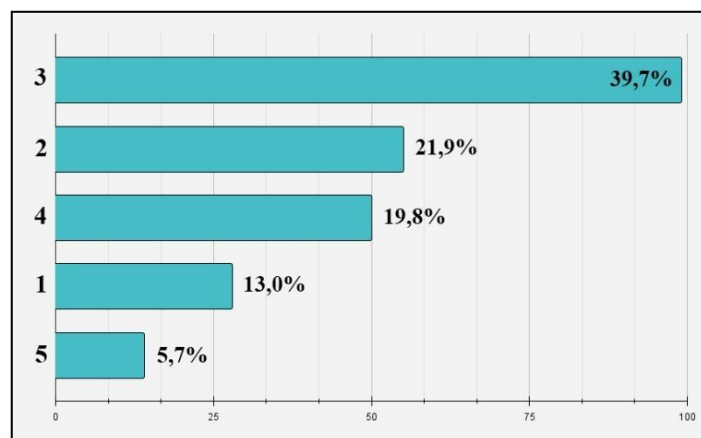


Chart 2. Assessment of Officers' Salary on a Scale from 1 to 6

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results obtained during the study, n=247

Respondents were asked to choose one of the options provided. The survey revealed that 44.1% of respondents had experienced pressure from the work environment at least once. 30.8% of those surveyed indicated that they did not experience psychological pressure from management and colleagues. 13.4% of the officers participating in the study stated that they had never encountered situations where psychological pressure prevailed, and 11.7% of respondents claimed that they were currently experiencing psychological pressure from

management and colleagues. Thus, based on the data obtained, it can be stated that emotional tension does exist in the institution and is experienced or has been experienced at least once by a significant proportion of statutory employees.

Results of a qualitative research

Due to methodological limitations and confidentiality requirements, the semi-structured interview with the police chief is presented in a summarized form.

First, the incentive system should be reviewed regularly, involving both employees and managers.

The management is making persistent efforts to ensure budget growth, but at present it does not yet sufficiently meet the expectations of employees.

The service imposes high demands on discipline and responsibility, and younger generation officers are more sensitive and have less tolerance for strict communication from their superiors, sometimes interpreting this as pressure or even mobbing.

Officers have the opportunity to apply for psychological assistance, which is provided whenever needed.

Improving the motivation system should be based on the constant involvement of officers, listening to their individual needs, and constructive dialogue between management and the officer.

Results of a qualitative research with a second law enforcement institution

Also, the structured interview conducted with statutory employees of the second investigative law enforcement institution is presented in a summarized form, without disclosing the identity of the respondents or other identifying data, due to confidentiality requirements and methodological limitations. Only essential points are presented, which the statutory servants have highlighted as the most important aspects of the topic under analysis.

The existing incentive system is not sufficiently focused on the individual interests of employees and their achievements at work.

Incentives should be applied more often, especially for work well done. Important financial incentives were also mentioned – salary supplements, additional days off for intensive work, as well as opportunities to develop competence.

Social factors: support from the team and recognition from management, according to the respondents, have a significant impact on employee motivation.

The study participants see a need to review and update certain provisions enshrined in the Internal Service Statute to make them clearer and more useful for officers. It was emphasized that the Statute should be reviewed regularly.

This law enforcement institution provides emotional support, but officers more often choose support from relatives or colleagues. This reveals the importance of emotional support, but at the same time, it can also be observed that there is insufficient trust in services providing emotional support.

Insights from research results on the motivation and incentive system for officials

Summarizing the results of all the research, it can be said that the main problems of the motivation and incentive system for law enforcement officers have been identified. First of all, based on the research data obtained, it can be concluded that the motivation and incentive

system applied in these law enforcement institutions is not sufficiently focused on the personal needs of employees and on the assessment of achieved goals. In a comprehensive assessment of an officer's performance, the incentive should be objective and correspond to the work results and efforts made. In addition, the applied incentive measures are often not sufficiently effective because they do not fully meet the expectations of statutory servants. Officials emphasized that it is necessary to prioritize material incentives, as formal incentives, such as acknowledgments, are not sufficient to keep officials motivated. Wages remain one of the biggest problems, as insufficient budgets limit the ability to ensure competitive remuneration in statutory institutions. Officials emphasize that the salary is not only disproportionate to their workload, but also does not provide financial stability. This not only reduces their desire to continue serving, but also fosters frustration with the existing system, which leads to job dissatisfaction. Opportunities for professional development are also assessed as insufficient. The officials expressed their desire to have high-quality and more flexible training that would be organized not only in Lithuania, but also abroad, so that international experience could be gained. Psychological and social factors also play a significant role in the work of statutory servants. Empirical research has revealed that the work of statutory servants is both emotionally and physically demanding, and in addition, officials sometimes experience psychological pressure in the work environment, some even perceive it as mobbing. According to the police chief, various factors influence this: generational conflict, excessive strictness on the part of leaders. The employee's greater sensitivity may also lead to certain remarks being perceived as psychological pressure. It should also be emphasized that the support of the team and managers is extremely important in creating a favorable and comfortable working environment. The results of the study show that psychological support is available to officers, but it is noticeable that some are hesitant to use it and choose other alternatives, such as support from relatives. In the opinion of the authors of the article, it is necessary not only to ensure the availability of this assistance, but also to better inform officials about the confidentiality of this service so that they feel assured that their consultations will be completely confidential. According to the police chief, in order to better understand what tools employees lack and what changes should be implemented in the system, it is important to ensure constant communication between management and employees. Feedback is of particular importance, as it is a key factor in strengthening cooperation. Thus, in order to better adapt the motivation and incentive system of the discussed statutory bodies to the needs of officials, it needs to be carefully reviewed and updated, which will also strengthen the legal system itself.

Solutions for improving the motivation and incentive system of law enforcement officers

After analyzing the incentive system designed and applied by two law enforcement institutions, key recommendations for improvement are presented.

Review and update of the motivation and incentive system. First of all, it is necessary to regularly analyze and update the applied incentive system, identify and eliminate problems that reduce the effectiveness of the system. After the updates are made, prepare a questionnaire survey to find out how officials assess the quality of the new incentive system. Summarize the results obtained and draw conclusions.

Application of motivational (incentive) measures. It is appropriate to review the applied motivational measures based on the needs and observations expressed by officials. If it is determined that existing motivation methods have lost their effectiveness and are no longer relevant, it is necessary to initiate their renewal by providing new incentive measures that would contribute to increasing employee motivation.

Ensuring constant communication between officers and management. In order to improve the motivation and incentive system, constant discussion between managers and statutory employees is necessary, as this is an essential condition for improving the applied system. It is necessary to regularly involve working employees in decision-making processes, listen to their opinions and provide them with feedback. Openness to discussion between management and employees is the most important factor in ensuring effective communication. This brings together common interests to ensure objective cooperation and smooth achievement of goals.

Optimization of the payroll system. Budget reform is needed to make civil servant salaries competitive. It is recommended that when planning the new budget, economic changes be taken into account and that permanent wage indexation be introduced so that the wages of statutory employees increase in line with inflation. It is also recommended to contact the responsible institutions, including the Government, and initiate constructive negotiations regarding adequate funding of the law enforcement institution with a request to allocate additional appropriations for the evaluation of officers for good work results. It could also be considered to increase the official salary by 1% after each year of service. This bonus would be combined with wage indexation taking into account inflation. For example, an officer working in a law enforcement institution for 20 years would receive an additional 20 percent bonus to his salary and a bonus equal to that year's inflation, while an officer with 3 years of service would have a 3 percent higher salary and would receive a bonus equal to inflation. Such a salary would not only motivate and encourage officers, but also ensure a stable source of livelihood. An improved payroll system would encourage long-term employees to remain in service, and officials with less work experience would not consider the possibility of looking for a better-paid job. Thus, this would significantly reduce employee turnover in the civil service.

Continuous employee encouragement based on achieved results. In order to strengthen the motivation of officials and ensure their job satisfaction, it is necessary to periodically evaluate their achievements in the service for their efforts, thus providing appropriate incentives. This would not only help highlight the meaning of the work of statutory employees, but also help them realize that their efforts are valued by management. This would increase the productivity of statutory employees.

Conclusions

It has been noted that the incentive system is a complex phenomenon, but it is an essential element that ensures the efficiency of law enforcement institutions and the effectiveness of officers. For the system to be effective, it must be aligned with the goals and values of the law enforcement institution, and the needs and expectations of employees must also be taken into account. The specifics of the activities and job requirements of law enforcement officers are shaped by the attitude towards the work of an officer as a service to society, which is characterized by constant commitment and a sense of responsibility. They are extremely sensitive to the psychological and emotional stress they experience. However, stress at work can not only reduce the productivity of civil servants, but also negatively affect their mental health and social integration.

It is necessary not only to ensure an effective incentive system, but also to develop preventive methods to help overcome stress and challenges arising at work. Empirical research has shown that the motivation and incentive system for law enforcement officers is not sufficiently focused on the needs of employees and objective assessment of achieved results, and the main problems are uncompetitive wages, which are not proportional to the workload

and do not provide financial stability. Officers also experience psychological pressure in the service, so it is important not only to ensure the availability of psychological assistance, but also to provide more information about the confidentiality of the consultations provided.

Analysis of scientific literature and empirical research have revealed that in improving the incentive system of law enforcement institutions, it is necessary to review incentive measures and hold discussions between statutory employees and managers, because involving employees in decision-making will ensure better cooperation and the implementation of common goals.

In order to improve the motivation and incentive system, a budget reform is necessary so that the salaries of officers are competitive, and an improved payroll system would significantly reduce the turnover of officers in the law enforcement institution. Continuous incentives for employees based on their service achievements are necessary.

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“UKRAINIAN” POLITICAL REGIME: A NEW CONCEPT FOR POSTWAR PRODEMOCRATIC HYBRID POLITICAL REGIME IN UKRAINE?

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Abstract. *In Ukraine, the rule of law and the attributes of formal democracy have been formally realised. It can be argued that in a country with a weak democratic political culture, democratic institutions can function mainly as administrative instruments. In this sense, democracy in Ukraine is more of a method of public policy. The actions of Russia in Ukraine, which prove its imperialistic intentions, are leading to more populist democratic aspirations, and democratisation in Ukraine is a kind of consequence of external threats. Russian aggression is thus encouraging Ukraine's pro-Western aspirations to become a member of the democratic alliances of NATO and the EU. At the same time, the West demands evidence of democratisation - effective anti-corruption policies, economic reforms, control of the oligarchs, etc. In turn, such processes force the acceleration of internal reforms by removing both institutional (bureaucracy and centralisation) and factual (nepotism, corruption) obstacles. Although Ukraine is in a kind of 'grey', buffer zone, it is slowly moving towards democracy rather than authoritarianism and could be an unique example for other post-soviet states. The aim of this study is to theorise a 'Ukrainian' political regime by analysing the wartime development of democracy as a public policy in Ukraine.*

Keywords: *“Ukrainian” political regime; Democratisation; Security policy; Russian aggression against Ukraine; Hybrid political regime; Public policy.*

Introduction

The war that Russia launched in Ukraine in 2022 has undoubtedly had significant consequences for the country's social fabric, economy and democracy itself. Even if there are examples of basic democratic attributes such as free, periodic elections being respected even during wartime, the current situation in Ukraine poses new challenges for the analysis of democracy and the country's political regime. Although there are various definitions of democracy, this article will be written in the spirit of Robert Dahl's criteria for democracy and Taras Kuzios' criteria for a hybrid political regime. Also, Charles Tilly's process analysis method will be used to analyse the state of Ukrainian democracy.

It must be stressed that the degree of democracy in Ukraine during the war is effectively determined by the country's Constitution, in particular Article 83 thereof, and that the very functioning of democracy as such in a country constrained by the martial law is complicated, but necessary. It states that parliamentary elections are not possible during wartime, especially in view of the security requirements and the need to ensure that citizens are able to express their civil will. The spirit of this article of the Constitution also extends to the powers of the country's President. Constitutional stability is one of the main objectives of these restrictions imposed in the context of martial law. Thus, in analysing the scenarios of the Ukrainian political regime, it is necessary to mention the factors that are currently influencing them.

The aim of this article is to provide an overview of the "Ukrainian political regime" as a concept and its potential to emerge and evolve not only in post-war Ukraine, but also in the surrounding region.

To achieve the aim, methods of scientific discourse analysis on hybrid political regimes, legal acts and other documents (defining democratisation and de-democratisation processes), will be applied and data systematization, comparison, descriptive methods will be used.

Preconditions for a hybrid political regime and its longevity

As a post-communist country, Ukraine has always balanced between autocracy and democracy. It has also been constantly confronted with the factors of "Russification" and Europeanisation. However, it is not stuck in such a state. Rather, it is in a kind of "grey zone", a hybrid political regime (HPR), which, in the absence of full democracy or full autocracy, is the preference of the political elite. Although, from a historical perspective, it is possible to sketch various scenarios for the political status of states. This reflects the prospects of authoritarianism, democracy or the rise of hybrid political regimes. And here the connotative meaning of the term Ukrainian political regime emerges.

In analysing the concept of hybrid political regime, it is worth noting and perhaps applying analytical approaches based on Dahl's criteria of democracy, or, as he puts it, polyarchy. (Dahl, 2007). According to Dahl, there are five principles for the functioning of democracy that must be applied as a basis in all democracies, although no one has actually managed to achieve this yet:

Effective participation, whereby in the process of making binding decisions, citizens must have an adequate and equal opportunity to make their preferences known before the final decision is taken. They must be given adequate and equal opportunities to put issues on the agenda and to present arguments in support of a particular decision.

Equality of voting in the decision-making phase: every citizen must be given an equal opportunity to express a choice that will be considered equal to the choice expressed by any other citizen. Specific choices must be evaluated when determining the outcome in the decision-making phase.

Informed understanding: every citizen must have an adequate and equal opportunity to know and evaluate (within the time necessary to make a decision) the choice on the matter at hand that is in the best interests of that citizen.

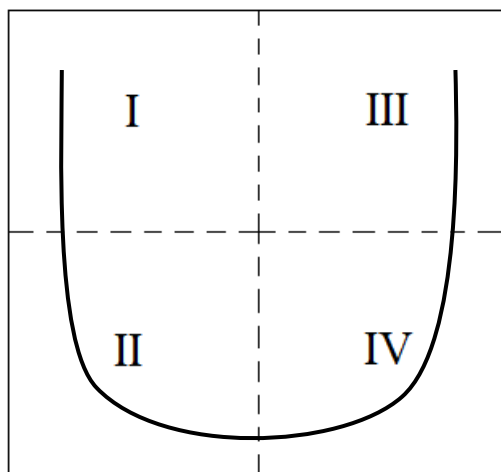
Control of the agenda: the demos must be able to decide what to put on the agenda for matters that must be decided by democratic means.

Involvement of citizens in the political decision-making process: the demos must include all adult members of the association who are subject to the collective decisions of the association that bind them, except for those temporarily residing in the State and those with proven mental incapacity. (Dahl, 1989).

These five criteria of the democratic process, as identified by Dahl, allow us to define a certain analytical approach to democracy.

The overall configuration of the processes of state governance in Ukraine shows that attempts to introduce authoritarianism from above, as Kuchma and Yanukovych tried to do in their time, face cumulative resistance from three sets of factors (structural, institutional and organisational). Ukraine's prospects of becoming an authoritarian state after the war are thus rather limited. This, in turn, may help the country to break out of its hybrid state and envisage a democratic future, despite the failures of democracy, the rise of populism, or the protracted post-war threat from Russia. Additional factors driving Europeanisation are the looming threat from the East, intensive labour migration to Western countries and the reforms introduced in return for financial stability provided by the EU and the IMF.

In the scholarly debate on the nature of Ukraine's hybrid political regime, we are formulating the question of the duration of this political regime - its short-term or long-term nature. The answer to this question implies the beginning of the answer to the next question: is the HPR a transitional and therefore short-term regime, or is it a separate (independent) and therefore long-term form of state-citizen interaction. For this purpose, a model of the interaction between the processes of democratisation and de-democratisation is used, which makes it possible to partially predict the prospects for the permanence of a hybrid political regime.



Picture 1. The case of a model of interaction between democratisation and de-democratisation processes

Source: A model of the relationship between democratisation and de-democratisation processes (Lotiuk, 2022).

[K. Lotiuk. Processes and Conditions of Democratisation and De-democratisation in Ukraine – Klaipeda: publishing house of Klaipeda University, 2022. - p. 153]

Here:

Sectors I, III - a categorical distinction between the processes of democratisation and de-democratisation, where they deny and destroy each other.

Sectors II, IV - the interconnection between the processes of democratisation and dedemocratisation, where they complement each other and limit each other's extremes: in the case of democratisation (II), a pro-democratic hybrid political regime emerges; in the case of dedemocratisation (IV), a pro-authoritarian hybrid political regime emerges.

This pattern of the relationship between democratisation and dedemocratisation processes indicates that political regimes are only "at risk" of survival if they are pro-democratic or pro-authoritarian or some other "hybrid", i.e. if they are located in sectors II or IV in Picture 1.

This model of the relationship between democratisation and de-democratisation processes does not presuppose a predefined characterisation of the HPR as good or bad. Such a political regime is a product of the times, in this case one of the processes inspired by post-communist and post-democratic developments and the geopolitical situation. The model presented here is intended to draw attention to the fact that the study of hybrid political regimes is particularly relevant today.

According to T. Kuzio, who represents the prevailing conception of hybrid political regimes as an unviable, and therefore temporary(?), combination of democratic and authoritarian rule, six characteristics of a hybrid regime can be observed in Ukraine, which are characteristic of both Kuchma's reign and the little-changed pre-war, post-Euromaidan revolution reality:

- - citizens are only partially represented or their views are partially ignored, especially at local government level;
- - low political participation, not to mention electoral participation as an attribute of delegated democracy;
- - frequent violations or manipulation of the rule of law;
- - election results do not appear legitimate to citizens;
- - low trust in public institutions;
- - poor state performance. (Kuzio, 1998)

In Ukraine, democracy has failed to consolidate since the end of the Cold War. Once again, the hybridity of the political regime in Ukraine is a result of the political, socio-economic and geopolitical environment that has developed. There have been numerous attempts to change the country's institutional set-up, particularly in the context of the extension of presidential powers. The form of government is parliamentary-presidential. Attempts to establish a system of presidential rule are associated with the monopolisation of power. (Whitmore, 2004). Every time Yanukovich, or even earlier Kuchma, tried to expand his powers, Parliament and the public have stood in the way. 2018 m. Tymoshenko's idea of a parliamentary system with a strong prime minister is, for the time being, an impossible project. It will be difficult to implement due to competing elite groups and lack of public support. Although the current Ukrainian governance model is far from perfect, Ukrainians tend to have a divided executive, which prevents the concentration of power. In Ukraine, the form of government has changed six times (1991, 1995, 1996, 2004, 2010 and 2014), while the regime itself has changed only once. In this respect, fundamental change took place during the Orange Revolution and finally matured after Euromaidan.

The peculiar mix of formal and informal institutions (including competitive elections, the lack of rule of law and the dominance of informal politics in the political process) has proved to be a fairly robust political construct in Ukraine. This hybrid regime emerged during Kuchma's reign and survived the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan. It is reasonable to assume that it will also survive the war.

Moreover, according to Hudson and Gibaja, the war in Ukraine shows that democracy itself is becoming a barrier to an authoritarian agenda in any state. The declining Russian influence in Ukraine, at least to the extent that it existed before the Orange or Euromaidan revolutions, is a factor in the escalation of permanent war. (Hudson and Gibaja, 2022).

The cases of other countries, such as Hungary and Poland, suggest that the so-called "grey area" between democracy and autocracy is geographically expanding. In this respect, EU membership does not negate the hybridity of the Hungarian and Polish political regimes; on the contrary, according to Bazoki and Hegedus, the survival of Hungary and Poland in the EU does not only imply the sustainability of the hybrid political regime, but also the provision of space for it and its legitimization. (Bazoki and Hegedus, 2018). Thus, as hybrid political regimes become more and more widespread, they can be characterised as a form that, in one or another case, depending on the economic, social and political situation of the state, can be even more logical and effective than a 'pure' democratic political regime that does not achieve consolidation.

State of the political regime in Ukraine in a military context.

Even in the military context of the current socio-economic and political processes in Ukraine, there is a political consensus - Ukrainian political actors and civil society unanimously acknowledge that the continuity of governance, albeit hybrid, in a given period is crucial for

the country's survival. Holding elections in the context of active hostilities is considered impractical and dangerous. It should be noted that no political group has challenged the extension of the current Parliament's term of office before the Constitutional Court, not for lack of competition, but because it is generally agreed that the constitutional provisions on continuity apply unequivocally in times of war, thereby confirming the legitimacy of the Ukrainian leadership.

The Ukrainian government has taken steps from the get go to protect itself from Russian manipulation by restricting political movements that are linked to Moscow or support its position on the war. At the beginning of the conflict, the Ukrainian National Security and Defence Council suspended the work of several political structures linked to Russia, and the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a similar measure, which was signed into law by President Zelensky on 14 May, 2022 (Проект Закону, 2022). It bans political parties that justify or deny Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.

Nevertheless, we cannot view the situation of the hybrid political regime in Ukraine solely through the constraints of the ongoing war. The current processes affecting democracy, although highly influential, are temporary. Of course, while some of the democratic reforms mentioned earlier are continuing, most of the constraints, particularly with regards to the democratic transition of power, will be lifted after the war, but we cannot rule out the long-term prospect of a hybrid political regime in the context of the long-term consequences of the war for democracy.

The ongoing war has had a significant impact on the functioning of Ukraine's key democratic institutions, and we have had to adapt to the challenges. The executive branch, in particular the institution of the President, has considerably strengthened its role and further consolidated its powers. The demands of wartime decision-making, which required a quick and effective response to rapidly changing situations, necessitated a more centralised approach to governance. (Budjeryn, 2024) However, this concentration of power has also attracted criticism from both domestic and international observers, who have raised concerns about possible violations of political checks and balances. Reports point to a reduction in regular consultations between the President's Office, the government and the Verkhovna Rada, which were interrupted immediately after the invasion and have not yet been fully restored. (Fedirko, Kudelia, 2025) There have also been accusations that President Zelensky relies on a small inner circle of trustees to make decisions, which raises questions about the transparency and inclusiveness of governance processes. The need for decisive leadership in wartime is not denied, but it is essential to ensure that this does not undermine democratic accountability.

Internal and external factors influence the processes of democratisation and de-democratisation and their interrelationship in such a contradictory way that, ultimately, the institutionalisation of democracy raises the question of the "appropriate political regime". Given that post-democracy is not a normative model alternative to democracy, the relationship between democratisation and de-democratisation in a country is perhaps best described by a D or D-shape.

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, Ukraine, as one of the hybrid political regimes, showed an improvement in political pluralism in 2020, although a slight downward shift was already observed in 2024. (EIU, 2024). The 2019 elections highlighted higher electoral standards and were characterised by greater fairness and transparency. In this respect, although the political spectrum of the country (pro-Western political wing, oligarchs and pro-Russian political forces) has remained largely unchanged, the periodic elections at all levels of government have prevented the emergence of more pronounced authoritarianism, which suggests that the interrelationship between

democratisation and de-democratisation in Ukraine is taking on the characteristics of a process whereby the processes of democratisation and de-democratisation are forming a kind of whole, interacting in one direction, i.e. In other words, they are not only mutually exclusive, but they can complement each other and limit those extremes of each other that hinder the emergence of a sustainable pro-democratic political regime in a post-democratic context.

Table 1 shows a far from exhaustive list of cases of pro-democracy and pro-authoritarian divides in the processes of democratisation.

Table 1. Pro-democratic and pro-authoritarian divides in the processes of de-democratisation

Source: The case of modelling the interaction between democratisation and de-democratisation processes (Lotiuk, 2022). [K. Lotiuk. Processes and Conditions of Democratisation and De-democratisation in Ukraine – Klaipeda: publishing house of Klaipeda University, 2022. - p. 151]

Key features of the pro-democratic orientation of de-democratisation	De-democratisation process	Key features of the pro-autocratic orientation of de-democratisation
Co-existing with minoritarian solutions as operationally necessary. In individual cases, subsequently adopted by minoritarian decisions	Non-majoritarian solutions	Single, mostly one-person decisions
A certain amount of distrust of those in power is a precondition for their democratic control	Declining trust in democratically elected governments	The sharp decline in trust in democratically elected rulers reflects the expectation of "strong arm", autocratic rule
Control and oversight, which is really just quasi-oversight and quasi-control, has the public's approval. The public partly needs this because politics is currently very complex and citizens do not always understand what is in their best interest	Control and oversight by political elites	Control and oversight of the political elite becomes systemic coercion and, in some cases, violence, and politicians become less and less subject to public scrutiny and evaluation, protecting group and personal interests under the guise of the public good
Focus on popularity ratings and winning the next democratic elections	Personalisation of policy	Orientation towards single-government in the context of controlled and non-transparent elections
Efforts by politicians to use direct dialogue with the public to maintain/regain political power in democratic elections. Public resistance to the technocratisation of politics	Populism	As an effort to overturn and change the conventional order, by persuading and winning the support of the public itself
Securing loyalty to a democratic political regime	Strengthening voter identification	Elimination of individual population groups from the electoral procedure
Temporary and usually caused by external circumstances or force majeure, a restriction on human rights and freedoms	Restrictions on human rights and freedoms	Systematic and persistent violations of human rights and freedoms

The unequivocally pro-authoritarian processes of de-democratisation are: the widening of the gap between the rulers and the citizens; the extreme polarisation of political forces; political corruption; the oligarchisation of politics; the prohibition of political pluralism; and the emergence of political movements based on racism or radical nationalism. Finally, let us note once again that our attempt to develop a theoretical model of the interaction between

democratisation and de-democratisation processes focuses on the area of post-communist and post-democratic development.

To summarise the relevant highlights of the scientific discourse on the modelling of the interplay between democratisation and dedemocratisation processes mentioned here, let us emphasise that what we have been referring to as the decline of democracy for almost the last two decades should not be exaggerated. In fact, as democracy is being challenged, more effective forms of political governance, which are essentially democracy-oriented, are being sought.

One example of pro-democracy reforms - the efforts to establish institutions to limit and destroy oligarchic clan rule - has been one of the axes of change in the Ukrainian Constitution. As you know, according to the experts interviewed, the relationship between politicians and oligarchs in Ukraine can be described as closely intertwined, and neither was destined to "play by the rules". Oligarchic interests explain the results of almost all presidential elections in Ukraine, including the victory of Mr Zelensky in 2019. The consensus of the oligarchs in this case presupposes an agreement on the division of power, in particular on the election of the next successor. In fact, there has been no consensus among the oligarchs/elites in Ukraine, and there is no reason to believe there will be any in the near future. Ukrainian politics oscillates between forced compromises, where the majority of the elite temporarily recognises the right of the main player to power, and a "struggle of all against all". As long as the aim of the struggle is the distribution of wealth rather than the interplay of principles and rules, no sustainable compromise (elite consensus) will be possible in principle. This is why oligarchic competition is a prominent feature of Ukrainian politics (unlike in Russia or Belarus, where such competition is limited and is not about wealth but about devotion to the country's "patron"). This is true of all presidents, starting with Kuchma, and there is no indication that it will be any different in the case of Mr Zelensky. (Way, 2018) The bad thing is that the infighting of the oligarchs weakens the state, while the good thing is that oligarchic competition allows for a change of power and stops authoritarianism from taking hold. The role of the oligarchs in situation of military aggression is obvious and, in a time of war, it is to the benefit of both the state and the oligarchs themselves. Although the US Helsinki Commission judges that the oligarchs in Ukraine have 'hijacked the state' (Senate Hearing, (2017), the richest individuals in Ukraine almost uniformly support the government in its war against Russia.

At the same time, Ukraine is at war for its survival and is seeking to accelerate its democratic reforms, especially in the light of its supranational aspirations. However, this creates political, economic and social pressures, where the immediate demands of wartime can sometimes conflict with the procedural and institutional needs of deepening democracy. Of course, given today's realities, efforts are being made, where possible, to maintain and even strengthen democratic practices, such as participatory democracy initiatives at local level through citizens' assemblies or the digitisation of civic engagement.

In essence, Ukraine's hybrid political regime is characterised, in the case of a wartime situation, by an intensified tension between the need to contain an existential threat, dictated by a strong, centralised leadership, and a commitment to democratic values, which are a fundamental part of the country's national identity. Ukraine's long-term trajectory could depend on the outcome of the war, the resilience of its democratic institutions and a continued sustained commitment to reform, especially once a military and diplomatic solution to the conflict is reached. Further research must be completed before further conclusions.

Conclusions

The claim that democracy is the best and perhaps the worst form of governance is becoming a classic. In this sense, when the idea of democracy is abused, the second part of the statement becomes more and more relevant, given that anyone can seek to be elected and represent the people. Nevertheless, it is also worth raising the derivative claim, which arises in the context of this article, that democracy can be a self-destructive phenomenon. Observing the personalisation of politics, the rise of the radical right and left, aggressive nationalism, racism, extremism, populism, we can say that these defective processes are nothing more than the use of the fruits of democracy to destroy democracy itself. This makes the hybrid political regime that is developing in Ukraine more sustainable in the given case of Ukraine and in the context of the internal and external processes that are affecting the country. This is where the meaning of calling such a hybrid political regime a "Ukrainian political regime" comes into play, summarizing the idea of not universality but suitability for one country or another. Here, the terms "suitability" and "sustainability" are brought together in a single meaning.

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ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC SECURITY AMONG FACTORS OF WELL-BEING DURING GLOBAL CRISES

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Abstract. *Economic security – the confidence that one can keep earning, meet sudden expenses, and protect basic living standards – has long been recognized as a main component of human well-being. Yet most empirical studies have assessed its influence during relatively stable periods, leaving open the question of how its role changes when society faces a major shock. This article addresses that gap by asking: How does the mutual role of various components of subjective perceptions of security change during a crisis period, and how do these shifts in priorities affect overall well-being?*

To answer this, we employ a mixed-methods design. First, a systematic review of peer-reviewed papers and official reports (2008–2024) maps prevailing definitions and metrics of economic security. Second, we conduct a comparative analysis of four multi-dimensional well-being dashboards – the World Happiness Index, OECD Better Life Index, Social Progress Index, and Eurostat Quality of Life Indicators. Supplementary evidence from Eurofound and Eurostat microdata enriches the macro picture by linking objective shifts in financial strain to changes in subjective life satisfaction.

The results of the study show that in “normal” years economic security competes with other priorities (such as health, education, and the environment) but remains a latent foundation of well-being. During periods of systemic shocks, its relative importance rises sharply, and the subjective perception of insecurity quickly translates into a decline in happiness indices, quality of life, and social progress. Institutional trust and large-scale support programs soften the blow but do not substitute for actual economic protection. The 2022 energy shock reproduces the same pattern, indicating that the phenomenon is not crisis-specific but structurally recurring.

These results refine Maslovian and capability-based models by demonstrating that the hierarchy of needs is context-dependent: economic security serves as an indispensable buffer against declines in well-being when external shocks occur. The article concludes that measurement frameworks and policy toolkits should adopt adaptive weighting and strengthen automatic stabilizers so that societies can preserve human well-being under future crises.

Keywords: *economic, security, well-being, crisis, pandemic*

Introduction

The need for security is one of the basic human needs and occupies the second level in Maslow’s hierarchy, directly above physiological needs (Maslow, 1987). This need extends to economic security, as confirmed by numerous contemporary studies (Rohde et al., 2017; Algan et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2009). From its very foundation, the United Nations has recognized the importance of economic security for human well-being. Already in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25), the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living and to protection in case of loss of livelihood (for example, due to unemployment, illness, or old age) was proclaimed (United Nations, 1948). Economic stability and predictability

enable people to plan for the future, foster social cohesion, and strengthen trust within society (Jimenez & Roig, 2021). Conversely, economic insecurity and uncertainty generate anxiety and distress, negatively affecting both psychological and physical health – up to increasing the risks of mental health issues and cardiovascular diseases (Kong et al., 2019; Kopasker et al., 2018).

Therefore, economic security is often regarded as a fundamental factor of well-being.

In a stable society, economic security plays a key role. However, economic security is not the only component of human security that forms the second level of Maslow's hierarchy. Alongside economic security, one can also consider, for example, personal safety, which relates to the absence of threats from violence or crime; health and medical security, which ensures timely access to medical care; legal security, which creates confidence that human rights will not be violated without due process; as well as housing and property security, which provides tangible protection for the space where a person lives and keeps their valuables. All these aspects shape the overall “comfort zone” of the second level of Maslow's hierarchy, where the economic component is closely intertwined with physical, legal, and social protection mechanisms, creating a holistic sense of stability and confidence in the future.

Most studies on economic security and its impact on the well-being of society have been conducted during periods of relative stability. At the same time, it is known that the laws governing societal behavior are not entirely stationary (Taleb, 2007). Therefore, when powerful external factors affect society, the role of the economic component of security may change significantly compared to other components. Most often, such factors take the form of various crises. On a global scale, the most significant of these over the past 20 years can be considered the global financial crisis (2008), the COVID-19 pandemic (2020), and the Russian military invasion of Ukraine (2022). Each of these crises had its own nature and manifestations. A common consequence of most crises is a decline in well-being, which in turn leads to increased social tension and the destabilization of society.

The global financial crisis directly affected the security of economic actors at all levels – from states to individual citizens. Largely as a result, an enhanced approach to ensuring economic security became established in developed countries, a strategy that proved fully justified during subsequent crises (Thompson, 2023).

The pandemic revealed the complex hierarchy of components of human security. Even under a direct threat to health, the economic factor continued to set the tone for the overall sense of stability and control over the situation. At the same time, the mechanisms of social security were able to temporarily compensate for lost or reduced wages, thereby softening the blow to well-being. However, as the protracted crisis continued, exacerbated by rising inflation and uneven recovery of labor markets, economic security once again became a critical resource, determining not only material conditions but also trust in institutional anti-crisis measures (Alam et al., 2022).

The need for a comprehensive study of the mutual shifts between economic, health, social, and legal security also became evident against the backdrop of the surge in energy prices following the war in Ukraine and the overall deterioration of the geopolitical environment. These events demonstrated that without an understanding of how exactly economic security translates into changes in subjective well-being, state policy risks either underestimating the scale of social tension or proposing delayed and inadequate solutions.

Thus, the main research question of this article can be formulated as follows: *RQ: How does the mutual role of various components of subjective perceptions of security change during a crisis period, and how do these shifts in priorities affect overall well-being?*

The logic of this study involves an analysis of approaches to defining the content of the term economic security, which should reasonably be considered at several levels. It is also

necessary to examine existing approaches to determining the level of well-being in society and to identify those most promising for use in this research. Based on the findings, we will analyze how the role of individual factors of well-being changed during crisis periods.

The main body of the paper

Economic security is closely intertwined with such categories as poverty and inequality, but it is not limited to them. Studies have noted that although low incomes and poverty directly worsen quality of life, it is the lack of economic protection – the fear of losing one’s job or suddenly facing unaffordable expenses – that can have an even more fundamental impact on well-being than differences in income levels (Tawney, 1964). In essence, “peace of mind about tomorrow” is a direct benefit of having economic security. Stability and confidence in future income allow people to make long-term plans, maintain social ties, and engage in community life. For example, a stable income is a crucial condition for the ability to support a family, raise children, and participate in social activities, thereby contributing to emotional well-being (Osberg, 2021). Conversely, households living in constant uncertainty – “from paycheck to paycheck” or in fear of possible shocks – show significantly lower levels of life satisfaction and mental health (Kopasker et al., 2018; Pricop & Diaconu, 2024). Thus, economic security serves as a necessary condition for sustainable well-being and provides the foundation for confidence, social stability, and the development of human potential (Jimenez & Roig, 2021).

The very concept of economic security is interpreted in different ways in the scientific literature, with the focus shifting from the level of the individual to that of the state. A universal definition has not yet been established – authors emphasize the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon and propose various interpretations (Pricop & Diaconu, 2024; Tagliapietra & Trasi, 2024). In the broadest sense, economic security can be understood as a state of protection of economic interests in which subjects (individuals, communities, or countries) do not experience devastating losses of vital means of subsistence and have confidence in the future. However, the specific meaning of this concept varies depending on the level at which it is considered.

At the level of individuals or households, economic security can be viewed in line with the interpretation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which defines this term as the ability of individuals, families, or communities “to cover their essential needs in a sustainable manner and with dignity” (ICRC, 2015). Essential needs include adequate food, housing, basic clothing, hygiene, necessary medical services, and education (ICRC, 2015). In other words, a person is within the zone of economic security if they have a stable income (or other resources) for a normal life now and in the foreseeable future, as well as some reserve strength in case of unforeseen difficulties. In this context, economic security is close in meaning to such concepts as financial resilience or income security: having stable employment, savings, and access to social guarantees and insurance. A number of studies emphasize that not only the objective sufficiency of resources matters, but also the subjective sense of protection. For example, research in social work indicates that the economic security of a family creates a “background of trust” that allows people to calmly cope with the inevitable fluctuations of the economy (Tapas Ray & Abbi, 2023). Conversely, constant anxiety about one’s material situation is seen as a sign of economic vulnerability, even if formally a person does not fall below the poverty line.

In the context of the national economy and state policy, the term *economic security* acquires a different nuance, associated with the protection of a country’s strategic economic interests. In this sense, the economic security of the state refers to the protection of critically

important economic assets and infrastructure from external and internal threats (Adams, 1936). Modern authors in the field of international political economy propose comprehensive definitions. For example, in a recent review by Japanese researchers, economic security is described as “the protection of key values – national survival, sovereign independence, and economic prosperity – from threats, including disruption of supplies of critical goods, leakage of advanced technologies, and excessive dependence on other countries” (Yuzue & Sekiyama, 2025). To ensure such security, states are advised to diversify supply channels, strengthen supply chains, create strategic reserves of resources, develop domestic production of key goods, and control the export of technologies (Perkins et al., 2021). In essence, this concerns the economic foundation of national security: protecting the economy from shocks and the deliberate use of economic ties and vulnerabilities as tools of pressure (MOFA, 2023). In Europe, especially after the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, these issues have come to the forefront. In this regard, the economic security of the EU is closely linked to energy security (Mints, 2023). For example, France proclaimed the doctrine of “European economic security,” Germany in 2023 released its first National Security Strategy, which emphasized the risks of one-sided dependence in critical sectors, and the European Union launched the development of its own Economic Security Strategy (Tagliapietra & Trasi, 2024). Thus, at the macro level, economic security is understood as the resilience of the economy – the ability of a country to withstand external economic threats and shocks while maintaining stability and conditions for the well-being of its citizens.

It should be noted that there is no strict boundary between micro- and macro-level approaches, and in academic discourse they complement each other. The concept of *human security*, which emerged in the 1990s, integrates these levels by asserting that alongside military and political security, the state must provide its citizens with economic security – through development, social protection, and the reduction of vulnerability to shocks. Despite the different perspectives, all definitions share a common emphasis on protection from economic risks and confidence in the future as an integral element of well-being. However, debates continue in the academic community about which indicators and conditions should be included and how the level of economic security should be measured – these questions remain under discussion in scholarly circles (Pricop & Diaconu, 2024; Tagliapietra & Trasi, 2024; Khadzhynova et al., 2022).

Let us now consider existing approaches to determining the level of well-being in society. For a long time, well-being was viewed primarily as an economic characteristic and therefore assessed by the per capita income level in a country (for example, GDP per capita). However, by the end of the twentieth century, the view of well-being as a multidimensional concept had become widely accepted, and as a result, comprehensive indices that take into account social and human aspects of development were proposed and began to be used (Bilbao-Ubillos, 2013; Carlsen, 2018; Scherbov & Gietel-Basten, 2020).

One of the most well-known indicators is the Human Development Index (HDI), which is calculated annually by the United Nations Development Programme. The HDI combines three key components: life expectancy at birth (which reflects the health of the population), the level of education (most often measured through mean years of schooling and education coverage), and gross national income per capita (Perkins et al., 2021). Essentially, this index integrates economic well-being with indicators of health and knowledge, providing a more holistic picture of a country’s level of development. Over recent decades, the HDI has become a widely accepted benchmark: for example, European countries traditionally occupy the top positions in the HDI ranking, reflecting a combination of high incomes, and well-developed education and healthcare systems.

Another approach – the measurement of subjective well-being – is represented by the so-called World Happiness Index. This indicator is published annually as part of the *World Happiness Report* (Helliwell et al., 2024) and is based on surveys of people in different countries about how satisfied they are with their lives. The Happiness Index reflects the average level of subjective life satisfaction, adjusted for a number of factors that influence the sense of happiness: actual GDP per capita, social support (having people nearby one can rely on), expected healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and the level of corruption. As an example, it is worth mentioning that in the latest *World Happiness Report*, the countries of Northern Europe (Finland, Denmark, and others) show the highest levels of happiness, combining a high level of economic security for citizens with strong social institutions.

In addition to these global indices, other integral indicators of well-being are also used. The Better Life Index, developed by the OECD, covers 11 areas important for quality of life – from income, employment, and housing to health, education, the environment, and civic engagement. It includes about 180 countries and allows for comparisons across a wide range of well-being indicators, reflecting the idea that “life is about more than just GDP figures” (OECD, 2024.1).

Similarly, the Social Progress Index assesses countries’ achievements in meeting basic human needs, providing the foundations of well-being (healthcare, education, access to information), and creating conditions for personal fulfillment. This index is currently calculated for 170 countries and includes 57 different indicators of social and environmental progress (SPI, 2024). The Social Progress Index has been calculated since 2014, which makes it a promising tool for analyzing the relationship between economic security and well-being.

In European statistics, the system of *Quality of Life Indicators* is also used. This system includes economic indicators (such as income level, material well-being, and economic security of households), social indicators (health, education, personal safety), and indicators of subjective well-being (for example, the overall level of life satisfaction) (Eurostat, 2023). In particular, the set of indicators of economic security in Europe includes the indicator *Inability to face unexpected financial expenses*, which is used to assess the level of financial vulnerability of households (Eurostat, 2024).

It is important to note that in times of crisis, standard economic indices are supplemented by special studies on well-being. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the OECD launched the *Life in the Pandemic* monitoring initiative, tracking the dynamics of aspects such as health, employment, income, work-life balance, social connections, and trust (OECD, 2021.1). Such multifactor reports make it possible to see the full picture of the crisis’s impact on well-being, going beyond purely economic indicators. Overall, the diversity of indices and approaches to measuring well-being reflects the understanding that well-being is a complex concept that includes material, social, and psychological components.

Let us consider how resilient the role of economic security remains as a factor supporting well-being during global crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic became an unprecedented shock in terms of scale, simultaneously affecting people’s health, economic systems, and their basic sense of confidence in the future. Researchers note that the pandemic triggered a massive surge of economic insecurity worldwide (Gentilini et al., 2020). Although at the onset of the pandemic, health security objectively came to the forefront, it soon became clear that people’s perception of infection risks was closely intertwined with anxiety about income, employment, and the safety of savings. In the first months of lockdowns, millions of people faced loss of jobs or income, and small businesses were on the brink of bankruptcy – all of this undermined the sense of

security even among previously well-off groups. Governments were forced to adopt emergency support measures (employment retention programs, direct payments to the population, loan repayment holidays, and others) to soften the blow. Thanks to large-scale fiscal stimulus and social programs, several developed countries managed to prevent a catastrophic decline in living standards, and according to some objective indicators, the impact of the pandemic crisis on the economic security of the population turned out to be less destructive than, for example, the 2008 crisis (Eurostat, 2024). Nevertheless, subjectively, the level of anxiety about one's material situation rose significantly.

Sociological surveys conducted in 2020–2021 recorded a rise in people's concern about their financial future and employment, which negatively affected levels of life satisfaction and mental health in many European countries (Jimenez & Roig, 2021). The *Eurofound* study on "Living, working and COVID-19" documented a sharp decline in confidence in future well-being among nearly half of surveyed EU citizens, with financial insecurity named as the main source of stress (Eurofound, 2021). At the same time, an analytical report by the OECD showed that the sense of economic security serves as a significant predictor of compliance with health restrictions and levels of psychological distress (OECD, 2021.2). Particularly vulnerable were groups without stable employment contracts or savings – economically insecure segments of the population. Thus, the experience of the pandemic confirmed theoretical findings: during an acute crisis, the preservation of economic security (through social protection, income stability, and prevention of mass unemployment) becomes a decisive condition for maintaining overall well-being and social stability.

The next global crisis in chronological order was triggered by Russia's military invasion of Ukraine in 2022. At the global level, this war caused not only a humanitarian catastrophe but also severe economic shocks – above all for Europe. The abrupt disruption of established trade ties and the imposition of sanctions led to an energy crisis: many European countries faced the threat of gas shortages and a sharp rise in energy prices. The threat to energy security immediately impacted the economic security of households: heating and electricity bills soared, pushing up inflation and creating the risk of increased poverty even in previously well-off EU countries. Under these conditions, the topic of economic security moved to the forefront of discussions. Tagliapietra & Trasi (2024) note that in this context, the implementation of the concept of *economic resilience* became a necessity for the EU. This concept includes diversification of energy supplies, strengthening of food security, and a rethinking of global production chains to reduce dependence on individual countries. It is for this reason that in 2023 the European Commission presented the *European Economic Security Strategy*, which identifies four main types of risks to the economy: supply chain vulnerabilities, threats to critical infrastructure (including cyber risks), leakage of advanced technologies, and "the weaponization of economic dependencies" (that is, situations in which one state can blackmail another by cutting off access to resources or markets). In essence, this is a consequence of the war in Ukraine, which forced European countries to reconsider previous approaches and recognize that an open economy must be combined with mechanisms for protection against strategic risks.

The global impact of the war also significantly affected well-being beyond Europe. The surge in prices for energy and grain dealt a heavy blow to developing countries, leading to rising food and fuel costs worldwide. The International Monetary Fund notes that the war has significantly exacerbated a number of negative trends: inflation accelerated, the threat of hunger and extreme poverty in the poorest countries increased, and overall uncertainty grew (IMF, 2022). These factors strike the most vulnerable segments of the population, undermining their economic security and lowering global well-being indicators. According to the UN, in 2022–

2023, tens of millions of people around the world were pushed below the poverty line, partly as a result of the indirect economic effects of the conflict in Ukraine (UNDP, 2024). In Ukraine itself, and in countries that have taken in the largest numbers of refugees, issues of economic security for the population (destruction of homes and jobs, dependence on humanitarian aid) have become extremely acute and directly determine the level of well-being and the humanitarian situation. According to the *Social Progress Index*, the level of *Personal Safety* in Ukraine is more than 10 points lower than that of its closest neighbors, and at present, this is the main factor shaping well-being in the country.

Opportunities for a more detailed study of the role of economic security among the factors of well-being are largely limited by the availability of data for research. For example, detailed data on the *Social Progress Index* that are publicly accessible describe the components of the index only up to 2022. The same applies to a number of other indicators. In addition, the crisis associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has already largely come to an end, and therefore data on it are more available than on subsequent crises. For this reason, let us take a closer look at how the role of economic security among the factors of well-being changed during the pandemic period.

In the *World Happiness Report* series, these shifts can be traced at the level of the regression decomposition of life evaluation. Chapter 2 of the 2021 report showed that in the first pandemic year, the contribution of GDP per capita and healthy life expectancy to the “happiness” index declined, while indicators reflecting protection from material loss and trust in government institutions statistically “strengthened,” up to doubling their explanatory power compared to the pre-pandemic trend (Helliwell et al., 2021). The authors emphasize that in places where people felt economically secure and trusted government measures, the decline in subjective well-being was half that of the European average.

Analytical reports by the OECD elaborate on this idea in greater detail. The report *COVID-19 and Well-being* notes that during the first 15 months of the pandemic, it was the components of security – stable employment, the ability to “cope with unexpected expenses,” and a sense of safety in public spaces – that contributed the most to the variation in the *Better Life Index* between countries, surpassing traditional factors such as education or environmental quality, which had been highlighted as key in previous studies (OECD, 2021.1). A later report, *How's Life? 2024*, confirms that after the shock of 2020, subjective *financial insecurity* remains the main “bottleneck” for well-being, even despite the recovery of absolute incomes and record-high employment levels by 2024 (OECD, 2024.2).

The basic “order of preferences” of the pre-crisis era can be understood through the study by Balestra et al. (2018), which analyzed over 130,000 user-assigned weights in the interactive version of the *Better Life Index*. Until 2019, health, education, and subjective life satisfaction ranked above personal safety and income; economic security came to the forefront mainly among young people and low-income men. The contrast with the OECD’s pandemic data highlights the scale of the shift: economic security moved from being a “niche” component to the core of explaining variations in well-being.

European microdata support this conclusion. A series of Eurofound surveys showed a record drop in the mental well-being index in April 2021 precisely among respondents facing financial difficulties; the share of citizens “unable to cover an unexpected bill” rose to levels last seen just after the 2008 crisis (Eurofound, 2022). At the same time, Eurostat includes this indicator in the core of its economic security metrics within the *Quality of Life Indicators*, emphasizing that it closely correlates both with the sense of personal safety and with overall life satisfaction (Eurostat, 2023).

Academic studies clarify the mechanism behind these effects. The study by Lee (2022),

based on a sample of 31,700 Europeans aged 50 and over, shows that it is specifically the fear of losing one's job, home, or ability to pay for basic services that most strongly undermines life satisfaction and intensifies psychological distress, while institutional trust partially "shields" against this effect. In another study (Gallie & Hradil, 2021), an aggregated index of economic insecurity was proposed, incorporating arrears on mandatory payments, inability to cover unexpected expenses, and risk of poverty; an increase in this index by one standard deviation reduces subjective well-being on average by 0.7 points on an 11-point scale – an effect comparable to job loss (Ranci et al., 2021).

The study of the *Social Progress Index* discussed above shows that the global decline in the index after 2020 is largely explained by the drop in the *Personal Safety* sub-index, which includes the homicide rate and the perception of violence in society (SPI, 2024). This conclusion is also confirmed by a study of subjective perceptions of well-being conducted in Belgium in 2020–2022. Claes et al. (2023) found that the key predictor of the recovery of all components of subjective well-being after lockdowns was precisely *peace of mind* – the feeling of financial and domestic security. In terms of impact, this factor even surpassed the restoration of social activity.

Conclusions

The study revealed the absence of a unified understanding of the definition of economic security. Depending on the context, economic security can be considered at various levels – from individuals and households to states and supranational entities. However, overall, the concept of economic security is closely linked to the subjective assessment of economic resilience in the face of external risks.

There is even less clarity regarding how to assess the level of well-being. The integral indicators analyzed in the article have different compositions, yet they consistently include, alongside indicators of economic security, other factors corresponding to the second level of Maslow's hierarchy, including health security and personal safety.

The global crises of recent years have posed a challenge for all countries and all levels of economic security. In the EU, where a well-developed system of social support exists, the impact of the pandemic on citizens' well-being was comparatively mitigated. However, these same countries turned out to be vulnerable to the next crisis, which exposed the EU's critical dependence on imported resources. As a result, the community was compelled to rethink the foundations of economic security. The growing importance of research into shock resilience, inequality in times of crisis, and the impact of economic insecurity on health and social sentiment is reflected in the increasing number of studies on these topics.

Thus, the results of the study show that

- in «normal» years, economic security competes with other priorities (such as health, education, and the environment) but remains a latent foundation of well-being;
- during periods of systemic shocks, its relative importance rises sharply, and the subjective perception of insecurity quickly translates into a decline in happiness indices, quality of life, and social progress;
- institutional trust and large-scale support programs soften the blow but do not substitute for actual economic protection.

Without taking these dynamic shifts into account, any strategies aimed at improving well-being risk proving unsustainable in the face of future crises.

In summary, it can be stated that in the latest literature, economic security is viewed as an integral component of social well-being and human development. Strengthening economic

security – from improving the reliability of jobs and incomes to enhancing macroeconomic stability – is directly linked to the growth of sustainable well-being. This is especially relevant for Europe, where efforts are simultaneously being made to develop economic security strategies at the supranational level and to implement support programs within individual countries. Continuing research in this direction will help to better understand which policies and institutions are most effective in protecting people from economic risks and ensuring prosperity even in turbulent times.

Thus, the role of economic security as a factor of well-being is today recognized both by theorists and practitioners – and its analysis is becoming an essential part of understanding how societies can preserve and enhance human well-being in the face of global challenges.

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THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC SECURITY

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Annotation. *The article analyses the transformation of the concept of economic security in the context of the challenges of the modern world – geopolitical crises, pandemics, climate change and economic globalisation. Economic security is understood here not only as a set of macroeconomic indicators, but as a multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing the fiscal autonomy of the state, the resilience of strategic sectors, the ability of households to withstand economic shocks and public trust in institutions. Based on three-level model (macro, meso, micro), different planes of analysis are distinguished, which allow for a holistic assessment of both structural and subjective aspects of security. The comparative analysis applied in the article allows for the identification of five main theoretical paradigms of economic security: liberalism, neorealism, critical, feminist and ecological. Each of them offers a unique value perspective on what security is, what its threats are and what political responses are appropriate. In this way, the article contributes to the theoretical discussion on the conceptualisation of economic security and the possibilities of its practical implementation in the context of Eastern Europe and especially Lithuania. It is emphasised that economic security is not only the result of political decisions or structural power, but also a discursive construction – it is formed in the public narrative, the media, the emotional sphere and the collective imagination. The article justifies that the assessment of economic security must be interdisciplinary, combining economics, communication, sociology, cultural studies and public policy. Such an approach allows us to understand how economic security becomes both a material and symbolic dimension of survival in modern society.*

Keywords: *economic security, theoretical approaches, macro-meso-micro model, subjective security.*

Introduction

Economic security in the modern world is becoming an increasingly important object of analysis in both academic and political discourse. This concept, according to Rose (2017), is no longer limited to financial stability or macroeconomic indicators - it is becoming a complex, multidimensional concept that includes both national policy directions and citizens' emotional and social security (Bajc & De Lint, 2011; Gomułka, 2023). It is increasingly emphasized that the basis of economic security is not only objective data, but also subjective citizens' trust in the future, state competence, reliability of systems and transparency of public communication.

Globalisation processes, increased dependence on international markets, and geopolitical crises – such as the Russia-Ukraine war – are radically reshaping the concept of economic security in the Eastern European region (Gomułka, 2023; Baldaro & Constantini, 2021). Traditional security models based on stability and growth are becoming insufficient to manage challenges such as the fragility of supply chains, fluctuating commodity prices, the vulnerability of digital technologies, or the dependence of the financial sector on external factors.

New challenges – energy vulnerability, inflation spikes, the economic consequences of climate change and increasingly frequent cases of economic blackmail – intensify public anxiety and shape new visualisations of threats in the media. These visualisations are often expressed in the media through symbolic narratives – “the threat of inflation”, “energy crisis”, “pressure from global markets” – which become not only informational messages, but also mechanisms for generating emotional (in)security.

As Bajc ir De Lint (2011) notes, the modern understanding of security can no longer be separated from everyday experience – economic security is becoming a part of people’s everyday lives, related to job security, housing affordability, predictability of service prices and the ability to live with dignity. Meanwhile, Nugaraitė (2015) emphasizes that in Lithuanian society, economic security is increasingly linked to the ability of public authorities to communicate, anticipate, engage and respond to crises.

Thus, the discourse of economic security today encompasses not only economic indicators but also trust in institutions, narratives shaped by the media, social solidarity, and the ability to critically assess risk communication. In this way, economic security becomes not only a challenge for the state but also a mirror for society’s values, collective memory, and reactions to uncertainty.

This article is relevant both on a theoretical and practical level, as it responds to the fundamentally changed discourse on economic security in the context of the 21st century. In recent years, society and policymakers have been faced with complex threats – from geopolitical conflicts (e.g., Russia’s war against Ukraine), the climate crisis, pandemics to supply chain disruptions and inflation spikes. Such phenomena have revealed the limitations of traditional security concepts and the need to expand and update them. The article argues that economic security in the modern world can no longer be assessed solely in terms of macroeconomic indicators. It is becoming an interdisciplinary construct that encompasses both the fiscal autonomy of the state and the individual’s subjective confidence in the future.

The study is particularly relevant in the context of Lithuania and Eastern Europe. These countries are economically and politically more sensitive to global crises, and economic security is increasingly associated with energy independence, information management, communication transparency and maintaining social solidarity. The study also reveals that public communication, media narratives and symbolic threats become shapers of a real sense of insecurity, therefore, it is necessary to include elements of discourse analysis in the analysis of economic security. The article provides a detailed theoretical map of the concept of economic security, comparing five main paradigms: liberalism, neorealism, critical, feminist and ecological. This allows not only to deeply understand the value tensions in security policy, but also to create a consistent, value-based model of resilience.

Research object: the concept of economic security.

The purpose of the research: to analyse theoretical approaches to economic security.

Research objectives:

1. reveal the concept of economic security;
2. discuss philosophical approaches to economic security.

Research methods: method of analysis of scientific literature, comparative analysis, conceptual analysis, synthesis and generalisation.

In reviewing the development of the concept of economic security, its historical origins and theoretical models (e. g. Mishchuk, 2023; Kalyniuk, 2023; Gradoboev & Solskaya, 2022; Koba, 202; Blakytė et al., 2021 etc.), an analysis of scientific literature was used. Comparative analysis was applied to compare different concepts of economic security and their philosophical foundations in Tables 2 and 3. This allowed us to assess the differences between the liberalism, neorealism, critical, feminist and ecological paradigms. Conceptual analysis was used to refine the concept of economic security and structure its level model (macro, meso, micro). Synthesis and generalisation were applied to summarise theoretical positions and formulate conclusions.

Concept of economic security

The concept of economic security has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades. Initially, it was considered a secondary component of national security, dominated by macroeconomic variables - budget deficit, trade balance, GDP growth or inflation rate. However, the modern approach increasingly treats economic security as a multi-level and interdisciplinary concept, covering both the state and individual levels. Such an approach, according to Bilgin (2023), allows us to discuss not only the objective parameters of the economic system but also the subjective sense of security of members of society.

Economic security is becoming a fundamental condition for the resilience of a modern state. It is defined not only as the capacity to avoid economic shocks, but also as the ability to quickly adapt to their consequences and ensure the continuity of the well-being of the population. Pisani-Ferry ir kt. (2024) points out that the paradigm of economic security must be revised in light of constantly changing global risk factors – energy crises, pandemics, military conflicts or climate challenges. Such changes show that traditional assessment models based solely on economic indicators are becoming insufficient.

Historically, economic security emerged as a branch of geopolitical economics, in which states sought to ensure the independence of their economic systems, control of resources, and resilience to external pressure. However, at the end of the 20th century, the concept of human security emerged, which integrated social, economic, and cultural aspects. According to this paradigm, security could no longer be defined solely by state power – it had to be measured by the parameters of the individual's quality of life (Lindstaedt, 2021). Scientific research highlights the importance of human security in the context of 21st-century challenges – from climate change to pandemics. According to Gasper (2005), human security helps to combine the goals of development, human rights, and security policy: “Human security is about the vital core of all human lives, in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment.” Furthermore, Acharya (2001) suggests that human security is an effective instrument for regional conflict prevention, as it targets the most vulnerable groups and the structural causes of violence. Despite its broad applicability, the concept of human security has also been criticised for its conceptual vagueness. Paris (2001) notes that this concept is too broad to be of practical application in policymaking: “Human security is like sustainable development – everyone is for it, but few people have a clear idea of what it means.” However, authors such as Owen (2004) emphasise that the flexibility of human security allows it to be applied in different regional and cultural contexts, which is its strength.

Andersen-Rodgers ir Crawford (2022), emphasises that the change in the concept of security allows for the inclusion of aspects such as job stability, access to basic services, lifestyle continuity, and the ability to avoid poverty. In this way, economic security becomes not only a structural issue, but also a matter of everyday life. It also includes an emotional component - even with good macroeconomic indicators, residents may feel insecure about the future, political instability, or changing prices.

After analyzing a number of scholarly works (Mishchuk, 2023; Kalyniuk, 2023; Gradoboev & Solskaya, 2022; Koba, 2021; Blakytė et al., 2021), a three-level economic security analysis is recommended: macro – the state's strategic independence and fiscal stability; meso – the resilience of individual sectors, especially energy and IT; micro – individual households, their financial situation and ability to withstand economic shocks. This structure allows us to assess economic security not only as a result of state policy, but also as a dimension of every person's life.

Table 1. Model of the concept of economic security
(compiled by the author)

Macro Level: State Economic Autonomy	Meso Level: Sectoral Resilience	Micro Level: Individual and Household Security
Assessment of national economic security	Assessment of specific economic sectors' security	Assessment of individual citizens' or families' security
MOST ATTENTION GIVEN TO:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal stability (budget deficit control, debt management) • Monetary policy (inflation control, currency stability) • Resource control (energy, food and natural resource self-sufficiency) • Economic diplomacy (reducing dependency on external suppliers or markets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy sector (import dependency, infrastructure vulnerability) • Information technologies (cybersecurity) • Healthcare (supply chains, medicine independence) • Agriculture and food production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal or family income and its sustainability • Debt levels and savings opportunities • Ability to obtain essential goods and services (housing, healthcare, food) • Subjective sense of security (perceived threat of job loss, living standards) • Level of financial literacy

Koba (2021) argue that at the macro level, the most important thing is to ensure strategic independence – i.e., that the country can function even during a global crisis or supply chain disruptions. For example, the LNG terminal in Lithuania is considered a macro security solution that allows for reducing energy dependence on unfriendly sources. At the meso level, the resilience of individual sectors to crises is assessed – whether they can continue to operate in the face of challenges, whether they have alternative supply channels, or whether they depend on one country/region. For example, if IT infrastructure (servers, cloud computing) is dependent on foreign countries, this may become a risk to national security. The meso level also allows for the assessment of sectoral policies: whether they contribute to long-term sustainability, or whether they promote innovation and self-reliance. Even with stable macro indicators, economic security may be low at the micro level – for example, when households are unable to withstand unexpected expenses, are under debt pressure, or do not have social security. Therefore, the micro level becomes extremely important in assessing the issues of social inequality, exclusion and long-term poverty. Three-level analysis model allows combining different aspects of economic security into a single system, helping to form a holistic security policy, in which both state sovereignty and the well-being of each citizen are equally important.

In Lithuania, the concept of economic security has expanded substantially since the 2008 global financial crisis, when it became clear that macroeconomic growth or budgetary discipline do not guarantee either public satisfaction or long-term trust in institutions. Crises have exposed structural weaknesses in social resilience, especially among the most vulnerable groups in society. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted these challenges – supply chains have been disrupted, energy insecurity has increased, and communication of economic decisions has become a key factor in trust.

In 2022, the war launched by Russia in Ukraine again moved the issue of economic security to the first plan of the political agenda – this time in the forms of energy independence, strategic reserves, control of the information space and social stability. As Persaud (2022) notes, the feeling of economic security of society increasingly depends not on GDP growth, but on

trust in institutions, price predictability and transparency of communication. This view is also confirmed by Matonytė, Gajauskaitė and Jasinavičius (2024), whose research shows that the economic insecurity experienced by young people is often associated not with actual income or the situation on the labor market, but with the uncertainty of information, uncertainty about the future and a crisis of public authority credibility.

In Lithuania, economic security is understood more and more broadly today as a complex system that includes not only financial stability, but also the maintenance of social trust, the quality of communication, the accountability of institutions and the ability of residents to navigate in information chaos. This allows us to talk about a new dimension of security—discursive economic security, in which the public narrative becomes no less important than real economic measures. It is important to mention that the modern concept of economic security also includes an emotional component – even with good indicators, people may feel insecure. This means that economic security is not only an objective condition, but also the result of perception and trust. Education, as an institute of social sustainability, is one of the most important factors in the formation of long-term trust, and Kazlauskaitė-Markelienė and Petrauskaitė (2011) highlights the importance of solidarity and social awareness as the opposite of economic and political egocentrism. In this author's view, the sustainability of economic security is impossible without cultural capital and a collective understanding that resilience is a community, not an individual project.

A study by Matonytė, Gajauskaitė, and Jasinavičius (2024) shows that perceptions of economic insecurity often stem from emotional reactions to uncertainty, especially among young people, where hybrid threats (e.g., price spikes, job instability, inflation narratives in the media) trigger a sense of loss of control. This confirms the need to combine both economic indicators and subjective experience research in the analysis of economic security.

Table 2. Comparison of concepts of economic security
(compiled by the author)

Author	Perspective	Concept of Economic Security	Key Focus Area
Smith, E. (2020)	Neorealism	Economic security is the state's ability to control strategic resources and protect markets from external threats.	Sovereignty, national interests, and resource geopolitics.
Bilgin, P. (2023)	Critical Theory	Economic security is a guarantee of human rights and dignity, grounded in social justice.	Social equality, reducing exclusion, and human rights.
Persaud, R. B. (2022)	Human Security Theory	Economic security is an individual's ability to live free from poverty, access basic services, and exercise economic choice.	Dignity, everyday security, and people-centred analysis.
Blakytė et al. (2021), Koba, O. (2021)	Complex Analysis	Economic security is a multi-level (macro, meso, micro) balance between strategic stability and individual well-being.	Sectoral responsibility, fiscal autonomy, household stability.
Kazlauskaitė-Markelienė, R. ir Petrauskaitė, A. (2011)	Educational-Cultural	Economic security is inseparable from education and civic awareness – it depends on risk perception and responsible action.	Trust, education, critical thinking, and social resilience.

Concepts of economic security in various theoretical contexts reveal that it is not a homogeneous, "technical" concept - it depends on the analytical point of view, the chosen level (state or individual), and the political-cultural value system.

The five concepts of economic security presented in Table 2 recognise that economic security encompasses more than just financial stability. The concepts shift the focus of analysis: from the state (Smith) → sector ((Blakytā; Koba) → individual (Bilgin) → society (Kazlauskaitė-Markelienė ir Petrauskaitė). The interpretation of the source of risk also varies: for some, it is external threats, for others, social exclusion or cultural fragmentation. Thus, the need for an interdisciplinary assessment that would connect political science, sociology, economics and educationology becomes apparent.

Finally, economic security in the modern world is not only an objective outcome of politics or a set of economic indicators – it is also a product of social imagination, based on how individuals and communities perceive risks, threats and their possibilities to act. As McDonald (2021) argues, security “is not just about protection from threat – it is also about giving meaning to uncertainty”. In other words, people respond not so much to the risk itself, but to how it is named, interpreted and broadcast through the media or political discourse. In this way, economic security becomes a dynamic, constantly changing construction that operates in social space. Trust in institutions, emotional background, tone of information and symbolic power – all of these become both expressions of security and its shaper.

This constructivist perspective allows us to understand economic security as a constantly rewritten narrative that is sensitive to historical context, communication tools, and collective memory. For example, what was considered a security guarantee in one era (e.g., global trade) may be considered a threat in another (e.g., dependence on Chinese or Russian supply chains). In times of contemporary economic shocks (pandemics, inflationary shocks, wars), it becomes evident that economic security requires not only political action but also ongoing discursive management, empathy in communication, inter-institutional cooperation, and citizen empowerment. Therefore, an interdisciplinary assessment – encompassing economics, communication, cultural studies, and public policy – becomes a necessity. Economic security cannot be ensured by regulating the budget or laws alone; it must be understood, felt, and made meaningful in society as the result of shared responsibility.

Philosophical approaches to economic security

Although the concept of economic security has already been presented in a general context, it is necessary to separately analyse how different philosophical directions conceptualise this concept. This subsection focuses on comparing different philosophical perspectives – how they explain the assumptions, sources, aspirations and policy goals of economic security. This reflects different value positions on what constitutes “security”, “threat”, or “risk” in economics. Each of these concepts answers different questions and raises different priorities for public policy makers. This approach allows not only to understand the theoretical dispute between paradigms, but also to choose a research position when analysing media discourses.

One of the dominant historical interpretations of economic security is based on the liberal paradigm, which is based on the idea that the market, competition and free trade by themselves ensure state stability. State intervention is treated as an exception, necessary only to ensure efficient market activity. According to this logic, the more economic exchanges take place, the more the probability of conflicts decreases, as countries become interdependent. As Barbieri (2002) states, from the perspective of the liberal paradigm, economic security is not ensured through control or isolation, but through integration, transparency and investment openness. Liberalism in the analysis of economic security is based on the fundamental assumption that free markets, open trade channels, institutional integration and international cooperation are

key elements in achieving stability and security. Unlike proponents of the realist or neorealist paradigms, liberals treat economic security not as state control of resources, but as effective involvement in the global market and trust in international institutions (Keohane & Nye, 2017). According to Barbieri (2002), “economic interdependence reduces the risk of conflict and creates a structural incentive for security”, which is especially relevant in the modern era of globalisation, where countries’ economic relations are becoming not only an instrument of profit but also of security. The liberal paradigm also emphasises the role of institutions – from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to the mechanisms of the European Union – as guarantors that reduce transaction risks and increase predictability (Baldwin, 2018). Liberal analysis of economic security often emphasises the dimension of human security, that is, the ability to ensure personal dignity, access to services, financial stability and social protection through the functioning of the market. As Higgott and Watson (2008) point out, liberalism is not limited to economics – it offers a normative vision in which economic security is achieved through international regulation, efficient markets and human mobility. However, liberalism faces challenges in the contemporary debate. In 2008, the financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russian aggression have shown that excessive dependence on the global market without internal protection mechanisms can become a threat. Therefore, this paradigm is often supplemented today by the concept of resilience, in which the market still plays an important role, but at the same time, a balance between national security and strategic autonomy is necessary (Gereffi, 2020).

Neorealism, as a theoretical paradigm of international relations, is based on the basic assumption that the state is the main actor seeking survival in an anarchic international system (Waltz, 2010). According to this model, economic security is the ability to control key strategic sectors (e.g. energy, defence industry), ensure the availability of resources and limit dependence on unpredictable partners. According to Kirshner (2020), “economic security refers to the ability of a state to act independently of the economic decisions of other states, while maintaining control both nationally and transnationally”. This paradigm pays special attention to the control of energy, raw materials, technology and infrastructure, which are considered strategic elements. Some authors, such as Cohen (2017), argue that economic security becomes a geopolitical weapon when countries use sanctions, investment controls and trade policies to ensure national interests. The neorealist tradition also emphasises the importance of self-sufficiency and resilience. According to Mearsheimer (2001), “dependence on global systems, even if they are economically efficient, can become a source of national vulnerability”. Therefore, states, acting according to the logic of neorealism, often choose policies of economic nationalism or strategic autonomy, limiting the influence of foreign capital in the most sensitive sectors. Persaud (2022) argue that the degree of economic sovereignty of a state is directly related to its ability to protect the well-being of its population in the event of a crisis. The neorealist paradigm emphasises the role of the state and strategic autonomy. Economic security is considered a matter of resource control, protection of domestic production and geopolitical balance (Smith, 2020; Zdanavičius & Statkus, 2020). Smith (2020) and Zdanavičius & Statkus (2020) emphasise that energy or technological dependence is not only an economic but also a security threat. The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s war in Ukraine have only further strengthened this view. Countries are reviewing their dependence on external supply chains, investing in domestic production, energy independence, and control of critical technologies, which is consistent with neorealist priorities (Blackwill & Harris, 2016). A weakness of this paradigm is that the state can become protectionist, closed to other states.

The critical theoretical approach, based on neo-Marxist and post-structuralist thought, holds that economic security cannot be assessed without an analysis of power structures. Its

representatives emphasise social exclusion, class inequalities, gender disproportion and the insecurity of marginalised groups. Critical theory in the analysis of economic security goes beyond the narrow framework of economic indicators and seeks to understand the deeper structural forms of power that determine economic inequality, marginalisation and social vulnerability. Its origins lie in the Frankfurt School, but in modern economic analysis, critical theory has transformed into a normative instrument that allows us to rethink what it means to be “secure” in a society where economic resources are distributed unevenly. Bilgin (2023) notes that “economic security is not just a statistical indicator – it is also the ability to live with dignity, without the constant threat of being excluded from the system”. The critical paradigm raises issues of inequality, marginalisation and social justice. Bilgin (2023) argues that “economic security is part of human rights” – and therefore it must be assessed through the prism of opportunities, dignity and social cohesion. According to Horkheimer (1972), “critical theory seeks not only to explain the world, but also to change it” – this is especially important in a context where economic security is related to people’s dignity, social protection and the possibility of living without poverty. In this view, the lack of economic security is seen as a systemic form of violence, not just a technical problem.

Unlike traditional paradigms, the critical approach focuses on the analysis of inequality and power. Economic security is understood here as a question of ensuring human rights, and the main goal is to guarantee a dignified existence for all. Walker (2002) notes in his work that the concept of “security”, dominant in the classical IR (International Relations) literature, is “too state-centric” and ignores the everyday economic traumas experienced by socially excluded people. Therefore, critical analysis suggests expanding the category of security to “everyday security”, focused on ensuring housing, food, education and access to services. Fehér’s (2020) study on Eastern Europe shows that discursive narratives about the crisis often hide deep structural inequalities that political and economic institutions support. His work argues that media rhetoric about “resilience” often acts as an ideological veil to cover up deepening inequalities. A critical theoretical approach requires fundamental structural changes and is more difficult to integrate into traditional politics, which is its weakness. An analysis of the impact of neoliberal policies is provided by Fraser (2020), who argues that the exclusion of unpaid work, the care crisis and women’s vulnerability from economic accounting threatens social stability. This opens up cross-disciplinary connections between critical and feminist theory.

Feminist economic security theory offers a radically different view of security, not as an instrument of state power or a macroeconomic condition, but as the security of everyday life and care systems. This approach criticises the traditional security discourse, which ignores unpaid care work, social vulnerability within the family and the impact of gender inequality on economic stability. As Elson (1999) points out, economic policies often assume a “neutral market”, but in reality, their effects are deeply gender-asymmetric. For example, the reduction of the public sector, the privatisation of care services or flexible work models have a disproportionate impact on women. Feminist theory raises the question of how the concept of economic security reflects (or ignores) the situation of women and the significance of unpaid work. It shows that official economic statistics often overlook invisible work, which is essential for the functioning of society as a whole. Economic security in feminist analysis means both economic autonomy and protection from dependency relations. Feminist theory also emphasises the economic challenges of the family and the vulnerability of women in times of crisis. According to Tickner (1992), economic security policies often ignore unpaid care work, which is essential for the functioning of society. This theory highlights invisible work (caregiving, child-rearing), the importance of which is often ignored in economic statistics.

Young (2008) emphasises that households often become centres of the “invisible economy”, and the family burden, especially for women, is a structural barrier to full participation in the economic system. A feminist approach requires rethinking these structures and incorporating them into policy-making. Tickner (1992) argues that “security must be reinterpreted through the prism of human experience, not state defence”. She proposes the so-called gender-sensitive security paradigm, in which women’s experiences become the centre of analytical significance. In this way, feminist analysis expands the category of security to include the dimensions of essential access to basic services, decent work, and emotional and social stability. Women often experience greater insecurity during crises, and their work is inadequately valued or excluded from decision-making processes (Tickner, 1992). A feminist approach requires a reconceptualisation of the economy as a social process in which informal, unpaid work is essential for the functioning of society. In contemporary academic debate, feminist authors such as True (2012) emphasise that gender inequality is not only a moral but also an economic issue, and that investments in care infrastructure (childcare, elderly care, social guarantees) are necessary conditions for economic security. Furthermore, feminist analysis is often integrated with the human security paradigm, which focuses on the guarantee of individual dignity, integrity and opportunities, not just physical protection from threats. Analyses by authors such as Robinson (2015) suggest that economic security should be measured not only in terms of GDP, but also in terms of how much people can live free from exploitation and with the right to full participation in society. This theory is appreciated for its emphasis on gender equality and social visibility, but is often dismissed as “uneconomic” in traditional analyses.

The ecological perspective links economic security to long-term sustainability: if economic activity disrupts the ecological balance, it eventually becomes unsafe for society itself (Barry, 2012). According to Barry (2012), economic security should be measured not only by GDP growth, but also by the ability to maintain ecological balance, social cohesion and intergenerational justice. In this way, economic security cannot be assessed without an analysis of climate change, resource depletion and environmental risks. Ecological crises – climate change, biodiversity loss, and overexploitation of resources – already pose direct threats to the economy: disrupt agriculture, pose risks to energy supply, and cause waves of migration. According to Dalby (2009), “economic security must be integrated with climate policy – otherwise it becomes artificially separated from real systemic risks”. Barry (2012) and other authors emphasise that economic security must be long-term and sustainable, which means responsible use of resources, transition to renewable energy and climate change management. This concept links security with environmental awareness – if economic development destroys ecological foundations, it becomes a threat to itself. The ecological perspective of economic security is difficult to reconcile with rapid growth or short-term political ambitions. An ecological approach requires rethinking development strategies – instead of the growth paradigm, a green economy, circular production, carbon emissions reduction and renewable energy are proposed. Raworth (2017) proposes the so-called “circular security zone” in the “circular economy” model, where it is necessary to ensure basic social conditions for people without overspending the planet. Adger et al. (2013) analyse the impact of climate change on security and note that “the ability of people to adapt is no less important than physical infrastructure”; therefore, social inequality, health disparities and lack of education become factors that multiply vulnerability in the context of the climate crisis.

Table 3 compares the five main theoretical paradigms of economic security in terms of their sources of security, identified threats, and policy responses.

Table 3. Economic Security Paradigms: Theoretical Comparison
(compiled by the author)

Perspective	Source of Security	Source of Threat	Political Response
Liberalism	Market integration, interdependence	Protectionism, market disruptions	Institutional regulation, trade liberalisation
Neorealism	State power, autonomy, and resource control	External dominance, dependency	Strategic autonomy, protection of national sectors
Critical Theory	Social justice, reducing inequality	Economic exclusion, marginalisation	Strengthening social policies, inclusion
Feminism Paradigm	Recognition of care work, gender equality	Unpaid labour, family vulnerability	Gender policy, family support models
Ecological approach	Environmental sustainability, ecological balance	Environmental degradation, climate crisis	Promotion of green investments, transition to sustainability.

The table below provides a consistent assessment of how different theoretical paradigms interpret the concept of economic security, identify threats, and formulate policy responses. The liberal paradigm bases security on market logic and interdependence, but becomes vulnerable to disruptions in the global market. Neorealism emphasises the role of the state and strategic autonomy, believing that external dependence poses the main threat to national security. Critical theory draws attention to social structure, inequality, and marginalised groups, proposing to ensure security through strengthening social cohesion. Meanwhile, the feminist paradigm expands the field of security to everyday life – family, invisible work, emotional vulnerability – and proposes gender-sensitive policy measures. The ecological approach views economic security as inseparable from long-term environmental stability and climate sustainability, therefore emphasising green investments and transformative policies. This theoretical map makes it clear that economic security is a multifaceted phenomenon that requires a comprehensive approach. Different paradigms complement each other and together shape the contemporary political economy discussion about what determines the security of a state, society, or individual against the backdrop of economic turmoil.

Conclusions

The concept of economic security is treated in scientific literature as complex and multidimensional, encompassing not only economic, but also social, political and informational aspects. Different theoretical approaches provide an opportunity to look at the phenomenon of economic security from various perspectives and create the prerequisites for defining economic security as a state in which the state and society maintain the ability to respond to economic threats, preserve the most important functions and ensure their development in the long term. Recently, the subjective concept of security, based on the population's trust in institutions, social resilience, the stability of the information space and access to vital resources, has been increasingly emphasised.

Different philosophical approaches offer unique perspectives on the issue of economic security. Liberals rely on the market, realists on the state, critics on structural equality, feminists on the invisible aspects of the economy, and ecologists on the limits of the planet. Concepts of economic security reflect value conflicts: Is efficiency or equality more important? National sovereignty or international integration? Human dignity or fiscal discipline? These different

philosophical approaches complement each other and allow us to understand economic security as a multifaceted phenomenon that requires an integrated, contextual, and sensitive approach.

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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS IN SHAPING MANAGERS' EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE SCARF MODEL

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Annotation. *The paper examines the influence of positive and negative organizational factors on the experience of Companies CEOs (hereafter referred to as managers) through the SCARF model framework. Managers play an important role in ensuring process efficiency in the organizations; therefore, the manager's work requires a lot of emotional and psychological resources, which are influenced by various external factors such as the nature of the organization's activity, competitive environment, organizational changes, as well as the managers' characteristics such as management and/or leadership style, behavioral and communication styles. A manager's ability to work effectively with employees, both direct reports and others across the organization, in routine and stressful situations is a critical factor that influences not only the organization's performance and quality outcomes, but also employees' job satisfaction and emotional well-being.*

This article presents a study that applied the SCARF model to analyze how managers' experiences working with employees are influenced by the SCARF factors: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. The study aims to explore how these elements are perceived by managers, what they mean in the context of their work, in which situations they are positively or negatively affected, and which of them has the greatest impact on managerial stress.

The study revealed that managers tend to invest in building relationships with employees and creating a positive working environment, so the relatedness is one of the key factors that can have positive and negative impacts on the managerial experience working with employees. In contrast, participants perceive autonomy as a 'territory' granted by shareholders, a relatively stable element that does not significantly affect managers' experience in working with employees.

Keywords: *manager, organizational factors, SCARF*

Introduction

Management of the company is an emotionally and psychologically demanding activity, but also one that adds significant value to the Company. It is often not only objective factors, such as processes, and performance, that contribute to Company's effectiveness, but also subjective reasons, such as the relationship between the manager and the employees. Researchers (see, e.g., Wood and Vilkin, 2004; Shi et al., 2019; Awan, 2021; Georgakakis et al., 2022; Christensen-Salem, 2023; Zhao and Zhang, 2024) have observed that a manager's communication style, performance management skills, and the interactions between employees and the manager all have an impact on the quality of leadership. The performance of the manager often depends on how well he or she feels psychologically. Recently, the SCARF model, which emphasizes the importance of the five factors - status, certainty, autonomy,

relatedness, and fairness - has been increasingly applied in management research. Meeting a manager's SCARF needs is not only a personal well-being issue but also a factor of organizational culture and performance. The manager who feels good in all five areas naturally builds healthier relationships with employees, makes more balanced decisions, and becomes a stronger leader.

Study object – organizational factors that affect the experience of managers exploring the SCARF model.

The aim of the study is to explore the role of organizational factors in shaping managers' experiences using the SCARF model.

Research methodology employs a qualitative approach. A semi-structured interview was constructed using the SCARF model to collect data. The interviews were carried out with 10 managers from different companies with between three and eleven direct reports. The work experience of managers in the same company is between one and thirteen years. The industries of the participants' workplaces include manufacturing, services, retail and wholesale, and the number of employees varies from 10 to 1300. Data collected during interviews were analyzed using content analysis. The study is based on ethical requirements for qualitative research.

The results showed that, according to the SCARF model, the most challenging and stressful situations for managers' experience working with employees are related to relatedness, while status and autonomy are less challenging and stressful. Managers make efforts to find solutions to eliminate stressors and turn them into positive experiences.

Theoretical provisions

Research on managers' experiences working with employees highlights that this is influenced by a variety of factors both positive and negative. In this paper, the positive and negative experiences of managers are revealed through the SCARF model (Rock, 2008), which has gained much attention in recent academic debates.

The model captures five key social factors (Rock, 2008, 2009; Rock and Cox, 2012) that affect how people feel and behave as part of a group. Different individuals respond in different ways to these social factors. The five factors that make up the SCARF model are: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness and fairness.

Status. Status is related to the social importance of members of the group. Everyone wants to feel important and if the person does not feel that way, he can feel less valued and less secured in the workplace. When the status is threatened, the person can feel strong emotions and potentially experience a threat response.

Certainty. Certainty is related to the ability to predict the future. The better someone does this, the happier and more certain he is. If we cannot predict the future, we feel uncomfortable and we can start to feel unsafe. The less certainty we have, the more anxious we tend to feel and the more emotional energy we tend to spend on doing things like predicting the future and trying to ensure the future.

Autonomy. Autonomy relates to our sense of control over ourselves, what we do, and the events around us. The more control we have, the more positive we feel. When we experience the sense of autonomy, we feel safe and in control. However, when we do not experience it, we risk feeling psychologically unsafe and we can feel out of control. In fact, we may feel controlled by others, which can be a very negative feeling.

Relatedness. Relatedness relates to our sense of security with others. If we are surrounded by colleagues at our workplace who wish us well and whose goals are aligned with our own,

then we will tend to feel safe and positive. If we do not feel like we are able to relate to those around us, then we may experience threat responses.

Fairness. Fairness is related to our sense of justice and equity in the interactions that take place around us. If we work in an environment in which effort is rewarded, leaders value playing by the rules, then we are likely to feel that things are fair. If instead we sense that things are not fair, then we may feel unhappy and unsafe. Examples of unfair behavior can lead to a response to a threat.

The SCARF model has been applied in the last decade in a variety of fields such as healthcare, education, nursing programmes (Campbell et al., 2022, Javadizadeh et al., 2022, Monsen and de Blok, 2013). The SCARF model has also received considerable attention in the research literature for its usefulness and applicability in the field of leadership development (Rock, 2008, 2009; Rock and Cox, 2012). The model allows us to analyze and understand how five model factors can influence a manager's experience of working with employees.

The manager's experience of working with employees is influenced by a variety of organizational factors, such as leadership and communication style (Awan, 2021; Zhao and Zhang, 2024), performance management (Christensen-Salem, 2023), the role of direct reports (Wood and Vilkin, 2004; Kappal and Mishra, 2023), communication and coordination (Shi et al., 2019; Georgakakis et al., 2022), and ethical and social responsibility (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008).). All of these organizational factors can have both positive and negative effects on the manager's experience; if the wrong methods and techniques are chosen, the application of any of these factors can provoke stressful situations and have a negative impact on the manager-employee relations and performance. And vice versa - by changing the methods and techniques, the manager's experience can be changed and can be seen as lessons learned in later stages.

In terms of positive organizational factors, performance management skills, goal setting, clear expectations, constant focus on feedback (Christensen-Salem, 2023), mindfulness and initiative (Basker et al., 2020), relationship-oriented leadership (Wang et al., 2011; Xi et al., 2017) are becoming very important. Another important organizational factor is the role that the manager plays himself, i.e., how he interacts with his direct reports, what kind of atmosphere he creates and influences the employees, i.e., what they talk externally about the manager, how manager is treated by the team, and so on (Wood and Vilkin, 2004; Kappal and Mishra, 2023). Ethical and social responsibility and its enforcement, as De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) note, create a culture of trust, reduces stress in the organization, and encourages employees to have a more positive view of the organization, and, therefore, of the role of the manager. Communication and its coordination is also an important organizational factor, as employees' trust in the manager and their attitudes towards the manager and the company depend on communication and its coherence within the company (Shi et al., 2019; Georgakakis et al., 2022).).

Effective communication and positive relations are influenced by a manager's empathy and caring attitude toward employees, as well as goal orientation and integrity (Wood and Vilkin (2004). As Wood and Vilkinas (2004) note, a manager with these characteristics is perceived by employees as trustworthy, successful, and human. This often contributes to effective organization performance and creates the conditions for positive relations between the manager and employees. All these organizational factors are interrelated and interdependent. Therefore, the manager's task is to combine and integrate these positive influencing factors.

Regarding the negative organizational factors of managerial experience, it is appropriate to consider strategies that can eliminate such risks. For example, isolation and detachment of the manager, avoiding contact with direct reports in order to avoid stressful situations, should

not be an option. As Kappal and Mishra (2023, 2024) point out, managerial disengagement can have a negative impact, as a disengaged manager tends to make decisions alone, and thus impose them on employees, reducing their authority and engagement. The literature also identifies organizational factors such as organizational change (Gligorovski, 2018), the work environment (Taap Manshor et al., 2003), and economic and social pressures (Haberey Knijessi, 2011) that can have a negative impact on managerial experiences. Such stressful experiences can negatively affect managers work-life balance (Trakaniki et al., 2022; Hansen et al., 2025), health and well-being (Gui, 2021), influence productivity and performance (Gui, 2021; Chimenya and Hyams-Ssekasi, 2023), and affect the task delegation process (Bonnesen et al., 2022). It is therefore essential to analyze what factors are prevalent in the organization, what determines them, on whom, managers or employees, they depend, and to initiate the necessary changes in this context.

It can be assumed that many of the organizational factors listed above can have both positive and negative effects on the experience of managers and can lead to stressful situations. As noted by Toderi and Balducci (2018), McCarthy et al. (2019), Toderi et al. (2024), managers who are able to manage their own stress exhibit prosocial behavior (e.g. they share knowledge and merit with their direct reports, which has a positive impact on employee turnover), and they can apply stress prevention measures.

In summary, organizational factors such as a manager's leadership style, communication, feedback, goal orientation and integrity, empathy, fair treatment are important components for effective management and positive performance. It is therefore important to analyze which organizational factors influence the manager's positive and negative experience most working with employees. In this context, an empirical study on this issue is presented below.

Methodology

This paper presents a study that surveyed CEOs of Lithuanian companies to find out how organizational factors affect their experience as managers.

Semi-structured interview protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol was used, which maintains the structure of the interview, but also allows additional questions to be asked if necessary in response to the participant's answers and to expand on the information needed. The semistructured interview questions were based on the SCARF model developed by Rock (2008), which provides a better understanding of participants' reactions and satisfaction in the work environment. The questions were guided through the five factors of the SCARF model: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. The first set of questions was designed to find out what the key factors of the SCARF model - status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness - mean to the participants. The second set of questions was designed to find out the situations in which each of these SCARF factors was strengthened or weakened. The third group of questions was designed to find out which of the SCARF factors are the most influential in a manager's stress when working with employees. In this way, it was analyzed how each of the components of the model influences the experience of the participants, i.e. managers, in working with employees and their satisfaction.

Study sample. A convenience sample of 10 participants was selected for the study. The selection of the participants was based on the following criteria: (1) they had been in a CEO position at the time of the study for at least one year; (2) they had experience in managerial activities. The composition of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Composition of participants in the study

Code	Gender (M/F)	Length of service with your current company	Number of direct reports	Number of Company's employees	Company's activity
1IN/25	M	13	8	300	Manufacturing, wholesale and retail
2IN/25	M	4	6	60	Manufacturing, wholesale and retail
3IN/25	F	1	10	400	Manufacturing
4IN/25	M	7	7	65	Services
5IN/25	F	6	10	1300	Manufacturing, wholesale and retail
6IN/25	M	30	4	13	Production and services
7IN/25	M	8	3	15	Freight forwarding, international transport
8IN/25	F	6	8	35	Wholesale and retail trade
9IN/25	M	8	10	10	Services
10IN/25	F	22	11	11	Services

As can be seen in Table 1, the characteristics of the managers who participated in the study are broadly similar in terms of the number of direct reports. It is important to note that, despite the differences in size, seniority, or gender, the study did not set out to analyze similar traits among the study participants. It is more of an exploratory study, focusing on different experiences in order to see commonalities in the communication between managers with different experiences and their employees.

Method of data analysis. Qualitative data collected during the study was analyzed using the exploratory analysis method. Qualitative content analysis was based on the qualitative data analysis stage identified by Gaižauskaitė and Valavičienė (2016): (1) data organization and preparation for analysis - the information gathered during the interviews was transcribed and prepared for further analysis; (2) data decomposition - the data were divided into significant fragments and coded; (3) merging of the obtained groups of primary data - the categories that emerged were distinguished; data interpretation - the obtained themes were analyzed, interpreted, illustrated with the thoughts of the research participants; conclusions were formulated - the results were summarized on the basis of the data obtained.

Research ethics. The study, in accordance with Bos (2020), ensured the essential ethical requirements for qualitative research: participants' privacy - their space is not violated, they have the right to provide as much information as they want, confidentiality - data are coded, de-personalized, data protection - data are not shared, stored in secure media, or shared with others, and informed consent - all participants were informed about the study, consented to take part, and were able to withdraw from the study at any point.

Results

The results were analyzed in the context of the five factors of the SCARF model: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness and fairness. The results revealed how each of these factors and its importance in their work is identified by the participants, which stressful situations affect them positively and negatively, and which of these factors, in the opinion of the participants, play the most important role in their work with their employees.

Status

To understand the positive and negative impact of the managerial status of working with employees, the study first sought to find out what kind of status perception the participants have in their work. The study revealed that, according to the participants, the manager's status in the context of performance can be defined along three different lines:

- status as a "given" with responsibilities;
- professionalism;
- responsibility

Status as a "given" that comes with being a manager is highlighted by research participant 1IN/25, who states that *"Every manager acquires status when they start working. Shareholders confer status"*. In a slightly different manner, but also referring to the often prevailing view that status comes as a consequence of position, research participant 5IN/25 says that *"when it comes to status, sometimes people say that I don't have 'shoulder blades' and because of that they don't listen to me, i.e. managers tend to believe that if you don't have a position and the status that comes with it, you cannot expect your employees' obedience"*.

Regarding status as an outcome of the relationship with employees, participants in the study say that status is often not related to a specific job title but to the manager's qualities and professionalism. 3IN/2025 states that *"there is also a status outside of the job which is related to specific qualities that people bring"*. Participant 5IN/2025 highlights that he encounters situations where *"status is not about what job title you have written down, but about how people identify you and that is related to your professionalism. Because people are very quick to recognize if the status is verbal, just for the sake of beauty. For me, status is about how you are perceived and perceived by people. You have to earn it."* Participant 6IN/2025 states that when the company is not big, *"status is an example because there are not many people, you have to communicate with everybody, you have to give them tasks to do, you are listened to, you agree, you communicate"*.

The analysis of the participants' perceptions of status also shows that they perceive status as a kind of **authority and responsibility** to act and achieve goals. Participant 4IN/25 states that *"Status is when you can make decisions on your own, influence strategy, and enjoy the results. I have no need to show the status"*. 7IN/2025 sees status as being responsible for the planned goals and results of the employees: *"Status is more about being responsible for the whole company, the employees, the results, achieved and not achieved."* A couple of participants also add to this by stating that status *"is an opportunity to recall decisions quickly and effectively to make changes"* (2IN/25), while 1IN/25 sees status as *"one of the prerequisites to be a manager. Well, in my case, it is also the reason why I want to be one"*.

Participants also reflect on how they feel about their status in the company. One of the participants (3IN/25) states that *"I feel quite comfortable because it is not important to me in itself, because I sometimes identify myself as a simple person"*, i.e., as if to reinforce the already expressed idea that status alone does not have a big impact. However, e.g. the next assessment of the research participant 4IN/25 already has both positive and negative connotations: *"I don't want hierarchical status, but it is very good for communication. Because sometimes semi-formal communication starts to get in the way."* Meanwhile, other participants in the study answer unequivocally that they are satisfied with their current status at work and the opportunities it offers.

When analyzing the relationships between the study participants as managers and their employees, in which the status of managers can be positively or negatively affected, the data revealed key elements that emerged, which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Factors influencing managerial status positively and negatively

Impact on the status of managers	Factors influencing the status of managers
Positive	Clear clarification of responsibilities and roles
	Communication with staff
Negative	Intolerable practices related to staff behaviour
	Restriction of status for other positions
	Rising to the position of Company manager from the same level as other employees

As can be seen in Table 2, participants in the study identify both positive and negative experiences that affect their status. First, on the positive side, it can be observed that the study participants consider that **clear clarification of responsibilities and roles** and **communication** with employees have a positive impact on the status of managers. As research participant 3IN/25 notes, *"I felt from the employees that the status is not earned, and after discussing the roles in the company, both mine and theirs, I felt that I have and can have the status rightly"*. Status can be reinforced through internal communication - 1IN/25 commented on an example of investing heavily in promoting teamwork and communication - during one team event, the manager was thanked for creating a good organizational climate, which reinforced his status within the team of subordinates: *"during a management team event, if somebody says, I want to thank the manager, < > because it makes us feel good and we want to continue to work well together"*.

In terms of negative impacts, managers stressed that they experience when **intolerable practices related to employee behavior** occurred, as exemplified by a participant in the study 7IN/25: *"There are always one or two employees who are often not only detrimental to the company, but also a nuisance. They are always saying that the director has come up with something again, that they will have to work harder again. It's important to control such people, to work with them, and if you can't, then it's better to say goodbye. This has led to dissatisfaction, stress."* Another respondent, 4IN/25, shared the **status-limiting factors due to other positions** on the part of the shareholders, which also influenced stress: *"there are untouchable employees, this often demotivates the team. For example, there is an employee whose position is deputy CEO, because of this "pseudo-status" we have a clash on the quality of work, the non-standardized process. This has been stressful for me as a manager, because I have to go around all the time. And there are more than a few employees like that."*

When a **manager is appointed from among colleagues**, it takes time to build status as the relationship and dynamics within the team change. 5IN/25 shared the experience that *"I became CEO from among my colleagues, and it took some time to go through the vetting process. It was a period of time, maybe a couple of months. There was a conversation with one of my colleagues about whether I would be able to do it, whether I was too democratic, and in that conversation I heard a situation where I was being questioned."*

Certainty

As a follow-up to the interview, managers were asked about the second SCART factor as certainty when working with subordinates. Based on the thoughts and examples of the participants, the following are the main influences on managerial certainty.

- ability to forecast;
- knowing that you can cope with the challenges;
- financial security.

Participant 5IN/25 describes certainty as a process, *"when you have a clear direction, a vision, a communication, then that's enough for me"*. Another participant, 6IN/25, relates certainty to the **ability to predict**, clear plans, and outcomes: *"Certainty is what we plan, what happens"*. Participant 3IN/25 says that *"in a relationship with employees, certainty comes from having a direction and feeling that it is agreed. I feel confident at work when I am quite clear about what is most important and what the direction and decisions are."*

At the same time, however, most managers talk about balancing between certainty and uncertainty, with research participant 1IN/25 saying that *"as a manager, you never feel completely certain because you have to balance unlimited expectations and limited resources all the time. And those resources are always scarce. So when it comes to achieving goals, you have to choose the path and the means, and there is never a certainty that this is necessarily the right path. It could be either one way or the other"*. Another participant, 10IN/25, emphasizes that confidence is related to **knowing that you can cope with the tasks at hand**: *"Confidence at work for me is that I trust people to do the right thing,"* while 8IN/25 says that *"I am a results person. The team is great, but if there is no result, there is no confidence"*. The interview respondent 9IN/25 says that he associates security with **financial security**: *"we are a small company, I feel calm when I know I have the means to pay my suppliers and employees."*

The balancing act between what a manager can control, the dynamics of certainty and uncertainty, is often stressful for managers. One of the study participants, 2IN/25, says that *"when certainty is reduced, stress arises. In the case of the direct team, it's more fog than fact.(...) A fifth of the planned income was a dream and the certainty disappeared in a flash. Certainty increases when team members exceed expectations."*

When analyzing the employment situations of the study participants, in which managerial certainty decreased or increased, the following key points emerge in Table 3.

Table 3. Factors influencing managerial certainty positively and negatively

Impact on managerial certainty	Factors influencing managerial certainty
Positive	Situation control, monitoring
	Clear communication
	Control of targets and indicators, clear and transparent reward system
Negative	Failure to recruit staff
	Uncertain situations, value dilemmas and mistrust.

Table 3 shows the factors that have a positive or negative impact on managerial certainty. The study participants say that one of the factors that contribute to certainty is control and monitoring of the situation. Manager 5IN/25 tells of a situation where a major project, the introduction of a new technological line, had been in preparation for a long time, and the manager was confident that the preparations had been successful, but when day x came, he saw that *"the team was not delivering, the potential was lacking, and then the confidence dropped. You seemed to have done everything to prepare. You had to change members, you had to make drastic changes. The stress was healthy, and naturally, the nerves started. We made an effort, we renewed the team"*. The situation was brought under control, control and monitoring helped to restore certainty.

Some managers emphasize clear and timely communication to maintain certainty; interview participant 1IN/25 says that *"to build confidence, you need to talk all the time. If something is unclear, if things are not going well, if conditions are different, if things are more complicated than we thought, if something has happened, then you need to rebuild that"*

certainty". He gives the example of a situation where there was a lack of clarity about the division of roles, there were doubts about the manager's interference in the operational activities and then there was "a reinforcing discussion where the division of roles was reinforced, that the scope of work, which is related to the production, that I don't go there, and that took away the tension, saying that I had other competences. So we can then support each other and not compete."

Participant 6IN/25 speaks about the **control of objectives and indicators**, baselining and discussions on the following topics: *"when I am setting objectives, we have sessions with the management team where we check if we are in line with the strategy, ambitions, vision, values, if we have a baseline, this kind of debriefing really gives you that reassurance and a good feeling."* A **transparent and clear reward system** also contributes to this reassurance, as the participant 4IN/25 says: *"A very clear reward system - sales-results, the employee knows what he is going to get and what he gets. He needs to be reassured that we will add the opportunity to earn more. As long as we are doing well, we have certainty."*

All of the above examples are positive factors, but the situations are also indicative of managers who balance reassurance in reassuring situations. The participants also mention the factors that are more likely to reduce certainty. One of them is when **the selection of the right employees fails** or their motivation is reduced. Participant 6IN/25, who represents a manufacturing company, says that *"it takes time to find good people. Sometimes they come in, make mistakes. They drill the wrong way, sometimes they have to restart production. That's why good people have to be appreciated. Assurance is usually undermined by wrong people. This makes development very difficult."* Another participant 7IN/25 speaks on the same theme: *"There have been situations where you take on a new person, you actively work with them, the results are poor, and then you have to work harder personally to see how you did every day. You work harder for a while and you see that nothing is working. Only a third of the staff survived."*

Uncertain situations, value dilemmas, and mistrust also undermine certainty. One of the managers in 1IN/25 quotes a situation regarding vaccinations during the Covid period and the difficult situation of a disagreement between the organization's and one of the managers' views on vaccination: *"here we had a complete difference of values. So, how do we do it? Do we let this person go, but he is a very important person to us. So that's where there was this uncertainty about how to deal with this kind of situation. I tried to counteract that(...) You can, for example, if you personally don't want to be vaccinated, you can not be vaccinated. But you don't have to tell your subordinates that this is nonsense, if that is the general policy of the company."* Another respondent in 4IN/25 shared a situation of mistrust in relation to certainty, where *"there are about 10 employees out of about 60 in the team that I do not trust. I am also not confident about my job because I don't know if I want to stay here"*.

Autonomy

When asked about the impact of autonomy, most managers stressed that it is more related to relations with shareholders and the Board and less to employee situations. Autonomy was described by most as:

- a ship to operate, your "territory";
- the power to influence and make decisions;
- agreed rules

Participant 5IN/25 described autonomy as *"one of the greatest values, the **ability to act**".* Another interviewee, 1IN/25, said that *"autonomy comes from my shareholders - this is **my***

territory". Interviewee 7IN/25 said that for him autonomy is *"the main fun of being a manager, that you can make your own decisions"*.

Regarding employees, the participants emphasized agreed rules, defined territories, and the stress on both themselves and their employees if this autonomy is violated. Participant 1IN/25 comments on employees that *"my subordinates also have autonomy. Each of them has a smaller part of that territory, but they each have their own. They are responsible for their own area. I think that autonomy is very important because if that autonomy is violated, especially if there is an agreement on how things are and it is not respected, there is a lot of stress"*. Participant 2IN/25 says the following about his autonomy and that of his employees: *"I have autonomy, I have it worked out with the board, with the shareholder. I try to establish the same with the employees by setting rules, expectations"*.

When asked what could have a positive or negative impact on their autonomy as managers working with employees, most managers did not give examples but rather stressed the stress that both sides experience when autonomy is not respected. One of the managers in 1IN/25 gave the example of a worker who decided on his own and gave an interview to journalists instead of the manager, thus violating autonomy and agreements. In response, the 1IN/25 manager reflected: *"Maybe you wouldn't call it stressful at all, but it's a kind of discomfort and deviation"*.

Relatedness

When talking about the importance of relatedness when working with employees, managers mainly emphasized their role and responsibility as managers in building and maintaining relationships. Managers described relatedness as:

- listening to employees;
- promoting values;
- separation of work and personal relationships, setting boundaries.

Participant 5IN/25 stressed the importance of **listening to and hearing employees** and finding the right ways to do so: *"We are not only building a relationship in the top management team, we have almost 300 employees in the administration, so it was very important for me to find a format for hearing the employees"*. Most managers see building relationships with employees and a supportive organizational culture as their main task. The interview participant 1IN/25 says that *"my main task is to create an environment or atmosphere where everyone can make the most of themselves and make the greatest contribution. For this, it is important to have the right relationships between people."* Managers characterize good relationships with employees as being based on important values, and at the same time most of them talk about the importance and the need for organizations to distinguish between work and personal relationships: *"a good relationship is one based on respect, openness, honesty, it's not about friendship, it's not about family"* (2IN/2525); *"we are all gathered together at work and it's a work relationship. I believe in working relationships; it's important to me because the results depend on it. If the relationship is bad, the results will suffer. I pay a lot of attention to relationships"* (5IN/25); *"Working relationships have never been on a par with friendly relationships. I have always had that distinction. You could have a personal relationship with someone, but it didn't affect them in any way or as little as possible. The relationship is work related"* (3IN/25). One of the participants, 9IN/2025, relates the relatedness with staff to status and talks about different leadership practices and **boundary setting**: *"the director has to keep the status as well, but he has to be first and foremost a leader, a coach, a teacher, a pusher, a*

motivator. One has to feel the boundary against becoming a friend, because then the abuse can start again".

Analysis of the situations presented by the study participants regarding their relatedness with their subordinates highlighted the following factors in Table 4, which positively or negatively affect managers' relationships of managers with their subordinates.

Table 4. Factors influencing managers' relatedness with employees, both positively and negatively

Impact on managers' relatedness	Factors influencing managers' relatedness
Positive	Focus on teams and individual, informal activities
	Crisis management and problem-solving
	Objectivity
Negative	Misalignment of employee values with expectations
	Lack of personal qualities such as empathy, respect and openness.

When talking about relatedness, managers not only stressed the importance of relationships, but also gave many examples of what had helped to strengthen relationships in their practices. There were many examples of **showing attention to both teams and individual employees and informal activities**. Participant 4IN/25 also describes his role as a manager: *"I am an introvert, but the team needs unification, so we have programmes for unification. We go on trips with the team when you are around and you can feel the mood. Respondent 5IN/25 says that "the most powerful thing is to strengthen the relationship, the same example when we go to the workshops, I moderate them".*

Crises, coping with them together and being supportive are factors that strengthen not only relatedness but also the team, so **managing crises and resolving problematic situations** is the second factor that contributes to the positive impact of the relationship. Research participant 5IN/25 cited an example of a difficult situation where there was a major fire in a production facility, during which the organization was very focused: *"we had a crisis in the organization, we had the saying 'I will survive and you will survive'. We all understand what we went through".* Participant 7IM/25 talked about situations where the company's results and financial situation were not favorable and the continuity of the business was threatened: *"I used to say, there are problems, it's not a problem, it's not solving them that's the problem. We need to sit down and find the best solution. Sometimes the speeches were heated. But it is better to agree. As a manager, I did not run away from problems."*

Relatedness are positively influenced by **objectivity**, analyzing situations, and finding solutions. Participant 3IN/25 says that *"accessibility strengthens the working relationship, because even when I find out about problematic situations from the wrong person, I never look for the guilty party, but I say that it is a topic and look for a solution. Relationships are uplifted by pragmatic, practical analysis of all topics. We look at what we have and how we move on. That is both positive and negative. Let's not dwell on the past, let's figure out what to do."*

When asked what has a negative impact on their relatedness when working with employees, the interview participants most frequently highlighted **a lack of alignment of employee values with expectations and a lack of personal qualities such as empathy, respect, and openness**. Participant 1IN/25 gives an example of a team's frustration with the attitude of one of its members: *"a new manager has come in, who is of a younger generation perhaps, and it is not natural for him to try hard for others. (...) We're having a training session for our team leaders, it's warm, we go outside from the auditorium, we have chairs and armchairs and the sun is beating down, and we have to put up an umbrella to make it more*

comfortable. The one who came out is the new one, he didn't go to spread the umbrellas. He sat down himself, took a drink, and waited for someone to do it for him. Everybody else is a joke, how come you didn't do it here. You didn't think of others. Here is an example of how he didn't think, he didn't think it was necessary, he was more concerned about how he was personally." Managers acknowledge that not only the behavior of employees but also that of managers themselves can also negatively affect relatedness. Research participant 5IN/25 shared a situation that he identified as a lesson for himself, when you *"say something inappropriate to an employee and the relationship falls apart. I said in a meeting 'you are trying to come from your narrow experience', I got very offended, then I had to apologise. But I destroyed the relationship, it was stressful for both me and him."*

Participant 2IN/25 highlights the lack of personal qualities such as openness, respect, which also has a negative impact on relatedness: *"I feel stressed about relationships when team members are not open, trying to please, not necessarily showing humanity and respect to the teams. The result is either you have a team that is organized around certain values. Others find that they are better off in a different environment. Now there are good relationships, we don't hide anything, we share, we express our opinions openly."*

Fairness

When asked about the last component of the SCARF model, fairness, the participants mainly described it as:

- objectivity and fair appraisal;
- presenting the facts, distancing yourself from emotions.

Participant 1IN/25 stressed that *"fairness, in my opinion, is not about everyone getting the same amount of money, but about everyone being rewarded equally for their efforts. If one puts in more effort, it is fair that he gets more. The one who puts in less effort may receive less. Objective and fair appraisal* was identified by many as an important part of their role as managers, with the interview participant 4IN/25 stating that *"it is important to me that everyone's performance is assessed fairly. There are stars because there is a result and there is effort. You can't put a good one on one person and a hard one on another. It is stressful when you are promoted undeservedly - we also had a situation where we took a good employee, got the same salary as a weaker one, but found out and left quickly. We regret it very much".*

This is echoed by the research participant 5IN/25, who says that *"for me, fairness is about objectivity, where there is no love/no love. For some, a relationship is formed because the chemistry matches. We come to work to work and to achieve results, it is important to me that, whatever experience you have had, if there is something wrong, then we say objectively and straightforwardly that it is okay. We don't make a love/dislike distinction, we treat everybody the same".* There is an element of detachment from preconceived personal opinion of being able to assess as objectively as possible. Another participant in the 3IN/25 study bases the objectivity of fairness on the need to **present the facts**, to **distance oneself from emotions**: *"no matter who you are talking to, be open with the facts. It is important to distance yourself as much as possible from emotional judgements and stay on the facts. Your circle is usually your circle of like-minded people. Being able to distance yourself from the fact that like is better, that is fairness. Judging by the facts."*

The key factors that emerged from the analysis of the participant situations in which fairness may be affected positively or negatively are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Factors influencing the fairness of managers, both positively and negatively

Impact o the fairness of managers	Factors influencing the fairness of managers
Positive	Transparent reward system
	Equal working conditions
Negative	Single person exclusion

Most of the examples given by the participants reflected situations where fairness was violated or diluted and how this affected motivation. The participants talked about reward systems and the importance of fairness in the introduction of transparent reward systems and in providing equal working conditions for employees. Participant 10IN/25 gave the example that *"our company is not a big company, all employees in the same position are paid the same salary and everybody knows it. This is what we wanted to avoid demotivation and comparison. The difference may be in overtime, per diems for business trips, the size of the post, but everything else is the same. For me, this reflects the right approach."* Another participant in the interview, 5IN/25, also gives the example of the implementation of remuneration policies: *"how we pay here in the regions, in the cities, this is very important, the transparency of remuneration policies is now happening, and this is the "key thing".* The same participant went on to say that equally important is the methodology of setting targets, which can weaken or strengthen equity: *"it's how we set them, cascade them. When you look at the end, you see that one is setting easy goals and the other is setting hard goals".* The participants also talked about how, even in the workplace, different working conditions can be demotivating. Participant 9IN/25 said that *"it is important to standardize the standard. Why one office has movable desks according to height and another has old ones? This gives motivation and demotivation. It is a very big job to manage equity within the organization".*

Most of the participants cited the exclusion of one employee in relation to other employees as a negative factor affecting fairness. Participant 3IN/25 mentioned that *"there have been situations where, as if the working relationship were closer in terms of values, you would pay more attention, more effort to the area represented by that person, you would represent that area with more enthusiasm. Another situation was the subordinate's demand for a change of reward or other benefits; there were situations where this led to a greater response. And I don't think that was good. Justice was compromised."* Research participant 1IN/25 gave another example of the exclusion of an employee in relation to others and the consequences that followed: *"Justice is weakened if, for example, there is no profit, nothing, you have to work hard, save a lot. So we all go, we live in double rooms, we take uncomfortable flights, but they are the cheapest. (...) A new colleague comes in, he thinks, what am I doing here, I'm going to fly business class now, and he takes a comfortable, nice hotel. This is a sense of injustice, it is stressful for those people who are trying hard and see that they are being treated unfairly, that if you can get more without trying harder, then what is the point of doing it. My job is to make things right, to prevent injustice from happening."* Research participant 2IN/25 gives another example of the dilution of fairness: *"company summer event, a colleague starts bragging to others about his salary. He has a higher salary than the others, we bought it on the market, and he bragged about it. Then justice is weakened. What we did then was to speak openly, we had to turn on openness. It's a long marathon to restore justice, you can't do it in a day or two. You can demolish it overnight, but it's hard to build."*

The SCARF model factors that are most and least influential on managerial stress when working with employees

At the end of the interview, all managers were asked in a summary question which of the SCARF model factors, status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness, have the greatest and least influence on the manager's stress in working with employees. A summary of the responses is given in Table 6 (positive - T, negative - N).

Table 6. SCARF model factors influencing managerial stress when working with employees

	Status		Certainty		Autonomy		Relatedness		Fairness	
	T	N	T	N	T	N	T	N	T	N
1IN/25		X				X	X			
2IN/25		X					X			
3IN/25		X	X							
4IN/25		X			X					
5IN/25						X	X			
6IN/25		X	X							X
7IN/25							X			
8IN/25						X	X			
9IN/25		X	X							
10IN/25							X			X

Most managers mentioned relatedness as the most stressful element when working with employees, several also mentioned autonomy, none mentioned status, and fairness. The least stressful element was the status, which managers had already described as a "given", as a tool for action. Autonomy and fairness were also mentioned among the less stressful elements; certainty and relatedness were not tracked.

Conclusions

The interaction between the manager and his/her direct reports can have both positive and negative effects on the manager's experience. Organizational factors such as leadership style, clear communication within the staff, focus on team and individual performance, objectivity, transparent reward, equal working conditions, are critical in achieving effective organizational management, good performance, and smooth relations. Despite the important positive benefits they can bring, these factors, if they are at risk of being neglected, can lead to stressful situations in the context of the manager and his/her direct reports. The analysis of these factors, therefore, remains an important area of research.

According to the interview data, the biggest challenges for managers in stressful situations are relatedness, while autonomy is the least. Relationships with employees and the creation of a supportive organizational culture have a significant impact on Company's overall performance and quality of work, while autonomy is characterized more as a 'territory' granted by the shareholder(s), over which employees do not have a significant influence. The results of the interviews reveal the need for participants to change their roles as managers to transform negative influencing factors into positive influencing factors and, at the same time, to eliminate stressful situations.

Limitations of the study - the study could in the future include a wider and more diverse sample of participants, taking into account the size of the sample of companies represented, and the diversity of the industry.

Based on the theoretical part and the results of the empirical research, recommendations are formulated for managers and HR specialists of organizations on how to assess the positive and negative factors influencing managers' work with employees, to anticipate possible negative consequences, and to find measures for their correction. The results of the study can be used to address the development needs of managers, study employee engagement, and discuss the creation of a supportive organizational culture. In the future, the study could link the application of the factors of the SCARF model to different leadership styles.

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ORGANIZACINIO ATSPARUMO VALDYMAS NEAPIBRĖŽTUMO SĄLYGOMIS LIETUVOS VIEŠAJAME SEKTORIUJE

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Anotacija. Straipsnyje nagrinėjama kaip organizacijų vadybos priemonėmis valdyti organizacinį atsparumą kintančiomis neapibrėžtumo sąlygomis Lietuvos centrinės valdžios organizacijose. Darbe taikyta bounce back organizacinio atsparumo prieiga, atsparumo valdymo priemonės skirstant į statinius (prieš neigiamą aplinko poveikį) ir dinامينius (po neigiamo aplinkos poveikio). Statiniai ir dinaminiai organizacinio atsparumo veiksniai papildyti informacijos ir žinių valdymo priemonėmis, remiantis kontingencijos teorijos prielaidomis, jog neapibrėžtumo sąlygos organizaciją paveikia per informacijos pakankamumą sprendimų priėmime. Ši teorinė prieiga panaudota priežastiniais ryšiais ištiriant Lietuvos centrinės valdžios organizacijų atsparumo valdymo veiksnius. Atlikus kiekybinį ranginės logistinės regresijos tyrimą, nustatyti veiksniai turintys poveikį organizacinio atsparumo valdymui: Kiekybinio tyrimo rezultatai patvirtino statistiškai reikšmingus ir teigiamus priežastinius ryšius tarp organizacinio atsparumo stiprinimo ir 14 nepriklausomų kintamųjų iš 63 įtrauktų. Tarp išorinės aplinkos veiksnių išskirti santykiai su instituciniais partneriais bei vyriausybės narių kaitos ir veiklos prioritetų dinamika. Organizacijų statinio atsparumo priemonės teigiamai veikiančios organizacijos atsparumą yra veiklos valdymo skaitmenizavimas, daugialypė komunikacija ir informacijos panaudojimas sprendimų priėmimui. Dinaminio atsparumo priemonės didina atsparumą platesnio konteksto informacijos teikimu darbuotojams krizės atvejais, papildomi vadovų susitikimai bei vidurinės grandies vadovų vadovavimo kompetencijos. Tarp informacijos valdymo priemonių reikšmingais veiksniais tapo skaitmenizacijos, įvairių komunikacijos kanalų naudojimo ir duomenimis grįsto sprendimų priėmimo procesų stiprinimas. Žinių valdymo priemonės prisidedančios prie organizacinio atsparumo yra dalyvavimas tarptautiniuose tinkluose, žinių sklaida dokumentų bei gyvų susitikimų formatais ir sklandus vidinis žinių mainų procesas, laikantis teisinių reikalavimų. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidžia kompleksinį organizacinio atsparumo priemonių taikymo pobūdį siekiant valdyti ir gerinti organizacijos atsparumą.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Organizacinis atsparumas, neapibrėžtumo sąlygos, viešasis valdymas.

Įvadas

Temos aktualumas ir problema. Viešojo sektoriaus organizacijų veiklos kokybės svyravimai visuomenėje dažniausiai sukelia neigiamas reakcijas. Viešojo sektoriaus organizacijos kurdamos vertę visuomenei atlieka platų spektrą įvairių funkcijų, kurios turi būti prieinamos visai visuomenei. Tačiau viešojo sektoriaus organizacijų veiklos nesėkmių poveikis jaučiasi ne tik visuomenei, bet ir partneriams. Vyraujanti dažna kritika viešojo sektoriaus organizacijoms negebant greitai prisitaikyti prie iššūkių ar pokyčių, greitai spręsti susidariusias problemines situacijas sukuria papildomą spaudimą ir naujas organizacines problemas. (Butkus, Rakauskienė, *et al.*, 2023; Shafaei *et al.*, 2023) Viešojo sektoriaus organizacijų sistema, nepaisant spaudimo, įvairiausių kitų trikdžių turi ne tik išlikti ir funkcionuoti, bet ir

gebėti diegti inovacijas, tobulinti veiklos valdymą ir paslaugų teikimą, siekdama tenkinti visuomenės ir tarptautinių organizacijų keliamus reikalavimus. (Hewat, Alex James Twaddle, Thompson, Michael, and Twaddle, James, 2024)

Pastaraisiais metais, siekiant sumažinti privataus ir viešojo sektoriaus organizacijų veiklos kokybės svyravimus dažnai akcentuojama organizacijos atsparumo sąvoka ir atsparumo didinimo priemonių taikymas. Nors vis dar vyrauja ganėtinai fragmentiška organizacinio atsparumo sampratos ir priemonių taikymo diskusija, atliekamuose tyrimuose taip pat stokojama kokybiško neapibrėžtumo sąlygų darančių poveikį organizacijos veiklai operacionalizavimo. Šiame darbe organizacinis atsparumas vertinamas per *bounce back* požiūrį: jog be sėkmingo organizacijos veiklos balanso atstatymo (*bounce back*) kiti organizacinio atsparumo etapai nebus sėkmingi arba neduos norimos naudos. Organizacijų veiklos svyravimas dažnai nulemtas besikeičiančių neapibrėžtumo sąlygų operacionalizuojamas remiantis kontingencijos teorijos prieiga, pasinaudojant aplinkos neapibrėžtumo matrica adaptuota pagal organizacijos informacijos ir informacijos apdorojimo teorijų struktūriniu apjungimu. Konceptualus tyrimo modelis pritaikytas priežastinių ryšių analizės metodu nustatyti reikšmingus ryšius tarp vadybinių atsparumo valdymo priemonių ir organizacinio atsparumo stiprumo.

Šio **tyrimo tikslas** yra priežastinių ryšių metodu nustatyti atsparumo valdymo priemonės veikiant kintančiomis neapibrėžtumo sąlygomis, tinkančias Lietuvos centrinės valdžios organizacijoms.

Taikomi tyrimo metodai: mokslinės literatūros analizė, anketinė apklausa, ranginė logistinė regresija.

Organizacinio atsparumo teorinė koncepcija. Šiuo metu moksliniuose darbuose vyrauja labai įvairiapusiškai taikomas organizacinio atsparumo sampratos, matavimo, valdymo ir kitų pritaikymo praktikoje priemonių suvokimas. (Hepfer and Lawrence, 2022) Plačiaja prasme, organizacinis atsparumas suprantamas kaip gebėjimas patyrus neigiamą veiklos poveikį sugrįžti atgal į veiklos balanso sąlygas. (Barasa, Mbau and Gilson, 2018; Duchek, Raetze and Scheuch, 2020). Organizacinio atsparumo sampratos pritaikymas išsiskirsto į šiuos mokslinių tyrimų klausimus: Atsparumas nuo ko?; Atsistatymas per kokį laikotarpį?; Atsparumas yra kas: Gebėjimas (*capability*), (Parsons, 2010) Pajėgumas (*capacity*) (Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas (EBAPE), Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) *et al.*, 2019), Charakteristika; Rezultatas; Procesas; Elgesys; Strategija; Požiūris; (Annarelli, Battistella and Nonino, 2020; Duchek, 2020) Veiklos tipas ar visų šių elementų dariniai? (Woods, 2015; Williams *et al.*, 2017; Chen, Liu and Zhou, 2021; Hillmann and Guenther, 2021; Munoz, Billsberry and Ambrosini, 2022).

Be vyraujančios tyrimų įvairovės organizacinio atsparumo aplinkoje dažnai stokojama kokybiško, labai susijusių vadybos sampratų ir atsparumo atskyrimo. Dažnai atsparumas suvienodinamas su organizacijos tvirtumu (*robustness*) ar tvarumu (*sustainability*), sinonimiškai pritaikomos anti – trapios (*anti – fragile*) organizacijos idėjos ar pernelyg akcentuojamos besimokančios organizacijos priemonės ir tikslai organizacijoms. (Hillmann and Guenther, 2021) (Munoz, Billsberry and Ambrosini, 2022) Tvirtumo samprata vadyboje siejama su organizacijos gebėjimu nepatirti jokio aplinkos poveikio, (Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2005) anti - trapios organizacijos tobulėja tik patirtamos neigiamą veiklos poveikį, o rutininėmis veiklos balanso sąlygomis tobulėjimas nėra vystomas. (Taleb, 2012) Organizacinis atsparumas tvarumo vystymo organizacijose kontekste yra sudedamoji dalis, prisidedanti prie organizacijos ilgaamžiškumo ir konkurencinio pranašumo.

Tad nors ir kompleksiška organizacinio atsparumo sampratos diskusija, tačiau pastaraisiais metais išryškėjo dvi esminės atsparumo teorinės koncepcijos: viena mokslo

diskusija akcentuoja kontekstą kuriame organizacinis atsparumas taikomas inžinerinių - taikomųjų mokslų (Bracci and Tallaki, 2021) arba kitaip konservatyvioje perspektyvoje (Humbert and Joseph, 2019) - gebėjimas organizacijai sugrįžti atgal į veiklos balanso sąlygas patyrus poveikį - *bounce back* (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003; Shaw, 2012; DesJardine, Bansal and Yang, 2019). Kita, tyrimuose taip pat analizuojama ir labiau dinamiška, ekologijos/ekosistemų mokslo srityje susiformavusi - transformacinė organizacinio atsparumo pusė (Barbera *et al.*, 2017) organizacinis atsparumas - gebėjimas organizacijai sugrįžti geresnei, stipresnei, patobulėjusiai po patirto poveikio - *bounce forward*. Kituose darbuose diskutuojama, jog *bounce forward*, be *bounce back* nėra įmanomas ir jie yra tarpusavyje susiję, tokiu atveju organizacinis atsparumas suvokiamas skirstant į tris ar daugiau susijusių elementų. (Butkus, Schiuma, *et al.*, 2023, 2023; Bartuseviciene, Butkus and Schiuma, 2024a)

Šios atsparumo taikymo takoskyros remiasi, skirtingais tikslais keliamais organizacijai patiriant neigiamą veiklos poveikį: *bounce back* – kiek tik galima greičiau sugrįžti į veiklos balansą; *bounce forward* – būtinai patobulėti, sugrįžtant po patirto poveikio. Galima daryti prielaidą, jog pirmasis atsparumo valdymo žingsnis būtų grįžimas atgal – *bounce back*, o antrasis žingsnis - *bounce forward*. Tačiau, be tinkamai valdomo ir išpildomo *bounce back* atsparumo proceso, išpildyti *bounce forward* požiūrio sąlygas daugeliui organizacijų būtų sudėtinga. Tad, bendresniu požiūriu organizacinį atsparumą galime suvokti kaip organizacijos gebėjimą sugrįžti į veiklos balanso būseną susiduriant su iššūkiais (Barasa, Mbau and Gilson, 2018)

Detalesni konservatyviojo *bounce back* ir transformacinio *bounce forward* atsparumo teorinio pritaikymo aspektai remiasi statine ir dinamine atsparumo dalimis. Statinis organizacinis atsparumas vertinamas kaip neigiamo poveikio tikimybių mažinimas, taikant išankstinį pasirengimą ir prevenciją – dažniausiai formalizuotus procesus – prieš neigiamą poveikį. Statinis organizacinis atsparumas apibrėžiamas pasiruošimo, planavimo iki galimo poveikio organizacijai metu. (Chen, Liu and Zhou, 2021) Ir siejamas su organizacijos funkcinė perspektyva, jog organizacijoje vykstantys procesai iki neigiamo veiklos poveikio formuoja statinį atsparumą. (Sevilla *et al.*, 2023) Taip pat, statinis atsparumas pateikiamas per organizacijos pajėgumo prizmę, išskirdamas organizacijos turimus išteklius, informaciją, žinias ar mokymąsi. Stephenson *et. al* (2010), (Gibson and Tarrant, 2010; Zighan, 2023) Tad detalizuojant statinio atsparumo taikymo priemones išskiriamos strateginio planavimo ir valdymo valdymo priemonės, kokybės vadyba ir standartai, rizikų valdymas ir pokyčių vadyba – organizacijoje vykstančius formalizuotus procesus, formuojančius bendrą organizacijos valdymo sistemą.

Dinamiškasis organizacinis atsparumas yra maksimalaus greičio atsigaunant nuo netikėtų atvejų pasiekimo savybė, kuriam būdinga greita, labiau neformalizuotus procesus įtraukianti veikla. Dinaminio atsparumo elementai dažniausiai pasireiškia, kaip organizacijos procesų, darbuotojų ir aplinkos sąveika, kuri leidžia organizacijai prisitaikyti ir kuo greičiau sugrįžti į veiklos balanso sąlygas, priimant kokybiškus ir neuždelstus sprendimus. Šiuo atveju išskiriamos organizacijos informacijos valdymo, vidinės komunikacijos, sprendimų priėmimo, žinių valdymo ir mokymosi procesai, organizacinės kultūros svarbos elementai. (Williams *et al.*, 2017; Duchek, Raetze and Scheuch, 2020; Tasic *et al.*, 2020; Al-Ghattas and Marjanovic, 2021)

Neišvengiamai organizacijų atsparumas yra neatsiejamas nuo aplinkos poveikio organizacijai padarinių. Jeigu nėra neigiamo poveikio organizacijai – organizacinis atsparumas nepasireiškia, o dinaminio atsparumo valdymo priemonės nėra taikomos. Tačiau, dėl vis labiau besikeičiančios aplinkos, netikėtų ir labai stipraus neigiamo poveikio organizacijų veiklai įvykių, atsparumo valdymo poreikis vis labiau aktualizuojasi. Šiame darbe remiantis

kontingencinės organizacijų teorijos požiūriu, organizacijos veikimo negalima atskirti nuo aplinkos kurioje ji veikia ir kokią aplinką formuoja organizacijos viduje, siekiant prisitaikyti prie išorinės aplinkos kurioje organizacija veikia. (Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge, 2007; Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013) Taip iškeliamas svarbi prielaida, jog nėra vieno geriausio organizacijos ir atsparumo valdymo metodo, tinkančio visoms organizacijoms. Atsižvelgiant į šiuo metu rinkoje esančius atsparumo valdymo modelius ir standartus. Pavyzdžiui tyrimuose taikyti modeliai ir standartai: The Benchmark Resilience Tool (BRT-53) (R. Whitman *et al.*, 2013; Brown, Seville and Vargo, 2017, 2017; Butkus, Schiuma, *et al.*, 2023; Bartuseviciene, Butkus and Schiuma, 2024b), British Standards Resilience Maturity Scale (BS 65000: 2014 - 2022) (R., Cudworth, 2022; Zambrano, Imani and Cunha, 2022; Manes, Lange and Rush, 2023), ISO atsparumo standartas (ISO 22316, 2017) (Codreanu and Vasilescu, 2022), Tarptautinio organizacinio atsparumo konsorciumo modelis (ICOR) (Zighan, 2023) - yra pernelyg universalūs, menkai akcentuoja organizacijos vidinės aplinkos poveikį ir stokoja neapibrėžtumo sąlygų operacionalizavimo konkrečios organizacijos atveju, taip pat yra orientuoti į privačių organizacijų veiklą, tad silpnai pritaikyti ir suformuoti atsižvelgiant į viešojo sektoriaus veiklos specifiką, kurios svarbiausi akcentai – vertės visuomenei kūrimas teikiant nenutrūkstamas paslaugas. Svarbu tai, kad atsparumo valdymo priemonės reikia parinkti pagal organizaciją veikiančius išorinės ir vidinės aplinkos, kurie atsparumo tyrimuose įvardinami kaip vyraujančios neapibrėžtumo sąlygos, taip akcentuojant atviros, tinklaveikoje veikiančios organizacijos pobūdį ir iš to kylančius valdymo iššūkius.

Neapibrėžtumo sąlygų teorinė koncepcija. Galima išskirti, jog dauguma autorių savo moksliniuose darbuose stokoja kokybiško aplinkos neapibrėžtumo sąlygų operacionalizavimo, o šiuo metu rinkoje esantys atsparumo valdymo modeliai ir veiklos kokybės užtikrinimo standartai labai mažai skiria dėmesio šiam aspektui. (pvz.: Ramašauskienė, 2022; Butkus, Rakauskienė, *et al.*, 2023) Dėl to, šiame darbe analizuojamas vidinės ir išorinės aplinkos poveikio sukuriamas neapibrėžtumo sąlygos ir jų poveikis organizacijos veiklai. Išorinės makro aplinkos veiksniai: reti, netikėti įvykiai ar nuo organizacijos veiklos nepriklausantys veiksniai (pvz. teisiniai, politiniai, ekonominiai...); Išorinės mikro aplinkos – partnerių, klientų ir kitų suinteresuotų šalių (*stakeholder*) veikla, su kuriais organizacija turi abipusį poveikio ryšį formuoja tam tikro lygmens neapibrėžtumo sąlygas, kurioje veikia organizacija. (Donaldson, 2009; Kujala *et al.*, 2022) Taip pat, vidinėje organizacijos aplinkoje vykstantys sprendimų priėmimo, užduočių pasidalijimo, informacijos ir žinių mainai, bei kiti įvairiais komunikaciniais kanalais vykstantys procesai sukuria tam tikrą neapibrėžtumo lygį, kuris neigiamai paveikia organizacijos veiklą ir sukuria sąlygas atitinkama forma aktyvuotis organizacinio atsparumo elementui – sugrįžimui į veiklos balanso būseną, su galimybe organizacijai iš to pasimokyti, patobulėti.

Neapibrėžtumo sąvokos moksliniai tyrimai nuo XX a. 6-7 deš. išlieka painūs, juos sunku objektyviai operacionalizuoti moksliniuose tyrimuose, (Achrol, 1988; Townsend *et al.*, 2018) todėl daugelyje tyrimų neapibrėžtumo sąlygų dekonstravimas lieka kokybiškai neišpildytas. Dažniausiai daroma mokslinė prielaida, jog išorinėje organizacijos aplinkoje vyraujanti intensyvi dinamika, netikėti įvykiai kuriems organizacija negali pasiruošti ir pan. turi neigiamą poveikį organizacijai ir šių susidarantių sąlygų objektyviai pamatuoti ir suvaldyti nėra galimybių. Organizacijų teorijų lauke, ne viena teorinė kryptis vertinanti, jog (i) organizacijos veikimas priklauso nuo aplinkos, (ii) organizacija yra atvira, (iii) nėra vieno geriausio metodo vystyti visas organizacijas turi mokslinę neapibrėžtumo sąlygų interpretavimo sritį. Šio tyrimo kontekste, neapibrėžtumas bus operacionalizuojamas per kontingencijos teorijos kryptį – jog organizacija turi vystytis prisitaikant prie aplinkos sąlygų, o neapibrėžtumo sąlygų operacionalizavimas. (Joseph and Sengul, 2025)

R. B. Duncan (1972) matricos panaudojimas skirstant neapibrėžtumo sąlygas į lygmenis, moksliniuose tyrimuose buvo patvirtintas tik iš dalies – pirmas apribojimas – neapibrėžtumo sąlygos vertinamos subjektyviu, organizacijos sprendimų priėmėjo požiūriu, dėl to menkai išpildomas objektyvumo reikalavimas ir pilnai netenkinamos tuo metu stipriai dominavusios mokslinio pozityvizmo idėjos. Taip pat, besivystančios technologijos ir visuomenės raštingumas didinantis organizacijų veikimo kompleksiskumą stipriai sumenkino Duncan matricos aiškinamą galią kuri susieta su aplinkos ir organizacijos sudėtingumo prizme – kuo sudėtingesnė (daugiau veikėjų, veikėjai skirtingi, skirtingi subordinaciniai lygmenys) aplinka kurioje veikia organizacija, tuo sudėtingesnė turi būti ir organizacinė struktūra bei valdymo mechanizmai. (Achrol, 1988) Tačiau, atsižvelgiant į stipriai teisės aktų reguliuojamą, daug formalizuotos veiklos procesų, hierarchiškai suformuotą ir vis dar daugiau valstybės tarnybos karjeros modelių bruožų turintį Lietuvos centrinės valdžios organizacijų lauką, daroma prielaida, jog R.B. Duncan matrica šio tyrimo kontekste bus naudinga. Ypač adaptuojant šią matricą remiantis informacijos apdorojimo teorija (Galbraith, 1974) – kuo didesnis aplinkos neapibrėžtumas, tuo daugiau informacijos turi gauti, apdoroti ir panaudoti organizacija, siekdama priimti geriausius sprendimus. Šios teorijos aplinkoje išskiriamos dvi pagrindinės kryptys: (1) mažinti poreikį (apkrovas) informacijai (procesų formalizavimas, standartizavimas, struktūrų supaprastinimas pvz. elektroninės dokumentų valdymo sistemos) arba (2) investuoti į organizacines kompetencijas gauti ir apdoroti informaciją (pvz. tinklaveika, duomenų analitika, komunikacijos sistemos, lankstesnės organizacinės struktūros elementų diegimas ir kt.). (Daft and Lengel, 1986)

Taip pat šiame darbe svarbi Weick 1995 (Bettis-Outland, 2012; YahiaMarzouk and Jin, 2023) organizacijos informacijos teorija, kurios argumentai yra, jog organizacijos veikdamos aplinkoje, kuri turi kintantį neapibrėžtumo laipsnį aktyviai apdoroja informacija siekdamos neapibrėžtumą sumažinti arba suvaldyti, t.y. sumažinti dviprasmiškumą ir neapibrėžtume suformuoti prasmingus procesus: 1. „Enactment“ – aplinkos suvokimas organizacijos viduje – formuojasi skirtingi situacijos aiškinimai, kuo didesnis neapibrėžtumas tuo daugiau skirtingų versijų; 2. Selection - Aukšto neapibrėžtumo atveju, organizacija susidūrusi su daug skirtingu aplinkos interpretacijų turi pasirinkti vieną (ar kelias, dominuojančias) versijas; 3. Retention – organizacijos sukauptos patirties prieš tai įvykusiųose procesuose išsaugojimas, leidžiantis ateityje pasikartojantiems panašaus neapibrėžtumo atvejams padėti organizacijai prisitaikyti greičiau.

Tad, jeigu informacijos apdorojimo teorijos pradinis kelias – pakankamas informacijos kiekis, prieinamumo kanalai, priemonės apdoroti, tai organizacijos informacijos teorijos pagrindinis akcentas – informacijos interpretavimas, pritaikymas ir sprendimų priėmimas siekiant gebėti keisti valdymo metodus prisitaikant prie kintančių neapibrėžtumo sąlygų. Iš esmės požiūriai priešingi, bet šiuo atveju vienas kitą papildo, nors ir išlieka vyraujantis neapibrėžtumo sąlygų suvokimo subjektyvumas: organizacijos nariai, rinkdami, interpretuodami ir keisdami informaciją suformuoja savo t.y. subjektyvų aplinkos, arba neapibrėžtumo sąlygų suvokimą. Tad šiame tyrime pritaikyta aplinkos neapibrėžtumo vertinimo matrica matrica, papildyta informacijos apdorojimo ir organizacijos informacijos teorinėmis įžvalgomis suformuota įvertinti Lietuvos centrinės valdžios organizacijų neapibrėžtumo aplinką:

		Aplinkos pokyčių greitis	
		Mažas	Didelis
Kompleksiškumas	Mažas	<i>Mažas neapibrėžtumas</i> Reikalinga informacija žinoma ir pricinama	<i>Vidutinis neapibrėžtumas</i> Nuolatinis naujos informacijos poreikis
	Didelis	<i>Vidutinis neapibrėžtumas</i> Persisotinimas informacija	<i>Didelis neapibrėžtumas</i> Nežinoma, kokia informacija būtų reikalinga

Paveikslas 1. Aplinkos neapibrėžtumo sąlygų skirstymas per informacijos prizmę

Šaltinis: Jucevičius ir kt., 2017, adaptuota pagal Duncan 1972, Galbraith 1973, Weis 1995 Hatch ir kt., 2013

Organizacijoms siekiant planuoti, prisitaikyti ir sugrįžti į veiklos balanso sąlygas po išorinių trikdžių dažnai praleidžiamas vidinės aplinkos poveikio elementas. (Zighan, 2023) Greiti, neparengti vidiniai pokyčiai, prastas vadovavimas, netikėta arba didelė darbuotojų kaita taip pat paveikia organizacijos veiklą neigiamai, suformuodami atsparumo ir grįžimo atgal į balanso būseną situaciją. (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003) Kita vertus vidinės ir išorinės aplinkos pasikeitimai sukuria ne tik atsparumo poreikio situaciją, bet ir formuoja neapibrėžtumo sąlygas, neigiamai veikia organizacijos veiklą, o sugrįžti atgal reikia pasitelkti atsparumo valdymo priemones ir procesus. (Bracci and Tallaki, 2021)

Organizacijai poveikį darančios aplinkos, neapibrėžtumo sąlygų ir organizacinio atsparumo valdymo priemonių sąsaja šiame darbe apjungiamą per jau įvardintus statinius ir dinامينius atsparumo elementus organizacijoje bei informacijos ir žinių valdymo metodines prieigas. Šių tarpdisciplininių prieigų pagalba bus analizuojama kaip pasitelkiant informacijos ir žinių valdymo praktinius metodus, sistemas ir vis tobulėjančias technologijas padėti organizacijų sprendimų priėmėjams vesti organizaciją į priekį patiriant neapibrėžtumo sąlygų poveikį. (Blandin and Brown, 1977; Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1990; Walker *et al.*, 2003; Van De Ven, Ganco and Hinings, 2013; Grote, 2018; Al-Ghattas and Marjanovic, 2021) Šiuo požiūriu, jog informacijos ir žinių valdymas yra atskiros mokslo sritys, grindžiamos atskiromis teorinėmis idėjomis, šiame darbe šios metodinės prieigos bus naudojamos kaip praktinio pritaikymo priemonės neapibrėžtumo sąlygoms ir atsparumo valdymo kriterijams bei indikatoriams detalizuoti.

Informacijos valdymo metodų poveikis organizacijai veikiant neapibrėžtumo sąlygomis yra gana seniai tyrinėjama sritis. Mokslininkai analizuoja kaip pasitelkiant informacijos valdymo metodus, sistemas ir vis tobulėjančias technologijas padėti organizacijų sprendimų priėmėjams vesti organizaciją į priekį patiriant neapibrėžtumo sąlygų poveikį. (Blandin and Brown, 1977; Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1990; Walker *et al.*, 2003; Van De Ven, Ganco and Hinings, 2013; Grote, 2018; Al-Ghattas and Marjanovic, 2021) Atsižvelgiant į informacijos valdymo sąveikos svarbą su neapibrėžtumu, reikalinga detalizuoti informacijos valdymo elementus, atsižvelgiant į organizacinio atsparumo statinių ir dinامينių veiksmų skirstymą. Pirmiausia informacija yra strategiškai svarbūs organizacijos ištekliai, (Brinkhues and MaÅ, 2014), kuriuos organizacija valdo pasitelkdama kitas išteklių formas (personalas, technologijos, kompetencijos, procesai) (Detlor *et al.*, 2006; Altındağ and Öngel, 2021). Organizacijos visų procesų detalės gali būti priskiriamos informacijai, tačiau skiriasi jų panaudojimo laikotarpis – iki poveikio ir po poveikio, tad svarbu kada organizacija priimdama sprendimus ieško,

apdoroja, įvertina ir taip panaudoja įvairiai apdorotą informaciją sprendimų priėmimo. (Cho, 1996)

Atsižvelgus į pagrindinius informacijos valdymo aspektus svarbu pabrėžti, jog **žinių valdymas** yra glaudžiai susijęs su informacijos valdymo procesais. Iš esmės organizacijai renkant ir transformuojant informaciją, sukuriamas pagrindas žinių kūrimui – informacijos pritaikymui po apdorojimo ir analizės procesų. (Kaye, 1995; Cho, 1996) Statinio ir dinaminio atsparumo dalių kontekste, svarbu atskirti vyraujančią diskusiją tarp žinių valdymo (dažniausiai planuojamos ir įvairiomis formomis formalizuojamos veiklos iki neigiamo poveikio patyrimo) ir besimokančios organizacijos sampratų. Neapibrėžtumo sąlygų ir atsparumo valdymo kontekste, svarbu atskirti, jog besimokanti organizacija yra platesnis, labiau organizacinės kultūros pobūdžio, darbuotojų elgsenos ir mokymosi elementas. Akcentuojant jog žinių valdymas yra skirtingų formų žinių kūrimas, saugojimas, panaudojimas, keitimasis, planavimas, siejamas su vadybinėmis procedūromis, formalizavimu. (Chilton and Bloodgood, 2008; Crites *et al.*, 2009)

Neapibrėžtumo sąlygų tyrimuose žinių valdymo metodų taikymas sietinas su trūkstamos informacijos (arba šiuo atveju žinių) užpildymu sprendimams priimti, kuomet organizacijos veikia aukštesnio neapibrėžtumo sąlygomis. (Bratianu and Bolisani, 2015) Atsparumo tyrimuose besimokančios organizacijos (iš dalies ir žinių valdymo) elementai labiau sietini *su bounce forward* organizacinio atsparumo samprata. (Evenseth, Sydnes and Gausdal, 2022) Galima apibendrinti, jog sąveiką tarp informacijos ir žinių valdymo koncepcijų reikia tinkamai atskirti tarp statinių ir dinaminių atsparumo dalių, ypač atkreipiant dėmesį į neapibrėžtumo sąlygų formuojamą poreikį jas skirtingai pritaikyti iki poveikio ir po poveikio organizacijai.

Apibendrinant mokslinės analizės rezultatus, konceptualus teorinis atsparumo valdymo modelis formuojamas kontingencijos teorijos rėmuose, organizacinio atsparumo sampratą taikant *bounce back* požiūriu, skirstant ją į statinio - dinaminio atsparumo veiksnius, kurių taikymas priklauso nuo kintančių neapibrėžtumo sąlygų susidarančių vidinėje ir išorinėje organizacijos aplinkoje, neapibrėžtumo sąlygų detalizavimą pateikiant per informacijos sprendimų priėmimo pakankumą ir informacijos bei žinių valdymo praktinius metodus.

Lentelė 1. Konceptualaus teorinio modelio kriterijai ir indikatoriai

Šaltinis. Sudaryta autoriaus pagal literatūros analizę

Kriterijų grupė		Indikatoriai
Aplinkos veiksniai	Vidinės aplinkos poveikis;	1. Aukščiausių vadovų kaita 2. Svarbių darbuotojų kaita (ilgamečiai institucinę atmintį turintys darbuotojai, aukštą kvalifikaciją/svarbias kompetencijas turintys darbuotojai) 3. Planavimo elementų pasikeitimai: strategijos pokyčiai, veiklos prioritetų pokyčiai; 4. Neplanuotos, skubios užduotys (ad hoc, ypač kai labai trumpas atlikimo terminas) 5. Vidurinės grandies vadovų kaita; 6. Valstybės tarnautojo statuso pokyčiai
	Išorinės aplinkos poveikis mikro lygmuo	1. Santykis su kuruojančia įstaiga (kam pavaldi Jūsų organizacija) 2. Santykis su instituciniais partneriais (išorės subjektai kurie tiesiogiai jaučia Jūsų veiklos sėkmės ir nesėkmės, nebūtinai pavaldumo ryšiais) 3. Naujų f-jų ir atsakomybių skyrimas, delegavimas organizacijai 4. Vyriausybės narių ir vyriausybės veiklos prioritetų kaita

		5. Spaudimas iš politikų (tiesioginiai kreipimaisi, seimo komisijos ar seimo komitetai)
	Išorinės aplinkos poveikis – makro lygmuo	1. Rinkiminis ciklas; 2. Valstybės tarnybos įstatymo pasikeitimai; 3. Organizacijos transformacija; 4. Tarptautinės teisėkūros pasikeitimai; 5. Nacionalinės teisėkūros pasikeitimai; 6. Spaudimas iš visuomenės (tiesioginis, per medijas, per politikus, per soc. tinklus) 7. Spaudimas iš žiniasklaidos (per medijas ir soc. tinklus)
	Neapibrėžtumo sąlygų identifikavimas	1. Reikalinga informacija žinoma ir prieinama 2. Vyrauja nuolatinis naujos informacijos poreikis 3. Persisotinimas informacija – perteklius 4. Nėra žinoma kokia informacija būtų reikalinga
	Organizacijos atsistatymo greitis	1-2 savaites, 3-4 savaites, 1-2 mėnesius, 2-6 mėnesius, Kita
Prieš poveikį: statinio atsparumo veiksniai		1. Strateginis planavimas: aiški organizacijos misija, vizija, strategija 2. Strateginė analizė – organizacijos vidinės aplinkos tyrimai, analizės ir vertinimai; 3. Strateginė analizė - organizacijos išorinės aplinkos tyrimai, analizės ir vertinimai; 4. Rizikų vertinimas/valdymas; 5. Kokybės vadybos metodų diegimas ar jų standartų tobulinimas; 6. Organizacijos procesinis valdymas, aprašymas; 7. Organizacijos veiklos valdymo skaitmenizavimas; 8. Organizacija investuoja į vidurinėsios grandies vadovų vadovavimo kompetencijas; 9. Organizacija investuoja į vidurinėsios grandies vadovų komunikavimo kompetencijas; 10. Organizacija investuoja į svarbių darbuotojų išlaikymą (pvz. su institucine atmintimi);
Po poveikio: dinaminio atsparumo veiksniai		1. Vidurinėsios grandies vadovų vadovavimo kompetencijos; 2. Vidurinėsios grandies vadovų komunikavimo kompetencijos; 3. Formuojamos darbo grupės susiklosčiusiai situacijai spręsti; 4. Informacija darbuotojams yra ribojama neigiamo poveikio organizacijai atveju. 5. Pateikiama papildoma, platesnė kontekstinė informacija darbuotojams neigiamo poveikio organizacijai atveju; 6. Įtraukiami papildomi vadovų lygmens susitikimai (ne rutininiai) 7. Aiškiai nurodoma atsakomybė/lyderystė (visiems org. Darbuotojams) neigiamo poveikio organizacijai atveju; 8. Darbuotojai su institucine atmintimi kiek įmanoma įtraukiami/išnaudojami neigiamo poveikio organizacijai atveju

Bendri kriterijai prieš ir po poveikio:	Informacijos valdymo veiksniai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizacijos veiklos valdymo skaitmenizavimas; 2. Informacijos perteikimas formalizuotai – raštu 3. Informacija galite laisvai keistis tarp organizacijos darbuotojų kiek tai leidžia teisės aktai 4. Renkama informacija panaudojama sprendimų priėmimo 5. Komunikacija organizacijoje vykdoma įvairiais kanalais ir formatais 6. Informacijos perteikimas verbaliniu būdu - žodžiu
	Žinių valdymo veiksniai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Žinios perduodamos dokumentų (ataskaitų), duomenų formatu 2. Individualizuotas kvalifikacijos kėlimas/ kompetencijų tobulinimas 3. Žiniomis galite laisvai keistis tarp organizacijos darbuotojų, kiek tai leidžia teisės aktai 4. Organizacijoje <u>rezultatyviai</u> išnaudojamas dalyvavimas nacionalinėje tinklaveikoje 5. Organizacijoje <u>produktyviai</u> išnaudojamas dalyvavimas tarptautinėje tinklaveikoje 6. Žinios perduodamos gyvų susitikimų formate (pristatymai organizacijai) 7. Organizacijoje taikoma neatitiktų/klaudų (supervizijos) ir problemų aptarimo gyvai metodika 8. Organizacijos darbuotojai su institucine patirtimi įgalinti/motyvuoti dalintis turimomis žiniomis 9. Organizacija pasižymi besimokančios organizacijos principais

Empirinio tyrimo metodika. Atsižvelgiant į išskirtus tyrimo kriterijus, sudarytas kiekybinio tyrimo dizainas, anketinės apklausos būdu surinkti duomenys išanalizuoti priežastinių ryšių – ranginės logistinės regresijos metodu, siekiant nustatyti ryšius ir tendencijas tarp jų. (Polit and Beck, 2010) Kiekybinio tyrimo pobūdis leidžia generalizuoti tyrimo rezultatus tiriamai imčiai dėl objektyvumo ir patikimumo privalumo. Anketinės apklausos formatus pritaikytas šiame tyrime remiasi uždaro tipo klausimais. Klausimai pateikti surinkti reikiamus duomenis standartišku (vieno pasirinkamo atsakymo) ir 5 dalių Likerto skalės principais.

Tyrimo duomenys surinkti 2024.12.03 – 2024.12.20. Remiantis 2024.12.01 Valstybės valdymo agentūros pateikiamais duomenimis apie Lietuvos centrinės valdžios organizacijose užimamas darbo vietas, skaičius svyravo tarp 38 – 40 tūkst. Gauti 555 respondentų atsakymai yra pakankamas skaičius patikimai interpretuoti gautus rezultatus tiriamos populiacijos atžvilgiu. Remiantis pannioto formule – tyrimui reikėjo apklausti 365 – 385 respondentus.

Surinktų duomenų analizė atlikta koreliacinių ir priežastinių tarpusavio kintamųjų ryšių nustatymu. Metodas skirtas įvertinti ar teorinio modelio kintamieji yra susieti teigiamais ar neigiamais tarpusavio ryšiais ir kiek tyrime vertinami kintamieji yra multikolinearūs. (Čekanavičius and Murauskas, 2014; P. Vatcheva and Lee, 2016) Atsižvelgiant į tai jog kintamieji pateikti Likerto skalėje, koreliacijos koeficientais galima interpretuoti ryšio buvimą ir stiprumą. Šio tyrimo atžvilgiu, kai kintamieji kategoriniai ir pateikiami Likerto skalėje, bus taikomas „Spearman“ koreliacijos koeficiento matavimas, kuris labiau pritaikytas netolydiems kintamųjų ryšiams įvertinti: 0 - (-)0,250 – silpnas koreliacinis ryšys; (-)0,250 - (-)0,600 – vidutinis koreliacinis ryšys; (-)0,600 - (-)1 stiprus koreliacinis ryšys. (Field, 2009) Taikomas ranginės logistinės regresijos metodas leidžia duomenis surinktus Likerto skalės principu, įvertinti ryšio svarbumą ir poveikį tarp: priklausomo kintamojo - organizacinio atsparumo lygio

įvertinimo; Nepriklausomų kintamųjų: aplinkų poveikio veiksnių bei vadybinių priemonių taikymo.

Atlikti duomenų apdorojimo veiksmai: kintamųjų apjungimas siekiant suvienodinti atsakymų dažnio pasiskirstymą pagal rangus. Duomenų analizės metu analizuoti multikolinearumo ryšiai tarp skirtingų kintamųjų modelių VIF testu ir koreliacijos ryšių testu prieš kiekvieną regresijos modelį. Atsižvelgiant į spearman Ro koreliacijos testų rezultatus, multikolinearumas pastebimas tik tarp keleto kintamųjų, jie į tolimesnius modelius buvo įtraukiami atskirai ir lyginti tarpusavyje.

Empirinio tyrimo rezultatai. Demografiniai, individualūs ir didžioji dalis organizacijos tipologijos kintamųjų neturi statistiškai reikšmingo ryšio su organizacinio atsparumo priklausomu kintamuoju išskyrus – organizacijos egzistavimo laikotarpį. Tačiau modelio Nagelkerke R^2 determinacijos koeficientas nebuvo pakankamas, kad kintamasis būtų reikšminga paaiškinamoji dalis.

Aplinkos poveikio organizaciniam atsparumui regresiniais modeliais nustatyta, kad vienas iš **vidinės aplinkos** indikatorių turi neigiamą poveikį atsparumui – neplanuotų, skubių užduočių (ad Hoc), modelis su vienu statistiškai reikšmingu kintamuoju paaiškina 2% tiriamo reiškinio. **Išorinės aplinkos** regresiniu modeliu nustatyti 5 nepriklausomi kintamieji iš 12, turintys statistiškai reikšmingą ryšį su organizacinio atsparumo priklausomu kintamuoju: trys veiksniai turi neigiamą ryšį – didėjant neigiamam poveikiui organizacijai iš politikų veiksmų, santykių su kuruojančia įstaiga ir Valstybės tarnybos įstatymo pasikeitimų daromas neigiamas poveikis organizacijos atsparumui. „Vyriausybės narių ir veiklos prioritetų kaita“ bei Santykio su instituciniais partneriais (angl. stakeholderiais) nepriklausomi kintamieji turi teigiamą priežastinį ryšį su organizaciniu atsparumu. Išorinės aplinkos regresijos modelis paaiškina 8% tiriamo reiškinio.

Neapibrėžtumo sąlygų nepriklausomų kintamųjų regresiniu modeliu nustatytas neigiamas statistiškai reikšmingas priežastinis ryšys su organizacinio atsparumo priklausomu kintamuoju - Neapibrėžtumo sąlygų identifikavimas. Kintamasis suformuotas pagal teorinėje dalyje pristatytą modelį įtraukiant tokias neapibrėžtumo sąlygų kategorijas : (nuo žemiausios iki aukščiausios) 1.Reikalinga informacija žinoma ir prieinama; 2.Vyrauja nuolatinis naujos informacijos poreikis; 3.Persisotinimas informacija – perteklius; 4.Nėra žinoma kokia informacija būtų reikalinga; Regresinis modelis paaiškina apie 11% reiškinio.

Statinio atsparumo nepriklausomų kintamųjų regresiniu modeliu nustatyta, jog iš 7 įtrauktų kintamųjų statistiškai reikšmingą teigiamą ryšį turi 4 kintamieji : Organizacija investuoja į vidurinėsios grandies vadovų vadovavimo kompetencijas; Organizacijos veiklos valdymo skaitmenizavimas; Strateginis planavimas: aiški organizacijos misija, vizija, strategija; Strateginė analizė – organizacijos vidinės aplinkos tyrimai, analizės ir vertinimai; Modelis paaiškina apie 20% tiriamo reiškinio.

Dinaminio atsparumo vadybos priemonių regresiniu modeliu nustatyta, jog trys kintamieji iš septynių turi teigiamą, statistiškai reikšmingą priežastinį ryšį su organizacinio atsparumo priklausomu kintamuoju: Įtraukiami papildomi vadovų lygmens susitikimai (ne rutininiai); Vidurinėsios grandies vadovų vadovavimo kompetencijos; Pateikiama papildoma, platesnė kontekstinė informacija darbuotojams neigiamo poveikio organizacijai atveju; Modelis paaiškina apie 18% reiškinio.

Informacijos valdymo priemonių regresiniu modeliu įvertinus ryšius tarp kintamųjų, nustatyti trys statistiškai reikšmingu teigiamu ryšiu su priklausomu kintamuoju susieti nepriklausomi kintamieji - Organizacijos veiklos valdymo skaitmenizavimas; Komunikacija organizacijoje vykdoma įvairiais kanalais ir formatais; Renkama informacija panaudojama sprendimų priėmimė; Modelis paaiškina apie 21% reiškinio.

Žinių valdymo priemonių vertinimo regresiniu modeliu nustatyti 4 teigiamu statistiškai reikšmingu ryšių su priklausomu kintamuoju susieti indikatoriai: Organizacijoje produktyviai išnaudojamas dalyvavimas tarptautinėje tinklaveikoje; Žinios perduodamos dokumentų (ataskaitų), duomenų formatu; Žiniomis galime laisvai keistis tarp organizacijos darbuotojų, kiek tai leidžia teisės aktai; Žinios perduodamos gyvų susitikimų formate (pristatymai organizacijai); Modelis paaiškina apie 30% tiriamo reiškinio.

Sudarius **bendrą** (Lentelė 2) visų tiriamų kriterijų nepriklausomų kintamųjų regresinį modelį: Iš 52 konceptualiaame modelyje įtrauktų nepriklausomų kintamųjų į galutinį priežastinių ryšių nustatymo modelį įtrauktų indikatorių, nustatyti statistiškai reikšmingi 11 atsparumo valdymo indikatorių. Gautas statistiškai reikšmingas ir patikimas priežastinių ryšių modelis paaiškina 42% organizacinio atsparumo reiškinio situacijų. Nustatyta, jog vidinė, išorinė aplinkos ir neapibrėžtumo sąlygos neigiamai veikia organizacijos atsparumą, išskyrus du išorinės aplinkos kintamuosius: (i) Santykis su instituciniais partneriais (išorės subjektai kurie tiesiogiai jaučia Jūsų veiklos sėkmės ir nesėkmės, nebūtinai pavaldumo ryšiais); ir (ii) Vyriausybės narių ir vyriausybės veiklos prioritetų kaita. Kurie teigiamai veikia organizacijos atsparumą, kuomet didėja neigiamas poveikis organizacijos veiklai. Tikėtina toks ryšys susiklosto dėl modelyje neįtraukto ir nematuojamo, tačiau tarp šių kintamųjų ir priklausomo kintamojo susidarančio ryšio, kuris siejasi su tinklaveika ar šoko testais.

Vadybos priemonės susijusios su organizacinio atsparumo gerėjimu ir valdymu pasiskirsto tarp visų 4 kriterijų gana vienodai, skirstant pagal reikšmingumą organizaciniam atsparumui: daugiausia poveikio turi žinių valdymo priemonės, informacijos valdymas, dinaminis atsparumas, statinis atsparumas. Visų kriterijų kintamieji susiję teigiamais priežastiniais ryšiais su priklausomu organizacinio atsparumo kintamuoju. Sudaryti modeliai paaiškina 20% - 32% tiriamo atsparumo reikšmių.

Apibendrinant kiekybinio tyrimo rezultatus, galima teigti, jog nustatyti sąveikos ryšiai visų tiriamų kriterijų ir priklausomo kintamojo – organizacinio atsparumo. Tą patvirtina atlikti atskirų kriterijų ryšių su organizaciniu atsparumu modeliai, bei trys apibendrinantys modeliai. Bendruoju atsparumo valdymo modeliu paaiškinama apie 42% organizacinio atsparumo reikšmių, įtraukus 11 statistiškai reikšmingų kintamųjų. Skirtingų kriterijų modeliais paaiškinama: Vidinė aplinka: ~2%; Išorinė aplinka - ~8%; Neapibrėžtumo sąlygos - ~12%; Statinio atsparumo ~20%; Dinaminio atsparumo - ~18%; Informacijos valdymo - ~21%; Žinių valdymo - ~32%; Pastebima, jog aplinkos kriterijų modelių aiškinamoji galia yra žemiausia, atskirų modelių paaiškinimo galimybės tinka tik iš dalies. Vadybos metodų kriterijų regresinių modelių paaiškinamoji reikšmė yra pakankama.

Lentelė 2. Bendrasis regresinis modelis
Šaltinis. Sudaryta autoriaus

Bendras modelis		Lygiagrečių tiesių santykio stat. Reikšmingumas $P \geq 0,05$	Pseudo determinacijos koeficientas Nagelkerke $R^2 \geq 0,2$	„Pearson, Deviance“ stat. reikšmingumas: $p \geq 0,05$	Tikėtino santykio kriterijaus stat. reikšmingumas: $P \leq 0,05$
		0.137	0.416	0.092 ; 1.000	0,000
		Vertinimas (B)	Stand. Nuokrypis	Valdo kriterijus	P
11	Neapibrėžtumo sąlygų identifikavimas	-0.51	0.123	17.261	0
22	Organizacijoje produktyviai išnaudojamas dalyvavimas tarptautinėje tinklaveikoje	0.39	0.094	17.073	0
33	Žinios perduodamos dokumentų (ataskaitų), duomenų formatu	0.47	0.124	14.315	0
44	Spaudimas iš politikų (tiesioginiai kreipimaisi, seimo komisijos ar seimo komitetai)	-0.246	0.068	13.162	0
55	Organizacijos gyvavimo trukmė?	0.308	0.092	11.129	0.001
66	Santykis su kuruojančia įstaiga (kam pavaldi Jūsų organizacija)	-0.272	0.087	9.712	0.002
77	Žiniomis galime laisvai keistis tarp organizacijos darbuotojų, kiek tai leidžia teisės aktai	0.386	0.126	9.408	0.002
88	Organizacijos veiklos valdymo skaitmenizavimas;	0.278	0.097	8.158	0.004
99	Strateginė analizė – organizacijos vidinės aplinkos tyrimai, analizės ir vertinimai;	0.242	0.101	5.703	0.017
110	Santykis su instituciniais partneriais (išorės subjektai kurie tiesiogiai jaučia Jūsų veiklos sėkmės ir nesėkmės, nebūtinai pavaldumo ryšiais)	0.186	0.087	4.496	0.034
111	Pateikiama papildoma, platesnė kontekstinė informacija darbuotojams neigiamo poveikio organizacijai atveju;	0.199	0.097	4.2	0.04

Išvados

Mokslinės literatūros analizės rezultatai leidžia teigti, jog organizacinio atsparumo *bounce forward* sampratos pritaikymas aktualizuojasi tuomet, kai organizacija sėkmingai išpildo *bounce back* idėjas. Kad sėkmingai išpildyti *bounce back* idėjas, reikia tikslingai naudoti statinio organizacinio atsparumo priemonės iki neigiamo veiklos poveikio organizacijai, įtraukiant informacijos ir žinių valdymo elementus. Pasireiškus neigiamam aplinkų poveikiui dėl susiformuojančio informacinio neapibrėžtumo sąlygų, taikyti dinaminio atsparumo valdymo elementus, kad kuo greičiau sugrįžti į veiklos balanso sąlygas bei gebėti išsaugoti įgytą informaciją, žinias ir patirtį.

Dažniausiai įvardinamas kaip organizacijos veiklos pablogėjimo šaltinis – vyraujančios neapibrėžtumo sąlygos, daro poveikį ne tik iš išorinės, bet ir iš vidinės aplinkos, taip suformuojant prielaidą, kad organizacijoje priimti sprendimai sukelia papildomas kliūtis prisitaikyti prie išorinės aplinkos iššūkių. Tad remiantis šiame darbe taikyta teorine prieiga, tikslinga rinkti ir vertinti vidinės ir išorinės aplinkos informaciją vystant organizacinio atsparumo valdymą, nes neapibrėžtumo sąlygoms vis sudėtingėjant, situacijos valdymas komplikuojasi atitinkamai, grįžimo į organizacijos veiklos balanso būseną laikotarpis gali išsitęsti, o tinkamai nevaldant šių svyravimų laikotarpių, organizacijos mokymosi iš patirties galimybės tampa labai apribotos.

Kiekybinio tyrimo rezultatai patvirtino statistiškai reikšmingus ir teigiamus priežastinius ryšius tarp priklausomo kintamojo - organizacinio atsparumo lygio ir nepriklausomų kintamųjų. Tarp išorinės aplinkos indikatorių reikšmingi buvo: (i) santykiai su instituciniais partneriais (išoriniais subjektais, kurie tiesiogiai patiria organizacijos veiklos sėkmės ar nesėkmės pasekmes, nepriklausomai nuo pavaldumo ryšių); (ii) vyriausybės narių kaita ir vyriausybės veiklos prioritetų pokyčiai. Tarp statinio atsparumo indikatorių išskirti: (iii) organizacijos veiklos valdymo skaitmenizavimas; (iv) komunikacijos vykdymas įvairiais kanalais ir formatais; (v) informacijos rinkimas ir jos panaudojimas sprendimų priėmimui. Dinaminio atsparumo reikšmingi indikatoriai: (vi) darbuotojams teikiama papildoma platesnio konteksto informacija organizaciją veikiant neigiamiems reiškiniams; (vii) organizuojami papildomi, nerutiniai vadovų susitikimai; (viii) vidurinėsios grandies vadovų vadovavimo kompetencijos. Patvirtinti informacijos valdymo indikatoriai: (ix) organizacijos veiklos skaitmenizacija; (x) komunikacijos vykdymas įvairiais kanalais ir formatais; (xi) informacijos rinkimas ir jos taikymas sprendimų priėmime. Žinių valdymo srityje reikšmingais veiksniais tapo: (xii) produktyvus dalyvavimas tarptautiniuose tinkluose; (xiii) žinių perdavimas dokumentų (ataskaitų) ir duomenų formatu; (xiv) galimybė laisvai keistis žiniomis tarp darbuotojų laikantis teisinių reikalavimų; (xv) žinių perdavimas gyvų susitikimų metu (pvz., organizacijai skirtų pristatymų formatu).

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MANAGEMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE UNDER CONDITIONS OF UNCERTAINTY IN THE LITHUANIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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Summary

This article examines the application of organizational management tools to enhance resilience in Lithuanian central government organizations facing uncertainty. It employs a bounce-back approach to organizational resilience, categorizing resilience management tools into two groups: static tools, which are used before negative environmental impacts occur, and dynamic tools, which are utilized after such impacts have already occurred. The concept of organizational resilience includes both static and dynamic factors and is enhanced by using information and knowledge management tools. These tools are based on the principles of contingency theory, which suggests that organizations are affected by uncertainty in their decision-making processes depending on the information available to them. This theoretical framework was employed to examine the causal relationships between factors influencing resilience management in Lithuanian central government organizations. A quantitative ordinal logistic regression analysis was performed to identify the factors affecting organizational resilience management. The findings of the quantitative study substantiated statistically significant and positive causal relationships between the enhancement of organizational resilience and 14 out of 63 independent variables. A review of the extant literature reveals that, among the external environmental factors, relationships with institutional partners and the dynamics of government turnover and priorities have been identified. Several measures of organizational structural resilience have been shown to positively impact organizational resilience. These include the digitization of operational management, the establishment of multiple communication channels, and the utilization of information for decision-making purposes. Dynamic resilience measures have been shown to enhance resilience by providing employees with information regarding the broader context during times of crisis, as well as by facilitating additional management meetings and assessing the leadership skills of middle managers. Among the various information management measures implemented, digitization, the utilization of diverse communication channels, and the enhancement of data-driven decision-making processes have emerged as significant factors. A comprehensive understanding of knowledge management is crucial for enhancing organizational resilience. This encompasses a multifaceted approach, including active engagement in international networks, systematic dissemination of knowledge through documented materials and live meetings, and the facilitation of seamless internal knowledge exchange processes in alignment with legal obligations. The study's results reveal the intricate nature of implementing organizational resilience measures in the context of managing and enhancing organizational resilience.

Keywords: Organizational resilience, uncertainty, public governance.



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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE GENERAL OBLIGATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT PARTIES IN RECENT COURT PRACTICE

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Abstract. *The foundation of labor law lies in legal principles that reflect the values of society and shape the direction of legal regulation. These principles are essential not only for interpreting and applying legal norms but also for filling legislative gaps and ensuring consistency within the legal system. They help to uncover the true meaning of legal provisions, influence the development of law, and aid in understanding the essence of specific legal norms. The provisions of the Labor Code incorporate principles that apply to all areas regulated by labor law, including direct employment relationships as well as closely related areas such as pre-contractual relations, the resolution of labor disputes, and more. In labor law, principles such as the equality of parties and the protection of employee rights are not merely theoretical - they carry real legal weight and directly impact both court decisions and daily employment practices.*

This scientific article aims to review the latest Lithuanian case law, in which the courts examining the cases took into account general obligations of the parties to the employment contract, the determining principles and based their decisions on them. In order to achieve these goals, the first part of this article examines the role and legal significance of the fundamental principles and their functions in employment legal relations. The second part of the scientific article analyzes the interpretations provided by the Supreme Court of Lithuania regarding the general obligations of the parties to an employment contract - particularly the principles of cooperation, timely information, non-discrimination, and respect for the employee's family obligations - as well as the employer's duty to train the employee, as established in the current Labor Code. The analysis focuses on how these principles are applied in practice, how their violations are assessed in labor disputes, and what legal consequences arise when these obligations are not fulfilled.

Keywords: *labor law, principles, general obligations of the parties to the employment contract, employer, employee.*

Introduction

One of the sources of law is legal principles, which are understood as fundamental provisions and ideas that determine the direction of legal regulation. In labor law, as in any other branch of law, both general legal principles that cover the entire legal system (fairness, reasonableness, justice, etc.) and specific legal principles intended only for this branch of law are applied. Most principles of labor law relations are established in the form of norms and are found in various norms of the Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Labor Code). For example, Article 2 of the Labor Code establishes the principles of legal regulation of employment relations, such as legal certainty, protection of legitimate expectations and full defense of employment rights, creation of safe and healthy working

conditions, stability of employment relations, freedom to choose work, fair remuneration for work, equality of subjects of labor law, etc.

The **objective** of this work is to review the latest Lithuanian case law, in which the courts examining the cases took into account the aforementioned general obligations of the parties to the employment contract, the determining principles and based their decisions on them.

The relevance of this scientific article lies in its timely and in-depth analysis of how fundamental principles of labor law are applied in Lithuanian judicial practice. This scientific article contributes to the academic discussion and offers practical insights into how legal norms are interpreted by the Supreme Court of Lithuania, helping to clarify the scope and importance of general obligations in employment relations.

The **purpose** of this scientific article is to analyze the latest Lithuanian case law, in which the courts examining the cases took into account general obligations of the parties to the employment contract, the determining principles and based their decisions on them. In order to achieve these goals, the first part of this article examines the role and legal significance of the fundamental principles and their functions in employment legal relations. The second part of the scientific article analyzes the interpretations provided by the Supreme Court of Lithuania regarding the general obligations of the parties to an employment contract - particularly the principles of cooperation, timely information, non-discrimination, and respect for the employee's family obligations - as well as the employer's duty to train the employee, as established in the current Labor Code. The analysis focuses on how these principles are applied in practice, how their violations are assessed in labor disputes, and what legal consequences arise when these obligations are not fulfilled.

The **subject** of the scientific article is the problematic aspects of the interpretation and application of the significance of principles for the general obligations of the parties to an employment contract.

The following theoretical and empirical **methods** are used in the scientific article: the method of comparative analysis, logical - analytical and systematic analysis. The comparative analysis method is employed to compare legal principles and their functions within employment legal relations. The logical-analytical method is used to examine the importance of interpreting and applying the significance of principles for the general obligations of the parties to an employment contract. Both the logical-analytical and systematic analysis methods are applied to identify the problematic aspects of these principles, analyze the scientific doctrine, summarize the article's findings, highlight the core problem, and formulate conclusions.

Legal principles and their functions in employment legal relations

In legal theory, legal principles are understood as guiding principles, ideas that express the essence of law as a specific regulator of social relations (Bagdanskis 2008, 29). According to their scope of application, legal principles are divided into general, inter-branch, branch and legal institute principles. It should be noted that legal principles also differ in their power. The principles of the highest hierarchy are enshrined in the supreme source of law of the rule of law - the constitution. Such principles are called constitutional principles and all principles of law of a lower hierarchy must comply with them. E.Kūris describes constitutional principles as special compared to other principles of law. We cannot disagree with his position that the entire legal system, all elements of a legal text, all general provisions formulated in legal acts – including those that are constructed as legal norms, i.e. general rules of conduct – must be based on constitutional principles (Kūris, 2001, 54). Constitutional principles permeate and affect the entire legal system and all branches of law without exception, including labor law. The

Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution) contains principles that are directly intended to regulate legal employment relations. Article 35 of the Constitution enshrines the principle of freedom of association, which grants individuals the right to unite into communities, political parties or associations, provided that their goals and activities are not contrary to the Constitution and laws. Article 48 of the Constitution enshrines the principles of freedom to choose employment and the right to decent working conditions, which determine that every person can freely choose work and business and has the right to have decent, safe and healthy working conditions, to receive fair remuneration for work and social protection in the event of unemployment, and also prohibits forced labor. The Constitution guarantees every working person the right to rest and leisure, as well as annual paid leave (Article 49 of the Constitution). Finally, the Constitution enshrines the right to strike as a way for employees to defend their economic and social interests (Article 51 of the Constitution) (Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija, 1992). As mentioned, these are the principles of law of the highest hierarchy, which all other principles of labor law must comply with.

Legal principles differ not only in their power, but also in the form in which they are formulated. Professor A.Vaišvila distinguished legal principles into principles-ideas and principles-norms based on the nature of their formulation. A.Vaišvila points out that principles-ideas are fundamental legal ideas that are not enshrined in any positive law norm or group of norms, but rather stem from the concept of law itself. Meanwhile, principles-norms are legal principles enshrined in one or more norms of positive law. (Vaišvila, 2004, 146-147). This position is generally supported by other legal scholars – Edita Žiobienė distinguishes primary, composite and derived principles in her textbook “Lietuvos konstitucinė teisė” (“Lithuanian Constitutional Law”) (Jarašiūnas, 2017, 53 p.). Although the author specifically speaks about constitutional principles, this classification method can also be applied to principles lower in the hierarchy. Primary principles are understood as directly enshrined in a legal act. Composite principles are those that are enshrined in more than one provision, but in different ones, each of which reveals different aspects of the principle. Finally, derived principles are understood as those that are not directly enshrined in a legal act, but are revealed by the court when interpreting the legal act (Jarašiūnas. 2017, 53-54 p.).

It is noteworthy that when drafting the current Labor Code, it was decided to establish most of the principles of labor law directly in the norms of the Labor Code. Although derived principles are in no way inferior in power to primary principles, the latter have a distinct advantage - according to A.Vaišvila, when legal principles are established in norms, the imperativeness and binding nature of the principle is strengthened. At the moment, it can be firmly stated that the norms of the Labor Code establish principles for all areas regulated by labor law, i.e. both direct labor relations and labor relations closely related to them, such as pre-contractual labor relations, the resolution of labor disputes, etc. For example, some of the essential principles of pre-contractual employment relations are the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination on other grounds, enshrined in Article 26 of the Labor Code.

A sufficiently detailed catalog of principles for the legal regulation of employment relations is provided in Article 2 of the Labor Code. This statutory provision establishes such principles of employment relations as legal certainty, protection of legitimate expectations and full protection of employment rights, creation of safe and healthy working conditions, stability of employment relations, freedom to choose work, fair remuneration for work, equality of subjects of employment law, etc. The application of the above principles in Lithuanian judicial practice has been reviewed in detail by legal scholars and practitioners, such as Dr. Tomas Bagdanskis, Dr. Gintautas Bužinskis, Inca Gaižauskaitė and others, in the collective monograph „Darbo teisės principai ir jų taikymas Lietuvos teismų praktikoje“ (“Labor Law

Principles and Their Application in Lithuanian Judicial Practice"). The authors' position is supported that legal principles help to reveal the true meaning of legal norms and fill in their gaps, they influence the development of law, help to understand the essence of a specific legal norm and apply it correctly (Bagdanskis 2016, 15).

In addition to the aforementioned principles of legal regulation of employment relations enshrined in Article 2 of the Labor Code, the Labor Code also establishes other principles determining the general obligations of the parties to an employment contract. In many cases, it is not enough for the court hearing the case to rely solely on the legal norm regulating a specific legal relationship (for example, a norm of the Labor Code providing for a specific basis for termination of an employment contract), but it is also necessary to assess the actions of the parties to the dispute taking into account the general obligations of the parties to the employment contract. Articles 24-31 of the Labor Code in force at the time of the study distinguish the following general obligations of the parties to an employment contract: implementation of the principles of honesty and cooperation, fair information and protection of confidential information, gender equality of employees and non-discrimination on other grounds, ensuring the right to private life and protection of personal data, respecting the employee's family obligations and professional development aspirations, protecting honor and dignity, prohibiting violence and harassment, and protecting property and non-property interests.

The meaning of legal principles is also revealed when a court resolves specific legal disputes - in court decisions, legal principles are applied to relationships that have arisen in real life. As already mentioned, principles are the basic provisions that determine the direction of legal regulation, therefore, by making a decision and basing it not only on the formal application of norms, but also on principles, the court can ensure consistent legal regulation and avoid deviations from the established direction of regulation. D.Mamonè stated that legal principles must be recognized and evaluated as certain regulators of the legal system, standards that, together with legal norms, ensure the full functioning of the legal system (Mamonè, 2023, 56).

The place of legal principles in the legal system has also been discussed by G.Lastauskienė, who states that in Lithuania, both in legal science and in court jurisprudence, a logical distinction is made between norms and principles. G.Lastauskienė points out that Lithuanian judges, when deciding cases, rely on the principles of law, as legal, not moral standards (Lastauskienė. 2024, 342). G.Lastauskienė supports the interpretation of legal principles as special elements of the legal system, differing from legal norms in their extremely general nature, consolidation of the regulatory direction, and special importance for law (Lastauskienė. 2024, 349).

In conclusion, it can be stated that legal principles are one of the essential sources of labor law, the function of which is to fill gaps in legal regulation, ensure consistent legal regulation and the full functioning of the legal system. The principles of labor law are enshrined both at the highest level - in the Constitution - and in the main law regulating labor relations - the Labor Code. When drafting the currently valid Labor Code, it was decided to establish most of the principles of labor law as primary - in the form of legal norms, thus giving these principles additional authority. The norms of the Labor Code establish principles for all areas regulated by labor law, i.e. both direct employment relationships and closely related employment relationships, including principles determining the general rights and obligations of the parties to an employment contract.

Principles determining the general rights and obligations of the parties to an employment contract in the practice of the Supreme Court of Lithuania

The currently valid Labor Code includes a chapter regulating the parties to an employment contract and their general obligations. Articles 24-31 of the Labor Code distinguish the following general obligations of the parties to an employment contract: implementation of the principles of honesty and cooperation, fair information and protection of confidential information, gender equality of employees and non-discrimination on other grounds, ensuring the right to private life and protection of personal data, respecting the employee's family obligations and professional development aspirations, protecting honor and dignity, preventing violence and harassment, and protecting property and non-property interests.

Article 24, Part 1 of the Labor Code establishes the obligation of the parties to an employment contract to act honestly, cooperate, and not abuse the right when exercising their rights and performing their duties. In the work of scientists-practitioners, the obligation of the parties to cooperate means, *inter alia*, that the parties to an employment contract must strive for the common good (of the employer and the employee or all employees), harmony of labor relations, and protection of the legitimate interests of the other party to the employment contract (Davulis 2018, 96.) It is believed that this obligation is closely related to another obligation, provided for in Article 25 of the Labor Code, which determines that the parties to an employment contract must notify each other in a timely manner of any circumstances that may significantly affect the conclusion, performance, and termination of the contract. At first glance, it may seem that these are only general provisions that do not cause any real consequences in practice, however, the latest case law of the Supreme Court of Lithuania confirms that violation of these principles, which establish the obligations of the parties to an employment contract, can cause real consequences, for example, (non)compensation for non-pecuniary damage.

In the ruling adopted on June 10, 2024 in civil case No. e3K-154-684/2024, the Supreme Court of Lithuania, when assessing the validity of the plaintiff's claims, was guided specifically by Articles 24 and 25 of the Labor Code and the principles established therein that determine the obligations of the parties to the employment contract. In the case at hand, the plaintiff (employee) filed a lawsuit with the court, demanding, among other things, that the defendant (employer) be awarded non-pecuniary damage in the amount of EUR 4,000, that her dismissal from work under Article 69, Part 1 of the Labor Code (upon the expiration of a fixed-term employment contract) be declared unlawful, and that monetary compensation be awarded in connection therewith. Although the Court of Cassation ruled that the plaintiff (employee) was lawfully dismissed from her job under Article 69, Part 1 of the Labor Code, the court decided the issue of compensation for non-pecuniary damage in accordance with the provisions of Articles 24 and 25 of the Labor Code.

The Court of Cassation assessed that the defendant (employer) made the decisions to remove from the register the master's degree program "European Union Business Law", in which the plaintiff worked, and thus the decision not to extend the employment relationship with the plaintiff (employee), in May-June 2022, but informed the plaintiff about this only upon the expiration of the fixed-term employment contract, i.e. only on August 31, 2022. The court, taking into account the fact that the defendant, knowing the existing personnel needs and having received several inquiries from the plaintiff (the plaintiff contacted the defendant's central administration 8 times in writing in August 2022), did not communicate with the plaintiff, found that the defendant did not fulfill the obligations of cooperation set out in Article 24, Part 1 of the Labor Code and timely information set out in Article 25 of the Labor Code and, by

informing the plaintiff on the last day of the academic year, made it more difficult for her to find a scientific and pedagogical job, which caused the plaintiff to feel uncertain about her future.

The judicial panel of the Civil Cases Division of the Supreme Court of Lithuania, guided by the previous practice of the Court of Cassation regarding the amount of non-pecuniary damage in employment cases, and taking into account the individual circumstances established in the case under consideration, recognized that compensation for non-pecuniary damage in the amount of EUR 2,000 in this particular case is a fair and proportionate satisfaction of the plaintiff's (employee's) non-pecuniary experiences.

Summing up the discussion of this cassation case, it should be emphasized that the liability of the defendant (employer) and the obligation to compensate the plaintiff (employee) for the non-pecuniary damage caused were directly determined by the violation of the obligations of cooperation established in Article 24, Part 1 of the Labor Code and of timely information established in Article 25 of the Labor Code, despite the fact that the procedure for terminating the employment contract was carried out lawfully and properly. It should be emphasized that in the judicial practice of the Republic of Lithuania, until the adoption of the ruling of June 10, 2024 in civil case No. e3K-154-684/2024, there has never been a case where compensation for non-pecuniary damage was determined by a violation of the obligations of cooperation and timely information. This ruling of the Supreme Court of Lithuania established the importance of the aforementioned obligations of the parties to the employment contract, and this decision became a binding precedent in the resolution of future labor disputes.

Another important ruling of the Supreme Court of Lithuania in the context of this issue was adopted on October 8, 2024 in civil case No. e3K-3-176-684/2024. This cassation case also analyzed the obligation of cooperation between the parties to an employment contract, which is established in Article 24 of the Labor Code. The plaintiff (employee) filed a lawsuit with the court, requesting that her dismissal on the basis of Article 58, Paragraph 2, Paragraph 1 of the Labor Code (for gross violation of labor duties) to be recognized as unlawful, and to award related compensation and compensation for non-pecuniary damage in the amount of EUR 20,000.

The courts that examined the case determined that the plaintiff (employee) worked for the defendant (employer) as an internet planner. The defendant (employer) argued in the case that the plaintiff (employee) was dismissed from work for the reason that she did not come to work from January 27, 2023 to February 10, 2023 without reason. In turn, the plaintiff (employee) claimed that a gross violation of labor duties was unreasonably established from January 27, 2023 to February 10, because during that period she worked remotely, submitted requests to the defendant (employer) to perform such work, i.e., complied with the internal work procedures established by the employer.

When deciding on the (il)legality of the dismissal of the plaintiff (employee), the Court of Cassation assessed that the defendant's company did not regulate the procedure for organizing remote work, i.e. the defendant (employer) had not created appropriate and clear rules on how remote work is organized, how such work is recorded, the procedure for submitting and assessing applications for such work, how the employee should communicate with the employer, etc. In addition, the judicial panel noted that the employer's practice in assessing the employee's consent to work remotely was not consistent: in some cases, remote work had to be coordinated with the direct supervisor, in other cases, it did not have to be, in some cases the employer allowed remote work after informing the employee before the start of work, in others - after the work had already started. Taking into account these arguments and the fact that the plaintiff (employee) submitted requests to the employer to work remotely on

every day that the defendant (employer) considered absenteeism, but the defendant did not consider them, did not respond in any way, only invited her to come to the physical workplace several times and discuss the work and the situation, without explaining that such work by the employee was considered absenteeism and that certain consequences may arise for the plaintiff, the Supreme Court of Lithuania ruled that there was no basis for the conclusion that the plaintiff did not come to work without justifiable reasons, because during the specified period she worked remotely.

However, the Court of Cassation noted that the plaintiff (employee), by not arriving at the physical workplace at the request of the defendant's manager, did not comply with the employer's requirements and such behavior should be viewed as violating one of the characteristics of the employment contract - the employee's subordination in employment relations. The judicial panel emphasized that the principles applicable in employment relations to act honestly, cooperate, not abuse the law, avoid conflicts of interest, strive for common good, sustainable development of employment relations, protection of the legitimate interests of the other party, etc. determined the plaintiff's obligation to take measures and seek ways to meet with the defendant's manager, especially when the parties failed to resolve the issue of termination of employment relations by mutual agreement, and at the same time both parties did not see many opportunities for further cooperation and each of them adhered to its own position, considering the behavior of the other party unacceptable and unjust. Thus, by not seeking to cooperate, to arrive at the workplace at the employer's invitation, to avoid miscommunication, etc., the plaintiff acted insufficiently prudently and with care and, through her careless behavior, contributed to the consequences that arose.

In the opinion of the judicial panel of the Civil Cases Division of the Supreme Court of Lithuania, even if it were recognized that the plaintiff (employee) ignored the employer's invitation and continued to work remotely, such behavior of the plaintiff could not be assessed as an independent violation of work duties, for which the most severe penalty can be applied - dismissal, and may be relevant in resolving the issue of compensation for non-pecuniary damage. When deciding on the plaintiff's (employee's) claim to award the employer EUR 20,000 in compensation for non-pecuniary damage, the Court of Cassation emphasized that although the plaintiff was dismissed from her job illegally, she herself did not obey the defendant's manager's invitations to come to the physical workplace, therefore, with her careless actions, she contributed to the consequences that arose and created the conditions for the employer to act illegally. Taking this into account, the Court of Cassation decided that sufficient satisfaction for non-pecuniary damage due to unlawful dismissal would be the amount of EUR 20,767.05 for the time of forced absence, which the employer would have to pay to the plaintiff (employee), therefore the aforementioned claim for compensation of EUR 20,000 for non-pecuniary damage was not satisfied.

As the analysis of these two rulings adopted by the Supreme Court of Lithuania shows, in the case of the first cassation case discussed (ruling of the Supreme Court of Lithuania of 10 June 2024, civil case No. e3K-154-684/2024), the employer's violation of the obligations of cooperation set out in Article 24, Part 1 of the Labor Code and of timely information set out in Article 25 of the Labor Code resulted in the employer's obligation to compensate the employee for the damage caused, despite the fact that the procedure for terminating the employment contract was carried out lawfully and properly. In the second case (ruling of the Supreme Court of Lithuania of 8 October, 2024, civil case No. e3K-3-176-684/2024), the employee's violation of the duty of cooperation and the employee's subordination in employment relations contributed to the employee's claim for compensation for non-pecuniary damage being rejected, despite the fact that her dismissal was recognized as unlawful. The analysis of these cases

allows us to reasonably state that compliance with the duty of cooperation established in Article 24, Part 1 of the Labor Code has real practical significance in the resolution of labor disputes and may result in non-compensation of non-pecuniary damage.

In its ruling of 24 February 2021 in civil case No. 3K-3-25-248/2021, the Supreme Court of Lithuania, when resolving the labor dispute, relied on two general obligations of the parties to the employment contract, i.e. the principle of cooperation of the parties to the employment contract established in Article 24, Part 1 of the Labor Code, and analyzed the employer's obligation to train the employee to work, which is established in Article 29 of the Labor Code. In the case under analysis, the plaintiff (employee) filed a lawsuit with the court, requesting that his dismissal from work by the defendant (employer) be declared unlawful and that monetary compensation be awarded in connection therewith.

The plaintiff (employee) worked as a driver for the defendant (employer) and transported goods by road vehicles within the territory of the European Union. According to Directive 2003/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the initial qualification and further training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods and passengers and the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Road Safety implementing it (Article 22, Part 6), drivers carrying goods or passengers on the EU roads for commercial purposes must have a qualification code 95. The employer decided to terminate the employment contract concluded with the plaintiff, citing the fact that the plaintiff (employee) did not renew his code 95 qualification on time. In the opinion of the defendant (employer), the loss (non-renewal) of this qualification should be considered a fundamental violation of the employer's interests, because without this qualification the plaintiff could not perform his job functions, i.e. transport international cargo for remuneration within the territory of the EU.

In the cassation case under consideration, the Supreme Court of Lithuania analyzed how the issue of improving professional qualifications should be resolved in cases where the employee's code 95 qualification expires and its extension requires participation in periodic professional driver training while the employee is in an employment relationship. The Court of Cassation drew attention to the fact that when exercising their rights and performing their duties, employers and employees must act honestly, cooperate, and not abuse the law (Article 24, Part 1 of the Labor Code); the exercise of labor rights and the performance of duties must not violate the rights and interests protected by law of other persons (Article 24, Part 2 of the Labor Code).

In addition, the court also analyzed the employer's obligations related to the professional development of the employee, established in Article 29 of the Labor Code. This statutory norm obliges the employer to train the employee to work to the extent necessary to perform his job function. T. Bagdanskis and others distinguish several stages of fulfilling this obligation: 1) the employer must train the employee, when hiring or changing the nature of the job, to the extent that the employee can perform the assigned job function, 2) the employer has the obligation to take care of the continuous improvement of the qualifications of employees, to create conditions for the employee to learn and develop professionally (Bagdanskis 2016, 41).

In the case at hand, the Supreme Court of Lithuania emphasized that the obligations of the employer and the employee in maintaining and improving the employee's qualifications may differ depending on whether the knowledge and skills acquired by the employee are directly related to the performance of work functions and are necessary for their work activities. The court, taking into account that the main activity of the defendant (employer) is commercial freight transport within the territory of the European Community, ruled that the code 95 qualification is mandatory for the defendant's employees performing these functions (drivers), as such qualification knowledge is directly related to the performance of their job functions and

is necessary for work activities. Taking this into account, the Court of Cassation ruled that both the employer and the employee who intends to continue the employment relationship are interested in acquiring such a qualification (periodic extension).

The court found that there is no evidence in the case that the plaintiff (employee) unreasonably refused to attend training during work, which could be treated as failure to perform job duties, and moreover, the defendant (employer) consistently held the position that the code 95 qualification must be acquired during the employee's rest time, although she herself did not coordinate the working hours that could be allocated for such training.

The court ruled that in the case in question, failure to obtain the necessary qualifications may be a reason for termination of employment, but cannot be considered a violation of work duties committed by the employee. The Court of Cassation noted that the plaintiff was employed as a driver under an employment contract, without the contract linking his duties to qualifications to transport goods within the territory of the European Community. The court also followed the provision of Article 6, Part 2 of the Labor Code, which states that in cases where there are doubts about the terms of contracts regulating employment relations, they shall be interpreted in favor of the employees. Based on the discussed reasons, the Court of Cassation ruled that in the case at hand, it was not obvious from either the law or the provisions of the employment contract concluded between the parties that the plaintiff (employee) had an obligation to acquire the qualifications necessary for working for the current employer at his own expense and during his leisure time, therefore there is no basis to establish a violation of this obligation.

The Supreme Court of Lithuania ruled that the dismissal of the plaintiff (employee) was unlawful, and also discussed the compliance of the actions of the parties to the employment contract with the principle of cooperation (Article 24 of the Labor Code). The judicial panel drew attention to the fact that the plaintiff (employee), knowing about the expiring term of the qualification code 95, not only did not acquire it independently, but also did not clearly express to the defendant (employer) his position declared in the legal dispute that the acquisition of this qualification must be ensured by the employer. Finally, when the validity period of the qualification code 95 expired and the date of the planned business trip approached, the plaintiff informed the employer that he would acquire the specified qualification independently, and later acquired it, but by doing so, he was unable to go on the business trip planned by the employer. Although the Court of Cassation considered such actions of the employee as shortcomings in cooperation, taking into account the fact that the obligation of the plaintiff to independently, at his own expense, acquire the necessary qualification was not clearly established, it decided that such shortcomings cannot be considered as a gross violation of work duties, forming the basis for imposing the strictest disciplinary penalty - dismissal.

In another civil case heard by the Supreme Court of Lithuania, No. e3K-3-227-684/2021, it was decided whether the employer, by its actions, which it took upon learning about the employee's pregnancy, violated the provisions of Article 26 of the Labor Code prohibiting discrimination in employment relations. The statements of scientists - practitioners that the principle of non-discrimination must be implemented at all stages of employment relations, i.e. the employer must apply the same criteria to all persons when hiring them, during the employment relationship, and when terminating the employment contract are fully supported (Bagdanskis, 2018, 27-28).

Commenting on Article 26 of the Labor Code, which had just entered into force at that time, T.Davulis pointed out that it already contains norms regulating the relationship between labor law provisions and special anti-discrimination provisions, which aim to facilitate the practical implementation of this principle where disputes arise and where they are actually

resolved - in enterprises, labor dispute commissions, and courts. T.Davulis hopes that this will increase the visibility of these rights and obligations and encourage more active protection of violated rights (Davulis, 2017, 110).

It is worth noting that discrimination in employment relations can also manifest itself as unequal pay, especially based on the employee's gender. The principle of equal pay ensuring equal opportunities for women in employment relations is discussed in detail in the works of K. Ambrazevičiūtė. It is noteworthy that this author also conducted an analysis of the Supreme Court of Lithuania cases related to equal pay on the basis of gender and concluded that there are practically no such cases (Ambrazevičiūtė, 2022, p. 240). It should be noted that the situation has not changed at present. The conclusion that there are no violations of the principle of equal pay in the labor market of the Republic of Lithuania sounds unconvincing, therefore there is reason to believe that employees who face discrimination in this aspect are not sufficiently active in defending their rights.

In the case discussed in this study, the plaintiff (employer) applied to the court and requested that the downtime declared against the defendant (employee) be recognized as lawful. In turn, the defendant (employee) indicated that the plaintiff, upon learning of the defendant's pregnancy, took targeted actions towards her: declared downtime, took away work tools, disconnected her from the electronic system, and refused to grant her leave. The defendant (employee) views such actions of the plaintiff (employer) as discrimination against her on the basis of gender due to pregnancy.

The Court of Cassation, taking into account the fact that the plaintiff (employer) did not prove that the downtime was declared due to objective circumstances beyond her control, and also that did not offer the defendant (employee) another job, ruled that the downtime was declared unlawfully. However, in the context of this investigation, the arguments of the Supreme Court of Lithuania are much more important in relation to the discrimination applied against the defendant.

The Court of Cassation drew attention to the fact that Article 26 of the Civil Code establishes the prohibition of both direct and indirect discrimination and the foundations for the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities. In the case at hand, the courts considered the actions of the plaintiff (employer) towards the defendant (employee) as discriminatory. The judicial panel noted that the discriminatory actions against the employee were not one-time and manifested themselves in the form of illegal declaration of downtime, seizure of work equipment, failure to inform the employee about the consideration of her requests and the granting of annual leave. Moreover, such actions began immediately after the defendant informed the plaintiff in writing about her pregnancy. The defendant, being pregnant, additionally had to defend her violated rights in accordance with the procedure established for labor disputes, which undoubtedly caused the defendant emotional distress.

The judicial panel noted that a person's work activity is that area of life on which the well-being of the person and his or her family, social assessment, the opportunity to realize oneself, and ensure social stability depend, therefore the violation of these values could have caused the person a strong feeling of uncertainty, distrust, and great distress, especially in the defendant's situation. For this reason, the Court of Cassation ruled that the plaintiff (employer) is obliged to compensate the employee for the non-pecuniary damage she suffered, which the employer caused her through its active, targeted actions, which are to be assessed as discrimination. The judicial panel that heard the case recognized that the employee should be awarded compensation for non-pecuniary damage in the amount of EUR 5,000.

In the opinion of the authors, by such actions the employer also violated another duty of the parties to the employment contract established by the Labor Code – to respect the

employee's family obligations and the principle of work-family harmony, which is established in Article 28, Part 3 of the Labor Code. The aforementioned norm establishes that the employee's behavior and actions at work must be evaluated by the employer in order to practically and comprehensively implement the principle of work-family harmony. We agree with T. Davulis point of view that this does not mean that just because an employee has children, the quality of his work must be assessed better than that of other employees, as this would contradict the provisions of Article 2, Part 1 and Article 26, Part 1 of the Labor Code (Davulis 2018, 121). Such a statutory norm obliges the employer to take into account the employee's family obligations when making certain decisions regarding the employee (for example, when explaining the circumstances of a violation of work duties committed by the employee). Other authors view this principle as an effort to create the most favorable working conditions for employees so that they can combine work with family obligations (Bagdanskis 2018, 40).

In the case at hand, the Supreme Court of Lithuania could, or perhaps even must, have noted that the employer's actions, which he took upon learning about the employee's pregnancy (illegally declaring downtime, confiscating work equipment, failing to inform the employee about the consideration of her requests and the granting of annual leave), are incompatible with the provisions of Article 28 of the Labor Code and had a negative impact on the employee's family interests.

It should be noted that under the current Labor Code, the Supreme Court of Lithuania has never once relied on this statutory provision when examining labor disputes. It should be noted that the Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania, which was in force prior to the entry into force of the current Labor Code and approved by the law No. IX-926 of 4 June 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the 2002 Labor Code), did not contain an article analogous to Article 28 of the current Labor Code. However, the requirement to take into account an employee's family obligations has been indirectly discussed in case law. Vilnius Regional Court, having examined civil case No. 2A-1929-590/2013 on appeal, adopted a ruling of 27 May 2013, by which it recognized the dismissal of the plaintiff (employee) as unlawful. The defendant (employer) made the decision to dismiss the employee taking into account the fact that the employee left work and did not come to work at all for two days after that. The plaintiff submitted evidence to the case confirming that he missed work and did not come to work for several days because he had to take care of the health of his pregnant wife and future baby. The court noted that these were important reasons why the plaintiff (employee) was absent from work, and described the behavior of the defendant (employer), who does not provide the employee with the opportunity to take care of his pregnant wife's suddenly deteriorating health and even dismisses him from work, as completely unfair, contrary to common sense and decency. It is obvious that the court that heard the case, when resolving this labor dispute, also took into account the employee's family obligations and applied the principle of work-family harmony, which currently already has the form of a norm (Article 28, Part 3 of the Labor Code).

The current Labor Code, compared to the 2002 Labor Code, contains numerous norms establishing certain benefits for employees due to their family situation, for example, for employees raising children. Moreover, the legislator explicitly established the obligation to respect the employee's family obligations. Nevertheless, courts do not rely on these statutory norms when considering labor cases. Taking this into account, the conclusion is that both employees and courts hearing labor cases pay insufficient attention to respecting an employee's family obligations and the principle of work-family harmony.

It should be noted, however, that in case law, courts rely on Article 28 of the Labor Code when examining family cases, not labor cases, and when resolving issues related to establishing the procedure for communication between parents and minor children. The courts have noted

that parents must strive for a balance between family obligations and work interests and use Article 28 of the Labor Code when making any requests to the employer based on the need to care for children or provide assistance to family members (see, for example, the ruling of the Kaunas Regional Court of 1 March, 2022, civil case no. e2S-314-324/2022, the ruling of the Kaunas Regional Court of 25 June, 2024, civil case no. e2S-948-324/2024).

Another important norm-principle of employment law relations is the employer's obligation to train employees to work. It has already been mentioned that Article 29, Part 1 of the Labor Code establishes the employer's obligation to train an employee to work to the extent necessary to perform his/her job function. Part 2 of the aforementioned article establishes that the employer must take measures to increase the qualifications of employees and their professionalism, as well as their ability to adapt to changing business, professional or working conditions. In T. Davulis opinion, such a provision of the Labor Code, by establishing the principle of employee professional development as a legal regulation of employment relations, encourages employer investments in employee qualifications (Davulis, 2017, p. 20).

In addition, Article 37, Part 1 of the Labor Code enables the parties to an employment contract to agree on the terms of reimbursement of the employer's training or qualification development costs of the employee when the employment contract is terminated at the employer's initiative due to the employee's fault or at the employee's initiative without significant reasons. Although Article 37, Part 2 of the Labor Code establishes that only expenses related to providing an employee with knowledge or skills that exceed the requirements for work activities may be reimbursed, in practice, disputes still arise regarding the limits of the employer's obligation to train an employee to work.

By the ruling adopted on 13 January 2021 in civil case No. e3K-3-174-701/2021, the Supreme Court of Lithuania established key provisions allowing for the delimitation of employee training to perform work functions and employee training (qualification improvement) expenses, the compensation for which may be subject to an agreement in accordance with the provisions of Article 37 of the Labor Code. In the case at hand, the plaintiff (employer) filed a lawsuit with the court, requesting that the defendant (employee) be awarded the costs incurred for improving her qualifications. The plaintiff (employer) considered such expenses to include the costs incurred in paying the fee for the defendant's (employee's) participation in two real estate conferences and two real estate exhibitions.

The court found that the defendant (employee) worked for the plaintiff (employer) as an assistant manager and later became an investment project coordinator. The case data confirm that, among other tasks, the defendant's tasks during her employment at the company were to know and be interested in the company's activities and achievements, to be interested in and collect information about real estate (prices, trends), economic and social indicators, to be interested in the indicators of investment real estate projects in Lithuania and other countries, and to search for potential clients.

The judicial panel of the Civil Cases Division of the Supreme Court of Lithuania stated that not just any employee's training or qualification improvement may result in the employee's obligation to reimburse the employer for the costs incurred as a result of them. The court emphasized that Article 37 of the Labor Code must be interpreted in conjunction with Article 29 of the Labor Code, which establishes the employer's obligation to train an employee to work to the extent necessary to perform his or her job function and to take measures to increase the employee's qualifications and their professionalism, as well as their ability to adapt to changing business, professional or working conditions. As mentioned above, in this cassation case, the Supreme Court of Lithuania established key provisions allowing for the distinction between the training of an employee to perform work functions and the costs of employee training

(qualification improvement), the compensation for which may be subject to an agreement in accordance with the provisions of Article 37 of the Labor Code.

The judicial panel explained that the employee's obligation to reimburse the employer for training costs incurred should arise if the employee, who is suitable for performing the assigned functions without training or qualification improvement, acquires additional knowledge or skills that exceed the requirements (competence) for the work (functions) performed by him, which provide additional value to the employee in the labor market and increase the employee's value. The court also emphasized that, solely in fulfilling the employer's obligation set out in Article 29 of the Labor Code to train an employee to work to the extent necessary to perform his/her job function, and to take measures to increase the qualifications of employees and their professionalism, ability to adapt to changing business, professional or working conditions, the costs incurred by the employer for training or improving the employee's qualifications should not be assessed as related to providing the employee with knowledge or skills that exceed the requirements for work activities, and the costs of performing job functions when the employee goes on a business trip should also not be considered reimbursable.

It is necessary to emphasize that this position of the Supreme Court of Lithuania essentially coincides with the explanations provided by legal scholars even before the adoption of this ruling. T. Bagdanskis and other authors in the book „Lietuvos Respublikos darbo kodekso komentaras: individualieji darbo santykiai“ (“Commentary on the Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania: Individual Labor Relations”) indicated that an employee and an employer may enter into agreements regarding the employer's training costs if the employer sends the employee to learn additional competencies, although the existing ones are sufficient for the employee to properly perform their job duties (Bagdanskis 2018, 42). After adoption of the analyzed ruling, these rules took the form of a court precedent, which is followed by courts hearing subsequent labor cases.

It is noteworthy that in the case under discussion, the judicial panel also discussed the rules for allocating the burden of proof in cases regarding reimbursement of employee training or qualification development costs incurred by the employer. The Supreme Court of Lithuania noted that it is the employer who is obliged to prove that the employee was provided with knowledge that meets the criteria set out in Article 37, Part 2 of the Labor Code, i.e. two comparable matters must be proven: what knowledge is necessary to perform the employee's job functions and the fact that the knowledge provided to the employee during the training was of a higher level than required to perform the employee's direct functions.

In the case of the civil case under analysis, the courts that heard the case, having examined and assessed the evidence collected in the case regarding the defendant's (employee's) work functions and the nature of her participation in the events, found that the plaintiff (employer) had not proven that the expenses requested to be awarded to her, related to the defendant's participation in the specified events and business conferences, comply with the provisions of Article 37, Part 2 of the Labor Code. The court emphasized that the plaintiff (employer) did not prove that the defendant's (employee's) participation in the events (two real estate conferences and two real estate exhibitions) provided the defendant (employee) with knowledge or skills that exceeded the requirements for the job.

Summarizing this case law of the Supreme Court of Lithuania, it should be emphasized that an employer can expect reimbursement of expenses incurred for employee training only if the knowledge provided to the employee during such training was of a higher level than that required to perform the employee's direct job functions. In the event of a dispute, the employer has the obligation to prove two aspects: first, what knowledge is necessary to perform the

employee's job functions and, second, that the knowledge provided to the employee during the training was of a higher level than required to perform the employee's direct functions.

Conclusions

Legal principles form the foundation of labor law, as they reflect the values and ideas recognized by society that shape the direction of legal regulation. Legal principles ensure that labor law is applied not merely formally, but legal principles help to reveal the true meaning of legal norms and fill in their gaps, they influence the development of law, help to understand the essence of a specific legal norm and apply it correctly. They help maintain the coherence and internal consistency of the entire legal system.

In labor law, principles are not merely theoretical postulates – they have concrete legal significance and directly influence the practical implementation of legal regulation. The principles enshrined in the Labor Code, such as equality between the parties to employment relations or protection of employees' rights are binding for all actions of labor law subjects. They are applied both in resolving disputes in court and in the daily interactions between employers and employees. Therefore, legal principles not only supplement positive law but also ensure fair, proportionate and socially responsible regulation of employment relationships.

The analysis of the rulings by the Supreme Court of Lithuania reveals a significant shift in legal practice, indicating a fundamental change in the previously prevailing judicial approach to the importance of general obligations of the parties to an employment contract - particularly cooperation and timely information - in practice. In the analyzed labor case, compensation for non-pecuniary damage was awarded solely based on the violation of these general obligations, and the ruling itself became an important precedent for future labor disputes, reinforcing the significance of honest communication and timely information within employment relationships. Thus, the obligation to act honestly and cooperate, as enshrined in Article 24 of the Labor Code, is not merely a formal provision - its observance is assessed in a real and practical context and can lead to significant legal consequences. This principle has become one of the key criteria when evaluating the conduct of parties in labor disputes. Therefore, both employers and employees must actively fulfill their duties related to communication, information sharing, and mutual respect within the employment relationship. This means that honest, proactive, and responsible behavior from both parties is not only a moral expectation but also a legal necessity to avoid adverse outcomes in employment-related legal conflicts.

The principle of non-discrimination must be upheld at all stages of the employment relationship - during recruitment, throughout the course of employment, and at the time of termination. The case law of the Supreme Court of Lithuania shows that violation of this principle, especially discrimination based on gender or pregnancy, can result in legal consequences for the employer, including the obligation to compensate for non-pecuniary damage. In a case where the employer took targeted actions against an employee after being informed of her pregnancy, such actions - unlawful declaration of downtime, withdrawal of work tools, and failure to provide information - were clearly recognized as discriminatory and in violation of Article 26 of the Labor Code. Such actions by the employer can also be considered to be in breach of the duty to respect the employee's family obligations and the principle of work-life balance, as enshrined in Article 28(3) of the Labor Code.

In judicial practice, a clear distinction has been established between the employer's obligation to train an employee to perform their direct work functions and additional training that exceeds the required qualifications, for which reimbursement agreements may be

concluded under Article 37 of the Labor Code. The employer may seek reimbursement only for training that provides the employee with knowledge or skills exceeding the competencies necessary for their job duties and that add value to the employee in the labor market. Thus, training carried out by the employer under the obligation set out in Article 29 of the Labor Code - to train the employee to the extent necessary to perform their job functions - is not considered additional, and the employee is not required to reimburse the employer for such training. The burden of proof that the training exceeded what was necessary for the job lies with the employer. This position not only aligns with legal doctrine but also ensures the protection of the employee's interests by preventing abuse of the concept of training as a means of seeking financial compensation from the employee.

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VADOVO LYDERYSTĖS STILIAUS RAIŠKA LIETUVOS SVEIKATOS PRIEŽIŪROS SEKTORIUJE

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Santrauka. Straipsnyje pristatomas Lietuvos asmens sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje taikomų lyderystės stilių tyrimas. Sveikatos priežiūros sektorius susiduria su daugybe iššūkių, susijusių su specialistų trūkumu, dideliais darbo krūviais, didėjančiu darbuotojų mobilumu bei sektoriuje paplitusiu perdegimo sindromu. Šias problemas dar labiau gilina nuolatinės reformos sveikatos apsaugos srityje bei sudėtinga asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų valdymo sistema. Lyderystė šiame sektoriuje kritiškai svarbi, o jos efektyvumą iš esmės lemia vadovo taikomas lyderystės stilius, galintis tiesiogiai paveikti įstaigos rezultatus, darbuotojų motyvaciją, įsipareigojimą bei organizacinę kultūrą. Tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovų taikomus lyderystės stilius. Siekiant šio tikslo atliktas kiekybinis tyrimas, apklausiant 422 respondentus, dirbančius sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje. Tyrimo metu nustatyta, kad Lietuvos sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovų tarpe dominuoja pasyvusis lyderystės stilius, pasižymintis ribotu vadovo įsitraukimu į veiklą, suteikiant darbuotojams autonomiją ir skatinant aukštą jų savarankiškumo lygį. Nustatyti bendri bruožai ir skirtumai tarp viešojo ir privataus sektoriaus asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovų taikomų lyderystės stilių. Visų tipų sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose dominuoja pasyvusis lyderystės stilius, tačiau nustatyta, jog transformacinio lyderystės stiliaus raiška yra didesnė valstybinėse įstaigose, kas rodo, kad viešojo sektoriaus vadovai dažniau orientuojasi į autoriteto stiprinimą, darbuotojų motyvavimą, palaikymą ir ugdymą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: lyderystė, lyderystės stilius, sveikatos priežiūros sektorius.

Įvadas

Sveikatos priežiūros sektorius, būdamas unikalus, dėl jam patikėtos didžiausios žmonių vertybės – sveikatos išsaugojimo, stiprinimo ir puoselėjimo, susiduria su nuolatiniais iššūkiais ir problemomis: sveikatos priežiūros specialistų trūkumu, esamų specialistų migracija ir nepastovumu (Boniol ir kt., 2022), sudėtingais biurokratiniais mechanizmais, vyraujančiais dideliais darbo krūviais bei darbuotojų patiriamu perdegimo sindromu. Stebima, jog šiame sektoriuje vyraujančias krizes dar labiau gilina nuolatinės reformos sveikatos apsaugos srityje, visuomenės nusivylimas, pasikeitę reikalavimai ir lūkesčiai kokybei (PSO, 2023). Minėtos problemos ne tik skaldo medicinos bendruomenę, kuri tapo apatiška, nepastovi ir migruojanti, bet ir išryškino esminę problemą – netinkamos lyderystės raišką (Singh ir kt., 2022; Restivo ir kt., 2022).

Asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovų veikla yra lydimą nuolatinės atsakomybės už profesionalias ir kokybiškas sveikatos priežiūros paslaugas (Tedla ir Hamid, 2022), o nuo jų lyderystės efektyvumo priklauso įstaigų gerovė ir funkcionalumas. Pastarųjų metų moksliniuose tyrimuose nurodoma, kad lyderystė sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje yra gyvybiškai svarbi. Tyrejai akcentuoja motyvuojančią sąveiką tarp vadovo ir sekėjo (Huber ir Joseph, 2020),

būtinų šiame sektoriuje komandinio darbo principų bei efektyvios komunikacijos užtikrinimą (Anasel ir kt., 2023; Dastane, 2020), teigiamą lyderystės ir pokyčių valdymo koreliaciją (Figueroa ir kt., 2019; Talu ir kt., 2020). Alčauskienė ir kt. (2019) akcentuoja, jog sveikatos priežiūros paslaugų įstaigų teikiamų paslaugų kokybė yra tiesiogiai priklausoma nuo jų vadovų lyderystės stiliaus – vadovo asmeninių savybių, gebėjimų ir elgsenos derinio, kuriuo siekiama daryti įtaką savo darbuotojams.

Lietuvos asmens sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje vadovų lyderystė traktuojama kaip daugialypis ir nevienareikšmiškas procesas. Viena vertus, asmens sveikatos priežiūros sektorius yra visiškai priklausomas nuo itin kvalifikuotos darbo jėgos, o pačios teikiamos asmens sveikatos paslaugos yra susijusios su visuomenės interesu (Agnolin ir kt., 2022), todėl procese dalyvauja daug suinteresuotų šalių, o patys organizaciniai procesai sveikatos priežiūros viduje yra lydimi nestabilios aplinkos, nuolatinių iššūkių ir krizių. Kita vertus, išryškėjo ir esminės sektoriaus valdymo problemos – sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų veikimas inertiškai, stokojant kompleksinio požiūrio į įstaigų valdymą. Nevienareikšmišką poveikį turi ir egzistuojanti takoskyra tarp viešųjų ir privačių sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų, skirtingi jų valdymo modeliai. Teigiama, jog privačiose sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose veikla vykdoma greičiau ir efektyviau, operatyviau prisitaikant prie pacientų poreikių ar pokyčių rinkoje. Tuo tarpu viešosiose įstaigose yra ilgesnė sprendimų priėmimo grandinė ir mažesnė vadovų veiklos laisvė. Todėl tiriant vadovo lyderystės stilių taikymą yra svarbu atskleisti, tiek kokį poveikį sveikatos sektoriaus vadovų taikomam lyderystės stiliui turi paties sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus specifika, tiek viešųjų ir privačių įstaigų veiklos kontekstas.

Šiame straipsnyje siekiama atsakyti į du tyrimo klausimus: 1) kokie vadovų lyderystės stiliai taikomi Lietuvos sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje; 2) kokiais bendrais bruožais ir skirtumais pasižymi Lietuvos viešojo ir privataus sektoriaus sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovų taikomi lyderystės stiliai?

Šio tyrimo **tikslas** – atskleisti sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovų taikomus lyderystės stilius.

Tyrimo metodai – mokslinės literatūros analizė, kiekybinis tyrimo metodas – anketinė apklausa, kiekybinių duomenų statistinė analizė.

Lyderystės ir lyderystės stilių sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje teorinės prielaidos

Asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovai yra tiesiogiai atsakingi ne tik už savo organizacijos veiklos efektyvumą, bet ir už pacientų saugumą, gerovę, kokybiškų savalaikių, veiksmingų bei nepertraukiamų paslaugų teikimą. Lyderystė sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje apibrėžiama kaip tinkama vadovo veikla, įgalinanti pokyčius, kuriant galimybes plėtoti darbuotojų motyvaciją, taip prisidedant prie aukštesnės sveikatos priežiūros paslaugų kokybės (Tedla ir Hamid, 2022; Olkiewicz ir Jarosik - Michalak, 2022). Lyderystės tyrimų sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje poreikį identifikuoja specifiniai veiksniai:

Pirma, šis sektorius susiduria su iššūkiais, tokiais kaip didelė atsakomybė dėl veiklos objekto – žmonių sveikatos, lydimu nuolatinio darbuotojų emocinio ir fizinio pervargimo, kvalifikuotos darbo jėgos trūkumo (McKimm ir kt., 2024). Dėl šios priežasties, sektoriuje vyraujantys tyrimai labiau orientuoti į minėtų iššūkių sprendimą, nei į lyderystės poveikį jiems.

Antra, asmens sveikatos priežiūros sektorius veikia dinamiškoje aplinkoje ir yra stipriai priklausomas nuo išorinės aplinkos poveikio, dėl kurio nuolat susiduria su reformomis (Sfantou ir kt., 2017). Šios reformos dažniausiai apima įvairius pokyčius sveikatos politikos reguliavimo ir reglamentavimo srityse, o pačių sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų veikla yra griežtai reglamentuota teisės aktais, todėl yra susaistyta pavaldumo ir atskaitomybės saitais su dideliu skaičiu

kontroliuojančių ir koordinuojančių valstybinių institucijų. Pastarosios daro didelę įtaką sektoriuje veikiančių organizacijų veikimo ir išlikimo rinkoje galimybėms, todėl dažniau tiriamos strategijos ir rizikos.

Trečia, itin sparčiai vystosi mokslinės žinios, diegiamos naujausios technologijos ir inovacijos, skirtos pacientų sveikatai ir gyvenimo kokybei gerinti, todėl lyderystės tematika nustumama į kraštą, kaip nereikšminga, o neretai šių pokyčių valdymas sektoriuje nėra efektyvus, nors suvokiamas naujų žinių poreikis ar pritaikymo galimybės (Agnolin, 2022).

Ketvirta, asmens sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje paplitęs netinkamas vadovų lyderystės stilius siejamas su autoritariniu valdymu ir stipriu hierarchiniu susiskirstymu. Manoma, jog lyderystė sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose vis dar siejama su pozicija, statusu, jėga (Singh ir kt., 2022), o dėl šios priežasties dauguma šiame sektoriuje dirbančių organizacijų yra labai uždaros, jose nedominuoja atvirumo kultūra, jos nesiekia bendradarbiauti lyderystės tyrimų klausimais (Sfantou ir kt., 2017).

Analizuotos priežastys ne tik nurodo tyrimų lyderystės sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje tematika stoką, bet ir išryškina esmines šio sektoriaus problemas – sveikatos priežiūros įstaigos veikia inertiškai, stokoja kompleksinio požiūrio į įstaigų valdymą bei tinkamo lyderystės stiliaus taikymą. Tyrėjų nuomone, efektyvus problemų sprendimas yra tiesiogiai susijęs su kompleksiniu lyderystės gebėjimų spektru ir vadovo lyderystės stiliumi (Longest, 2017; Figueroa ir kt., 2019). Tai patvirtina ir Agnolin ir kt. (2022), teigdami, jog lyderystė sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje yra viso ko pamatas, kadangi būtent nuo vadovo lyderystės stiliaus priklauso ne tik darbuotojų įsitraukimas, bet ir sektoriaus teikiamų paslaugų kokybė ir pačio sektoriaus funkcionalumas.

Lyderystė sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje suponuoja procesą ir įtaką sekėjams, siekiant motyvuoti ir įtraukti juos į pokyčius ir kokybės siekimą (McKimm ir kt., 2020). Efektyvi lyderystė sveikatos priežiūros įstaigoje yra tiesiogiai priklausoma nuo vadovo, jo gebėjimų, lyderystės stiliaus ir gebėjimo komunikuoti (Tedla ir Hamid, 2022; Wu ir kt. 2024), kadangi jei sektoriaus darbuotojai nėra motyvuoti ir įsipareigoję organizacijai - kenčia sveikatos priežiūros paslaugų kokybė ir pacientų saugumas, o nepakankama teikiamų paslaugų kokybė turi tiesioginį ir neigiamą poveikį visos sveikatos sistemos funkcionalumui (Borghi ir kt., 2018).

Lyderystės stilius mokslinėje literatūroje traktuojamas įvairiai. Autoriai akcentuoja, jog lyderystės stilius yra lyderio išskirtinumas (Sabbah ir kt., 2023), įtakos skleidimo būdas (Siregar ir kt., 2022), gebėjimų, įgūdžių ar strategijų visuma (Alrwili, 2022), įrankis, leidžiantis kurti santykius tarp lyderio ir sekėjo, siekiant atitinkamo rezultato: įsitraukimo, įsipareigojimo, motyvacijos (Wu ir kt., 2024; Aziz ir kt., 2021). Visi autoriai vieningai sutaria, jog lyderystės stilius daro tiesioginį poveikį įvairiems organizacijos aspektams, susijusiems su žmogiškaisiais ištekliais.

Tinkamo lyderystės stiliaus taikymo svarbą lemia keletas priežasčių. Viena vertus, organizacijos veikia nuolatiname pokyčių kontekste, todėl reikalinga keisti kryptį ir adaptuotą viziją perteikti darbuotojams (Aziz ir kt., 2021). Kita vertus, kintanti darbuotojų elgsena ir įpročiai verčia ieškoti būdų ir kurti strategijas, padedančias išlaikyti darbuotojų įsipareigojimą, įsitraukimą ir motyvaciją. Lyderystės stiliaus veikimo spektras paliečia lyderį ir jo sekėjus (Alrwili, 2022), o šiems sąveikaujant kuriama pridėtinė vertė ne tik šioms suinteresuotoms šalims, bet ir valstybei, organizacijai ir visuomenei (Drewniak ir kt., 2020). Lyderystės stilius organizacijų kontekste yra esminė sąvoka, apibūdinanti lyderio veiklos metodus, požiūrį, tarpusavio santykius su darbuotojais, gebėjimą paveikti jų elgseną darbo vietoje, todėl koreliuoja su organizacijos veiklos rezultatais. Vadovas pasirinkęs taikyti tam tikrą lyderystės stilių savo veikloje pradeda socialinės įtakos procesą, kurį Wu ir kt.(2024) traktuoja, kaip

abipusį veiksma, vykstantį tam tikromis aplinkybėmis, kurio metu lyderis siekia savanoriško pavaldinių dalyvavimo, kaip atlygio už tikslų pasiekimą.

Moksliniai tyrimai, skirti lyderystės stiliams sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje, pasižymi tam tikrais prioritetais. Dažniausiai tyrinėjamas stilius – transformacinė lyderystė, orientuota į darbuotojų įkvėpimą ir motyvavimą, inovacijų skatinimą ir organizacinių pokyčių skatinimą. Šis stilius siejamas su didesniu darbuotojų pasitenkinimu ir produktyvumu, geresniais pacientų priežiūros rezultatais. Autentiškos lyderystės stiliaus tyrėjai (Alilyyani ir kt., 2018; Saeed ir kt., 2022) pabrėžia skaidrumą, etišką elgesį ir nuoširdžius santykius. Autentiškas lyderystės stilius siejamas su teigiama darbuotojų psichologine būseną, pasitenkinimu, gerove ir darbo rezultatais, taip pat geresniais pacientų priežiūros rezultatais. Tyrimuose minimas tarnaujančios lyderystės stilius teikia pirmenybę darbuotojų ir pacientų poreikiams, skatina palaikančią ir įgalinančią aplinką (Alharbi ir kt., 2023). Sveikatos priežiūros kontekste taip pat aptariami transakcinis, situacinis, charizmatiškas, dalyvaujamas, autokratinis ir pasyvus lyderystės stiliai (Dzokoto ir kt., 2024), kurių kiekvienas turi skirtingą poveikį darbuotojų motyvacijai ir organizacijos rezultatams (Ezinwa ir kt., 2024).

Nors mokslinėje literatūroje sutinkami labai įvairūs lyderystės stiliai, siekiant kompleksinio vaizdo tyrimuose pasirenkami konstrukta, apimantys vientisą lyderystės stilių grupę. Lyderystės stilių tyrimuose naudojamos prieigos iš klasikinės ir šiuolaikinės lyderystės pozicijų (Drewniak ir kt., 2020). Klasikinės lyderystės stilių grupę sudaro autoritarinis, demokratinis ir liberalusis lyderystės stiliai, priskiriami elgsenos teorijomis. Šiuolaikinės lyderystės stilių grupę apima transakcinį, transformacinį ir pasyvų stilius, priskiriamus santykių teorijoms. Šiame straipsnyje prisilaikant požiūrio, jog lyderystė yra socialinės sąveikos tarp lyderio ir sekėjų procesas, pasirinkta analizuoti šiuolaikinės lyderystės stilių grupę. Minėtų lyderystės stilių charakteristikos apibendrinamos 1 lentelėje.

1 lentelė. Lyderystės stiliai ir jų charakteristikos

Lyderystės stilius	Lyderystės stiliaus charakteristika	Lyderystės stiliaus sudedamosios dalys	Autorius (-iai)
Transformacinis lyderystės stilius	Lyderis pasitelkdamas savo įtaką ir charizmą, motyvuoja ir nukreipia darbuotojus tinkama linkme, skatindamas juos viršyti numatytus tikslus, priimti iššūkius ir spręsti problemas, siekiant asmeninio ir profesinio augimo.	Idealizuota įtaka	Avolio ir Bass (2002); Bass ir Bass (2008); Demirtas ir Karaca (2020); Endriulaitienė ir kt. (2016); Alblooshi ir kt. (2020); Petrulis ir kt., (2021); Awais-E-Yazdan ir kt., (2023); Wu ir kt. (2024).
		Įkvepanti motyvacija	
		Intelektinė stimuliacija	
		Asmeninis dėmesis	
Transakcinis lyderystės stilius	Lyderis savo įtaką grindžia nuolatiniais tarpusavio mainais, kai už tinkamą darbą apdovanojama, o netinkamą – baudžiama. Šio stiliaus lyderis orientuojasi į tinkamą užduočių atlikimą ir tikslų įgyvendinimą.	Sąlyginis atlygis	Avolio ir Bass (2004); Bass ir Bass (2008); Endriulaitienės ir kt. (2016); Demirtas ir Karaca (2020); Makambe ir Moeng (2020); Aziz ir kt., (2021); Petrulis ir kt., (2021); Beauty ir Aigbogun (2022).
		Aktyvus valdymas pagal išimtį	
		Pasyvus valdymas pagal išimtį	

Pasyvus lyderystės stilius	Lyderis suteikia neribotą laisvę veikti savarankiškai, nesiima atsakomybės, o ją perkelia savo darbuotojams, organizacijos valdyme dalyvauja pasyviai.	Nekontroliuojama lyderystė	Avolio ir Bass (2002); Bass ir Bass (2008); Khan (2016); Yahaya ir Ebrahim (2016); Okpokwasili ir Kalu (2021); Sabbah ir kt. (2020)
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Vadovas, pasitelkęs lyderystės stilių, daro poveikį sekėjų veiklai organizacijoje: jų veiklos rezultatams, motyvacijai, emocinei ir psichologinei būklei bei organizaciniam įsipareigojimui. Kiekvienas iš analizuotų stilių, paveikia sekėjus skirtingais būdais. Transakcinis lyderystės stilius orientuojasi į tinkamą užduočių atlikimą ir mainus, siūlant sekėjui atlygį už tinkamą veiklą. Transformacinės lyderystės stilius įkvepia ir motyvuoja sekėjus, siekti aukštesnių tikslų, ugdo profesinius gebėjimus ir skatina panaudoti juos maksimaliai. Pasyvusis lyderystės stilius suteikia neribotą laisvę ir visiškai nevaržo sekėjų, jiems siekiant bendrų tikslų. Visi stiliai turi tiek privalumų, tiek trūkumų, todėl jų taikymas turi atliepti veiklos specifiką, keliamus tikslus, aplinkos sąlygas, darbuotojų kompetencijos lygį, esamą organizacinę kultūrą ir viziją bei kitas socialines, ekonomines ar psichologines sąlygas. Šių lyderystės stilių klasifikacija remiantis atliktas empirinis Lietuvos sveikatos sektoriaus vadovų lyderystės stilių raiškos tyrimas.

Tyrimo metodika

Tyrimo instrumentas. Siekiant ištirti asmens sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovų taikomą lyderystės stilių atliktas kiekybinis tyrimas. Respondentų apklausai vykdyti suformuotas tyrimo instrumentas, siekiant nustatyti lyderystės stilių ir jį įvertinti, naudotas daugiafaktorinis lyderystės Avolio ir Bass (2002) klausimynas, leidęs nustatyti vadovo lyderystės stilių: transformacinį, transakcinį ar pasyvųjį bei įvertinti jų elementus. Respondentams pateiktas 21 teiginys, kiekvienas jų vertintas pagal Likerto skalę, pateikiant teiginių skaitines reikšmes (1- visiškai nesutinku, 5- visiškai sutinku).

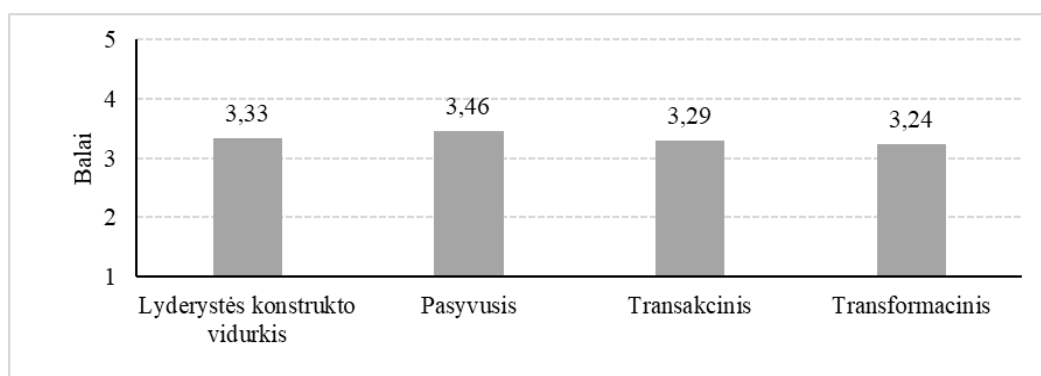
Tyrimo imtis. Tyrime dalyvavo 422 respondentai, dirbantys sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje. Iš tyrime dalyvavusių respondentų daugumą sudarė moterys (74,4 proc.), mažumą vyrai (25,6 proc.). Analizuojant gautus respondentų duomenis stebima, jog dominuoja dvi didžiausios amžiaus grupės: nuo 25 iki 34 metų (30,3 proc.) ir nuo 35 iki 44 metų (27,5 proc.). Didžiausia dalis tyrime dalyvavusių respondentų dirba privačiuose sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose (44,8 proc.), valstybinėse įstaigose dirba 34,4 proc., likusieji derina darbą abiejuose sektoriuose (20,9 proc.). Daugiausiai tyrime dalyvavusių respondentų nurodė, jog turi 6 - 10 metų patirtį (26,8 proc.) ir 1 - 5 metų darbo patirtį (26,1 proc.). Tyrime daugiausiai dalyvavo gydytojai specialistai (27,3 proc.) ir bendrosios praktikos slaugytojai (20,1 proc.).

Tyrimo etika. Empiriniame tyrime sveikatos priežiūros specialistai dalyvavo savanoriškai, anonimiškai pildydami tyrimo anketą internetu. Jautrūs asmens duomenys, kurie galėtų identifikuoti apklausoje dalyvavusius respondentus nebuvo renkami.

Tyrimo duomenų analizė. Tyrimo rezultatai apdoroti statistinės analizės metodais, naudojant SPSS 27.0.0 programos versiją. Visų intervalinių požymių pasiskirstymai atitiko normalumo dėsnį, jų palyginimui tarp dviejų grupių naudotas Stjudent'o testas (t), o tarp daugiau nei dviejų grupių - One-Way ANOVA (F) su Welch'o patikslinimu (W) esant dideliu grupių dydžių skirtumui. Intervaliniai kintamieji apibūdinti pateikiant vidurkį (M) ir standartinį nuokrypį (SN).

Tyrimo rezultatai

Tyrimo metu respondentai vertino tris vadovo lyderystės stilius: transformacinį, transakcinį ir pasyvųjį. Šių stilių vertinimas galėjo įgyti reikšmes nuo 1 iki 5 balų, kur aukštesnis balas reiškė didesnę respondento pritarimą. Lyderystės stilių vertinimas pateikiamas 1 paveiksle.



1 pav. Lyderystės stilių vertinimas

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, jog respondentai savo vadovų tarpe stebi stiprią pasyviojo lyderystės stiliaus raišką, todėl šis stilius gali būti laikomas dominuojančiu sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje. Transakcinio ir transformacinio lyderystės stilių vertinimas yra artimas, tačiau ženkliai žemesnis už pasyviojo lyderystės stiliaus vertinimą.

Siekiant gauti detalesnius tyrimo duomenis, analizuoti visų lyderystės stilius sudarančių elementų vidurkiai ir standartiniai nuokrypiai (2 lentelė).

2 lentelė. Lyderystės stilių elementų vertinimo vidurkiai ir jų standartiniai nuokrypiai

Dimensija	Elementas	Vidurkis (M)	Standartinis nuokrypis (SN)
Transformacinis lyderystės stilius	Idealizuota įtaka	3,39	1,08
	Įkvepianti motyvacija	3,24	1,21
	Intelektinė stimuliacija	3,09	1,08
	Asmeninis dėmesys	3,22	1,23
Transakcinis lyderystės stilius	Sąlyginis atlygis	3,11	1,04
	Valdymas pagal išimtį	3,46	0,94
Pasyvusis lyderystės stilius	Nekontroliuojama lyderystė	3,46	1,14

Analizuojant lyderystės stilių elementų vertinimus, stebima, jog aukščiausiai respondentai įvertino tris elementus: valdymą pagal išimtį 3,46 (SN 0,94) balo, priklausančią transakciniam lyderystės stiliui, nekontroliuojamą lyderystę 3,46 (SN 0,97) balo, priklausančią pasyviajam lyderystės stiliui ir idealizuotą įtaką 3,39 (SN 1,08) balo, priklausančią transformaciniam lyderystės stiliui. Žemiausiai įvertinti du elementai: intelektinė stimuliacija 3,09 (SN 1,08) balo, priklausanči transformaciniam lyderystės stiliui ir sąlyginis atlygis 3,1 SN (1,04) balo, priklausančias transakciniam lyderystės stiliui.

Atsižvelgiant į šiuos tyrimo rezultatus galima teigti, jog sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovai, pasitikėdami savo darbuotojais, kurie yra aukščiausio lygio specialistai, suteikia jiems visišką laisvę veikti neribotai ir nevaržomai, tol kol visos užduotys yra atliekamos laiku ir kokybiškai. Vadovų įsitraukimas į veiklą ir problemų sprendimą yra ribotas ir tik tuomet, kai kyla grėsmė tinkamam užduočių atlikimui ir tikslų įgyvendinimui. Idealizuotos įtakos aukštas vertinimas leidžia teigti, jog jų vadovai pasitelkia savo charizmą ir autoritetą savo kasdienėje veikloje. Žemas intelektualinės stimuliacijos ir sąlyginio atlygio vertinimas rodo, kad sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovai mažai dėmesio skiria darbuotojų tobulėjimui ir kūrybiškumo skatinimui bei netaiko atlygio ar naudų sistemos, kaip motyvacinės priemonės.

3 lentelėje pateikiamas teiginių, kuriems respondentai labiausiai pritarė, vertinimas. Šie tyrimo duomenys svarbūs identifikuojant konkrečias stipriąsias vadovų lyderystės stiliaus taikymo puses.

3 lentelė. Teiginių, su kuriais respondentai labiausiai sutiko, vertinimo vidurkiai ir jų standartiniai nuokrypiai

Teiginiai	Vidurkis (M)	Standartinis nuokrypis (SN)
Vadovas yra patenkintas, kuomet aš pasiekiu numatytų standartų	3,57	1,21
Vadovas neprieštarauja, jei aš ir toliau dirbu laiko patikrintais būdais ir metodais	3,56	1,14
Aš būnu visiškai sąžiningas/-a su savo vadovu	3,49	1,18
Vadovas neuždavinėja klausimų kitiems, apie savaime suprantamus dalykus	3,45	1,12

Respondentai, vertindami savo vadovų lyderystę išskiria, jog jie gali būti sąžiningi su savo vadovais, taip išreiškdami savo pasitikėjimą jais. Taipogi stebima sektoriaus vadovų orientacija į standartų ir taisyklių laikymąsi bei inovacijų ir naujovių stoką darbo būdų ir metodų prasme. Kitas svarbus aspektas, jog respondentai nurodė, jog vadovai pasyviai įsitraukia į bendravimą ir bendradarbiavimą, kadangi daugelį klausimų laiko savaime suprantamais.

4 lentelėje pateikiamas teiginių, kuriems respondentai mažiausiai pritarė, vertinimas. Šie tyrimo duomenys svarbūs identifikuojant konkrečias silpnąsias vadovų lyderystės stiliaus taikymo puses.

4 lentelė. Teiginių, su kuriais respondentai labiausiai nesutiko, vertinimo vidurkiai ir jų standartiniai nuokrypiai

Teiginiai	Vidurkis (M)	Standartinis nuokrypis (SN)
Vadovas man pataria ko imtis, kad už darbą bučiau apdovanotas	2,83	1,22
Vadovas skiria dėmesio tiems, kurie kitų yra atstumti	3,02	1,24
Vadovas skatina mane į įsisenėjusias problemas pažvelgti naujai	3,07	1,19
Vadovas man padeda rasti prasmę darbe	3,08	1,23

Silpnomis savo vadovų pusėmis respondentai laiko tai, kad vadovai neskiria pakankamai dėmesio atlygio sistemai, kuri didintų jų motyvaciją. Taip pat respondentai, vertindami lyderystės stilių išskyrė sritis, į kurias mažiausiai orientuojasi sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovai. Tai tikslingos pagalbos darbuotojams stoka, atskirties tarp darbuotojų mažinimas bei nepakankamos motyvacinės priemonės, siekiant išsigrnyinti vertes ir asmeninius tikslus.

5 lentelėje pateikiami skirtingose pareiginėse pozicijose dirbančių respondentų vertinimai apie jų vadovų taikomus lyderystės stilius.

5 lentelė. Lyderystės stilių vertinimas skirtingose respondentų pareiginėse grupėse

Pareiginė grupė	Aukščiausiai įvertintas lyderystės stilius	Vidurkis (M)	Žemiausiai įvertintas lyderystės stilius	Vidurkis (M)
Gydytojai specialistai (N=115)	Pasyvusis	3,49	Transformacinis	3,10
Bendrosios praktikos slaugytojai (N=84)	Pasyvusis	3,56	Transakcinis	3,34
Slaugytojų padėjėjai (N=48)	Pasyvusis	3,26	Transformacinis	3,06
Reabilitacijos paslaugų specialistai (N=34)	Pasyvusis	3,50	Transformacinis	2,88
Odontologijos praktikos specialistai (N=32)	Transakcinis	3,06	Pasyvusis	3,03
Vaistininkai ir kiti specialistai (N=69)	Pasyvusis	3,56	Transformacinis	3,32
Administracijos darbuotojai (N=40)	Transformacinis	3,76	Transakcinis	3,50

Penkias skirtingas pareigines grupes atstovaujantys respondentai (N=350) nurodė, jog savo vadovų veikloje aktyviausiai stebi pasyviojo lyderystės stiliaus raišką. Reikšmingai išsiskyrė dvi pareiginės grupės, kurios pateikė kitokį vertinimą. Odontologijos paslaugas teikiantys specialistai (N=32) savo vadovų veikloje stebi transakcinio lyderystės stiliaus raišką, kas rodo, jog jų vadovai orientuojasi į užduočių vykdymą, aiškių taisyklių laikymąsi ir mainų principu grįstą motyvavimą. Administracijos darbuotojai (N=40) dažniausiai išskyrė transformacinį lyderystės stilių, o tai gali būti siejama su glaudesniu bendradarbiavimu tarp administracijos ir vadovų. Tokiu atveju vadovai turi daugiau galimybių skirti individualų dėmesį, motyvuoti darbuotojus bei padėti aiškiai formuluoti organizacijos tikslus.

6 lentelėje pateikiami skirtingų respondentų amžiaus grupių vertinimai apie jų vadovų taikomus lyderystės stilius.

6 lentelė. Lyderystės stilių vertinimas skirtingose respondentų amžiaus kategorijose

Amžiaus kategorija			Idealizuota įtaka	Įkvepianti motyvacija	Intelektinė stimuliacija	Asmeninis dėmesys	Transformacinis lyderystės stilius	Sąlyginis atlygis	Valdymas pagal išimtį	Transakcinis lyderystės stilius	Nekontroliuojama lyderystė/Pasyvusis lyderystės stilius
	18-24 m. (N=30)	M	3,48	3,37	3,26	3,20	3,33	2,96	3,27	3,11	3,22
		SN	1,05	1,00	1,03	1,02	0,91	1,16	1,32	1,06	1,18
	25-34 m. (N=128)	M	3,45	3,24	3,10	3,30	3,27	3,20	3,54	3,37	3,51
		SN	1,05	1,05	1,03	1,00	0,90	1,08	1,13	0,86	1,11
	35-44 m. (N=116)	M	3,30	3,07	2,82	3,03	3,05	2,91	3,34	3,13	3,45
		SN	1,08	1,06	1,12	1,05	0,93	1,06	1,19	0,86	1,15
	45-54 m. (N=101)	M	3,21	3,19	3,12	3,18	3,18	3,16	3,44	3,30	3,42
		SN	1,10	1,10	1,07	0,91	0,90	0,99	1,18	0,87	1,16
	55 m. ir daugiau (N=47)	M	3,81	3,65	3,53	3,58	3,64	3,38	3,68	3,53	3,63
		SN	1,08	1,04	1,06	0,96	0,94	0,85	1,13	0,72	1,07
		W	2,75	2,73	3,88	2,77	3,49	2,51	2,05	2,79	1,99
		p	0,031	0,032	0,005	0,030	0,010	0,045	0,132	0,029	0,439

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, jog amžiaus grupės 25–34 m. (3,51 balo), 35–44 m. (3,45 balo) ir 45–54 metų (3,42 balo) dažniausiai identifikuoja pasyviojo lyderystės stiliaus raišką savo vadovų elgsenoje. Tuo tarpu jauniausi 18–24 m. (3,33 balo) ir vyriausi nuo 55 m. (3,64 balo) respondentai dažniau fiksuoja transformacinio lyderystės stiliaus bruožus. Tai leidžia daryti prielaidą, kad sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovai linkę taikyti skirtingus lyderystės stilius priklausomai nuo darbuotojų amžiaus: jauniems specialistams – siekiant juos motyvuoti ir padėti integruotis į įstaigos veiklą, vyresniems – palaikyti jų įsitraukimą ir pripažinti patirtį. Be to, transformacinio ir transakcinio lyderystės stilių elementai buvo reikšmingai aukščiau įvertinti vyresnių nei 55 metų respondentų, palyginti su jaunesnėmis amžiaus grupėmis, ypač 35–44 metų.

Analizuojant lyderystės stilių ir jų elementų vertinimo rezultatų pasiskirstymą pagal respondentų amžiaus grupes, stebima transformacinės lyderystės elementai – idealizuota įtaka, įkvepianti motyvacija, intelektualinė stimuliacija ir asmeninis dėmesys buvo aukščiausiai įvertinti jauniausių (18–24 m.) ir vyriausių (nuo 55 m.) respondentų grupėse. Tai leidžia teigti, kad šiose amžiaus grupėse vadovai dažniau taiko įkvepiančius, ugdančius ir darbuotojų motyvaciją skatinančius lyderystės metodus. Transakcinės lyderystės elementai: sąlyginis atlygis ir valdymas pagal išimtį, ryškiausiai pasireiškė tarp 25–34 m. ir 55 m. bei vyresnių darbuotojų, kas rodo, kad šiems darbuotojams yra labiau pastebimi užduočių vykdymu, grįžtamuju ryšiu ir aiškiais lūkesčiais grindžiami lyderystės būdai. Pasyviosios lyderystės elementas nekontroliuojama lyderystė elementas aukščiausiai vertinamas visose amžiaus grupėse, išskyrus 18–24 m., ypač 25–54 metų amžiaus tarpsnyje. Tai leidžia manyti, kad šio amžiaus

darbuotojams vadovai suteikia daugiau autonomijos, pasitikėdami jų gebėjimu veikti savarankiškai laikantis nustatytų standartų.

Svarbūs yra tyrimo duomenys, kurie leido palyginti viešajame ir privačiame sektoriuose dirbančių sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovų taikomą lyderystės stilių, jie pateikiami 7 lentelėje.

7 lentelė. Lyderystės stilių, jų elementų vertinimo skirtingo tipo sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose vidurkiai ir jų standartiniai nuokrypiai

Asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigos tipas			Idealizuota įtaka	Įkvėpanti motyvacija	Intelektinė stimuliacija	Asmeninis dėmesys	Transformacinis lyderystės stilius	Sąlyginis atlygis	Valdymas pagal išimtį	Transakcinis lyderystės stilius	Nekontroliuojama lyderystė/Pasyvusis lyderystės stilius
	Privati ASPĮ (N=189)	M	3,30	3,13	3,01	3,18	3,15	3,10	3,43	3,27	3,48
		SN	1,03	1,06	1,07	1,02	0,88	1,08	0,95	0,88	0,97
	Valstybinė ASPĮ (N=145)	M	3,45	3,27	3,14	3,29	3,29	3,08	3,51	3,30	3,40
		SN	1,15	1,11	1,11	1,00	0,98	0,97	0,91	0,82	0,93
	Ir valstybinė ir privati ASPĮ (N=88)	M	3,50	3,40	3,18	3,21	3,32	3,19	3,43	3,31	3,53
		SN	1,07	1,03	1,06	0,99	0,91	1,08	1,01	0,95	1,02
		F	1,33	1,95	1,01	0,49	1,34	0,31	0,39	0,09	0,59
		p	0,267	0,144	0,365	0,612	0,264	0,736	0,679	0,911	0,557

Vertinant respondentų atsakymus stebima, jog jų nuomone visų tipų įstaigose vadovų tarpe dominuojantis lyderystės stilius yra pasyvusis. Šio stiliaus vertimo rezultatai buvo aukščiausi lyginant su transformacinio ir transakcinio lyderystės stilių.

Stebima, jog transformacinės lyderystės stiliaus raiška stipresnė valstybiniame (3,29 balo) nei privačiame (3,15 balo) sektoriuje, kas leidžia manyti, jog valstybinių sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovai yra linkę dažniau demonstruoti į darbuotojus orientuotą, įkvėpimą, viziją ir individualiu dėmesiu grįstą vadovavimo elgseną. Transakcinio lyderystės stiliaus raišką respondentai įvertino panašiai (3,27 – 3,30 balo), kas leidžia daryti prielaidą, jog šis stilius, vadovų tarpe aktyviai naudojamas tiek privačiame tiek valstybiniame sektoriuje. Pasyviojo lyderystės stiliaus raiška pasižymėjo aukščiausiais įvertinimais, todėl galima teigti, kad šis lyderystės stilius yra plačiausiai paplitęs sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovų tarpe, nepriklausomai nuo asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigos tipo. Gautas rezultatas indikuoja, jog sektoriuje veikiantys vadovai suteikia neribotą laisvę veikti savo darbuotojams, atsižvelgdami į jų aukštą kvalifikaciją.

Analizuojant lyderystės stilių ir jų elementų vertinimo rezultatų pasiskirstymą pagal sveikatos priežiūros įstaigos tipą stebima, jog respondentai dirbantys privačiose įstaigose išskyrė valdymo pagal išimtį (3,53 balo) ir nekontroliuojamos lyderystės (3,48 balo) elementus, kaip labiausiai pasireiškiančius vadovų veikloje. Tai rodo, jog šio sektoriaus vadovai remiasi reaguojančiais, o ne prevenciniais valdymo principais, todėl aktyviai įsitraukia tik iškilus problemoms. Tai skatina darbuotojų autonomiją ir aukštesnę atsakomybės lygį. Mažiausiai stebima intelektualinės stimuliacijos elemento raiška (3,01 balo), todėl galima teigti, jog privačių

asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovai neskiria pakankamai dėmesio darbuotojų tobulinimui, kūrybiškumo skatinimui ir kompetencijų vystymui, o tai gali riboti inovacijų diegimą bei mažinti darbuotojų įsitraukimą ar motyvaciją.

Respondentai, dirbantys valstybinėse asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose aukščiausiai įvertino idealizuotos įtakos (3,45 balo) ir valdymo pagal išimtį (3,51 balo) elementus. Dėl šios priežasties manytina, jog valstybinių įstaigų vadovai pasižymi gebėjimu formuoti ir palaikyti tvirtą lyderio autoritetą, kuris padeda skatinti darbuotojų įsitraukimą ir palaikyti teigiamą discipliną, taip prisidėdami prie efektyvios įstaigos veiklos užtikrinimo. Žemiausiai įvertintas sąlyginio atlygio (3,08 balo) elementas, identifikuoja, jog šiame sektoriuje nepakankamai išvystyti motyvaciniai veiksniai, susiję su materialinėmis gėrybėmis ir pripažinimu, o tai ilgalaikėje perspektyvoje gali neigiamai veikti darbuotojų motyvacijos augimą ir profesinį įsitraukimą.

Ir valstybinėse ir privačiuose asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose dirbantys respondentai aukščiausiai įvertino idealizuotos įtakos (3,50 balo) ir nekontroliuojamos lyderystės (3,53 balo) elementus, žemiausiai intelektualinės stimuliacijos (3,18 balo). Šios respondentų grupės atsakymai gali būti vertingi, kadangi jiems būdinga platesnė patirtis bei galimybė palyginti skirtingų sektorių vadovų lyderystės elgseną. Vis dėlto, jų vertinimų interpretavimą apsunkina tai, kad nebuvo aišku, apie kurio sektoriaus vadovą, viešojo ar privataus, respondentai galvojo pildydami klausimą. Siekiant didesnio tikslumo, ateities tyrimuose rekomenduojama šiai grupei taikyti diferencijuotą klausimą, leidžiantį atskirai įvertinti viešojo ir privataus sektoriaus vadovų lyderystės ypatumus.

Vertinant statistiškai reikšmingus skirtumus tarp skirtingų sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų tipų ir lyderystės stilių ir jų elementų vertinimo, stebima, jog statistiškai reikšmingi tik transformacinės lyderystės ir jos elementų rezultatai. Tai reiškia, kad šio lyderystės stiliaus raiška reikšmingai skiriasi priklausomai nuo asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigos tipo. Tyrimo metu gauti rezultatai rodo, jog valstybinio sektoriaus vadovai aktyviau demonstruoja darbuotojų ugdymu, įkvepiančia vizija ir asmeniniu dėmesiu grįstą lyderystę nei privataus sektoriaus vadovai. Tuo tarpu transakcinio ir pasyviojo lyderystės stilių bei jų elementų vertinimų skirtumai tarp įstaigų tipų nebuvo statistiškai reikšmingi, todėl galima teigti, kad šių stilių raiška sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuose yra vertinama gana vienodai, nepriklausomai nuo įstaigos tipo.

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, jog nepaisant transformacinės ir transakcinės lyderystės elementų raiškos, pasyvusis lyderystės stilius dominuoja tarp Lietuvos sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovų tiek viešajame, tiek privačiajame sektoriuje. Šio stiliaus vadovai suteikia darbuotojams didelę veikimo laisvę ir pasitiki jų gebėjimu priimti sprendimus savarankiškai, todėl įstaigose formuojasi atsakomybės ir tarpusavio pasitikėjimo kultūra. Toks aiškus vieno lyderystės stiliaus paplitimas yra neįprastas reiškinys akademiniuose tyrimuose, todėl ateityje būtų tikslinga išsamiau analizuoti pasyviosios lyderystės formavimosi prielaidas, jos efektyvumą bei poveikį darbuotojų motyvacijai, organizacinei kultūrai ir veiklos rezultatams.

Išvados

Lyderystė yra dinamiškas socialinio poveikio procesas, reikalaujantis lyderio gebėjimų paveikti sekėjus be prievartos, pasitelkiant įkvėpimą, vertybes ir motyvaciją bei remiantis stipriais tarpasmeniniais santykiais bei bendradarbiavimu vykstant nuolatiniais pokyčiams. Sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje lyderystė apibrėžiama kaip tinkama vadovo veikla, įgalinanti pokyčius, kuriant galimybes plėtoti darbuotojų motyvaciją, taip prisidedant prie aukštesnės sveikatos priežiūros paslaugų kokybės.

Lyderystės stiliaus sąvoka apibūdina lyderio veiklos metodus, požiūrį, tarpusavio santykius su darbuotojais, gebėjimą paveikti jų elgseną darbo vietoje. Vadovas, pasitelkęs lyderystės stilių, daro poveikį darbuotojų veiklai organizacijoje: jų veiklos rezultatams, motyvacijai, emocinei ir psichologinei būklei bei organizaciniam įsipareigojimui.

Empiriniame tyrime dalyvavo 422 respondentai, dirbantys sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje, atstovaujantys skirtingas demografines grupes, pareigybes, ASPĮ tipus. Tyrimo metu naudojant Avolio ir Bass (2002) daugiafaktorinį klausimyną analizuoti sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje vadovų taikomi lyderystės stiliai: transformacinis, transakcinis ir pasyvusis. Gauti duomenys analizuoti taikant statistinės analizės metodus. Tyrimas vykdytas laikantis etikos principų, užtikrinant respondentų konfidencialumą.

Tyrimo duomenys atskleidė, kad Lietuvos sveikatos priežiūros sektoriaus vadovų tarpe dominuoja pasyvusis lyderystės stilius, pasižymintis ribotu vadovo įsitraukimu į veiklą, suteikiant darbuotojams autonomiją ir skatinant aukštą jų savarankiškumo lygį. Šio stiliaus raiška nustatyta kaip aukštesnė nei transformacinės ar transakcinės lyderystės, o tai gali būti siejama su aukšta darbuotojų kvalifikacija ir jų poreikiu veikti autonomiškai. Dominuojantis pasyvusis lyderystės stilius gali būti laikomas prisitaikymo prie kvalifikuotų darbuotojų poreikio forma, tačiau kartu gali indikuoti ir apie sisteminį lyderystės trūkumą sveikatos priežiūros sektoriuje.

Tyrimo metu nustatyta, jog sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų vadovai taiko skirtingus lyderystės stilius, pritaikydami juos pagal darbuotojų amžių ir poreikius – jauniems specialistams dažniau taikomas transformacinis stilius, siekiant juos motyvuoti ir integruoti, vyresniems – pasyvusis stilius, palaikant jų įsitraukimą ir pripažįstant patirtį. Vadovų lyderystės stilius skiriasi ir pagal pareigines grupes, nors didžioji pareiginių grupių daliai naudojamas pasyvusis lyderystės stilius, tačiau odontologijos specialistų vadovai dažniau naudoja transakcinį, o administracijos darbuotojų – transformacinį lyderystės stilių, atspindintį skirtingus vadovavimo būdus, pritaikytus specifiniams darbuotojų poreikiams.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, jog, visų tipų sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose dominuoja pasyvusis lyderystės stilius, kurio raiška reikšmingai nesiskiria tarp viešojo ir privataus sektoriaus. Abiem sektoriams būdingas reaktyvus vadovavimo modelis, pasižymintis ribotu vadovo įsitraukimu, darbuotojams suteikiama veiklos laisvė ir aukštu jų savarankiškumo lygiu. Tačiau nustatyta, jog transformacinės lyderystės stiliaus raiška yra reikšmingai didesnė valstybinėse įstaigose, kas leidžia teigti, kad viešojo sektoriaus vadovai dažniau orientuojasi į autoriteto stiprinimą, darbuotojų motyvavimą, palaikymą ir ugdymą. Privatačiame sektoriuje labiau išreikšta pasyvioji lyderystė, atspindinti labiau reaguojantį nei prevencinį vadovavimo pobūdį. Tuo tarpu transakcinio lyderystės stiliaus raiška tarp sektorių reikšmingai nesiskiria, o tai leidžia manyti, kad šis stilius taikomas panašiai, remiantis taisyklių laikymusi ir atlygio už rezultatus sistema.

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THE EXPRESSION OF LEADERSHIP STYLES AMONG MANAGERS IN THE LITHUANIAN HEALTHCARE SECTOR

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Summary

The article presents a study on leadership styles applied in the Lithuanian personal healthcare sector. This sector faces numerous challenges, including a shortage of specialists, heavy workloads, increasing employee mobility, and widespread burnout syndrome. These problems are further exacerbated by ongoing healthcare reforms and a complex healthcare institution management system. Leadership in this sector is critically important, and its effectiveness is largely determined by the leadership style adopted by managers, which can directly influence institutional outcomes, employee motivation, commitment, and organizational culture.

*The aim of this study is to identify the leadership styles applied by managers in the healthcare sector. To achieve this, a quantitative study was conducted, surveying 422 respondents working in healthcare institutions. The results revealed that the dominant leadership style among Lithuanian healthcare managers is **passive leadership**, characterized by limited managerial involvement, delegation of autonomy, and promotion of employee independence.*

*The study also identified commonalities and differences in leadership styles between managers in the public and private sectors of healthcare institutions. Although passive leadership is prevalent across all types of healthcare institutions, **transformational leadership** is more strongly expressed in public institutions, suggesting that public sector leaders are more focused on building authority, motivating employees, providing support, and fostering development.*

Keywords: leadership, leadership styles, healthcare sector



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CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE USE OF DIRECT COERCION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT: RESULTS FROM AN EXPERT FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

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Abstract: *The article is based on a focus group interview with experts and serves as a continuation of the author's previously compiled article entitled: "The Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit: Optimal Measures of Direct Coercion and the Competencies to Be Developed Through Training".*

This article investigates critical issues in the regulation and application of direct coercion by non-police law enforcement authorities in Estonia. Building upon previous research, the study employs a focus group methodology involving eight experts from four key sectors: rescue services, environmental protection, municipal law enforcement, and police. The findings highlight significant inconsistencies and ambiguities in the current legal framework, particularly regarding the scope and proportionality of permissible coercive measures and the fragmented regulation across various legal acts. Experts identified that the existing framework sometimes leaves public order insufficiently protected due to limited legal authority and access to modern, less-lethal means. The study provides evidence-based recommendations, including consolidating and clarifying legal provisions, expanding the list of permissible equipment, and enhancing training and standardization across agencies. These results underscore the necessity for a more coherent, flexible, and proportionate regulatory approach to direct coercion in Estonian law enforcement.

Keywords: *focus group, direct coercion, law enforcement, legal regulation, Estonia, public order, less-lethal weapon*

Introduction

The article is based on the author's previously compiled article entitled: "The Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit: Optimal Measures of Direct Coercion and the Competencies to Be Developed Through Training". In a previous article, the author, drawing on analyses of police security tactics, proposed a suitable and necessary set of direct coercive measures for a competent law enforcement authority (other than the police) and outlined the core competencies required for their application (Vanaisak 2025, pp. 15–16). The present study builds upon the previous research and is an extension thereof, drawing on the results of a focus group interview conducted with field experts.

The implementation of the Estonian Law Enforcement Act over the past decade has nonetheless revealed several challenges, one of which concerns the use of direct coercion by law enforcement authorities other than the police (Law Enforcement Act (LEA), Section 6(2) and 75(1)). In the context of an evolving security environment and unforeseen crises, society requires well-functioning law enforcement authorities with both the legal mandate and operational capacity to independently respond to threats and address breaches of public order.

Based on the findings of the recent study, the author formulated an optimal set of direct coercive measures suitable for a competent law enforcement authority. The analysis demonstrates that, in situations involving a malicious person liable for public order, the application of physical force alone is clearly insufficient to ensure compliance. The measures employed should be effective while causing minimal harm to both parties. Based on recent

empirical studies, the use of a conducted electroshock weapon is recommended more extensively as a novel means of intervention. (see Vanaisak 2025, p. 6; Haav 2023, p. 81). The study is relevant, as the regulations governing the use of direct coercion have not undergone significant updates over the past decade. Indeed, the Ministry of Justice has acknowledged the need to amend the Law Enforcement Act, referencing international practices related to the use of conducted electroshock weapons, water cannons, and rubber bullets (Ministry of Justice 2024). However, experts working in various fields of direct coercion have not yet been involved in this discussion. The study conducted by the author addresses this important gap by identifying deficiencies in the current regulatory framework and offering expert-based recommendations for its improvement.

The key **problem** addressed in this study is the inadequacy and ambiguity of current legal provisions regulating the use of direct coercion by non-police law enforcement bodies. The **aim** of this study is to identify key issues in the use of direct coercion by non-police law enforcement authorities and to develop expert-based recommendations for improving current regulations.

The study poses the following central **research question: What problems or inconsistencies can be identified in the legal provisions regulating the use of direct coercion and in related enforcement practices?**

To address this research question, the following **research tasks** have been formulated:

- a) to identify the most common problems encountered in the use of direct coercion;
- b) to assess whether public order has remained insufficiently protected due to a lack of authority;
- c) to gather expert recommendations for improving the regulations governing the use of direct coercion.

The study draws on data collected through a focus group interview involving experts from four key sectors—environmental protection, rescue services, the police, and local government—in order to identify major challenges in the application of direct coercion and to formulate evidence-based recommendations for regulatory improvements.

Methodology

A focus group interview was conducted with eight experts across four fields – rescue services, environmental protection, municipal law enforcement and police (see Table 1).

The focus group was structured around a pre-designed questionnaire and conducted as a facilitated group discussion with a clearly defined and relatively narrow thematic focus, aiming to stimulate dialogue among participants (Vihalemm 2014). With the help of experts, the challenges surrounding the use of direct coercion are outlined, and the path from the current situation to proposed regulatory amendments is analysed.

1. Legal Preconditions and Practical Considerations for the Use of Direct Coercion in Law Enforcement

This chapter addresses the legal preconditions and practical considerations for the use of direct coercion in the field of law enforcement. It emphasises that direct coercion may only be applied in exceptional cases to enforce state supervision measures, and must be based on clearly defined authority, lawful grounds, and appropriate means. The chapter also examines shortcomings in the current legal framework and presents proposals by the Ministry of Justice aimed at updating the regulation of direct coercion and enhancing the flexibility and proportionality of special equipment use.

Preconditions for the Use of Direct Coercion in the Context of State Supervision

The primary objective of law enforcement is the prompt elimination of threats or the resolution of breaches of public order. In achieving this, an official is entitled to apply measures of state supervision that interfere with an individual's constitutional rights as little as possible. Direct coercion does not constitute a state supervision measure (such measures are defined in the LEA, Sections 26, 28, and 30–53). It may only be employed in exceptional circumstances, and solely to compel an individual to comply with a prescribed measure.

In a previous article, the author formulated the competencies required for the use of direct coercive measures, drawing on ten years of police operational tactics analysis (see Vanaisak 2025, p. 16). These detailed formulations serve as a valuable resource for the effective delivery of training on the use of direct coercion, including the development of relevant curricula.

Training in the use of direct coercion must encompass both legal knowledge and practical skills. However, in order to determine whether a law enforcement authority requires the right to use direct coercion solely for the performance of its specific supervisory function, it is essential to assess the necessity of such a measure within a broader context. For this purpose, the author constructed a conceptual **model for the application of direct coercion**:

1. The law enforcement agency is legally assigned a clearly defined state supervision function.
2. It is authorised to apply appropriate state supervision measures to fulfil this function.
3. The use of direct coercion is permitted for the enforcement of these measures.
4. The measures available for direct coercion are legally defined, diverse (i.e. not limited to physical force) and suitable for achieving the intended objective.
5. Safeguards are in place to prevent abuse, including clear rules for the selection, training and accountability of officers.

Ministry of Justice analysis and legislative amendments regarding the permissibility of direct coercion

The Ministry of Justice has conducted an analysis of the Law Enforcement Act and drawn up proposals for amendments. Regarding the use of direct coercion, the proposal suggests **removing separate references** to the right to use direct coercion under individual measures, as Section 76 of the LEA already establishes general grounds for the use of direct coercion, applicable to all measures (Ministry of Justice 2023, analysis of the LEA, pp. 11–12). The analysis also highlights the need to relax the rules **governing the use of electroshock weapons, less-lethal ammunition** (Ministry of Justice 2023, analysis of the LEA, pp. 17–18; LEA draft 8-3/5025-1, pp. 37–40, 43–44) and water cannon, in order to ensure their effective and proportionate use in law enforcement (draft LEA, p. 41).

Since 2014, the use of electroshock weapons has been equated with that of firearms, significantly limiting their deployment – even in situations where officers are under attack (LEA, Section 80). The aim of easing this regulation is to reduce escalation and the risk of injury, by lowering the classification of electroshock weapons within the hierarchy of coercion measures.

In Europe, their impact is considered comparable to pepper spray and lower than that of cold weapons, such as telescopic batons (Vanaisak 2025, p. 8; Petersen, Koper, Taylor, Liu & Sheridan-Johnson, 2024, pp. 389). The use of less-lethal ammunition, such as rubber bullets, is also proposed for regulation, as current law does not differentiate it from standard lethal

ammunition (LEA, Sections 79–81). The change would allow rubber bullets to be used where proportionate, helping to prevent more serious injury. The use of water cannon is currently restricted to situations involving a serious threat (LEA, Section 79¹). Relaxing this regulation would enable their deployment earlier in an incident, avoiding escalation to the point where firearms are required (Ministry of Justice 2023, analysis of the LEA).

The analysis further suggests keeping the **list of special equipment** under the LEA **open-ended**: “It is not reasonable for a law enforcement agency to be barred from using effective yet less harmful special equipment simply because the legislature has not yet included it in the statutory list” (Ministry of Justice 2023, analysis of the LEA, p. 19).

2. Study

Overview of the study methodology

The study uses **focus group interviews** as research method.

The **focus group interview** involved **eight experts** representing four fields: rescue, environmental protection, local government and police. Statements made during the interviews are not linked to the interviewees by name in the presentation of the research. However, interviewees are distinguished based on their field of work, using codes instead of names (e.g. expert 1 (E1), expert 2 (E2) and expert 3 (E3)). The interviews were conducted via Teams on 19 and 26 June 2023, from 14:00–16:00 and 13:00–14:30 respectively. Participants were sent the questionnaire in advance, along with references to relevant academic literature for optional reading. At the end of each session, experts answered three real-time questions via the slido.com platform (15 minutes). The discussion was moderated by the author and received technical support from Alina Gavrijaševa, educational technologist at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. Participants had an average of 24.3 years of experience in the internal security field; 70% held leadership positions; over 60% had teaching experience; 90% had developed more than three training curricula; and all had conducted more than three training sessions. All had higher education qualifications, with 80% holding a master’s degree. The average age was 50.

Table 1. Expert data, 2023
(compiled by the author)

Expert		Institution	Age	Education level	Experience in internal security (years)	Training curricula developed	Training sessions conducted
1	Expert 1 (E1)	PBGB Analyst, EASS Guest Lecturer	51	Higher	30	Under 3	Over 3
2	Expert 2 (E2)	PBGB Head, EASS Guest Lecturer	45	MA	26	Over 3 (both degree-level education and in-service training)	Over 3 (hundreds)
3	Expert 3 (E3)	EASS College Head	49	MA	30	Over 3	Over 3
4	Expert 4 (E4)	Environmental Board Head	55	MA	30	Under 3	Over 3

5	Expert 5 (E5)	Local government Department Head	38	MA	17	Over 3	Over 3
6	Expert 6 (E6)	PBGB Analyst	53	MA	12	Under 3	Over 3
7	Expert 7 (E7)	EASS Lecturer	60	MA	30	Over 3	Over 3
8	Expert 8 (E8)	Rescue Board Head	48	Higher	18 (+11 years in the military)	Over 3	Over 3

Results and discussion of the focus group interview

This subsection summarises the research findings. Given the article's length constraints, the findings are presented briefly and concisely, with most examples and recommendations compiled into summary tables.

Expert focus group interview results

The focus group interviews revealed three categories related to the use of direct coercion: **inconsistencies in the regulatory framework; challenges faced by bomb disposal experts and environmental inspectors; and issues in training for the use of direct coercion** (see Tables 2–4).

Expert assessments of inconsistencies in the regulation of direct coercion

According to the experts, several inconsistencies are evident in the regulations governing the use of direct coercion, affecting both the legislative framework and the specific rules for using certain means.

Experts believe that the use of **self-defence measures** should not be regulated under the Law Enforcement Act, as they are not used exclusively in connection with direct coercion but also before and after such incidents. It would be more appropriate to include these provisions in secondary legislation regulating the work of law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, in the experts' view, the list of **special equipment** in the LEA should not be exhaustive, and the **inconsistent level of detail** in regulating different measures of direct coercion is unjustified. The use of direct coercion should be based on a uniform principle of proportionality (see Table 2, codes 1, 2, 4).

The experts highlighted legal ambiguities in the regulation of **rubber bullets**, raising questions about whether their discharge from a firearm constitutes firearm use or should be considered less severe. Respondents also called for easing the conditions for using **water cannons**, arguing that current regulations are overly restrictive, allowing their use only when no other means can achieve the objective. In comparison, they suggested that water cannons could be used more broadly in rescue services, such as dispersing aggressive individuals from incident scenes (see Table 2, code 5, 6).

In their view, as technology evolves, the legal framework for the use of force must also be revised to allow law enforcement agencies to adopt modern and less harmful measures for maintaining public order. Expanding the right to use **electroshock weapons** (Tasers) is justified on the grounds of proportionality, technological advancement and the protection of human rights. Firearms represent an extreme measure with potentially fatal consequences, whereas

Tasers enable neutralising threats while preserving life. In many countries, Tasers are already integrated into police arsenals as an effective and less dangerous alternative to bladed weapons and traditional force methods (see Table 2, code 7).

The experts also noted that the regulation of law enforcement powers and coercive measures is **dispersed across various legal acts**, which reduces clarity and can create legal uncertainty. They proposed **developing a “universal law”** that would consolidate the conditions and gradations for using direct coercion into a coherent framework applicable to all law enforcement agencies. It was emphasised that, as with the police, all law enforcement agencies should have their powers of direct coercion codified in the **Law Enforcement Act**. This would help unify practices and improve legal clarity (see Table 2, code 3).

Table 2. Inconsistencies and bottlenecks in legislation according to experts
(compiled by the author)

Category 1: Inconsistencies in direct coercion regulations	
Code 1: Closed list of special equipment in the Law Enforcement Act (LEA)	4
Statements, examples: “...if a police officer seizes a club from a criminal, they would not be allowed to use it as a measure of direct coercion” (E2); “...if technology advances and we need to adopt a new measure, the law will have to be changed” (E6).	
Code 2: Varying levels of detail in the regulation of the use of direct coercive measures in the LEA	7
Statements and examples: “If Tasers, handcuffs and firearms are regulated by the law enforcement act but gas weapons, cold weapons and telescopic batons are not, that’s strange, especially since the level of danger varies drastically” (E6); “If it is permitted to use a measure in response to an imminent, serious threat, then logically it should be permitted to use the same measure in less dangerous cases as well. The same should apply to direct coercion – if deadly force is permitted, then all milder forms should also be permitted” (E2)	
Code 3: Universal law on the use of force	6
Statements and examples: “A major issue is that the gradations and proportionality of force are spread across numerous different and diffuse laws, which undermines the confidence of various units and agencies. In the future, we should consider a broader discussion on adopting a universal law addressing the use of force, coercion or the use of coercive measures by law enforcement officers more generally, a universal act on the use of force. This would provide a coherent and unified framework, with clearly defined levels and the individuals authorised to use force at each level” (E1); “A good example is how the Law Enforcement Act grants rights to the police – not by topic or special law but by clearly listing what the police may do. It would be clearer if the same were done for other agencies” (E2); “I wouldn’t limit the Environmental Board’s authority by area... I believe the Law Enforcement Act should list all law enforcement agencies alongside the police so we can access the full toolkit and choose the most effective and proportionate measure... In practice, we could use nearly all of these measures. To choose the proportionate tool to counter an unlawful act or detain a criminal, today we only have two options: handcuffs or firearms – or both in turn.” (E4); “In other sectors, the range of direct coercive measures should be broader. I see no reason why no.” (E7); “These tools should be listed in one place – in the Law Enforcement Act... If they’re listed in one law, it’s easier and clearer for inspectors too” (E8); “There should not be any rigid rule here because everything depends on the situation, which can change in seconds. One moment you need one thing, next moment another – you might even return to the first tool” (E7).	
Code 4: Removal of the self-defence tool list from the LEA	3
Statements, examples: “...the wording on self-defence measures in the LEA is confusing – these measures are used before and after the use of direct coercion, and also during it” (E2).	
Code 5: Provisions for the use of rubber bullets	3
Statements and examples: “With the legal amendment, a new concept – combat ammunition – has been introduced, but the old issue remains unresolved: if you shoot combat or non-lethal ammunition like rubber bullets from a firearm to control crowds, is that the use of combat ammunition or of a firearm? It fits both definitions simultaneously, but the law offers no clear answer. Should rubber bullets fired from a firearm be considered firearm use, or should this be more leniently regulated?” (E2).	
Code 6: Regulation of water cannon use	4

Statements and examples: *“The use of water cannons is overly restricted – police may use them only when no other weapon can achieve the goal. Comparing this with rescue services, their use should be more lenient and perhaps also permitted to firefighters”* (E2); *“...also worth mentioning is that although water cannon use is listed in the Law Enforcement Act, we’ve used it much more than police in dealing with malicious individuals. At many fire scenes, aggressive individuals have attacked rescue personnel or disrupted the response. A strong jet of water can be more effective than having police present”* (E3).

Code 7: Right to use electric shock weapons instead of firearms

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Statements and examples: *“If we are allowed to use firearms, then perhaps it’s time to think about the fact that the police forces in many countries now use Tasers, which can neutralise threats while preserving life”* (E7); *“In my view, Tasers are less dangerous than cold weapons”* (E8); *“We currently have firearms, but technology is evolving – Tasers or other less-lethal weapons are now better options for self-defence”* (E3); *“I strongly believe that in the 21st century, we should no longer be gassing or beating people with batons – Tasers are a more humane solution”* (E7).

Inconsistencies in the regulation of direct coercion for Rescue Board bomb disposal experts, Environmental Board inspectors and local government law enforcement officers

The discussion on which direct coercive measures should be available to Rescue Board bomb disposal experts, Environmental Board inspectors and local government law enforcement officers, and where such powers should be regulated, touched on several important aspects. It was argued that the focus should be on the supervisory functions of each agency as defined in special laws, followed by an assessment of the associated risks, and only then should the need for direct coercion powers be determined. It was noted that the list of direct coercive measures available to **environmental inspectors** is unreasonably limited and their conditions of use unclear across various legal acts. Instead of **firearms**, bomb disposal experts and Environmental Board inspectors should be authorised to use electroshock weapons as a less-lethal alternative. Attention was also drawn to problematic firearm regulations for bomb disposal experts and the vague provisions in the Rescue Act regarding the use of direct coercion by rescue workers. A critical issue identified was the **chaotic regulation** of direct coercion across the various special laws governing environmental supervision, which creates confusion and a **dependency on police assistance**.

The experts unanimously agreed that any law enforcement agency with the authority to apply measures that require direct coercion must have access to a broad and diverse range of direct coercive measures. A single or dual-measure approach is insufficient. The discussion concluded that the legal basis for using direct coercion should be integrated into the **Law Enforcement Act for all agencies, rather than scattered across special laws**. Multiple examples were given where universal powers similar to those of the police would be justified for officers of the Environmental Board, local government law enforcement and the Rescue Board (see Table 3, codes 1–5).

The results of the expert focus group interview revealed that, due to the lack or insufficiency of state-level supervisory measures and the authority to apply direct coercion, public order has, on several occasions, remained inadequately protected. There have been instances where law enforcement officials have been subjected to attacks. Given the limited means at their own disposal, there is a reliance on the assistance of the police, who are increasingly involved proactively in the execution of supervisory tasks (see Table 3, code 5).

Table 3. Inconsistencies in the regulation of direct coercion for Rescue Board bomb disposal experts, the Environmental Board and local government law enforcement officers
(compiled by the author)

Category 2: Inconsistencies in direct coercion provisions in laws governing the work of Rescue Board bomb disposal experts, the Environmental Board and local government law enforcement officers	
Code 1: Inconsistencies between the tools listed in the Rescue Act and those in the Law Enforcement Act (LEA)	5
<p>Statements and examples: <i>“The biggest inconsistency lies in the list of tools and the actual means available to us – this doesn’t allow us to act humanely. I don’t think physical force is even mentioned anywhere in law... Today we must first manage our own protection, and the service weapon is technically only for self-defence... Clearly, we should have options in between. We shouldn’t have to jump straight from softest to harshest – for example, a bomb disposal officer should have access to Tasers or gas”</i> (e8); <i>“Sometimes these tools are provided for a very specific niche. Take Rescue Board bomb disposal experts: they work under police or Internal Security Service supervision during bomb control, but they’re only authorised to carry a weapon for protection while transporting explosives – which is quite significant”</i> (E7); <i>“The service weapon is technically only for self-defence... Maybe it should be more than just for that. Clearly, there should be tools for intermediate situations as well”</i>; <i>“The range of direct coercion tools should also be broader for bomb technicians. We’ve already procured support weapons, which are even more extreme. We’re moving from handguns to support weapons, but we’re still missing the first step. We shouldn’t have to go into ‘battle’ straight away, maybe things could be solved more easily”</i> (E8).</p>	
Code 2: Different legal bases for the use of direct coercion by bomb disposal experts and rescue workers	4
<p>Statements and examples: <i>“From the rescue side, I’d highlight that while bomb technicians are mentioned in terms of direct coercion, rescue workers have been completely left out. For bomb technicians, the focus is on using special equipment, particularly dogs and weapons...”</i> (E3).</p>	
Code 3: The Environmental Board’s fragmented and inconsistent listing of coercion measures in special laws	4
<p>Statements and examples: <i>“Physical force alone helps us in nothing”</i> (E4); <i>“There must be a very clear and simple framework stating what can be used and when. Once you’re in a situation, you can’t stop to look things up in a regulation. At the same time, it’s important not to be afraid to use force, but also not to abuse it”</i> (E5); <i>“Physical force alone helps us in nothing if you can’t use handcuffs. You’re straddling someone and holding their arms down... how long are you meant to sit there? Applying physical force (alone) leads nowhere. In some laws we have either firearms or handcuffs, this ridiculous binary: shoot or cuff. No less severe options available”</i> (E4); <i>“Sometimes it feels like inspectors can only do their job with police assistance. It’s usually the case that for larger operations, we inform the police in advance so they can have patrols nearby – just in case we need all the options of coercion at hand. We never conduct major operations alone”</i> (E4); <i>“I sympathise with Environmental Board staff... and the people they have to deal with: drunken hunters and arrogant fishermen who come at them... trying to detain a poacher waving a stick... My view is that an Environmental Board law enforcement officer should be trained on the same level as a police officer... We won’t have enough police in the future – we already don’t now”</i> (E1); <i>“Currently every special law has a reference to either physical force or whatever. In reality, when we talk about environmental supervision, it’s worth noting that organised crime is already eyeing waste management very closely – there is a great deal of money involved. Nature conservation, cross-border wildlife trade – millions, air pollution – billions. In a field where so much money is moving, to detain a criminal we need access to all the measures. Today’s environmental inspectors must get the same level of substantive training as the police – to be ready and capable of deciding in any situation, no matter the field, which tools are tools. Take, for example, special lighting tools: salmon surveillance in the middle of the night, a flare is fired – we do this during operations. This is a special-purpose tool used for supervision. We do it, but legally, we don’t have those options”</i> (E4).</p>	
Code 4: Right to use direct coercion for local government law enforcement officers	5
<p>Statements and examples: <i>“The right to use direct coercion tools for local government law enforcement officers depends entirely on the expectations placed on them. We’re back to the same issue: if you have the authority to impose special measures, you must be able to enforce them somehow”</i>; <i>“Right now, the most topical issue is the image in the coalition agreement: granting local governments more authority to deal with intoxicated individuals. What does that require – the right to detain intoxicated persons, to transport them,</i></p>	

how to enforce these actions, what coercive measures are needed for that?" (E5); "Use of physical force is the mildest of them. Next would be handcuffs as special equipment, not firearms" (E4); "This issue could be solved using such a framework: goal – expectations, then corresponding authority, then appropriate equipment – weapons, then training and instruction. That's how we get a clear picture. Not all Environmental Board inspectors need a weapons licence, and not all local government law enforcement officers do either, especially if they're processing cases at a desk" (E1); "I believe that if people are tasked with maintaining order and stopping violations, then their rights must be reviewed. What are their duties, and what outcomes are expected? Even, for example, municipal social workers visiting social housing. They may be attacked and have nothing to defend themselves with. If people are trained and tasked, they should be provided with direct coercive measures" (E5).

Code 5: Reliance on the police for the use of direct coercion

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Statements and examples: "Sometimes it feels like inspectors can only do their job with the help of the police" (E4); "If any kind of danger arises, such as bystanders entering blasting sites, then I rather see the need for involving the police, not for using direct coercion ourselves" (E3); "If needed, we've still involved the police, who have access to the necessary measures. At the same time, the police are also busy and can't always come to help. There was a case where officers had to protect bomb technicians, but that took attention away from their main job" (E8); "I'll add this about administrative cooperation: if coercion needs to be used and our officers see that it's beyond their authority or capacity to handle the task, we call 112 and ask for police assistance (when someone's life or health is at risk)" (E5); "So is it reasonable to go and experiment on your own? The police have excellent specialists who could help"; "In the case of more serious threats, we always cooperate with KAPO (Author: The Internal Security Service) or a special unit of the PPA (Author: Police and Border Guard Board), meaning the bomb disposal expert does their job while the police provide security. It's possible that the presence of police officers has already prevented some attacks."; "In fact, it seems like a waste of resources that bomb disposal experts receive firearms training – I don't recall a single incident where it was necessary to use it. It would be reasonable, as in many European countries, for bomb disposal experts to rather be part of a police unit."; "We also have firearms stocked for assistant bomb disposal experts, but due to inadequate legislation, we aren't even allowed to provide them with firearms training." (E8); "Unfortunately, there have been quite a few cases where our officers have been attacked by offenders, and the MUPO (author: Municipal police officer) has not even had the possibility to defend themselves. In such cases, police assistance mainly consists of initiating misdemeanor proceedings afterward. There have also been situations where we've had to use immediate coercion to influence an animal or an object on private property."; "As a preventive measure, we've called on the police to assist in dealing with intoxicated individuals in public spaces, as intoxicated persons typically behave unpredictably and aggressively. There have been instances where offenders simply walk away." (E5); "To prevent attacks against officials, we have involved the police early on in operations such as raids in the fields of forestry, hunting, and fishing supervision. Large sums of money are involved in these areas, and offenders tend to defend themselves with force or even attack." (E4)

Training as a means to prevent the misuse of direct coercion

Experts agree that training in the use of direct coercion should be **regulated by law**. Most importantly, the legislation should define the general framework for training, including mandatory **degree-level** and **in-service training** and **regular skills assessments**. It was suggested that the **content** and **volume of training** could be defined in a regulation or another **lower-level** legal act, as it may vary depending on the specifics of each law enforcement agency. Comprehensive initial training was deemed essential. The training should cover both theory and practice, with equal focus on legal principles, tactical responses, techniques for using coercive measures and incident analysis. Experts emphasised that preventing the need to use coercion is the most important skill, which requires strong interpersonal communication skills, including de-escalation methods and tactics. It was also noted that well-considered recruitment

is essential, with stress resilience and conflict resolution skills recognised as necessary competencies. One expert highlighted the fact that authorising a law enforcement officer to use direct coercion inherently implies the possibility that they will indeed use it. There was consensus that basic training and continuous practice can **significantly reduce** the risks of unskilled or unjustified use of coercion, as well as potential abuse (Table 4, codes 1–3). Risk mitigation, the experts stressed, relies on high-quality training. Positive examples of systematic instruction were cited: *“It would be risk-free if we had a very targeted, adequate training system. As an example from the Police and Border Guard Board, I would mention the TORK system, which we are currently implementing in practice. Four times a year, people take their tests, drills and firearms training. If we could apply the same principles to other units, there would be no risk.”* (E1)

Table 4. Expert recommendations for direct coercion training
(compiled by the author)

Category 3: Training issues related to the use of direct coercion	
Code 1: Regulation of the obligation and regularity of training in the use of direct coercion	6
Statements and examples: <i>“This is a skill that fades and is forgotten – it absolutely needs to be practised”</i> (E2); <i>“I think the training part should be in the law that deals with direct coercion [...] Rather, it should be described in the Law Enforcement Act”</i> (E8).	
Code 2: Importance of training, risk potential and mitigation	6
Statements and examples: <i>“The ability to make the right choices comes only through experience and training. First there should be training, then experience. Then comes the matter of finding suitable officers. It begins with recruitment, continues with training, and then with practice. To mitigate risk, one should also learn from history – what has been done, how, and how it should be done differently”</i> (E8); <i>“I agree that if the system is in place, risk minimisation is possible. Within our agency, we have established a rule that all inspectors with the right to carry a weapon or special equipment must go shooting at least once a quarter [...] and they go regularly; I believe they also have to attend training rooms about once a month to practise takedowns and similar drills. Currently, we have two instructors licenced under the TORK system who run the exercises. We also plan to increase the number of TORK instructors. If we are granted broader powers and have more people authorised to use special equipment, we can begin training them immediately”</i> (E4); <i>“Another issue is that if someone has the right to use direct coercive measures, it might make it easier to resort to them. They may choose the path of least resistance and use force and direct coercion more readily, whereas in the absence of such direct coercive measures, the situation might have been resolved differently”</i> (E2); <i>“It should probably be stated somewhere that one must have completed training in the use of direct coercion and special equipment”</i> (E8).	
Code 3: Training topics in the use of direct coercion	8
Statements and examples: <i>“I would also emphasise that lifelong learning and regular training are important”</i> (E2); <i>“The best form of coercion is when someone can be persuaded with words. If it comes to physical confrontation and using equipment, then one needs the skill to use them. First comes negotiation, the psychological part, and then comes the equipment. It should be practised regularly so that it becomes automatic through muscle memory. Psychologically, you must know what to do in which situation. Mental and physical training must be in balance”</i> (E4); <i>“We should not focus solely on the use of force or the implementation of direct coercion. We should rather ensure that the situation doesn’t reach that point. If we use force, then we have, in a sense, already failed. The goal has been pushed into the background. It is better to train communication and persuasion skills”</i> (E1); <i>“I think training should consist of three components: knowing the law, understanding tactical options, and being able to ‘read’ the situation to grasp the objective. All three must be learnt and brought to the level of application – one must be able to assess the situation, know what is legally permitted, choose the right tactic, and apply it”</i> (E2); <i>“We get a subjective picture of stress tolerance through partners, direct supervisors and the people we interact with – this way attention can be focused more deeply”</i> (E1); <i>“Communication skills and conflict resolution abilities are important. There are many unknown variables when using direct coercion. One must be able to assess the situation appropriately”</i> (E7); <i>“In addition to</i>	

training in the use of direct coercion, the development of communication, negotiation and conflict resolution skills should continue so that not all resources are spent on force-related training” (E2) “When discussing conflict situations, stress tolerance is quite important [...]” (E6); “I think the training section should be included in the law that deals with direct coercion. What is all that special equipment? It should be described in the Law Enforcement Act” (E8).

Experts point out that when enforcing supervisory measures through the use of direct coercion, decisions should be based on the general analogy with threats: if the use of a firearm is permitted in a given situation, then the use of all other, less intense measures should also be considered permissible. It is not logical that the use of handcuffs, water cannons, electroshock weapons and firearms is tightly regulated, while the use of gas and cold weapons – which can be equally or more **harmful** – is not. The author concurs that when using special equipment, including gas, cold or electroshock weapons, the guiding principle should be proportionality. The legal framework should minimise discrepancies in how measures are regulated.

Experts also point to the need to relax the conditions for using **water cannons** and **electroshock weapons**, as these are considered less-lethal measures of direct coercion. In practice, rescue personnel often use water jets (water cannons) to move people away from the scene of a fire, despite the lack of a legal basis for doing so. While the legal regulation of firearms – as lethal weapons – is rightly strict, other direct coercive measures should be governed by established practices, methods and proportionality assessments. When evaluating proportionality, the focus should be on how effectively the coercive measure helped achieve the objective – not whether it was part of a stepwise escalation – and whether it caused unnecessary suffering or harm to any parties involved.

Experts in the focus group noted that the list of **special equipment** is **closed** (with the exception of the measures used to forcibly stop vehicles), and that **self-defence measures** should not be included in the LEA or the chapter on the use of direct coercion. The author agrees, arguing that there must remain some flexibility to use other measures (e.g. a bat taken from an attacker) and that the list of self-defence measures should be included in sector-specific acts regulating the work of law enforcement agencies, such as the Police and Border Guard Act or the Rescue Act, since such measures are also used before and after the application of direct coercion. According to experts, the **use of less-lethal ammunition in firearms**, such as rubber bullets for crowd control, requires more precise regulation. The same proposal has been made by Kristi Kool, who argues that the use of rubber bullets is justified for countering immediate and serious threats, as they pose a lower risk than live ammunition (Ministry of Justice 2023 pp. 18–19).

The analysis by the Ministry of Justice and the assessments of experts are aligned in the view that regulating direct coercive measures at varying levels of detail is not justified. Both the experts’ explanations (see Table 2, code 2) and the Ministry’s analysis of the LEA (Ministry of Justice 2023, pp. 11–12) support the proposal to remove references to the right to use direct coercion from the provisions concerning specific measures in order to enhance legal clarity.

The right to use direct coercion should be enshrined in the LEA for all law enforcement agencies, as is the case for the police. If an agency has the right to apply measures that presuppose direct coercion, it should also have the right to use suitable measures from a comprehensive range. A definitive solution is difficult to specify, however, since the LEA is a general act that requires the coercive powers of a special law enforcement agency to be further regulated in a special act (LEA, Section 75(1)), where the agency’s supervisory competence is also established. As the legislation applicable to special law enforcement agencies contains significant inconsistencies, these should be resolved under the current legal framework by

ensuring that the list of coercive measures is consistent and, as noted earlier, sufficiently diverse.

In general, there is broad agreement that the toolkit of direct coercive measures available to a law enforcement agency must be diverse: it is not enough to rely on one or two measures, such as physical force and a firearm. The selection should include electroshock weapons, which are considered more humane than pepper spray or batons.

Training considerations

Experts concur with the Ministry of Justice (Ministry of Justice, 2024) that effective and lawful application of direct coercive measures requires comprehensive training. In line with analysts' recommendations (see Vanaisak 2025, pp. 15–16), the competencies related to various coercive tools –ranging from physical force to firearms – should be clearly defined. Expert assessments further stress the importance of training in communication and de-escalation, as well as firearm safety and first aid (see Table 4).

Conclusions

The article "Critical Issues in the Use of Direct Coercion by Law Enforcement: Results from an Expert Focus Group Interview" investigates the challenges and inconsistencies in the legal regulation and practical application of direct coercion by non-police law enforcement authorities in Estonia.

The study builds on previous research and uses a focus group interview with eight experts from four sectors – rescue services, environmental protection, municipal law enforcement, and police – to identify key issues and propose recommendations for regulatory improvement.

The central **research question** posed was: What problems or inconsistencies can be identified in the legal provisions regulating the use of direct coercion and in related enforcement practices? To address this, the study set out to:

- Identify the most common problems encountered in the use of direct coercion.
- Assess whether public order has remained insufficiently protected due to a lack of authority.
- Gather expert recommendations for improving the regulations governing the use of direct coercion.

The study found that:

- **Inconsistencies and Ambiguities:** Experts identified several inconsistencies in the regulatory framework, particularly regarding the scope and proportionality of permissible coercive measures. The current legal provisions are fragmented across various acts, leading to ambiguity and reduced clarity for practitioners. The list of special equipment is considered too restrictive, and the regulation of certain means (e.g., rubber bullets, water cannons, electroshock weapons) is either unclear or overly stringent.
- **Insufficient Authority and Protection:** There is a consensus among experts that the current framework sometimes leaves public order insufficiently protected, as non-police law enforcement bodies lack adequate legal authority or access to modern, less-lethal means of coercion. This gap is particularly evident in crisis situations or when dealing with malicious individuals.

Experts recommend revising the Law Enforcement Act to:

- Consolidate and clarify the conditions for using direct coercion in a universal legal framework.
- Lower the legal threshold for using less-lethal means, such as Tasers and water cannons, to ensure proportionality and minimize harm.
- Improve training and unify standards across all law enforcement agencies to ensure effective and accountable use of coercive measures.

The research questions were comprehensively addressed through expert focus group discussions. The study identified significant legal and practical inconsistencies in the current regulation of direct coercion, confirmed that these issues can compromise public order protection, and provided concrete, expert-based recommendations for legislative and procedural improvements. The findings underscore the need for a more coherent, flexible, and proportionate regulatory approach to direct coercion in Estonian law enforcement.

This study opens up new avenues for further exploration.

- The potential topic for further research is the right of officers to use direct coercive measures in self-defence when attacked while performing their duties, an issue raised by Teder in 2017 but not yet comprehensively studied.
- Since the results are based on a social science study, it is important to conduct legal research – such as constitutional review of the use of direct coercion – in order to ensure better lawmaking.

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DECENT WORK IN LITHUANIA'S LOGISTICS SECTOR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LOCAL AND MIGRANT EMPLOYEES

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Abstract: Due to a labor shortage, more migrants are employed in the Lithuanian labor market. One of the sectors most affected is logistics, where the demand for employees, especially drivers, is particularly high. The main goal of this study is to compare the perceptions of decent work and workplace exploitation between local and migrant employees in the logistics sector in Lithuania, identifying critical attributes influencing job satisfaction, well-being, and perceived fair treatment in working conditions. The impact of various variables (decent work, job satisfaction, economic constraints and well-being) on migrant and local employees were studied for this study. A quantitative research method was used to achieve this aim. Data was collected through a survey of 300 employees working in the logistics sector in Lithuania, with 18% of participants being migrants. The industry is male dominated, therefore 79.3% of participants were male. The data was analyzed using SPSS software. The following tests were used to analyze the results for this study which include descriptive analysis, regression analysis and clustered bar charts with mean. Hypotheses H1, H2, H3 were rejected whereas only hypothesis H4 were accepted after analyzing the results. This indicates that migrant employees have low job satisfaction and experience greater economic constraints, leading to higher levels of work exploitation. However, migrant employees report lower levels of well-being compared to local employees in Lithuania's logistics sector. The main results showed that all employees identified salary and working hours as the primary factors influencing perceived exploitation. However, no statistically significant differences were found between local and migrant employees. The study recommends implementing upskilling programs and visible promotion pathways to ensure equal career progression for local and migrant employees. Additionally, there should be fair wages and working hours for migrant employees and to avoid ambiguity employee contracts should be presented in a language the worker understands and should be clearly explained. Lastly, the future directions could investigate the long-term consequences of employment precarity by analysing gender-specific experiences within the sector on migrant well-being. Additionally, for migrant employees, a comparative analysis across distinctive EU countries could also reinforce broader perceptions into local gaps in decent work measures.

Keywords: Decent Work, Comparative Study, Lithuania, Logistics Sector, Local Employees, Migrant Employees

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to examine and contrast local and migrant workers' opinions of decent labor and victimization at work in Lithuania's logistics sector. The main goal of this study is to compare the perceptions of decent work and workplace exploitation between local and migrant employees in the logistics sector in Lithuania, identifying critical attributes influencing job satisfaction, well-being, and perceived fair treatment in working conditions. Through these factors, it could be determined to what extent the principles of decent work conceptualized by the International Labor Organization (ILO) are implemented in the logistics industry and to identify the inequalities in the experiences of the two groups. The drive of labor from emerging countries to more developed countries has revealed the gap between rich countries with labor deficiencies and poor countries with no occupations (Geneva, 2008). The study's purpose is to assess the differences in the perceptions of local and migrant workers concerning their working conditions based on job security, equality, and growth opportunities. Lastly, the critical point is to shed light on what can be learnt from it in terms of notifying policy, enhancing working conditions, and promoting fair treatment for all employees in the logistics sector, irrespective of ethnic group. According to the Migration Department of Lithuania (Gudzinskaitė, 2024), the number of foreigners living in Lithuania has exceeded 200,000 for the first time in the history of the country. The majority of the foreigners are ordinary workers, and 50% of them are working in various missing professions, mostly passenger carrier workers in construction and other industrial sectors.

The research question of this study is:

How do decent work perceptions and workplace exploitation differ between local and migrant workers in Lithuania's logistics sector, and what are the most significant factors shaping job satisfaction, well-being, and perception of fair treatment at work?

The logistics industry in Lithuania is an essential stimulus of the country's economy, enabling basic services for domestic and external trade. In recent years, the overall industry has experienced a large influx of migrant workers, who now constitute a considerable percentage of migrant employees in the sector. With time, it has become crucial to look at the experiences and attitudes of both local and migrant employees. Decent work was proclaimed as "the most widespread need, shared by people, families and communities in every society, and at all levels of development", and went on to announce that "the primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity" (ILO, 1999). These definitions highlight fair compensation, job security, protection of working conditions, and personal development. However, to an extent, where these standards are realized in the logistics industry is still a cause for concern. Migrant workers are forced to commit to lower-skilled, physically demanding roles with lower wages and job insecurity (Bazaras & Palšaitis, 2017).

A more thorough scrutiny discloses that the issues confronted by migrant and local workers are similar, together with lengthy hours of physically challenging jobs and the likelihood that migrant workers may face inferior working conditions and amplified exploitation due to peer networks, legal protections, and linguistic barriers. On the other hand, local workers may be more informed about their civil rights and have access to labor protection, which may have a complete effect on how they feel about justice and fulfillment with work. Migrant workers face substandard working conditions, partial mounting flexibility, and inadequate access to assistance, equated to their local counterparts. Migrant workers must take part in the labor market as this is the only way for them to make money, but working conditions based on their status often prevent them from social integration (Benedetti, et al., 2020).

Literature Review

Employee Status

Employee Status is distinct as the classification of workers as either they are Migrant workers or Local workers. The Status of the employee shows its cruciality within the Lithuanian economy when it comes to decent working conditions. Associated with the stigma of status shows the impact on their chances of inequality they face, their personal growth, their safety, and last but not least, how secure their job is. Looking over the logistics sector of Lithuania, this sector is somehow dependent on both the local and the migrant workers, and amongst this, the transportation and warehousing sectors carry the most weight.

In Lithuania, the Law Force is aligned with the European Union Standards that state the legal framework for Equality and equal opportunity. However, the implementation of these laws varies based on the status of the employee working in a particular sector. Local employees get the privilege in the job market and can have access to the benefits of job security because of cultural similarity and native language. In contrast, migrant workers from non-EU countries face a lot of difficulties, including job insecurity, discrimination, more working hours, temporary visas, degree qualification barriers, lower wages, and limited benefits. These constraints led to a delay in employment and limited access to better job opportunities.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has highlighted the need for Lithuania to strengthen its integration policies and labor market for migrant workers. Though the reforms have been introduced to ease the overall process for the migrant workers, including their documentation, foreign recruitment, and enforcement of laws, the shortcomings of proper implementation of these laws still make migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation and informal work measures (OECD, 2018).

The employment contracts also show the differences based on the status of the employees. The migrant worker is hired based on a fixed-term or probationary period, whereas the local worker is hired based on a permanent contract. There's a study that shows how migrant employees are trapped in "precarious employment," where employees face low job security, irregular hours, and low wages. These factors lead to psychological stress and job dissatisfaction. In contrast to local employees, they enjoy perks such as job security, mental well-being, and opportunities for personal growth (Huseynova, 2024).

Working Hours, Wages, and Occupational Health and Safety Conditions reflect the divide between the local and migrant employees. A study found that 72% of migrant workers in the logistics and transport sector worked more than 40 hours a week and earned less than €500 per month. They are more likely to perform physically demanding jobs with inadequate training and equipment. 27% of migrant workers in the logistics sector weren't provided with safety gear, and 5% experienced physical violence. Whereas, local employees tend to have greater bargaining power, higher wages, regulated working hours, and instructions about safety protocols likely to raise safety concerns without fear (Blaziene & Zabarauskaite, 2016).

Migrant employees often face omission due to language and cultural barriers. These problems lead to delayed communication in the workplace, contribute to decision-making, and distance from community engagement. A study revealed that migrant workers have limited access to housing, unequal community services, and are socially unacceptable. On the other hand, local employees have the nationality and gain more access to institutional knowledge and professional networks, which eases smoother workplace integration and personal growth (MEIDUTĖ-KAVALIAUSKIENĖ & ČINČIKAITĖ, 2023). The overall view shows that the logistics sector depends on migrant workers. Addressing dissimilarities in decent work

circumstances is not a matter of social righteousness but a non-negotiable matter for the sustainability of the logistics sector. Deprived of balancing work conditions, Lithuania risks the retention of skilled workers as the labor system challenges their productivity and confidence. The country needs to take tangible steps to bridge the gap between local and migrant workers.

Decent Work

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), decent work is defined as opportunities that deliver compatible income, job security, social protection, and personal development (ILO, 1999). In the Lithuanian economy, under the logistics sector, the definition differs as it is affected by economic conditions, market policies, and organizational practices. Seeing the financial data of the logistics sector, a current study illustrates that though the corporation is profitable and accomplishing well, the challenges of ensuring decent work remain for the employees. So, there is a need for continuous monitoring and ensuring that the labor standards need to be aligned with the principles of decent work (Bužinskienė & Gelashvili, 2024).

The Decent Work and Economic Growth, known as Sustainable Development Goal 8, aims to promote sustainable economic growth, productive growth, and decent work for all workers across the European Union countries so they can work in peace and stay happy (UNGA, 2023). An analysis indicates that most countries have made significant progress in achieving these goals, while a few countries are still lagging, and Lithuania is one of the countries, predominantly lagged after the COVID-19 era (Bieszk-Stolorz & Dmytrów, 2023).

Eurofound has emphasized promoting decent work. The evolution of social discussion in the logistics sector in Lithuania is very important to improve the working situations for the employees to get fair treatment and safeguard safety (Eurofound, 2020). ILO has recognized the practices in endorsing decent work in enterprises in the logistics sector to implement occupational safety, fair labor standards, and opportunities for personal growth. The European Commission has emphasized the need to advance the quality of employment to lessen the disparities in working conditions among local and migrant workers (Commission, 2022). The above conclusion draws the following hypothesis:

H1: Migrant employees report experiencing higher levels of work exploitation compared to locals in the pursuit of decent work in Lithuania's logistics sector.

Job Satisfaction

Employee Retention, Organizational Performance, and Productivity are the factors that are being influenced by Job Satisfaction. In Lithuania, studies show that workers working in the logistics sector are affected by the working conditions, wages, personal growth, and work-life balance. Logistics former students in Lithuania integrate strong theoretical and practical skills, and their configuration in the job sector, based on their qualification, affects the level of satisfaction. Businesses need to identify the potential and capability of their employees and offer them chances to job satisfaction (Ginavičienė, et al., 2023).

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, corporations executed flexible working hours for workers, maintained psychological support, and opened communication channels so that employees felt motivated and satisfied during the crisis. In this way, they sustained employee motivation. This integrated HRM practice helped to ensure job satisfaction (Čižiūnienė, et al., 2025). A study examined that the employees working in the transport sector in Lithuania have lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions based on their views on fairness, safety, and support. So, the study focused on practicing the managerial implications to increase job satisfaction and make sure that the employees feel equality and safety while working for a particular sector (Affiliation, et al., 2024).

A recent blog by Oksanen Minna shows that Job Satisfaction in Lithuania has increased by only 0.6 points since 2016. In 2016, it was estimated at 5.73; in 2021, it reached 6.45, and in 2022, it fell to 6.33. Employees were not satisfied with what they were earning; when asked if they were receiving fair wages, 71% responded that their wages were too low. In their minds, the fair wage should be 38% more than the current wage. The crucial factor that contributes to the satisfaction was extra money earned (-0.79) and motivational measures (-0.26), which decreased the most (Minna, 2022). The hypothesis H2 is drawn from the above discussion:

H2: Migrant employees report lower job satisfaction compared to local employees in Lithuania's logistics sector.

Economic Constraints

Financial instability, limited access to resources, and fluctuations in the market are playing their roles, economic constraints are among these aspects that have obstructed the logistics sector of Lithuania. It limits a business's freedom to do what it wants. The businesses are bound to it as it is out of their control. The economic environment majorly contributes to the performance of companies, so companies need to go along with the challenges such as competition, change in demand, and regulations. The financial health analysis of the Lithuanian logistics companies shows that while many companies are financially stable, few are struggling with the risk of liquidity. The economic constraint needs to be minimized by considering factors such as financial resilience, size of the company, the practices that the company is following, and the precautions that it is taking (Bužinskienė & Gelashvili, 2024).

On one hand, if the company has a risk of internal factors, there are also external factors that play their part, such as geopolitical tension and economic downturns that make economic constraints worse. The negative impact that it leaves disrupts the whole process of a sector, such as in the COVID-19 Pandemic, the shortage of demand in the logistics sector disrupts the supply chain, leaving an overall impact on the business. This vulnerability is led by external shocks and needs adaptive strategies to overcome the constraints caused by economic constraints (Čižiūnienė, et al., 2025).

Another study shows the obstacles faced by the Lithuanian logistics sector and identifies high competition in the European Union, cost-cutting pressures, innovation, and the prerequisite for advancement in technology to remain competitive (Langvinienė & Sližienė, 2014).

To enhance the performance of the Lithuanian logistics sector, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has emphasized the issue that the skills of the workers don't match the jobs for which they are being hired, which can lead to higher unemployment, lower wage rates, and lower job satisfaction. So, to mitigate the risk of economic constraint, policies need to be followed actively (IMF, 2019). The above literature can help to develop the third hypothesis

H3: Migrant employees experience greater economic constraints than local employees in Lithuania's logistics sector.

Well-Being

If an employee is physically healthy, mentally stable, and emotionally satisfied, and overall social conditions are better, it helps the employee to thrive at the workplace and in personal life. In the logistics sector, well-being can be defined by work-related issues, economic conditions, practices held by the management, job security, and working environment. Based on the status of the worker, whether migrant or local, as well as cultural integration and social connections, they may experience well-being in different contexts. The logistics sector demands the physicality of the work, increased work hours, and strict delivery schedules. These conditions impact the well-being of the worker physically and mentally. Eurofound study shows that the stress level, fatigue, and muscle disorders are reported to be higher for this sector, and

these factors are compounded for migrant workers based on their status, cultural differences, language barrier, and severe living conditions (Eurofound, 2020).

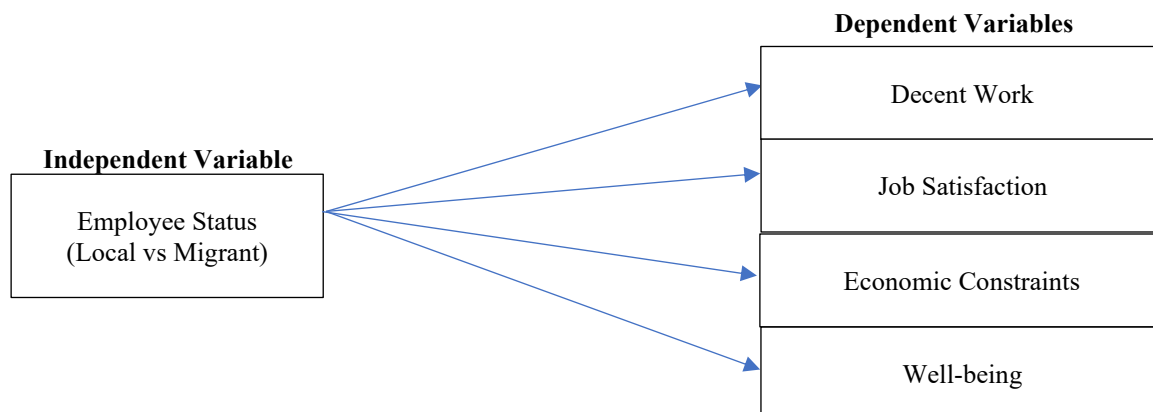
Considering one of the factors of well-being. Job insecurity, where there are temporary contracts and a lack of promotion opportunities, leads to anxiety, stress, lower self-esteem, and no motivation. Whereas, if there is equality, fairness, and sustainability of jobs, it leads to higher trust levels, more engagement, and satisfaction that contributes to well-being. The status of the employee defines their experiences of well-being and clarifies the career goals for the individual (Alonderienė & Škudienė, 2022).

The second factor of well-being is Organizational Justice. Where do the employees feel that they are being treated fairly or not. The perception that they built includes commitment to the organization, trust in management, behavior, and task performance (Colquitt, 2012). Staniškienė and Butkienė found that employees' perceptions of fair conduct, decision-making, and merit-based reward systems are correlated with their well-being. The outcomes of these are different for migrants, and unfortunately, due to managerial practices, they cannot stand for their rights. To improve the overall workforce's well-being, an inclusive organizational culture can play a transforming role (Staniškienė & Butkienė, 2020).

Thirdly, Work-Life Balance is overseen in the logistics sector. In logistics firms, predictable schedules, medical leaves, access to family, and childcare options lead to greater satisfaction and less frustration. The outcomes of such emergencies with a positive response can bring greater retention and reduced absenteeism in the logistics sector (Grinevičienė & Katilienė, 2019). The above discussion concludes the following hypothesis:

H4: Migrant employees report lower levels of well-being compared to local employees in Lithuania's logistics sector.

Research Model



Methodology

There were diverse tools used to gather quantitative data. The study was supported using primary data as it is exclusively based on questionnaires, where the questionnaire was premeditated based on all the variables which include independent variables (Employee Status such as Local vs Migrant), dependent variables (Decent Work, Job Satisfaction, Economic Constraints & Well-Being). The participants selected for this study are the employees working in logistics sector in Lithuania (Local & Migrant). The employees are from different Lithuanian logistic companies. The sample size of 300 respondents selected and questionnaires were distributed amongst them in order to know their opinions. The sampling technique used for this

study was convenience sampling. The study was cross-sectional because the data was collected at a single point in time.

The questionnaire consists of close ended questions to measure demographic variables and Likert scale questions for measuring dependent and independent variables. The demographic section includes questions related to gender, age, marital status, employee status, level of education and country of origin. The numbering has been allotted to them in sequence in order to give them the coding so that it would be easier to generate the results. The binary coding has been set for the questions that consists of the answers as Yes or No and Male or Female.

Each variable was developed by various authors and included different numbers of items to measure each variable. To begin with decent work was assessed by using the 14-items Decent Work Scale (DWS) by Duffy et al. (2017) in the translated version to Portuguese by Ferreira et al. (2019). This scale includes five subscales addressing different dimensions of decent work: (a) interpersonally and physically safe working environments, (b) access to adequate health care, (c) adequate compensation, (d) adequate rest and free time, and (e) organizational values that are in complement to family and social values. Secondly, the 6-item Economic Constraints Scale (ECS) by Duffy et al. (2019) was used to measure perceived economic constraints. Furthermore, to measure job satisfaction the scale was developed by Judge et al. (1998) and includes five items to assess the level of people's satisfaction with their jobs. Lastly, the cognitive aspect of subjective well-being was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et. al. (1985) and adapted to Portuguese by Zanon et al. (2014). Participants answered items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Table 1 shows the items associated with each scale used in the study and respective reliability, measured by the Cronbach Alpha.

There are different statistical techniques used in order to test the relationships of variables. The data collected for this study was analyzed by using SPSS software. SPSS was used in order to test the relationship between variables, regression analysis (linear) by using ANOVA table, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) etc. These techniques were used to test the relationship between variables. By doing this, we can prove the hypothesis.

Table 1. Constructs of Variables

Variables	Author	No. of Items	Scale	Cronbach Alpha
Decent Work	Duffy et al., (2017)	14	7-point Likert scale	0.86
Job Satisfaction	Judge et al., (1998)	5	7-point Likert scale	0.80
Economic Constraints	Duffy et al., (2019)	6	7-point Likert scale	0.94
Well-Being	Diener et. al., (1985)	5	7-point Likert scale	0.87

Source: Developed by Author

Results

The demographic variables were analysed by pie and bar charts. The result of the study shows that the industry is male dominated, therefore 79.3% of participants were male as also shown in figure 1. 48.30% of the employees working in the logistics sector are married as shown in figure 2. The study was carried out in various logistic companies of Lithuania. The employees working in the logistics sector are more local compared to migrants. Figure 3 also indicates that 81.70% of them are locals and only 18.30% of them are migrants who are working in logistic companies in Lithuania. Similarly, country of origin of most employees are Lithuania. whereas most of the migrants belong to Poland (2.30%), Tajikistan (5%) and India (3%). Only 8% of

them belong to other countries such as Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh etc. also breakdown is shown in figure 4.

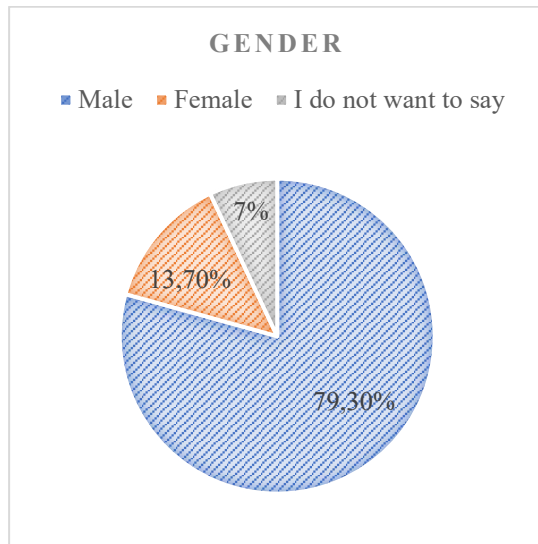


Figure 1: Gender
Source: Developed by Author

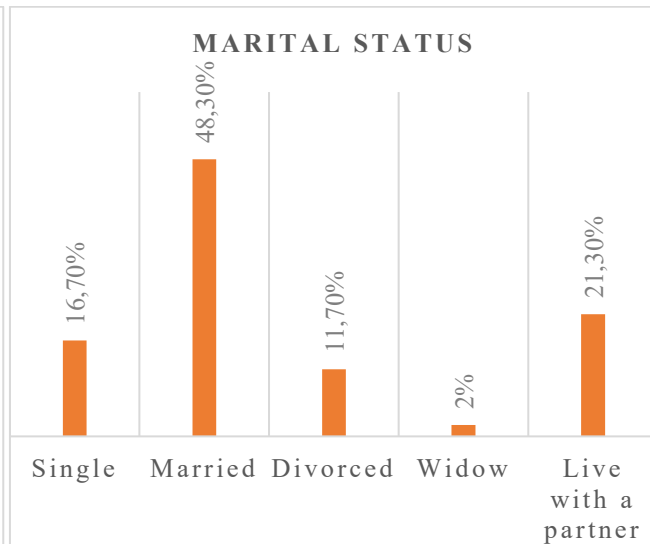


Figure 2: Marital Status
Source: Developed by Author

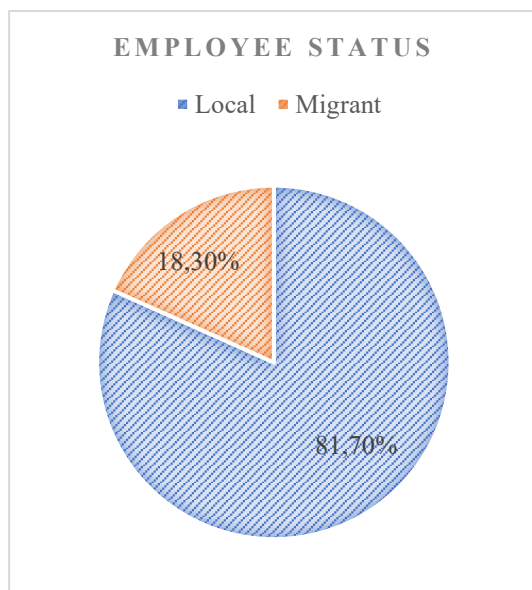


Figure 3: Employee Status
Source: Developed by Author

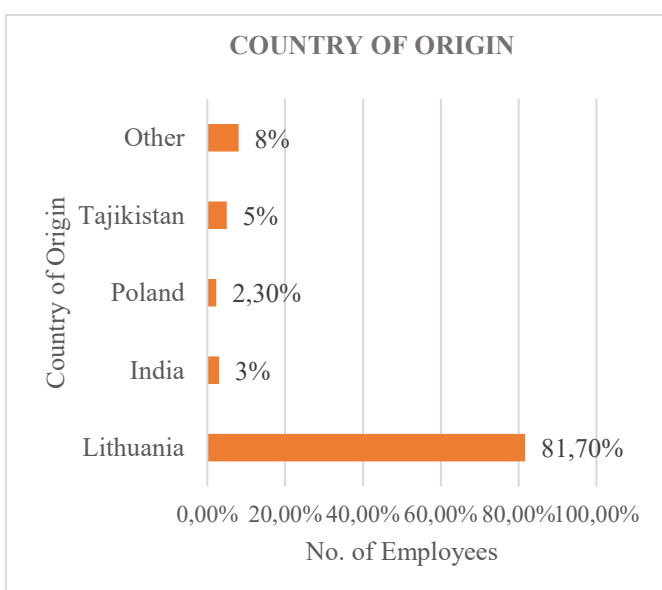


Figure 4: Country of Origin
Source: Developed by Author

Graphical Analysis

Figure 5 depicts a clustered bar chart that compares the mean values of decent work, job satisfaction, economic constraints, and well-being among local and migrant employees. The findings show considerable differences between the two groups. Local employees received higher mean scores for both decent work and job satisfaction, indicating that they view their work environment and job duties more positively than their migrant counterparts.

Migrant employees, on the other hand, demonstrated higher levels of economic limitations, indicating that this group is facing financial insecurity or volatility. Furthermore, the mean well-being score was lower among migrant workers, implying that they may have

more challenges in maintaining their overall psychological and emotional health. However, the above results suggest that perceptions of workplace quality, financial conditions, and personal well-being impacted by employee status (local versus migrant). Therefore, focusing on the unique limits and challenges that migrant employees face can assist to establish more equitable and supportive work environments.

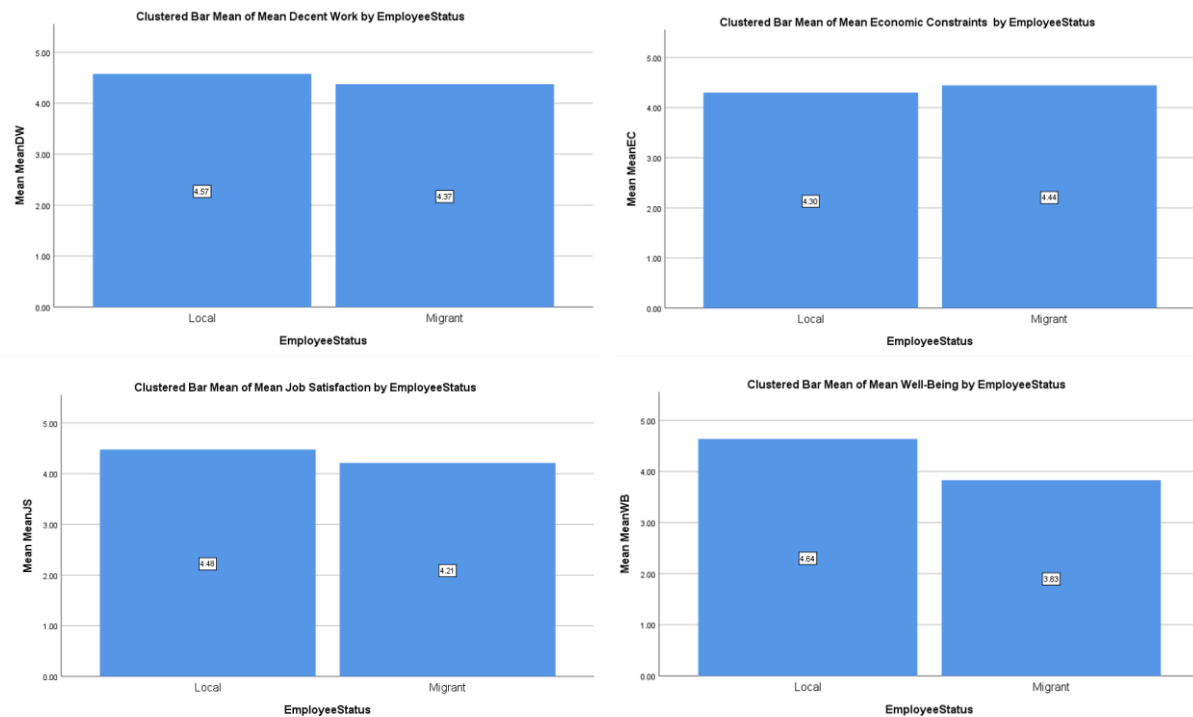


Figure 5: Clustered Bar Mean of Dependent Variables

Source: Developed by Author using SPSS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 2. The variables of the study revealed that the sample size was $N = 300$. Skewness was slightly positive ($SE = 0.141$), indicating a mild right skew, suggesting that most participants rated employee status slightly higher. The kurtosis was ($SE = 0.281$), which indicates a relatively normal distribution with slightly heavier tails than a perfect normal curve. These values suggest that the data is fairly symmetric with some mild concentration at the extremes. Moreover, since both Skewness and Kurtosis values less than ± 1.96 , the data is not normally distributed. This is calculated by the following formula. $Skewness = -.216/.141 = -1.53$ and $Kurtosis = -.344/.281 = -1.22$.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables
Source: Developed by Author using SPSS

Descriptive Statistics									
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness		Kurtosis	
Decent_Work	300	26.00	92.00	63.5267	13.23303	-.216	.141	-.344	.281
MigrationGroup	300	1.00	2.00	1.1800	.38483	1.674	.141	.808	.281
Economic_Constraints	300	6.00	42.00	25.9533	8.61812	-.500	.141	-.431	.281
Job_Satisfaction	300	9.00	33.00	22.1467	5.32601	.016	.141	-.303	.281
Well_Being	300	5.00	35.00	22.4567	7.13380	-.586	.141	-.374	.281
Valid N (listwise)	300								

Regression Analysis

The hypotheses were tested based on the analyses made on the collected data by running simple linear regression using SPSS software. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of employee status on decent work, job satisfaction, economic constraints and well-being. Among the four regression models shown in Table 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively, only the fourth was statistically significant, $F(1, df) = 14.819$, $p < 0.001$, indicating a meaningful relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The other models showed no statistically significant effects as ($p > 0.05$). The regression model for wellbeing was statistically significant, $F(1, 298) = 14.819$, $p < 0.001$, indicating a strong effect of the employee status on well-being. Whereas the regression model for other variables was not statistically significant, as their F values are low and have high p -values as shown below in Table 3, 4 and 5 respectively. From this analysis we conclude that hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 were rejected and only hypothesis H4 was accepted. This is also shown in Table 7.

Table 3: ANOVA Summary for the Effect of Employee Status on Decent Work
Source: Developed by Author using SPSS

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	349.713	1	349.713	2.004	.158 ^b
	Residual	52009.073	298	174.527		
	Total	52358.787	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Decent_Work
b. Predictors: (Constant), MigrationGroup

Table 4: ANOVA Summary for the Effect of Employee Status on Job Satisfaction

Source: Developed by Author using SPSS

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	78.400	1	78.400	2.780	.096 ^b
	Residual	8403.146	298	28.198		
	Total	8481.547	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Job_Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), MigrationGroup

Table 5: ANOVA Summary for the Effect of Employee Status on Economic Constraints

Source: Developed by Author using SPSS

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.509	1	33.509	.450	.503 ^b
	Residual	22173.837	298	74.409		
	Total	22207.347	299			
a. Dependent Variable: Economic_Constraints						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MigrationGroup						

Table 6: ANOVA Summary for the Effect of Employee Status on Well-Being

Source: Developed by Author using SPSS

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	720.854	1	720.854	14.819	.000 ^b
	Residual	14495.583	298	48.643		
	Total	15216.437	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Well_Being

b. Predictors: (Constant), MigrationGroup

Table 7: Results of Hypotheses

Source: Developed by Author

Hypotheses	p-Value	Results
Employee Status – Decent Work	0.158	Rejected
Employee Status – Job Satisfaction	0.096	Rejected
Employee Status – Economic Constraints	0.503	Rejected
Employee Status – Well being	0.000	Accepted

Conclusions & Recommendations

The primary conclusion of the study is that even though a large majority of the employees, 82% are local and 18% are migrant employees. The sector is largely masculine, with 79.3% of employees being male and 48.3% of them being married. The findings indicate that there is no significant difference between the two groups in most of the variables, as the p-value was higher than 0.05 except for one which is well-being as their p-value is 0.000. Also, f values show no statistical difference except for well-being.

Moreover, according to the results, Migrant employees report lower levels of well-being compared to local employees in Lithuania's logistics sector, and hypothesis H4 is accepted. Whereas the other hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were rejected. Migrant employees' living conditions are not excellent. They are also not satisfied with life. So far, they have not gotten the important things they want in life which include the car, home etc. Whereas local employees are living their best life and are highly satisfied. The main results showed that all employees identified salary and working hours as the primary factors influencing perceived exploitation. Migrant employees have low job satisfaction and experience greater economic constraints leading to higher levels of work exploitation.

According to the results, the following recommendations can be proposed for this study, to begin with, the organizations must establish upskilling programs and transparent promotion paths to ensure that both local and migrant employees have equal access to career advancement and long-term economic stability. Additionally, companies and municipal authorities should work together to guarantee that migrant employees have access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing, recognizing the link between living standards and well-being. Furthermore, increased oversight and enforcement of labor laws particularly concerning fair wages and reasonable working hours are essential, with attention to employers who disproportionately hire migrant labor. Last but not the least employment contracts should be presented in a language the worker understands and should be clearly explained to avoid ambiguity or exploitation particularly for migrant employees.

The future research directions could investigate the long-term consequences of employment precarity on migrant well-being, analyse gender-specific experiences within the sector. Additionally, a comparative analysis across different EU countries could also support wider perceptions into local gaps in decent work standards for migrant employees.

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF A LAW PRACTICE: ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract. *This article provides a critical analysis of the proposed reform of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Personal Income Tax (PIT), with a focus on its negative impact on persons engaged in individual business activities, in particular, lawyers and assistant lawyers as well as representatives of other free professions. The PIT reform is assessed through a comparison between individual business activities and employment relationships, with the main consequences of the reform identified as follows: the proposed combining of passive income (from property sale or lease) and active income (from work, i. e. earnings) and equalised taxation of income irrespective of differences in origin, intensity of effort, and risks will undoubtedly damage economic justice; capital gains under a project would be taxed by up to 36 %, whereas in Latvia or Poland the tax rate is 19–20 % and in Sweden it is 30 %, which means that taxation in Lithuania would be disproportionately high; equal taxation could encourage highly-qualified specialists to relocate to jurisdictions that are more favourable in terms of taxation. Thus, the reform would increase both emigration rates and the size of the shadow economy.*

The current tax regime is deemed to be a balanced one. At present, different PIT rates are applied depending on the type of activities: 5–15 % to individual business activities, 20–32 % to income from employment, and 15 % to dividends. It is obvious that the proposed PIT reform is unfounded both legally and economically as it violates the principles of proportionality, fairness and legal certainty. It is recommended that a targeted, proportionate and gradual solution should be implemented having regard to the types of activities as well as risks.

Keywords: *personal income tax, individual business activities, employment relationships.*

Introduction

Determining a person's residence for tax purposes forms a fundamental and integral part of the taxation system of any state. Based on such determination, the person is subject to either unlimited (resident) taxation or limited (non-resident) taxation. In Lithuania, taxation of personal income is based on residents' categorisation as permanent/non-permanent residents, which determines whether a taxpayer is taxed on total income derived worldwide or just on the income received in Lithuania (Law on Personal Income Tax, 2002). In accordance with Article 4 of the Law on Personal Income Tax (LPIT), a natural person is considered as a permanent resident of Lithuania if the person meets at least one of the criteria listed in the said Article: has a place of residence in Lithuania; the centre of their main personal, social or economic interests is in the territory of Lithuania; they stay in Lithuania for more than 183 days in any calendar year; or the person is a Lithuanian citizen who receives income from Lithuanian sources (LPIT, 2002). Such legal position is in line with the rules for avoiding double taxation in which priority is given to the criterion of place of residence (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). Therefore, determination of the status of a permanent resident is the first and key element in the application of the personal income tax system, ensuring compatibility of international taxation rules. A person is started to be classified as a permanent resident and their income is taxed in Lithuania upon meeting at least one of the criteria set in Article 4 of

LPIT. In some cases, non-permanent residents can be taxed in Lithuania, however, only income the source of which is in Lithuania will be considered as taxable income. This means that acquiring the permanent resident status in Lithuania is essential in determining which income will be taxed with PIT and what tax rates will apply. Lately, a PIT system reform aimed at equal taxation of individual business activities and income from employment has been increasingly discussed in this country. According to proponents of such reform, the purpose is to create a fairer and more neutral taxation environment. A thorough analysis, however, raises doubts over whether this principle of equalisation is proportionate, legally justified and socially balanced. Both research and assessments made by professionals' communities point out to potential long-term adverse consequences of such reform, in particular for self-employed persons and highly-qualified professionals.

Research problem. The proposed changes to the personal income tax and the aim to equalise tax rates for persons working under employment contracts and persons engaged in individual business activities may contradict key principles such as proportionality, legal clarity and tax neutrality. According to Moore, K. B., research has shown that a tax reform that is carried out while disregarding professional aspects and risks inherent in different business activities can lead to an increase in economic activities outside formal regulatory frameworks and reduce motivation for individual business activities (Moore, 2004). Furthermore, the law doctrine suggests that a lack of legal certainty in tax law makes planning of activities difficult and diminishes public trust in the authorities – this is particularly relevant to persons engaged in individual business activities (Gorodilov, 2022; Demin, 2020).

Purpose of research. The purpose of this work is to examine differences between tax and legal regulation of individual business activities and employment relationships in terms of the proposed personal income tax reform.

Tasks. (1) To identify the importance of the personal income tax within taxation system of the Republic of Lithuania; (2) To examine the current legal regulation of individual business activities and employment relationships in Lithuania and to identify existing differences in terms of personal income tax; (3) To assess the impact of the personal income tax reform upon individual business activities and to identify the gap between the reform and the economic and legal substance of an employment relationship; and (4) To identify potential consequences of the reform for both behaviour and work volumes of persons engaged in individual business activities.

Methodology. Corporative method, analysis of scientific literature, and methods of summarisation and systematisation.

Importance of the personal income tax

Every state has the purpose of collecting maximum amounts of funds in its budget for the financing of certain state-controlled areas. According to E. Puzinskaitė (Puzinskaitė, 2011), there is a close correlation between the budget available to the state and certain functions performed by it, and the higher the efficiency of the tax system, the higher the state budget revenues. Efficiency of tax systems of different states is measured according to the following criteria: tax administration within the state; proper implementation of taxation principles; proper resolution of taxation-related issues; management of the tax system etc. Therefore, in order to ensure that its budget is properly funded, each state seeks to put in place and implement a fair tax system, to manage taxation gaps and to improve taxation principles (Kuodis, 2008). Revenues from personal income tax account for a large part of total state budget revenues. Therefore, this tax is central to the tax system of the state.

An overview of tax systems of the European Union's Member States reveals their diversity including differences in the application of PIT. There is a trend for making taxation principles more uniform, however, the process of harmonising PIT in the EU is difficult as the Member States differ in terms of economic and social development. Therefore, having regard to specific economic situation, geopolitical factors etc., each country applies a different taxation system and individual tax exemptions and reliefs.

According to I. Szarowka (2014), PIT is important within the taxation system not just as one of the main taxes feeding the state's revenues but also as a tax that has an impact on other economic factors such as the functioning of the labour market, emigration, relocation of legal entities to other countries etc. This tax affects the economy in its entirety. On examining taxation of residents' income within the overall tax structure, the author of this article has concluded that unreasonable changes in taxation lead to a disarray among residents and businesses. A number of tax reforms were carried out in Lithuania during the period of over 30 years of independence, and now the governing party is proposing a new PIT reform, which obviously promotes instability and uncertainty among taxpayers. The analysis provided by I. Szarowka aimed to determine the share of PIT in tax revenues by applying a certain tax rate. It has been established that PIT is a highly significant tax. An increase by one percentage point (i. e. the PIT share as part of the entire tax structure) would mean raising the PIT rate up to 0.57 p. p. I. Szarowka has pointed out that a proportionate PIT rate can reduce current progressiveness of the model in a short term.

To sum up, one may conclude that the importance of PIT manifests itself through the revenues received by the state budget. As four tax reforms have already been proposed in Lithuania during 20 years, and now the fifth one is on the table, a change in the PIT determination methods will make it difficult to collect requisite funds to the state budget. Therefore, introduction of a progressive model in the long term is being discussed. One may agree that the current taxation model does not always meets the state's expectations for the collection of tax revenues, however, the necessity and efficiency of such radical changes is doubtful. Practices in other countries must be taken into consideration, and an analysis of Lithuania's economic situation including an examination of various segments and identification of all possible threats and consequences is required.

Current regulation of personal income tax and issues pertaining to the planned tax reform

Personal income tax in Lithuania is governed by the Republic of Lithuania Law on Personal Income Tax (LPIT) that lays down rules for its imposition and application. It should be pointed out that Article 4 of the LPIT details the notion of a permanent resident as PIT is levied on permanent residents of Lithuania who have received income and non-permanent residents that are liable to pay PIT on their income received in Lithuania. Article 5 of LPIT deals with the object of this tax; to put it short, it covers all income of a permanent resident the sources of which are in and outside Lithuania. It should also be stressed that PIT is imposed on non-residents' income as well. Income from individual business activities received through a permanent base in Lithuania and income earned abroad but linked to such base are classified as income taxable in Lithuania if such income is received by a non-permanent resident. Non-permanent resident's income that is not related to the permanent base but the source of which is in Lithuania is also subject to taxation in Lithuania save for exceptions stated in the LPIT.

An overview of PIT rates levied on different types of activities is necessary in order to properly describe the essence and faults of the PIT reform (data source: State Tax Inspectorate, 2025):

Table 1. Tax rates (State Tax Inspectorate, 2025)

20 %	<p>Tax allowance ceiling for annual income earned from employment or equivalent relationships, based on average wage (AW):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021-2024 – a 20 % PIT rate was applied to the share of income that does not exceed 60 AW; above this ceiling, 32 % PIT rate was applied;. In 2020, the ceiling was higher: 84 AW; In 2019, the ceiling was even higher: 120 AW.
32 % - in and after 2020; 27 % - in 2019 15 %	<p>A higher (32 %) PIT rate applies to the share of annual income earned from employment or equivalent relationships that exceeds the set AW ceiling. The ceiling was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 – 60 AW, In 2020 – 84 AW, In 2019 – 120 AW. <p>Income that had been calculated in 2018 or earlier and paid in 2019 or later were taxed without having regard to the total annual income, i. e. a non-progressive (standard) PIT rate was applied to it.</p>
15 %	Sickness, maternity, paternity, childcare and long-term service record benefits including benefits paid at the employer's expense. They are not subject to the annual PIT rate ceilings. Therefore, their taxation depends on their specific character rather than total annual income.
15 %	Income derived from distributable profits (dividends) are not linked to the annual income ceiling. Therefore, its taxation is not dependent on total annual income.
15 % (less tax credit)	Income from individual business activities.
5 %	A share of income from business activities other than individual business activities, received from waste sold or otherwise transferred into ownership, that does not exceed 120 AW; applicable since 2019.
20 %	A share of income from business activities other than individual business activities, received from waste sold or disposed otherwise, that does not exceed 120 AW; applicable since 2019.
20 %	<p>Annual income not linked to employment relationships or equivalent relationships the share of which does not exceed set AW ceilings: 60 AW (2021–2024), 84 AW (2020) and 120 AW (2019). The following types of income are included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tantiemes or other remuneration for work in a supervisory council, board or loan committee, paid instead of tantiemes or together with them; author's fees received from persons related to the resident's employment relationships or equivalent relationships; income received for management of small partnerships under a civil (service) agreement by managers of small partnerships who are not members.
32% - from 2020; 27% - 2019	<p>Annual income not linked to employment relationships or equivalent relationships the share of which exceeds set AW ceilings – 60 AW (2021–2024), 84 AW (2020) and 120 AW (2019). The following types of income are included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tantiemes or other remuneration for work in a supervisory council, board or loan committee, paid instead of tantiemes or together with them; author's fees received from persons related to the resident's employment relationships or equivalent relationships;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> income received for management of small partnerships under a civil (service) agreement by managers of small partnerships who are not members.
15 %	<p>The share of income not linked to employment relationships or equivalent relationships that does not exceed 120 AW from 2019. The following types of income are included (except income from individual business activities, distributed profit, tantiemes, remuneration for work in a board/supervisory council/loan committee, income under authorship agreements received from one's employer, and income received under service agreements by managers of small partnerships who are not members):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interest; proceeds from sale or other disposal of property; author's fees received from persons other than one's employer; income from lease of property; winnings in gaming; royalties; prizes received from a source other than one's employer, gifts etc.
20 %	<p>The share of income not linked to employment relationships or equivalent relationships that exceeds 120 AW from 2019. The following types of income are included (except income from individual business activities, distributed profit, tantiemes, remuneration for work in a board/supervisory council/loan committee, income under authorship agreements received from one's employer, and income received under service agreements by managers of small partnerships who are not members):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interest; proceeds from sale or other disposal of property; income from business activities other than individual business activities received for waste sold or otherwise transferred into ownership; winnings in gaming; author's fees received from persons other than one's employer; income from lease of property; royalties; prizes received from a source other than one's employer, gifts etc.
Fixed rate	Applied to income on which a fee is paid at acquisition of a business licence.

The Law on Personal Income Tax provides for tax reliefs such as tax allowances under Article 17 of the LPIT, amount of tax allowance applied only to the income from employment relationships or equivalent relationships (Article 20 of the LPIT), and tax deductions (Article 21 of the LPIT).

Therefore, one may state that the current income taxation system functions perfectly and ensures consistent and growing collection of tax revenues. The proposed changes of the reform would impose substantial restrictions on freedom of economic activities that is enshrined in the Constitution. A proposal that is subjected to strongest criticism is combining all the resident's income (except income from profit distribution) and equal taxation irrespective of the origin, i. e. both active income (e. g. wages, provision of services, trading) and passive income (e. g. lease, sale of property, capital gain). The proposed PIT reform provides for a uniform PIT rate starting from an EUR 35,000 threshold. This gives rise to questions as to how the market would be affected and how would taxation of employment relationships and individual business activities change; also, whether such solution is reasonable and whether it poses a risk to the very existence of individual activities as a form of business, which currently play an important

role in Lithuania. According to official statistics, as of 1 January 2024, 238,924 legal entities were registered in Lithuania, and as of October 2024, there were approx. 1.46 million employees; in 2024, 263,929 persons were engaged in individual business activities (VĮ Registrų centras (Centre of Registers, a public entity)). The latter figure shows that this form of conducting business is important for the national economy (Duomenų galia, 2024).

A significant impact of the proposed PIT reform is seen at an annual income level of EUR 35,000 (which is equivalent to EUR 2,917 per month gross or EUR 1,968 per month net). The PIT payable by a person engaged in individual business activities becomes equal to that payable by an employee. It is difficult to say whether these two forms of activities can be equalised and how this would affect the market, however, it is likely that individual activity will remain a suitable choice only for persons who earn up to EUR 29,000 per year (\approx EUR 2,416 per month gross or EUR 1,727 per month net). It should be stressed that for some professions, such as notaries, lawyers or bailiffs, changing the form of activities is impossible, the more so – changing the place of residence, therefore, it is presumed that such persons would be put in a risky position in the market, and it is them, earning over EUR 35,000, who will be burdened by the proposed taxation. In the meanwhile, other market participants will be encouraged to form legal entities and to receive income through dividends. It is probable that persons engaged in individual business activities with annual income exceeding EUR 29,000 will change the country of residence or enter the employment market; the size of shadow economy may increase as it is likely that part of such persons will not declare their income; or, as mentioned above, they will change the form of business into a legal entity in order to derive income from dividends.

In view of the foregoing, it is probable that the proposed changes will reduce the number of persons engaged in individual business activities and income of such persons, along with reduction in consumption and tax revenues from value added tax and income tax. On the other hand, in order to maintain the same level of income, such persons will raise their service rates, which will cause harm to consumers whose ability-to-pay is already doubtful.

Issues of taxation of lawyer's activities in the context of the personal income tax reform

It should be pointed out that an analysis of potential changes in PIT shows that the reform would make the position of lawyers engaged in individual business activities significantly more difficult. Solicitors and assistant solicitors, in particular, would be disproportionately affected by the proposed legal changes. The most important aspects are discussed below.

Firstly, combining all the resident's income (except income received from distribution of profit) and equalising it for tax purposes is a completely unfounded and economically incorrect solution, which is also doubtful in terms of compliance with the Constitution. The summing up of income while disregarding the origin of income, relevant experience of European countries close to Lithuania and taxation context is unacceptable and unfair for the following reasons:

1. Equalised taxation of individual business activities, employment relationships and passive income is deemed to be unjustified both legally and economically as these types of income differ not only by their origin but also the type of efforts and risks assumed by the person. To earn active income, a resident invests their time and work, often encountering business risks, whereas passive income – such as lease or capital gain – are often related to asset management or investment decisions with a different types of risks and input. Constitutional principles of equality of taxpayers, good faith and fairness would be violated in the event of such equalisation.

2. The draft proposal for the new LPIT does not consider a probability that a resident may receive passive income of accidental nature – e. g. from sale of real estate that they have held for a long time. In such a case the person would fall within the brackets of a much higher PIT rate. Notably, the value of real estate increases in the long term, and such growth is determined by actions of the owner (proper maintenance and repairs) and inflation rather than by actions of the state. Under the proposed income summing-up model, the whole amount would be taxed as income received in one year because, in case of a proportional distribution over the property ownership period and upon combining it with other income of the same period, the resident may be not subject to the progressive tax rate at all. Such taxation scheme distorts the real nature of the resident's income and violates the principle of proportionality.

3. The proposed reform would mean summing up of all income of a resident (except dividends) irrespective of the type of income. This would result in an unrealistically high taxation of capital gains: the PIT rate could be up to 36 %. Fixed tax rates levied on capital gains in neighbouring countries (such as Latvia or Poland) are usually lower; furthermore, this income is not combined with income from activities. For example, in Latvia capital gains are taxed at 20%, whereas other income up to 31%; in Poland 19% and 32%, respectively. Such disproportion shows that the proposed change in the Lithuanian PIT framework stands out in the region as a one unfavourable for capital investments. In addition, such decisions damage competitiveness of the country's taxation system.

4. Finally, implementation of the proposed model that combines active and passive income would not give an incentive to residents to stay in Lithuania, set up a business and develop economic activities. On the contrary, they would be motivated to seek a more favourable tax environment in the neighbouring countries such as Poland or Latvia where administrative burden is lighter and tax rates are more competitive.

Still, if a decision to carry out the PIT reform and to increase tax rates is taken, it will be critically important to exclude income that is different by substance – in order to retain entrepreneurs that create value added in Lithuania and to attract highly-qualified specialists from abroad. The existing system in which residents income is classified by origin and taxed with different progressive tax rates ensures certain taxation fairness and promotes economic activity.

According to current legal regulation (Personal Income Tax, 2025):

a) income that is deemed to be equivalent to income from employment, tantiemes and remuneration for work in supervisory councils/boards is taxed at 20%–32%,

b) income from individual business activities (also activities related to art and sports) is taxed 5%–15%, and

c) any other income is taxed at 15%-20% except individual business activities, income from dividends and income from employment which are taxed at 15%.

Such system enables to maintain separate income taxation regimes that reflect differences in terms of income type, intensity of efforts and risks. The current income taxation system is most balanced as it takes account of different character of activities and ensures freedom of choice of activities. Whereas the income equalisation model proposed in this reform is considered as its essential flaw as it ignores differences between individual business activities, employment relationships and passive income.

It should be stressed that employment relationships provide guarantees: the employee enjoys social security according to the law and receive fixed pay on a monthly basis. Income from an individual business activity is also considered as active income, however, the person engaged in it has no employer and their income depends on personal initiative, market conditions, geopolitical situation, and the status of the country's economy. On the contrary,

passive income – such as proceeds from property sale or investments – is derive from one-off transactions or capital gains and, in substance, are not related to protection inherent in an employment relationship. For the reasons stated above, equalisation of taxation of all these types of income violates the principle of proportionality and does not ensure fairness of taxation.

Another important point is related to essential differences between individual business activities and employment relationships that must be taken into consideration in the formulation of tax policies. A person engaged in individual business activities initiates their professional activities independently, creates their workplace, finances relevant expenses, and assumes full responsibility for continuity and lawfulness of their activities. In LPIT, a special term is used to denote such realisation of the resident's right: permanent base. Furthermore, such person does not receive social security guarantees that are provided to employees. A resident engaged in individual business activities can freely choose the place of business including abroad. Such mobility legally defined as a *permanent base* signifies a more flexible model of organising business activities as compared with conventional employment relationships.

Ability to maintain and attract knowledge and highly-qualified human resources is the key strength of a state in terms of economic competitiveness. In modern global market, competitive advantage is determined also by movement of talents, innovation and knowledge – not just by investments or capital flows. Current Lithuania's taxation policy is favourable for legal entities: the Law on Corporate Income Tax provides for tax reliefs to investments and innovation as well as for start-ups. However, similar strategic approach to taxation of personal income is not obvious in the proposed PIT reform. Many highly-qualified professionals operate independently, register individual business activities, and provide services to customers in both Lithuania and foreign countries. Such persons work independently, are not subordinate to anyone, and create their own workplaces. Their purpose is to provide knowledge-based services focussed on the customer's needs, with the specificity of their activities enabling them to be flexible in selecting the country of operation. Whereas proponents of the PIT reform intend to equalise taxation of such professionals with that of employees without having regard to risks, substance of activities, and differences in terms of responsibility. Such equalisation could be considered as a destruction of the model of individual business activities and would mean a significant restriction on the freedom of operation.

A comparison of individual business activities and employment relationships is provided below. The obvious differences shown by this analysis lead to a conclusion that equal taxation of these activities is not only legally unjustified but is also unreasonable from the economic point of view.

Table 2. A comparison of individual business activities and employment relationships.

	Individual business activities	Employment contract
1.	Individual business activities do not guarantee income (daily, monthly, annual). No income is guaranteed. The person is responsible for obtaining a business permit/licence independently.	Irrespective of performance results, the person working under an employment contract (the employee) is guaranteed a fixed and stable wage. The employer pays and is responsible for business licences and permits.
2.	The person engaged in individual business activities assumes all risks including the risks related to continuity of business and stability of income; there is a bankruptcy risk; they do not enjoy social security (e. g. in the event of an accident).	The employee receives stable income and is not responsible for continuity of the entity's business activities; the employer and the employee agree only on performance of certain work functions and the employee enjoys social security in the event of an accident at work.
3.	Individual business activities are based on independence that manifests itself through conclusion of a service agreement.	The employee performs set functions for the employer, and such functions form part of the entity's business. The employee is dependent on and subordinate to the employer.
4.	Individual business activities do not involve any incentive mechanisms.	The employee may be incentivised depending on the quality of performance of their work functions.
5.	The person engaged in individual business activities creates a workplace for themselves and there are no restrictions in terms of working time. Creation of a workplace, however, gives rise to additional expenses for rent and means of work.	The employee is provided by a workplace and incurs no additional costs or risks related thereto; maximum length of a working week is 40 hours.
6.	The person engaged in individual business activities is not paid for days-off and holidays (or paid at different rates) or overtime.	The employee receives pay irrespective of how many working days coincide with holidays. Work on holidays is paid at a double rate, and work on days-off at a rate increased 1.5 times. Extra payment for overtime is guaranteed.
7.	The person engaged in individual business activities must earn money for their annual holiday, i. e. there is no leave pay and the money has to be earned in advance.	The employee is granted a set number of leave days and payment for the leave is guaranteed.
8.	No time is granted for childcare, and childcare time is not paid for. There is no preservation of business during maternity leave and childcare leave, and the person has to restart work with their customers and develop their business anew.	An employee with two or more children receives additional paid days-off every month. The employee's job is retained during maternity and childcare leave, and they can return to their previous workplace.
9.	Individual business activities involve full financial liability (i. e. the person is liable to the full extent of their family assets).	The employee's material liability is limited to an amount equal to the average monthly wage multiplied by 3 to 6.
10.	The person engaged in individual business activities has to make arrangements for their skills improvement independently.	The employer pays for the employee's skills improvement.
11.	In case of sickness, the person engaged in individual business activities receives a minimal benefit of EUR 31.62 per day. This means that no sickness benefit is provided for.	Sickness benefits received by the employee depends on the employee's pay (70 % of pay).

12.	Should annual income from individual business activities exceed EUR 45,000, the person is liable to pay VAT.	Employees do not pay VAT.
13.	Banks apply terms and conditions that are different from usual ones to loans granted to persons engaged in individual business activities.	Banks treat persons working under employment contracts as more reliable ones and grant loans on more favourable terms.
14.	The person engaged in individual business activities is obliged to keep accounts or hire an accountant.	Responsibility for keeping the entity's accounts rests with the employer.
15.	The lawyers' right to engage in other activities or to work under an employment contract is restricted (except academic activities and authorship agreements).	A person working under an employment contract has the right to be employed by other employers as well.

An analysis of the differences between individual business activities and employment relationships shows that, even if a decision is taken to change the framework for taxation of personal income and implement a different tax regime for persons engaged in individual business activities, it is important to retain the principles of good faith and fairness in the taxation system. It should be stressed once again that income from such activities cannot be equalised with income from employment, not least due to the different nature of these two types of activities and different inherent risks. In particular, it is unreasonable to combine income from individual activities with the resident's other income received during the same year in order to apply a common system of progressive taxation. Such practice would distort tax neutrality and violate the principle of proportionality.

In the event of rejection, considering the geopolitical situation, of all the above arguments against the application of the new model to individual business activities, a higher tax rate on such activities could only be considered if the increase in the tax rate is gradual and not radical (a few percentage points only), and the whole increase is earmarked for the Defence Fund.

Having regard to geopolitical factors and in order to reinforce the financial base of the national defence, a targeted PIT reform model could be considered, i. e. levying of an additional tax rate on higher income from individual business activities. In such a case, an introduction of a new 17% or 20% PIT rate for income exceeding 60x AW per calendar year, irrespective of the size of the excess, could be considered. The said rate would be levied on the excess amount only. Such solutions would ensure clarity of the use of the funds, which would result in the public trust in the taxation system and people would be motivated to contribute to the national security.

Research has shown that increased tax rates reduce returns from individual business activities and may result in exit from such activities or rising prices, which is finally borne by consumers (Bruce, 2002); (Fölster, 2002); (Ferede, 2013).

Considering the risks identified above, it is proposed that income from individual business activities is taxed at a 17% or 20% PIT rate levied on the income exceeding the amount equal to 60x AW during a tax period. Such taxation should be implemented gradually, at the rate of a percentage point per year. This model would enable persons engaged in individual business activities to adapt to the change gradually, ensure stability and reduce risks; consumers would be enabled to adapt to changed conditions.

Conclusions

Personal income tax is deemed to be a key and essential part of the state's fiscal policy, has a significant impact on the collection of state budget revenues, and fosters economic stability and social equality. It should be stressed that changes in the PIT model contribute to mistrust in the taxation system on the part of the public and businesses, and lead to tax uncertainty, therefore, a clear and consistent taxation model based on the principles of fairness, good faith and proportionality should be maintained in the long term.

One may assert, based on provisions of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Personal Income Tax and tax rates currently levied on residents' income, that the present PIT framework ensures sufficient stability of tax revenues for the state budget. Proposed PIT changes, in particular those related to equalised taxation of income of different types, pose a threat to the very survival of individual business activities, may promote development of the shadow economy, and may slow down the growth in tax revenues. Therefore, a thorough impact assessment must be made prior to carrying out such reform, having regard to different forms of activities, social aspects, and structure of the national economy.

On completion of an overview of differences between individual business activities and employment relationships, one must point out, in particular in the context of a law practice, that even if a decision is taken to change the framework for taxation of personal income and to implement a different tax regime for persons engaged in individual business activities, it is important to retain the principles of good faith and fairness in the taxation system. Income from individual business activities cannot be treated as income equivalent to income from employment. The proposed equalisation of income of all types (active and passive) by imposing the same tax rate is economically unjustified and legally dubious as it disregards different origin of income and different levels of effort required and risks involved; it also violates constitutional principles of good faith, equality and proportionality.

The proposed PIT reform that is being publicised would reduce tax competitiveness of Lithuania. A comparison of taxation of capital gains in Lithuania, Latvia and Poland shows that the proposed change in Lithuania would increase the tax rate up to 36 %, which would result in the reduced competitiveness of the country's taxation system in the region. Furthermore, a steep increase in tax rates poses risks to both businesses and consumers. Research shows that a sudden rise in PIT for individual business activities can reduce economic activeness, encourage exiting this type of activities, or increase service prices for consumers.

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