

EVALUATION OF LEGAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE CASE OF FUTURE POLICE OFFICERS

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***Abstract.** Changes in today's global political, economic, demographic and cultural situation make the relations in society to get sophisticated. Legal and social responsibility becomes critical important in these processes. Because of their professional duties, police officers must be professionals with a very high level of responsibility. However, there is a lack of scientific researches with a particular reference to future police officers responsibility evaluation. This leads to the aim of this research: to evaluate legal and social responsibility of future police officers. The research was based on systematic and comparative scientific literature analysis and statistical data analysis. The study was conducted in 2011 and 2015 in one of Lithuanian universities. 102 recipients of the study program "Law and Police Activities" participated in the survey in 2011 and 109 – in 2015. It was found that students – future police officers feel legal as well as social responsibility. Although the greatest impact on the formation of respondents' responsibility had a family, the relevance of the university's contribution has grown from 2011 to 2015. It is also to notice that 66 % of respondents marked that they are legal responsible in 2011 and this proportion increased to 82 % in 2015. The obtained results will contribute in further investigations making analysis of future professionals' responsibility and its factors.*

***Keywords:** Future Professionals, Legal Responsibility, Police Officers, Social responsibility.*

Introduction

Nowadays the development of a qualified professional who is able to deal with the different types of social problems is in the major respect. Thus, police officers must be professionals with a very high level of legal and social responsibility. It poses major challenges for future education of professionals. The current situation encourages educational institutions to respond flexibly to the environment and society needs and focus on the professional education of specialists.

However, until a person becomes a qualified professional, the development of future professionals' responsibility begins in the early stage of their life,

continues at school and at the university. In this situation, a very important question arises: how to evaluate the responsibility of a future police officer.

Responsibility issues were raised and analysed in papers of Vasiljeviene (2012), Duch et al. (2014), McDonald (2015), Miller (2015), Pickard (2015), Ramasastry (2015), Hébert & Hauf (2015). The legal liability concept was analysed by Morawski (2000), Vaišvila (2009), Okoye (2009), Lange et al. (2012). Social responsibility concept was analysed by Argandona et al. (2010), Russell (2010), Michelsen, et al. (2011), Fenwick (2011), Tauginienė (2013), Jeppsson (2014). The police officers, their activities and roles were analysed in scientific papers of Scott, et al. (2013), Maran et al. (2014), Davies & Dawson (2014), Bush & Kimberly (2014), Normore et al. (2015), Guclu & Can (2015), O'Neill (2015), Christopher (2015), Chen (2016). The responsibility of police officers topic was analysed by Williams & Foce (2002), Laurinavičius (2003), Misiūnas (2010), Palšis (2014).

However, a very important point is that the responsibility of professional police officer develops from the early stage of his life. Responsibility of a future police officer is a result of person's environment, general education factors: family, school, self-learning as well as university. There is a lack of scientific researches with a specific focus to the future police officers responsibility.

The goal of this article is to evaluate legal and social responsibility of future police officers. The article aims to reveal the theoretical concept of legal and social responsibility, to justify empirical research methodology and to evaluate empirical responsibility of future police officers.

The results of this article is based on scientific literature analysis and statistical data analysis.

Theoretical framework

Nowadays professional responsibility and competence of professionals providing social services becomes critical. Thus, responsibility is one of the most important characteristics of a professional police officer.

Responsibility is determined as the highest personal value, fundament of ethics and morality, one of the criteria of justice and traits, personality and self-identity mechanism, the freedom to choose actions and the obligation to be accountable for the performed actions related to the perception of guilt and righteousness (Nedzinskas & Nedzinskienė, 2017). Responsibility is the respect for moral and legal requirements. Personal responsibility includes police officers' control when they respect the law and equal conduct with citizens. Person's responsibility reveals in professional activity. A police officer, without knowing his professional responsibility, can not successfully complete his professional

duties (Janušauskaitė, 2012). Professionals in their daily roles face legal liability and social responsibility (Bankauskienė & Nedzinskas, 2010).

Legal liability is an obligation regulated by law to be responsible for your actions. Responsibility as a legal status element of a subject is a juridical guarantee that appropriate institution or official will perform its tasks, functions and duties properly and on time. According to the type of violation of law, legal liability could be criminal, administrative, civil, disciplinary, material (Vaišvila, 2000). According to Laurinavičius (2006) legal liability obligates police officers to discharge their duties and rights properly.

The legal liability is often related to a person's fear that in case of an offence he will be punished under the relevant law (Šatas, 2004). A mistake of police officer or improper judgment of situation may "cost" him/her material wealth, career or even freedom. It is the application of state violence to protect established and regulated social relations, to ensure legal requirements. Legal liability reveals in the condemnation of an offender's act and in the application of legal sanctions for which the offender experiences negative moral, property, physical and organizational consequences.

Responsibility appears from duty to respect and defend human honour and dignity, support and protect rights and the main liberties of all people. Police officers have quite wide authorization for their activity and have right to choose the most suitable method for solving the problem (Bankauskienė & Nedzinskas, 2013).

It might be noted that under various circumstances when discharging substantial officer's duties, police officer must comply with certain specific requirements, characteristic to this particular occupation, and related to official, pecuniary, administrative and criminal liability.

The main attribute of **social responsibility** is that a person knowingly assumes social part, becomes an engaged community subject and decides himself/herself about a proper conduct. So social responsibility develops as human relations under certain conditions. According to Guogis (2006), moral liability arises as a result of violations of some moral requirements: traditions, decency requirements. Police officer, who had perceived role imposed on him/her, voluntarily decides to execute certain social functions as generally important and necessary.

Social responsibility is considered not to be a one-day action, but a process, a permanent commitment to the public, realizing social obligations for the stability and sustainable development of the society (Vaišvila, 2009). However, society involves in investigation of various practical situations and modelling of solutions but has very few concerns about police professional status (Vaišvila, 2009). Thus, society firstly evaluates the quality of police officers' activity. Social responsibility often promotes moral values, ideal social relations and human

development, is social rightness, democratic participation in public life Fenwick (2011) it is also an ethical concept Argandona & Von Weltzein (2010). However, issue of police ethics is not raised in police professional ethics and professional activity itself is not analysed. Moral assessment of police officers is the concern of society. Issues of professional ethics are: how institution executes its functions and what is conduct of police officers (Nedzinskas, 2012). Misiūnas (2010), analysing social responsibility, points out that disciplinary statutes and codes lay down requirements for a police officer not only for his professional duties but also for his personal life – obliging him to avoid discretisation in his actions and to keep prestige of police. Guclu & Can (2015) and Chen (2016) emphasize that next to crime prevention, another very important role of the police is the social service to citizens. Police officer in his/her job constantly meets the situations that require for determinate communication independent from believes, but dictated by the present social role. According to scientists of democratic countries, social control asserting through attentiveness to police officers' conduct and its critical assessment is the power which makes police changing its working style and attitude towards its duties and responsibility.

It is to summarize that social responsibility is inner, perceived and experienced as moral sense while legal liability shows as external sanction which is applied in case of offence. Social responsibility exists all the time while legal liability is applied only in case of lack or absence of social responsibility or when interests of society or other people are harshly violated.

Responsibility education of future professionals. The concept of lifelong learning is emphasized since a professional police officer's responsibility is developed from the early stage of life, at school, at university, and even when he becomes a professional. The majority of European countries pay big attention to the quality of police officers education and training.

One can distinguish the following main factors in early stage education: family, school and self-education. These factors help to develop personal character traits and values such as creativity, a sense of duty and responsibility.

University education of future professionals is focused on the development of professional skills, inter-disciplinarily, broader practical application of knowledge, generation of ideas, independent solution of problems and responsibility in solving complex operational challenges. University studies are aimed to prepare future professionals, who will be able to solve the global problems in the context of other sciences, who are professionals generalists actively involved in the creative process, who successfully adapt themselves in the multicultural communities, who may change themselves their professional identity, who are close to diverse artistry and creative expression.

Methodology

The research instrument. In order to evaluate future police officers responsibility and to perform empirical research, the original questionnaire was used as the main research instrument. The research logical construction is as follows:

- 1) The first part of questions aims to establish a common understanding of future professionals' responsibility and the key factors that help to develop the respondents' legal liability and social responsibility;
- 2) The second part of questions aims to identify the influence of the rules at school to the development of respondents' responsibility;
- 3) The third part aims to define obligations and desires contributing to the responsibility education of students during study process at the university;
- 4) The fourth part is devoted to the collection of demographic characteristics of respondents.

Data set. A written survey was conducted out in one of Lithuanian universities where future police officers are educated. It was aimed to assess the dynamic changes in the responsibility's education of the future professionals. 102 recipients of the study program "Law and Police Activities" took part in the main survey in 2011 and 109 recipients – in 2015. The first year students were chosen as a target group, since the responsibility's education path from school to university and during the studies in the chosen program at the university was emphasized and the students were asked to retrospectively remember the responsibility's education at school and during the studies at the university. This study was carried out at the end of the first year, when the students were able to evaluate their responsibility's education during the first academic year. During the first year students complete most of general university modules which inspire the students to understand the social responsibility and legal liability. The students complete basic courses of Law sciences during the first year. These courses are expanded during subsequent years and help the students in their education of legal liability.

Statistical data analysis techniques allowed quantitative processing of students written survey results. The equality of average values were tested and calculations of Spearman and Cramer's V coefficients for the assessment of correlations between the variables were made. Data processing was carried out using IBM SPSS 23.0.

Results

General factors of future professionals' responsibility. Firstly, it was tested whether the students possess the legal liability and social responsibility

(1 - no possession; 2 – partly possession; 3 – possession of responsibility) and whether it differs in 2011 and 2015. The 78 % of respondents marked that they are social responsible in 2011 and this proportion was 84 % in 2015, however no significant difference was detected between the answers. It is also to notice that 66 % of respondents marked that they are legal responsible in 2011 and this proportion increased to 82 % in 2015. The significant difference between the answers about social responsibility in 2011 and 2015 was detected with a significance level of 0.05. Moreover, Spearman’s correlation was calculated and it was proven that there is a relation between future professionals’ legal and social responsibility ($r=0.355$; $p<0.001$). If a student possesses social responsibility he/she is also likely to possess legal liability and vice versa. In addition, it was found that there are no significant correlations between respondents’ legal and social responsibility and their demographic characteristics (gender, type of secondary school they finished, study results) with a significance level of 0.05.

Students, who marked that they are legal and social responsible, were asked to choose the factors that had the greatest influence to the development of their responsibility. More than one answer could be selected. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Factors influencing future professionals’ responsibility

Factors	Legal liability		Social responsibility	
	2011	2015	2011	2015
Family	48%	50%	60%	74%
School	21%	22%	24%	11%
Self-learning	39%	29%	33%	29%
University	19%	26%	9%	12%

Although the greatest impact on the formation of respondents' responsibility had a family and self-learning, the relevance of the university’s contribution has grown from 2011 to 2015.

Future police officers responsibility’s development at school. Since the formation of a social responsibility and legal liability starts already at school, respondents were asked about their attitude to different rules they learned at school: School’s internal rules, Pupil’s Rules, Fire safety rules, Road rules. It was found that most of the respondents who participated in the survey were familiar or not only aware of the rules, but also compliance with them. The respondents’ attitude to the rules were not significant different in 2011 and 2015 year. The correlations between respondents’ attitude to the rules and their responsibility were also tested. It is to notice, that a statistical significant correlation existed between the attitude to Fire safety rules and legal liability. Future professionals understand that it is important to comply with these rules so that they do not pose

a real risk to human life, health and property, as failing to comply with the requirements of these rules would pose a real threat to public security and would face legal consequences. A statistical significant correlation also existed between attitude to School's internal rules and social responsibility. Sense of social responsibility helped respondents to adjust themselves to the acceptable behaviour norms within the community and promote these norms. Developed sense of social responsibility contributes to the respondents' behaviour in the school community and is basis for further responsibility education at the university.

Future police officers responsibility development at the university. Analysing responsibility development at the University, the students' desires and obligations in self-education of legal liability and social responsibility were taken into consideration.

Table 2 **Obligations and desires influence on the development of future professionals' responsibility**

Legal liability					Social responsibility				
Year	Mean	t	df	p-value	Year	Mean	t	df	p-value
I am obliged to follow the rules and regulations of the university, because the university administration knows what is needed									
2011	2,93	-2,377	176	0,019*	2011	2,75	-3,604	160	<0.001*
2015	3,22				2015	3,20			
I want to follow the rules and regulations of the university because they can lead to successful learning									
2011	3,04	-1,559	194	0,121	2011	2,96	-2,729	176	0,007*
2015	3,22				2015	3,29			
I am obliged to meet the requirements of a teacher because he knows how to teach									
2011	3,19	-1,175	197	0,241	2011	2,96	-2,606	186	0,010*
2015	3,31				2015	3,26			
I want to meet the requirements of a teacher because I am convinced that they are successful in studying									
2011	3,34	-1,433	181	0,153	2011	3,14	-2,151	187	0,033*
2015	3,48				2015	3,39			
I am obliged to be responsible for my studies and successful exams, because otherwise I can be suspended from the university									
2011	3,19	-4,202	170	<0.001*	2011	3,18	-2,742	176	0,007*
2015	3,64				2015	3,50			
I want to be responsible for my studies, because I am a dutiful person knowing what I am aiming for.									
2011	3,68	-0,371	188	0,711	2011	3,60	-0,238	191	0,813
2015	3,71				2015	3,62			

*Significant at 0.05

Students were asked to assess if different obligations and desires at the university have the influence to the development of their responsibility in the scale from 1 (no influence) to 4 (very high influence). The results are presented in Table 2.

Performed study revealed that the students' obligation to comply with the rules of the university, to be responsible for his/her studies and exams success over the years is becoming increasingly important in the development process of both: legal liability and social responsibility. Moreover, the obligation to meet the requirements of a teacher as well as the desires to follow the rules and regulations of the university and to meet the requirements of a teacher became more important for the development of social responsibility in 2015 comparing with 2011.

Conclusions

The police officer, showing his legal liability and social responsibility while concerning about community issues, will gain the trust of community. Education of responsibility is the object of life-long learning process, thus the development of future professionals' responsibility must be highlighted.

The empirical research results showed that the majority of future police officers possess legal and social responsibility and there is a significant correlation between each other. The most important factor influencing the development of responsibility is family, however the relevance of the university's contribution has grown from 2011 to 2015. The possession of responsibility is not correlated to respondents' demographic characteristics. Before entering the Law and Police Activities studies at the university, the majority of respondents were familiar or compliance with the rules at school. Thus, it can be stated that the legal and social responsibility of future professionals was educated already at school. It was also found that the influence of obligations and desires at the university for the development of students' legal and social responsibility increased in 2015 year while comparing with 2011. It is to conclude that future professionals' responsibility develops in each stage of life during their studies at school and at the university and is influenced by different factors, that is why a great interest must be paid to the education of responsibility in order to have qualified police professionals.

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