PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS OF POLICE OFFICERS' COMPETENCE EDUCATION

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Abstract

Paper presents some results from a research study aimed to analyze theoretical aspects of competence education, identify problematic areas of police officers' competence education, and present the possibilities of development of police officers' competence education. Theoretical and methodological basis of the scientific research consists of the used empirical methods – a questionnaire of police officers and officers who are taking managing positions in subdivisions of territorial police office. Data obtained during the questioning were analyzed and presented using graphic methods of data presentation. To present the research results, scientific literature, law, statistical data and questioning analysis was used. The research performed in the police institution revealed the problematic aspects of officers' competence education inside it: competence education process regulated by the means of legal regulation is more efficient and smooth in the level of managers. With respect to the fact that legal regulation of competence groups and their education in Lithuanian police system is a novelty, a striving of this research was to reveal if current order of competence education ensures proper identification of the need for police officers' training and qualification refreshment, and if it motivates police officers to acquire or refresh competencies lacking in professional activity by using horizontal and vertical career.

Key words: police officers, competencies, education of competence.

Classification JEL: M12 – Personnel Management.

1. Introduction

When talking about organizations and their human capital we should not forget to mention and distinguish statutory institutions and their employees. Employees of statutory institutions are given almost the highest level of public attention, and greater requirements than usual in other organizations, in terms of both ethical and qualification and competency. Goal of these institutions is not only to work for the people by securing their rights and freedom, public security, but, in consideration of practice of other countries, to involve the society into activity of these institutions in terms of cooperation. For statutory employee, it is important not only to acquire the qualification required for professional activity, but also to be able to act properly by satisfying society's expectations. Activity of the most statutory institutions based on the principle of publicity not only forces their officers to be gathered, but also to wait for a feedback from society. This is the best evaluation criterion of works performed by competently operating system. With respect to the extent of statutory institutions in Lithuania and abundance of personnel working in these institutions, it is worth to note that concept of employees is very broad, because there are not only statutory state officials working in statutory institutions, but also career and alternative state officials as well as the persons, work of which in statutory institutions is regulated by labour contracts.

This *article examines* legal aspects of statutory state official's, police officer's, competence education in police institution and is oriented towards statutory police officers working in Lithuanian police system and aspects of their competence education. Importance of competencies and aspects of their education in organizations were studied and discussed in different foreign and Lithuanian scientific literature wide enough. Competence was, and still is, a subject of research for many different sciences. Single aspects of competence were examined by following Lithuanian scientists: Adamonienė (2001, 2009), Adamonienė & Pilipavičius (2005), Diskienė & Marčinskas (2007), Juralevičienė (2003), Laužackas, Tere-

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sevičienė & Stasiūnaitienė (2005), Jucevičienė & Lepaitė (2000), Petkevičiūtė & Kaminskytė (2003), Raudeliūnienė, Tunčikienė & Petrusevičius (2013), Raudeliūnienė, Meidutė & Martinaitis (2012), and foreign researchers: Le Boterf (2010), Boyatzis (2008), Boyett (1998), Collin (1997), Poole & Warner (2000), Smelser & Baltes (2001), Spencer & Spencer (1993), Tirana (2002). Meanwhile, the aspects of competence education in police office were not given much attention in scientific literature. Some of the aspects of the issue were investigated and revealed by the authors participating in training or education of officers' professional training or education, or the authors, who in one or another way are related to Lithuanian police system. The following authors could be distinguished: Lepeška (2011), Navickienė (2011), Paurienė (2011), Misiūnas (2008), Smalskys (2008), Adamonienė & Ruibytė (2011).

With respect to the fact that legal regulation of competence groups and their education in Lithuanian police system is a novelty, a striving of this research was to reveal if current order of competence education ensures proper identification of the need for police officers' training and qualification refreshment, and if it motivates police officers to acquire or refresh competencies lacking in professional activity by using horizontal and vertical career.

Purpose of the investigation is to analyze theoretical aspects of competence education, identify problematic areas of police officers' competence education, and present the possibilities of development of police officers' competence education.

2. Research method

Theoretical and methodological basis of the scientific research consists of the used empirical methods – a questionnaire of police officers and officers who are taking managing positions in subdivisions of territorial police office. Also, the investigation was based on the following documents: *Lietuvos Respublikos policijos veiklos įstatymas (2000), Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas (2011), Lietuvos Respublikos valstybės tarnybos įstatymas (2002), Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statuto patvirtinimo įstatymas (2003)* and other documents. Based of theoretical research the questionnaire was prepared for police officers and officers who are taking managing positions in subdivisions of territorial police office. The questioning was performed in the territorial police office – Kaunas county police headquarters. In accordance to the order determined by the laws, this office implements police tasks and performs its functions in the municipalities of Kaunas city, Kėdainiai, Kaunas, Jonava and Kaišiadorys districts.

The questionnaire consists of the questionnaire for the police officers with 23 questions, and that for the managing officers with 29 questions. This questionnaire consists of four parts: professional and demographical characteristics of respondents; peculiarities of competence education process in police office; possibilities for improvement of competence education process in police office; the main and lacking parts of police officers' competence in individual's level. The questionnaires were presented to the respondents personally. The totality of the research includes 119 police officers, 98 of which are police officers and 21 officers who are taking managing positions in the police institution. The performed research reflects problematic aspects of competence education in Lithuanian police system, because legal regulation of competence education is the same for all territorial police offices in all Lithuania. Data obtained during the questioning were analyzed and presented using graphic methods of data presentation. To present the research results, scientific literature, law, statistical data and questioning analysis was used.

3. Results

In order to find out officers' attitude towards the process of competence education, there was an interest during the research what place of importance takes this process in police office in their point of view. Data obtained show that competence education in police office, which

consists of the processes of competence acquisition and refreshment, in respondents' opinion, takes a place high enough. 79% of police officers and 100% of managing officers stated that police officers working in police office, who constantly acquire or refresh lacking competencies, ensure successful implementation of tasks raised to police system and stimulate own personal development in the field of professional activity. 21% of police officers stated that such process has medium importance, because it is not a prior part of police system's processes. Neither respondent indicated such process is not important.

It is supposed that such results obtained during the research reveal, that most police officers, and especially managing officers, understand the importance of competence education processes, which not only helps officer's performance inside the boundaries of professional activity and ensures quality of performed work, but also affects officer's personal development in the field of professional activity. First, officers educating own competence develop themselves as personalities, and such process helps them understanding constant importance of knowledge refreshment or acquisition of the lacking knowledge within the boundaries of professional activity, and also develop own abilities that lead them to adapt that knowledge in practical situations.

As legal regulation of competence education in Lithuanian police system describes six different ways of competence education process, the research identified which of these ways are the most popular. The questionnaire presented the methods of competence education that are being regulated in Lithuanian police system, and respondents could choose few of them for the answer. Having performed the questioning, it became clear that both police officers and their managers usually are educating their competence by participating in the events of qualification refreshment. This is the most popular way of competence education as it was chosen by all officers and managers.

It was find out by the research that in the levels of all respondents all methods of competence education regulated in Lithuanian police system are dominating more or less. It should be highlighted that the biggest part of police officers (23%) are educating their competencies by selecting *higher education* and this is the second popular method of competence education they are selecting, meanwhile this method of competence education is being selected by 19% of managers. Pedagogical activity in the field of police activity when it is not the main officer's activity is being performed by 1% of police officers and 10% of officers and 24% of managers. Functions of tutor are being performed only by 1% of officers and 14% of managers; meanwhile 7% of officers and 29% of managers participate in traineeships and thus educate their competence. Data obtained during the research are presented in Table 1.

Competence education methods	Officers	Leaders	
Higher education (extended studies)	23 %	19 %	
Participation in qualification refreshment events	100 %	100 %	
Performance of pedagogical activity in the field of police activity when it is not the main officer's activity	1 %	10 %	
During adaptation process	6 %	24 %	
While performing functions of tutor	1 %	14 %	
Participating in traineeships	7 %	29 %	

Table 1. Evaluation of competence education methods (own study)

The results obtained during the research allow reasonable statement that the most popular and most often selected method of competence education of both officers and their managers is a *participation in the events* of qualification refreshment. In the level of officers, besides a participation in the events of qualification refreshment, there dominates also a selection for higher education, and other methods of competence education are less important, and because of this a conclusion can be done that such methods of competence education as performance of pedagogical activity or functions of tutor are not popular between officers. Also, officers avoid education of own competence during the adaptation process and participating in traineeships. Meanwhile, between managers, besides participation in qualification refreshment events, the second method of competence education by popularity is a participation in traineeships, and also managers are not avoiding education of their competence during the process of adaptation. Higher education, performance of pedagogical activity and performance of tutor's functions are less important. Assessing a frequency of participation in qualification refreshment events/traineeship, police officers evaluate boundaries of one year better that their managers.

In striving for assessment of the need for training and qualification refreshment in police institution, it was determined that this process is usually performed during annual assessment interview, however, in point of view of police officers, this is only a formality oriented rather towards assessment of work activity than further need for training and qualification refreshment, meanwhile managers on the contrary stated that annual assessment interview highlights the importance of competence education and identifies officer's need for training and qualification refreshment after assessment. Such contradiction of the research results just highlights one of the parts of annual interview – a problem of identification of need for officer's further training and qualification refreshment.

The research was also striving to find out if competence education process goes the same way as it is described in schedule of the order of acquisition and refreshment of competencies, i.e. if officers give their applications in striving to acquire competencies required for their position, acquisition of qualification category or confirmation of the current category, for new or intended position. Also there was an intention to reveal officers' activity and initiative on the issue. During the research it was determined that all questioned managers of police institution subdivisions in striving for acquisition of competencies required for the position held and to get higher qualification category or confirm the held one, according to the need for qualification and training identified during annual assessment interview, give their application to their direct manager, meanwhile such applications are given only by 31% of police officers. 42% of police officers would like to apply, however this process is impeded by the fact that there is no identification of need for further training and qualification refreshment during their annual assessment interview, which highlights this problem once again. 27% of police officers are not interested in the process of competence education and do not initiate it. Such results allow an assumption that officers are lacking motivation and highlighting of importance of a general competence education process.

During the adaptation of competence education process initiation, *managers are more active* and initiate such competence education process themselves by their applications, meanwhile, according to the statement of bigger part of other officers, adaptation process of competence education process is not being initiated neither by themselves nor by their managers.

In the questionnaire both officers and their managers were asked which elements of Lithuanian police system's competence education order *are motivating them as officers*, which elements motivate them partially and which elementsts are not motivating. The biggesr part of the respondents (94% of officers and 76% of managers) stated that they are most motivated by the setting of additional wage premiums after acquisition of higher

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qualificational category and only 14% of managers indicated that monetary premium motivates them only partially. The least part of respondents stated that *additional wage premium is not motivating*. According to the answers of the most respondents, setting of term of compulsory competence acquisition or refreshment in order to acquire or confirm qualificational category motivates only partially. Competencies gathered by the officer are one of the criteria in assessment of work results, skills, professionalism, suitability for position motivates enougn 38% of officers and 62% of managers, motivates partially 49% of officers and 38% of managers, and does not motivate 13% of managers. Binding of competence education process with officer's horizontal and vertical career mostly motivates respondents only partially, and does not motivate 6% of officers. Identification of need for training does not motivate even 30% of managers, and possibility for constant development motivates enough the bigger part of managers, however, it does not motivate 7% of officers and 19% of managers. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Motives	Motivates enough		Motivates only partially		Not motivates at all	
	Officers	Leaders	Officers	Leaders	Officers	Leaders
Setting of term of compulsory competence acquisition of refreshment in order to acquire or confirm qualification category	44 %	33 %	56 %	67 %	_	_
Competencies gathered by the officer as one of the criteria in assessment of work results, skills, professionalism, suitability for position	38 %	62 %	49 %	38 %	13 %	_
Binding of competence education process with officer's horizontal and vertical career	30 %	43 %	64 %	57 %	6 %	_
Identification of need for training	8 %	48 %	62 %	52 %	30 %	_
Possibility of constant development	36 %	67 %	57 %	14 %	7 %	19 %
Setting of additional wage premium (after acquisition of higher qualification category)	94 %	76 %	_	14 %	6 %	10 %

Table 2. Evaluation of competence education order's motivation factors (own study)

The respondents were asked if *officers would be more motivated to be more interested in this process* and its possibilities in case there would be more highlighted the importance of acquisition or refreshment of lacking competencies and identified suitably the needs for training and qualification refreshment during annual assessment interview. They could choose one of three answers. 10% of managers and 33% of officers think that in such a way there would be increased officers' motivation to be interested in competence education process and its possibilities.

The answer that importance of competence acquisition and refreshment is highlighted enough and the need for training and qualification refreshment is being identified suitably, which motivates to be interested in competence education process and its possibilities, during annual assessment interview in police institution, was chosen by 52% of managers and 8% of officers. 59% of police officers and 38% of officers stated that simple highlighting of the importance of this process and identification of the need for training and qualification refreshment during annual assessment interview is not enough, this requires the totality of individual's personal characteristics: desire for development in professional field, initiative and so on.

However, police officers and managers would be more stimulated to be interested in competence education process and active participation in it, if an officer would be obliged to give application for acquisition or refreshment of lacking competencies to his/her direct manager every

year after annual assessment interview, and if mechanism of partial compensation of higher education (extended studies) would be created. In case such procedure would be compulsory, this would ensure constant participation in competence education process and officer's interest in methods and possibilities of competence education.

The research had also a striving to *identify the most required and lacking parts of competence* between officers and their managers. In the questionnaires of officers and their managers there were distinguished following parts of competence in the level of individual: personal, social and professional competence. There was an additional managerial competence in the questionnaire of managers.

By the research it was identified that in the level of police institutions' subdivisions managers the most required parts of competence are personal and social competence. According to the respondents, the smaller part is taken by professional and managerial competencies. Meanwhile between lacking parts of competence there also dominate personal and social competencies.

According to the statement of managers of police institution subdivisions, the most required parts of professional competence in their work are *ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, striving for professional knowledge, knowing of laws and other legislation, work experience, and also professional knowledge on modern achievements and work methods.* According to their statement, less required are: higher education, exhaustive knowledge on work character and further education. In managers' opinion, the most lacking parts of professional competence are: ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, striving for professional knowledge and knowing of foreign languages.

Data of the research allow a statement that the most required parts of managerial competence for managers are *ability to motivate, strategic singleness, management of conflicts and risk, team work organization, management of discussions and meetings as well as ability to get, gather and process information needed.* Meanwhile, according to the statement of managers, analytical and creative thinking and development of organization are less important and less required. The most lacking parts of competence are: *management of discussions and meetings, management of conflicts and risk as well as ability to get, gather and process information needed.*

In opinion of officers working in police institution subdivisions, the most required professional competence parts are: knowing of laws and other legislation, striving for professional knowledge and work experience as well as ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and thorough professional knowledge on work character. As less required they named knowing of foreign languages and professional knowledge on modern achievements and work methods as well as higher and further education.

The research identified that officers are lacking mostly a striving for professional knowledge, professional knowledge on modern achievements and work methods, knowing of laws and other legislation as well as knowing of foreign language.

Having analyzed the research results it became clear that the most required and lacking parts of competence for officers and managers are personal and social, therefore further there is presented a comparative analysis of these data.

Need and lack of personal competence parts in officers and their managers levels. During the research both officers and their managers could choose from 12 presented elements of personal competence by indicating the need and lack of parts of personal competence. The results obtained are presented in Figure 1.

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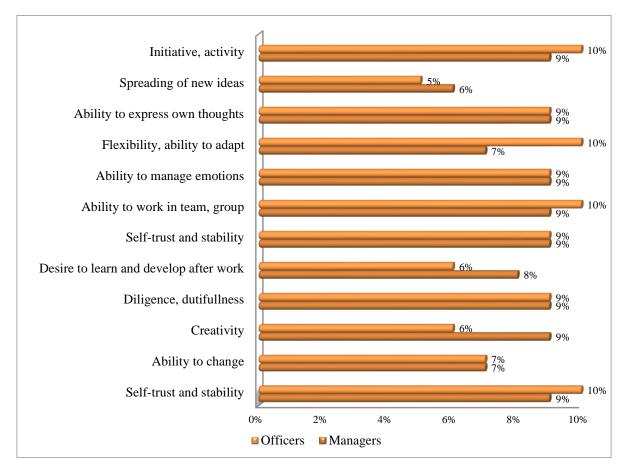


Figure 1. Evaluation of the most required parts of personal competence (own study)

Having analyzed the presented data, it can be stated that for both officers and their managers equally important and required parts of personal competence in their work are officer's initiative, activity, ability to work in team or group and self-trust, and stability. While assessing the lacking parts (Figure 2), it was noticed that police officers are most lacking ability to manage emotions, ability to work in team or group, and their managers are most lacking flexibility, ability to adapt, diligence, dutifulness, self-trust and stability.

Need and lack of social competence parts in officers and their managers levels. Officers and their managers, who made a totality of respondents during the research, could choose from 11 presented elements of social competence by naming the parts of social competence required in their work and also the lacking ones. The research results are presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

It was identified that the most required parts of social competence in officers work are mutual understanding and help to co-workers, sense of responsibility, observance of professional ethics, ability to ask, ability to communicate as well as creation of positive police image. Essentially, the opinions of officers and their managers coincide, however managers additionally highlight the importance of ability to cooperate. Distribution of lacking parts of social competence is different. Officers indicate that they are most lacking mutual understanding and help to co-workers, sense of responsibility, observance of professional ethics as well as knowing of negotiation art and negotiation flexibility. Their managers are lacking knowing of negotiation art and negotiation flexibility, mutual understanding, help to co-workers, observance of professional ethics and ability to ask.

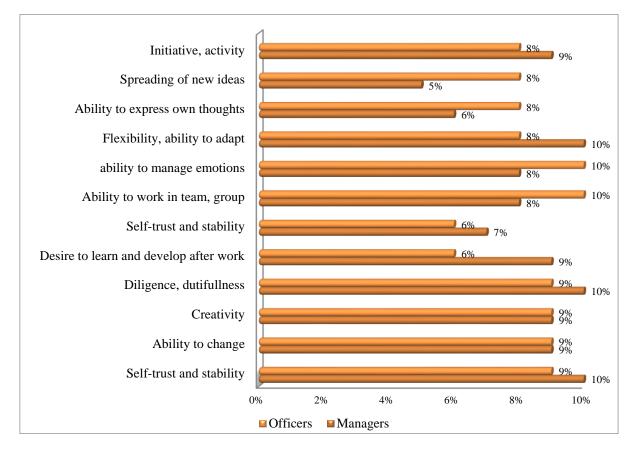


Figure 2. Evaluation of the most lacking parts of personal competence (own study)

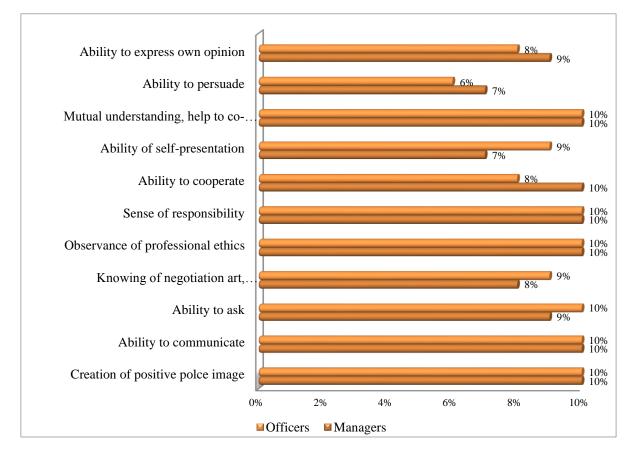


Figure 3. Evaluation of the most required parts of social competence (own study)

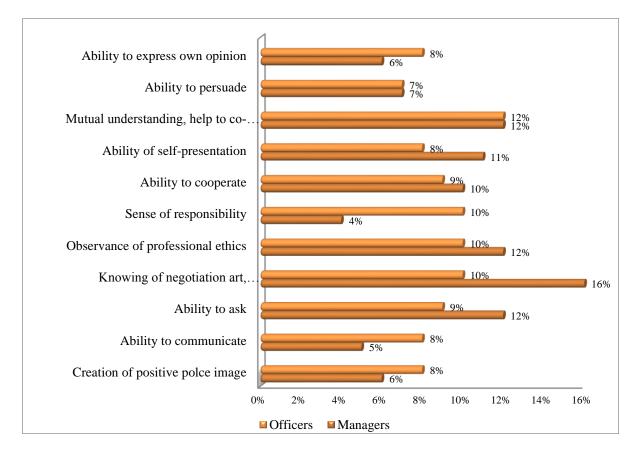


Figure 4. Evaluation of the most lacking parts of social competence (own study)

The results of the research showed that police officers *understand and highlight the importance of competence education process*. First, it is because they think acquisition and refreshment of competencies can help officer to perform in the field of professional activity, and second, because this can determine development of the individual in the field of professional activity. It is supposed that many persons could and would like to see these concepts as the same; however, it is important to highlight their essential difference and their competitiveness at the same time. Affected by competence education process, a development of officer as individual in the field of professional activity reflects understanding of importance of this process and determines further participation and interest in it.

In the process of competence education, there are being developed abilities of a person that determine the level of usage of obtained or refreshed knowledge in a particular situation within the boundaries of the professional activity. Thus, educated personality and totality of obtained knowledge only determine further success of officer's activity and ability to implement the tasks raised to the service. Of course, understanding of the importance of competence education process only does not reflect officers' desire to participate in it, because on top of all factors of motivation of the order of competence education and totality of the individual's personal characteristics are important. The research results allow a statement that within the boundaries of one year, police officers participate in qualification refreshment events, traineeships actively enough, and no one indicated that he/she haven't participated in these events within the year.

Totality of the results obtained allows an assumption that officers are more active in this process that their managers, but the difference is not substantial. There was find out during the research that the most popular and most often selected by police officers method of competence education is a participation in qualification refreshment events. However, between officers there is highlighted the importance of higher education as well, because most

officers are educating their competencies by selecting extended studies of higher education, differently that their managers, who already have higher education. In order for officers to educate their competencies more and to choose more various methods of competence education, more attention should be given to the performance of pedagogical activity and functions of tutor.

Thereby, an essential problem that became clear during the research is an identification of the need for further police officers' training and qualification refreshment. A conclusion should be done that officer's annual assessment interview, a constituent of which is an identification of the need mentioned, is performed more efficiently in managers level and less attention is given to thoroughness of its performance while assessing other officers of police institution, and especially when manager performs assessment interviews of few officers, because there are tens of subordinate.

As the research results indicate, higher managers, who evaluate the managers of police subdivisions, every time during annual assessment interview discuss and identify further need for training and qualification refreshment. Meanwhile, despite other managers evaluating direct subordinates indicated that they identify further need for training and qualification refreshment during every assessment, the most part of respondents, composed of police officers, stated that they do not discuss further need for training and qualification refreshment with their manager during assessment interviews and they think this is more a formality oriented towards assessment of work activity, discussion of work results. Because of these reasons, it is supposed that because the position of managers and their subordinates, i.e. other police officers, regarding proper identification of need for training and qualification refreshment, differs cardinally, this only highlights a problem of this process. It is supposed that such results might be determined by the fact that managers reporting conclusions of annual assessment interview are formally filling the graph that should indicate further need of the subordinate for training and qualification refreshment, however the importance of this process is not highlighted enough and (or) is not discussed and analyzed enough together with the subordinate with respect to his/her expectations and needs, or such need is not indicated at all by indicating that the officer has no need for development during the current year.

Having analyzed the research results, it also became clear that all questioned managers of police institution subdivisions in striving for acquisition or refreshment of lacking competencies, that are required for current position or acquisition of higher qualification of confirmation of the current one, are applying to their direct managers following the need for training and qualification refreshment determined during annual assessment interview, and thus initiate this process. It is supposed that this once again confirms that the process of competence education is more efficient in the level of managers. Also the attention should be paid to the fact that according to the bigger part of respondents, composed of other officers, this once again highlighted and emphasized a problem of one part of annual assessment interviews, i.e. identification of the need for training and qualification refreshment, because this interview both does not identifies this need properly and it is the reason that further impedes officers' possibilities to initiate the process of competence education that is required for current position of acquisition of higher category of confirmation of the current one.

During the research it was determined that managers of police institution subdivision in striving for competencies required for aimed position more actively take care in this process and initiate it by their applications than their subordinates. Such activity was noticed also in a striving for acquisition of competencies required for new positions. However, it needs to be noticed also that proper evaluation of positions of police officers who are not taking managing positions is difficult in the part of competence education required for new position, because the most of these respondents, after the order of competence education came into force, were not assigned new positions, therefore their answers do not reflect peculiarities of this process between these respondents. Managers of police institution subdivisions initiate competence education process every time new officers are assigned new position. And according to their statement, they initiate it more often than officers themselves.

Also, during the research there was identified that according to the statement of the most part of police officers, it is not enough during the annual assessment interview to highlight the importance of competence education and identify further need for training and qualification refreshment in order officers would be more motivated to be interested in the process of competence education and its possibilities, moreover, an individual needs a totality of personal characteristics. Meanwhile the most of respondents of managers' level stated that currently during the annual assessment interview the importance of competence education is being highlighted and the need for further training and qualification refreshment is being identified properly, which motivates officers to be more interested in the process of competence development and its possibilities. The research results revealed thatfor both officers and their managers the most important as well as the most lacking parts of competence are personal and social competence. Therefore an assumption could be made that the big importance in officers' work is made of inter-personal relationship based on abilities to communicate to persons of different categories, ability to work in team by adapting within the boundaries of social environment, and also an ability to strive for goals, self-evaluation and motivation. Thus, this makes sufficient assumptions for individual's competence education (Strateginės individo kompetencijos, 2007).

Beside the aspects of the order of competence education presented above, it is also important to highlight the activeness of the officers, who are using the order of competence education regulated in Lithuanian police system, in applications based on which such process can be initiated. The performed assessment of motivation factors of Lithuanian police system competence education revealed that the most valued and motivated factor for officers is additional premium given after acquisition of higher category. Evaluating motivation factors that would create assumptions for improvement of competence education of both officers and their managers, compulsory application for participation in the process of competence education after officers' annual assessment interview would be suitable, because it would stimulate them to be more interested in this process and active participation in it. Also, a creation of mechanism of compensation of higher education would be topical to them.

4. Discussion/conclusions

The research performed in the police institution revealed the problematic aspects of officers' competence education inside it: competence education process regulated by the means of legal regulation is more efficient and smooth in the level of managers. The research also revealed one constituent part of officer's annual assessment interview – a problem of identification of the need for further training and qualification refreshment. Inadequate identification of such need impedes officers' possibilities to initiate the process of competence education and also de-motivates officers. While identifying this need, officer's direct manager should avoid subjective assessment and identification of such need, and also should make stronger emphasis on the importance of the process. During the assessment of selection of variety of competence education still is a performance of pedagogical activity and functions of tutor, which makes assumptions for popularization of these methods and involvement of officers into performance of this activity.

Process of competence education has not only to motivate officers for active participation in it and be interested in its possibilities and methods, but also to ensure systemic participation of police officers in it. Assessing the research data, essential possibilities of police officers' competence education development could be: development of the means of legal regulation that determine the order of police officers' competence education as well as improvement of the order of inner processes.

Also, while talking on development of the means of legal regulation it should be highlighted that regulation of compulsory applications to participate in competence education process after performance of annual assessment interview and identification of the need for further training and qualification refreshment could improve substantially the process of competence education and at the same time would stimulate to be interested in its methods and possibilities. Thus it would be possible to avoid subjectivity of officer's assessor, and also this would stimulate assessor's thoroughness while performing identification of such need. Also officers would be motivated by the fact if their participation in the process of competence education would be one of the criteria of assessment of work activity, determination of additional wage would depend on which.

The improvement of the order of inner processes should be attributed to the highlighting of the importance of competence education process in the level of officers, which would include more active review of legislation regulating the process of competence education in order to involve and engage as more as possible officers of primary and middle link working in subdivisions of Criminal and Public police. Besides, the selection of variety of competence education methods would be stimulated by creation of mechanism of partial compensation of higher education, which would create possibilities to the officer to educate own competence outside the institution, and also to make more active officers' involvement into the performance of pedagogical activity and functions of tutor.

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