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REQUIREMENTS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: IS IT IN A DICHOTOMY OR A SYNERGY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT?

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Abstract*. The dichotomy or synergy, when law enforcement, which has the main function to stand for the rule of law, and also for human rights may be discussed from several perspectives, such as the role of emotional intelligence or effective performance. When it is doubtful that a direct and one-sided answer will be formulated, it is, however, important to ask the questions in a democratic country. Human history, at least the one recorded in writing or preserved in technological artefacts such as cities, irrigation, and similar, spans approximately 10 thousand years or so (at least until new findings are uncovered), but the history of democracy is rather short. Apart from the rather limited and short-lived form of democracy in Antiquity (Ancient Greece), the more recent democratic thought and its manifestations do not extend beyond 300 years. The urgency of discussions about what it means to live in a democracy is rooted in the fact that democracy remains rather fragile and limited globally: the Democracy Index does not increase; rather, it declines. Not even half of the world's population lives in a democracy: specifically, 45%. Then 39% live under authoritarian rule, and 15% in "hybrid regimes" that combine electoral democracy with authoritarian tendencies. Thus, anyone who lives among those 45% has both expectations and a certain responsibility to live up to and respect the privileges we enjoy. Thus, it is imperative to discuss how our state and its institutions, specifically, the police force, function. The* ***aim*** *of this paper is to discuss whether there are preconditions for promoting a paradigm of thinking, where requirements and expectations for police officers are in synergy with the support they need in their demanding work. The empirical data were collected during the 1st quarter of 2026, under the framework of the POL-COM (KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals, with respect to communications) project.*

Keywords*: Police officer, Emotional Intelligence (EI), synergy, paradigm, requirements.*

Introduction

While human history, at least the one that is recorded in written form or preserved in technological artefacts, such as cities, irrigation, and similar, counts approximately 10 thousand

years or so (at least until new findings are uncovered), the history of democracy is rather short[1]. Apart from the rather limited and short-lived form of democracy in Antiquity (Ancient Greece), the more recent democratic thought and its manifestations do not extend beyond 300 years. And what just adds to the urgency for these discussions, the ideas of democracy are still rather fragile and limited in terms of their spread globally, even today. As the Democracy Index does not increase, rather it declines, which is counterintuitive to rational expectations of a person of the 21st century: in 2024, the average score fell to 5.17 (down from 5.23 in 2023), which is the lowest score since the index began in 2006 (https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024/). Not even half of the world's population lives in a democracy: specifically, 45%. Then 39% live under authoritarian rule, and 15% in "hybrid regimes" that combine electoral democracy with authoritarian tendencies[2].

Thus, anyone who lives among those 45%, have both expectations, and, we, the authors of these lines we will argue, certain responsibility to live up and respect the privileges we enjoy.

One of the aspects of life in any society (be it a democratic one or not) is the way a state and its institutions function. Members of a democratic, rule of law and human rights-oriented society, a society, which, we assume, contemporary Lithuanian society is, expect all institutions to perform their assigned tasks in a professional, reliable, and transparent way. Members of a democratic society have rather high expectations for the way their state and its institutions function; they expect a state to be governed and run (including its institutions, such as law enforcement) in a democratic, professional, reliable, and transparent way. If an infringement of these expectations is noticed, or at times, just perceived, the members of such a society immediately use all legal tools to rectify the situation, such as expressing their disappointment on social IT-based media or in mainstream media; sometimes even a more direct and compelling legal actions are taken. These expectations are thus intrinsically linked to law enforcement officers' communication skills and their ability to convey instructions, which, in turn, relate to Emotional Intelligence (further referred to as EI). EI is understood as the ability to perceive, interpret, demonstrate, control, evaluate, and use emotions to communicate with and relate to others, with respect, effectively, and constructively. That is, in a contemporary society, the one where appr. 45% of global denizens live[3], a law enforcement officer is expected to represent a democratic state in a reliable, recognizable way, as officers are both first responders and representatives of any state. The expectations are high and ever-increasing; yet do we consider support for our officers at the same or at least a similar level, that the expectations are set? That is, is synergy or dichotomy evident between the requirements for law enforcement officers and the support they receive in their highly demanding work? The Lithuanian police force faces constant public scrutiny, officers are expected to do so much in some volatile and quite often extremely dangerous situations, where life is endangered.

We, the authors of this paper, posit that, as there are several dozen lost lives among Lithuanian police officers, the sad statistics add to the urgency to start and heavily promote a paradigm[4] of thinking, where requirements and expectations for police officers are in synergy with the support they need in their demanding work.

Research **object**: discuss whether synergy or dichotomy exists between the requirements for law enforcement officers and the support they receive in their highly demanding work.

[1] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva. Citizenship and a Young Person: Expected and Unexpected Aspects // Public Policy and Accounting. Zhytomyr : [Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University]. ISSN 2707-9325. 2022, no. 2(6), p.10-17. DOI: 10.26642/ppa-2022-2(6)-10-17.
[2] https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024/, accessed on 26 March, 2027.
[3] https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024/, accessed on 26 March, 2027.
[4] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/paradigm, accessed on 27 March, 2026.

The **aim** of this paper is to discuss whether there are preconditions for promoting a paradigm of thinking in which the requirements and expectations for police officers are in synergy with the support they need in their demanding work.

The paper is based on a research question, which highlights the problem (**RQ1)**: Is a synergy or a dichotomy evident between the requirements for law enforcement officers and the support (in terms of attention to EI) that they receive in their highly demanding work?

Methods: The theoretical considerations were discussed and the data items were collected during the first quarter of 2026, under the framework of the POL-COM (KA220-VET – Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals with respect to communication) project, when: 1) the Content analysis of selected documents was performed; and 2) subjective perspectives were collected.

Stress, requirements and expectations for a contemporary police officer's professional activities: towards the support paradigm

According to the Report of the Activities of the Lithuanian Police (for 2024[5]; note - the data for 2025 was not yet confirmed at the moment of developing this paper in Spring 2026), the Lithuanian public had a high confidence level in the Lithuanian police (82% had a positive attitude). The plan for 2025 was that 75% of respondents would have a positive attitude, which remains to be confirmed in the future (p. 11). Interestingly, the plan for 2024 had been to maintain a benchmark of 75%, which was in line with the previous year, yet the factual estimation yielded higher results, which, on the one hand, is a positive development; on the other hand, it further increases the pressure of expectations towards our police officers. One glaring example of how difficult it will be to maintain the level of confidence is the fact that only more than a third 37.5% of offences and crimes in digital space were successfully solved in 2024 (p. 24)[6]; when the portion of activities in all spheres of private, economic, social life is being transferred into digital sphere, this percentage will trigger public to question the competence and readiness of police to apprehend this type of criminal activity.

The main legal document, the Act on Police[7], which regulates the activities of police officers in Lithuania, stipulates the vision, values, mission, tasks, and functions of the Lithuanian police. These aspects are closely related and complement each other. The Lithuanian police is expected to effectively use available resources to defend the rights and freedoms of the Lithuanian people, protect society and the state, and help individuals, families, and communities.[8] The vision is focused on society, its safety, and a police officer as well.

Even a cursory analysis of the requirements for our police officers reveal a high level of expectations. In the paper, we call our readers to ponder whether these requirements are in synergy or there is some dichotomy of what the public expects, what legal regulations require,

5 https://policija.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1740978344/10416/2024%20m.%20policijos%20veiklos%20ataskaita%20fin.pdf , accessed on March 3, 2026.

6 https://policija.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1740978344/10416/2024%20m.%20policijos%20veiklos%20ataskaita%20fin.pdf , accessed on March 3, 2026.

7 Lietuvos Respublikos policijos įstatymas, Nr. VIII-2048, LRS, accessed on 27 March, 2026, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.111665/asr

8 Lietuvos policija, „vizija, misija, vertybės", (2020), accessed on 31 March, 2026, https://policija.lrv.lt/lt/apie-mus/vizija-misija-vertybes (**Note** - translation of texts in this paper is provided by the authors, thus certain discrepancy between texts in different versions is possible)

and what support our officers receive. Police officers must be respected and trusted, therefore it is important to provide conditions for improvement and the performance of duties. Officers must be motivated, police officers must be honest, loyal to police values, determined, and effective, which means officers must be competent in solving problems of people and society; they must use effective methods of combating crime, strive for concrete results at minimal cost. The police force is for the people, thus police officers unconditionally defend human rights, and it is important to ensure a safety of a person, because that leads to a safe state. Police officers strive for trust and partnership, ensuring public order and security, including crime prevention.[9]

Police officers are assigned six major tasks to carry out during their service. These tasks serve as guidelines for officers on what to focus on and what exactly to do; these tasks are as follows: 1) protection of human rights and freedoms; 2) ensuring the safety of individuals, society, and public order; 3) providing urgent assistance to persons when necessary due to their physical or mental helplessness, as well as to persons who have suffered from criminal acts, administrative offenses (misdemeanors), extreme situations, or similar factors; 4) prevention of criminal offenses and administrative offenses (misdemeanors); 5) detection and investigation of criminal offenses and administrative offenses (misdemeanors); 6) supervision of road traffic[10].

Although the tasks assigned to police officers seem achievable, they nevertheless at times require great effort, as they face an officer every day while on duty, and sometimes all or at least several of them – all at once.

In Lithuania, we have casualties among police officers in the line of duty (since Independence 36 officers lost their life in the line of duty, which is more than one life lost each year, which must be tolerated)[11] or police officers were in close proximity to lost life, or were injured in the line of performing professional duties[12]. The sad statistics adds to the urgency to start and heavily promote a paradigm of thinking, where requirements and expectations for police officers are in synergy with the support they need in their demanding work. Police officers need to reason and react fast, thus they fast information processing skills, patience, and strong psychological and physical fitness. Though the Act on Police of the Republic of Lithuania establishes 22 functions of police officers, only a few that are most relevant to the topic of this article are listed here. Police officers within their competence develop or participate in the preparation of projects for prevention and control, measures for law enforcement strengthening, and then implement these measures. Within their competence, they implement the prevention, detection, and investigation of criminal offenses and administrative violations (misdemeanors), also analyze and identify the causes for criminal behaviors or administrative violations and take measures established by law to eliminate them. They also conduct searches for suspects, accused persons, convicted persons, persons who have absconded, and persons who have left healthcare institutions to whom the court has applied coercive medical measures, and other persons, and establish the identity of persons and of unidentified corpses found. Officers implement the provisions of European Union and international legislation within its competence, participate in the activities of European Union institutions, bodies, services, agencies, and international organizations and organize and implement measures to ensure

[9] Lietuvos Respublikos policijos įstatymas, Nr. VIII-2048, LRS, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.111665/asr; accessed on March 24, 2026
[10] Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statuto pakeitimo įstatymas Nr. XIII-1381, LRS, https://www.infolex.lt/portal/start_ta.asp?act=doc&fr=pop&doc=41119, accessed on March 1, 2026.
[11] https://policija.lrv.lt/lt/apie-mus/eidami-tarnyba/
[12] https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/nusikaltimaiirnelaimes/vilniaus-centre-pasautas-policijos-pareigunas-59-2321080

public order and public safety; and, which is one of the most important points in this paper, provide immediate assistance to victims of criminal offences and administrative offences or for persons in a helpless state, as it is necessary to preserve life, health, or property. Article 6(1)(13) of the Law on the Police of the Republic of Lithuania, referred to above, also specifies a function of police officers in communicating with victims. As police officers spend a considerable part of their time at work communicating with victims, it takes a lot of emotional energy to listen to each person, understand a person, and find a way to help a person. It is important to note that stress is inevitable in police officers' work, because their work involves witnessing human suffering, such as witnessing incidents in which even children are abused, making split-second decisions about life and death, bearing great social responsibility, and complying with strict legal norms[13]. Any incident that did not result in a safe conclusion is scrutinized in a years' long legal process[14], which takes its high toll on a police officer, the colleagues involved, and the outcome is rarely favorable; which remains to be seen in this particular case (fatal encounter with a citizen in December, 2023). Taking into account the vision, mission, values, tasks, and functions presented, it is important to note that everything presented applies both to the police community as a whole and to each police officer individually. Police officers are subject to high standards (sometimes exceedingly so); they are the executors of the listed tasks, their work is mainly focused on ensuring security, even solving social problems, communicating with citizens, which is why officers must know the law, be able to listen, be able to resolve conflicts, and make decisions here and now – and all at once!

As the aim of this paper is to discuss whether there are preconditions for promoting a paradigm of thinking, whether requirements and expectations for police officers are in synergy with the support they need in their demanding work, yet the scope of the paper is rather limited, therefore we here will provide just several arguments in favor of the need for this paradigm.

Firstly, it was already discussed that the statistical data about lost police officers in the line of duty is intolerable in a small country such as Lithuania.

Secondly, a high level of legal requirements and expectations for professional conduct was already presented.

Thirdly, an example of an ongoing exhausting legal process was provided when a police officer was charged for using excessive force (the case is ongoing, as the positive verdict acquitting an officer was referred to a higher court). In the case of the slightest controversy, in a contemporary society, almost always an officer will have to defend his/her case, and that benefit of the doubt is not extended by either the public or the legal system. On the one hand, it is symptomatic of how democracy should work, where the state and its institutions are supposed to work for an individual and safeguard the individual's rights. However, it illustrates the extreme pressures our officers are under.

The fourth argument is the ever-changing (deteriorating) regional and global political changes, and the changes in the level and sophistication of criminal activities due to technological and other factors.

Lastly (fifthly), we note that the number of officers in the service is decreasing, which only adds to the pressure that the remaining officers face.

[13] Conflict de-escalation and resolution. Course materials (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42 [accessed on 20 March, 2026]

[14] https://www.prokuraturos.lt/lt/pateiktas-kasacinis-skundas-del-nuosprendzio-kuriuo-isteisintas-tarnybos-metu-moteri-nusoves-policijos-pareigunas/12021, accessed on 24 March, 2026

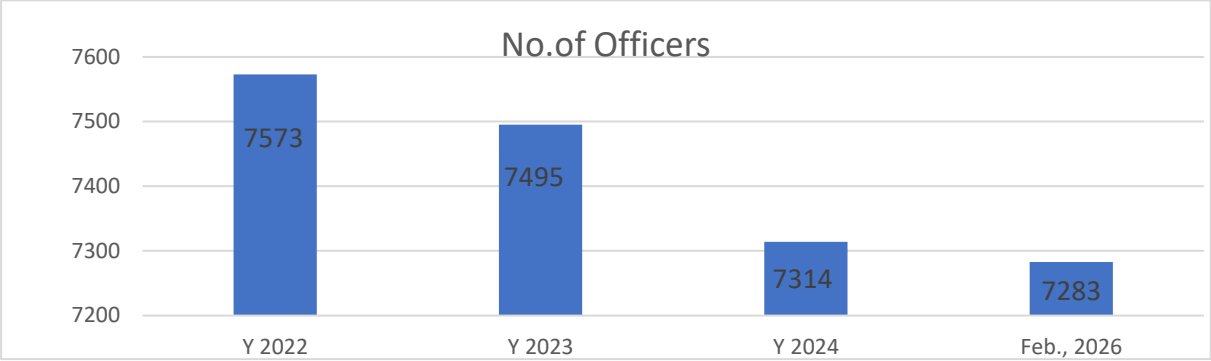


Figure 1. Dynamics of the number of police officers in Lithuania

The data published by the Police Department reveals that the number of police officers is decreasing every year recently. Each year, the number is decreasing, as is evident in the most recent number (Fig. 1)[15].

Moreover, even the argument that, in the context of a decreasing population in Lithuania, the decrease in the number of police officers is acceptable does not stand up to scrutiny or logic, as the relative number of police officers per 100,000 inhabitants is also observably decreasing[16].

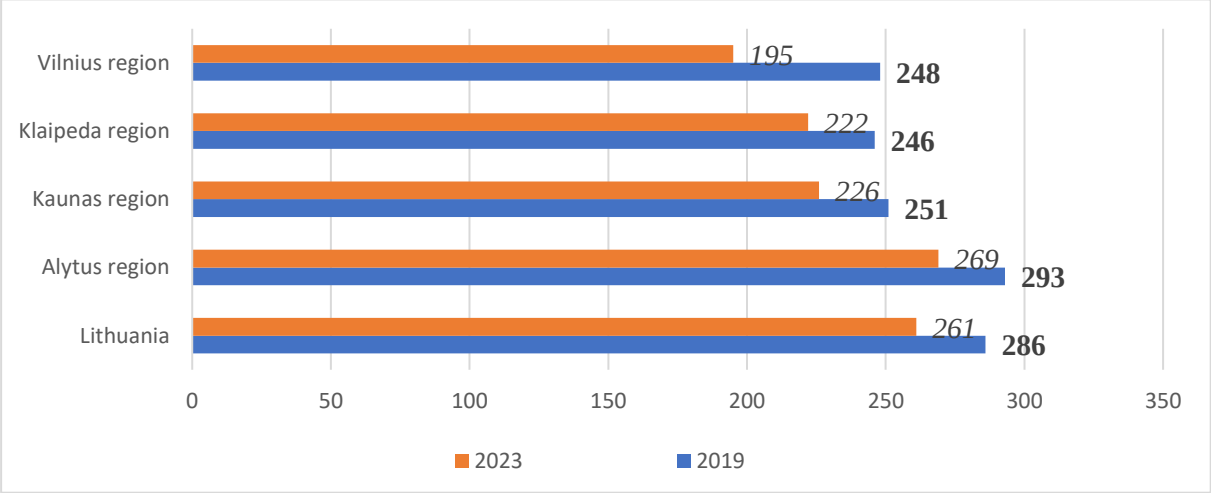


Figure 2. The dynamics of relative number of police officers per 100 thous. inhabitants: comparison between situation in 2019 and 2023

In fact, the relative number of police officers in that period (Fig.2) decreased by appr. 8.7%, which is not conducive to public security, to security of officers themselves, and only adds to our position that the paradigm of support for officers rather than only paradigm of expectations for them deserves attention.

15 https://policija.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1740978344/10416/2024%20m.%20policijos%20veiklos%20ataskaita%20fin.pdf ; accessed on 3 March, 2026 and https://madeinvilnius.lt/naujienos/lietuvos-naujienos/policija-truksta-1500-pareigunu-bet-reakcija-i-ivykius-10-sekundziu-greitesne/ , accessed on 24 March, 2026

16 https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?indicator=S3R714#/

The police system must be strengthened rather than weakened because it is unclear when crime levels will increase[17]. Due to the current geopolitical setting, already widely noticeable changes in the labor market, which, most probably will only increase exponentially as related to technological changes[18], and other, yet to be seen technological changes already mentioned above, the situation may shift rapidly, producing new openings for the increase of crime levels, which will cause problematic issues for the Lithuanian public, the economy, and, surely, law enforcement.

There are several sources of stress in each profession; however, they are clearly pronounced for police officers, especially, as discussed earlier, Lithuanian police face specific additional sources of stress, such as a decreasing number of colleagues, with whom a workload may be shared. The intensity of stress may vary significantly depending on the nature of the professional activity: police officers often find themselves at the centre of a disaster or conflict, where firm, legally valid, and sensitive action is necessary here and now[19]. The police profession is one of the most stressful professions, affecting the physical and mental health and psychosocial well-being of officers, *ibid*. Stress has been investigated for decades; thus, we now know the main characteristics, manifestations, and causes of stress, e.g., it is known that stress is an individual physiological and psychological reaction of the body to external and, sometimes, internal stimuli[20]. If an officer performing assigned functions is overwhelmed with information that cannot be immediately and adequately processed, surely, the officer will experience stress, will be impeded from making the correct decisions, and the level of stress will increase even further. This is especially true, when an officer realizes the possible consequences of the decision made. Stress in the professional activities of a police officer can manifest itself in symptoms, such as heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, muscle tone, movement and coordination disorders, emotional tension, fear, and sometimes feeling of a lost control[21].

Sources of stress or tension felt in professional activities do not increase work productivity and results, nor, in most cases, do they provide positive emotions in the work environment. Moreover, extreme or prolonged stress can negatively affect a person's well-being and health[22]. Thus, the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of police officers must be developed, as not every officer is able to cope with challenges, experiences, stress, and anxiety. Officers require knowledge, training, and emotional, collegial, and professional support, as the context in which they operate is highly demanding (in light of the five arguments for the need for a paradigm of support). Almost universally, officers respond to, are involved in, or participate in

[17] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva; Jatautaitė, Dileta; Adamonienė, Rūta. Educators on emotional intelligence in law enforcement and education // Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka = Public security of public order. Kaunas : Mykolo Romerio universitetas. ISSN 2029-1701. eISSN 2335-2035. 2025, t. 37, Nr. 4, p. 635- 646. DOI: 10.13165/PSPO-25-37-04-10.

[18] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clyk7zg0gzvo

[19] Conflict de-escalation and resolution (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42, accessed on 20 March, 2026.

[20] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva. Inteligencja emocjonalna, studenci i Covid = Emotional intelligence, students and Covid // Uniwersytet - raport z rubieży = A University - a report from the frontier / editing by Anna Murawska, Paula Wiażewicz-Wójtowicz. Szczecin : Uniwersytet Szczeciński, 2022. ISBN 9788379725571. eISBN 9788379725588. p. 119-120. (Pedagogika szkoły wyższej, ISSN 2083-4381 ; t.3).

[21] Conflict de-escalation and resolution. Course materials of the KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals, with respect to communications project (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42, accessed on 23 March, 2026.

[22] Bernard S. Mayer. *The Dynamics of Conflict : A Guide to Engagement and Intervention*. Vol 2nd ed. Jossey-Bass; 2012. Accessed March 31, 2026. https://search-ebscohost-com.skaitykla.mruni.eu/

interactions with victims, witnesses, or suspects. Therefore, police officers' Emotional Intelligence must be constantly developed, because officers must first regulate their own responses and behaviors appropriately, and they will be able to understand others and manage their communication with other people and between them[23].

The analysis of studies and the legal regulation documents indicate that the pressures that come from high-pressure situations where our officers operate in, the high requirements set by the legal regulations for the profession, by superiors, and surely by the public, in conjunction with at times excessive workload, lead to at times excessive pressure our officers endure in performing their professional duties. Thus, sensitive and reasonably targeted attention to officers' EI, especially in the light of the five arguments outlined above regarding the need of paradigm of support for officers, is essential to maintain effective law enforcement services in a democratic and sophisticated society that has high expectations for public service.

A few notes on emotional intelligence

The concept of EI was formalized into a widely accepted definition in early 1960s (here from Davitz, 1976)[24] and gained global attention with Goleman's influential work in 1995[25]. The author defined EI as a cluster of competencies essential for leadership, including self-motivation, impulse control, mood regulation, and empathy. Later, the author expanded this framework to include 25 competencies, including even political awareness and an achievement drive[26].

Since then, three dominant models have shaped EI research: the ability model by Mayer and Salovey, offered more than twenty years ago, the mixed model by Bar-On, offered almost immediately afterwards[27], and the most recent trait model offered by Petrides *et al*[28]. Each of these models interprets EI slightly differently. For Mayer and Salovey EI is a hierarchy of four competencies: perceiving, facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions. Bar-On, on the other hand, explained it as a collection of non-cognitive skills, such as stress management, adaptability, and interpersonal competence. The level of these skills predicts life success more reliably than traditional IQ. Petrides *et al* underscored the connection between strong EI and positive psychological, academic, and even relational outcomes.

These theoretical insights are particularly relevant for law enforcement, where officers frequently face high-stress and emotionally charged situations. Black (2022)[29] argued that EI is not stagnant but can be enhanced through targeted education and training. For example, skills

[23] Conflict de-escalation and resolution. Course materials of the KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals, with respect to communications project (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42, accessed on 23 March, 2026.
[24] Davitz, J. R., & Beldoch, M. (1976). *The communication of emotional meaning*. Greenwood Press.
[25] Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
[26] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva; Jatautaitė, Dileta; Adamonienė, Rūta. Educators on emotional intelligence in law enforcement and education // Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka = Public security of public order. Kaunas : Mykolo Romerio universitetas. ISSN 2029-1701. eISSN 2335-2035. 2025, t. 37, Nr. 4, p. 635- 646. DOI: 10.13165/PSPO-25-37-04-10.
[27] Bar-On, R. (1997). *BarOn emotional quotient inventory* (Vol. 40). Multi-Health Systems.
[28] Petrides, K. V., Sanchez-Ruiz, M. J., Siegling, A. B., Saklofske, D. H., & Mavroveli, S. (2018). Emotional intelligence as personality: Measurement and role of trait emotional intelligence in educational contexts. In *Emotional intelligence in education: Integrating research with practice* (pp. 49–81). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17879-2_3
[29] Black, D. (2022). The role of emotional intelligence in public safety. Cordico. Lexipol Team. https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/role-of-emotional-intelligence-in-public-safety/

such as self-regulation are fundamental for de-escalation of a conflict, as they allow officers to control their emotions and replace impulsive reactions with rational judgment. Therefore, the enhancement of Emotional Intelligence and communication skills has a hypothetical potential to enhance officers' resilience. Officers may get better at communication, and ultimately be more effective in managing conflicts and building positive community relations, thus more efficient in performing their professional activities in accordance with public expectations[30].

Thus, though EI does not provide answers in most cases that make the police officer's work so demanding, yet it may provide an additional source for resilience in high-pressure situations that officers face in their everyday activities.

Thus, the theoretical analysis revealed that the requirements that the documents stipulate for police officers' work are high, moreover, the statistical data shows the adverse context for officer's work, the dangers that officers face, thus the potential compensatory impact that attention to EI may have in this context should not be overlooked. Furthermore, we will examine and illustrate the statements in more detail.

Requirements and Emotional intelligence. Dichotomy or synergy: the paradigm of support for officers

The empirical study was completed in the following steps. Firstly, a set of documents was analysed, and secondly, a quantitative method (reflections and a written report on those reflections) was completed. Results are presented further on.

For the **first** step, we analysed the relationship between formal requirements (in the form of assigned functions) as stipulated in the official state documents and the internal official documents of a particular police station. Due to the ethical considerations, the police station is not indicated; it may be merely stated that the station operates in Lithuania, and internal documents are valid at the moment of this analysis (Spring, 2026).

The **process** of a study. Due to the limited scope of the paper, only a few documents were selected for analysis, which is a **limitation** of the study; however, the findings are sufficient to test whether the study's premise is reasonable and worth further investigation.

Table 1. Comparing the elements of EI and the requirements (in the format of assigned functions) for law enforcement officer

Note: in total, 7 descriptions of functions were analysed from the perspective of support; here, due to limitations on the scope of the paper, just some examples are provided.				
Elements of Emotional Intelligence (EI) **The positive impact is direct or almost direct**	Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statuto pakeitimo įstatymas Nr. XIII-1381 (further on: Act)	Description of functions (Police station at X town in Lithuania) ***Chief pre-trial Investigator*** 20 functions are listed in total	Description of functions (Police station at X town in Lithuania) ***Chief police patrol officer*** 18 functions are listed in total	Notes
High level of EI helps perceiving, facilitating,	(1) protection of human rights and freedoms	All of them, in some aspect or another, add to this function	All of them, in some aspect or another, add to this function	

[30] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva; Jatautaitė, Dileta; Adamonienė, Rūta. Educators on emotional intelligence in law enforcement and education // Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka = Public security of public order. Kaunas : Mykolo Romerio universitetas. ISSN 2029-1701. eISSN 2335-2035. 2025, t. 37, Nr. 4, p. 635- 646. DOI: 10.13165/PSPO-25-37-04-10.

understanding, and managing emotions. Collection of non-cognitive skills, such as stress management, adaptability, and interpersonal competence. Self-regulation leads to de-escalation of a conflict, as it allows controlling emotions and replacing impulsive reactions with rational judgment Resilience, which enhances positive communication	(2) ensuring the safety of individuals, society, and public order	All of them, in some aspect or another, add to this function	All of them, in some aspect or another, add to this function 5.15	**No direct immediate stipulations** on sources of support **Indirect stipulation** on one of the sources of support: mentoring (patrol officer, item **5.15**. …oversees the adaptation process of recently appointed officers…
	(3) providing urgent assistance to persons when necessary due to their physical or mental helplessness, as well as to persons who have suffered from criminal acts, administrative offenses, extreme situations, or similar factors	Specifically, for example, item **6.8**, which mirrors a statement on function/requirement in the Act	Specifically, for example, item **5.2**, which mirrors a statement on function/requirement in the Act	
	(4) prevention of criminal offenses and administrative offenses	E.g., specifically item **6.6**, which is a mirror statement	E.g., specifically item **5.3**. implements prevention of criminal activity or other breaches of law, investigates criminal offences in a specific assigned territory, route, or posting, secures scenes of incidents.	
	(5) detection and investigation of criminal offenses and administrative offenses	E.g, item **6.3** … within the scope of assigned competencies…. Investigates criminal activities, carries out personal responsibility for implementation of steps of pre-trail investigation…	Items **5.3.** and **5.7** …within the scope of assigned competencies . . . investigates administrative offences and administers penalties	
	(6) supervision of road traffic.	Not specifically assigned	Specifically item **5.6**.: monitors whether the participants in traffic adhere to the regulations of Transport Rules in the assigned territory, route or posting. . .	

Thus, based on the analysis of the few selected documents, in response to RQ1 (Is a synergy or a dichotomy evident between the requirements for law enforcement officers and the support (in terms of attention to EI) they receive in their highly demanding work?), we may conclude, that a dichotomy rather than a synergy is noticeable, because Lithuanian officers are assigned an array of tasks, responsibilities, moreover, the requirements are high, yet immediate

sources for support, for maintaining or increasing resilience and other elements of EI are not indicated next to these high requirements.

Except for item 5.15. for a patrol officer, item 5.15 for a chief patrol officer, item 5.17 for an entry pre-trial investigator, which outline ***mentorship,*** which is one of the indirect support mechanisms, no other direct references or linkages were found. Interestingly, even this stipulation was not in any format listed among functions for senior members of the force.

Surely, while there are documents that outline possible sources of support, our position is that the immediate 'task/requirement/expectation - support' link is not established in the job descriptions analysis, which is the focus for analysis in the future.

Furthermore, even a preliminary analysis established that the study's premise is reasonable and worth further investigation, which the authors of this paper plan to follow up on in the future.

For the **second** step, we asked Lithuanian future law enforcement officers (not necessarily police officers per se, as some of the respondents may choose the statutory officer's career, and the others may choose a civilian's career) to share their subjective perspectives regarding the relationship between demonstrating emotional intelligence (as expected by the public) and formal high requirements.

The **process** of the study. Students were asked to ponder on the question (What characterizes contemporary law enforcement in Lithuania today: are emotional intelligence and the requirements complementary to each other?) in small groups. In 8 small groups (of 3 to 5 students, in total 43 students in the I study cycle, study field: law), students were invited to ponder on the question and then provide their aggregated perspectives in a written reflection. These reflections were analysed, and the Content analysis was performed. Note, the N, denotes a number of small groups (not the individuals); total N=8.

Limitations of the study stem from a rather small sample; however, the limitation was compensated to some degree by the fact that the discussion proceeded anonymously, and moreover, the written reflections represent the group's rather than individual perspectives, thus further securing the anonymity of individual participants. The qualitative research methodology, in most cases, is characterised by subjectivity, which, however, is reasonable in this instance, when the perspectives of potential future officers, who in several years will join the service, are of most interest to study.

Results

Findings reveal that respondents are relatively positive about the situation. Interestingly, out of 8 small groups written reflections, only two mentioned, and even then, just fleetingly, requirements: („*In our opinion, emotional intelligence, human rights, and the requirements for contemporary law enforcement officers in Lithuania complement each other*.." and "*Looking at how officers are trained today, it is clear these requirements work well together, because emotional intelligence provides the foundation for treating every citizen with respect...").* In all other cases, the requirements were not mentioned at all, the emphasis was on emotional intelligence, support for citizens and their human rights, but no mention of support for officers was articulated.

Thus, based on the analysis of the written reflections, in response to RQ1, we may conclude that either complete synergy was noted by respondents, or our respondents do not yet reflect on the multilayered realities of police officer's work. The tilt towards positivity must be investigated further.

On the one hand, a lack of on-hand experience may have impacted these positive perspectives. On the other hand, the respondents study the stipulations of the regulatory documents; thus, respondents must, at least theoretically, be aware of the relative emphasis on requirements rather than on support for officers in the regulatory documents.

This study thus generated surprising results, which may be attributed to generational differences of perspective, or the lack of on-hand experience of respondents, or the relative stubbornness and rigidity of thinking of the researchers/authors of this paper, or a combination of these three reasons. Yet the differences prompt interest in further analysis and will shape the design and direction of further studies.

Conclusions

This paper was dedicated to exploring whether there are preconditions that a paradigm of support for officers should be heavily promoted. The five arguments were outlined and explained in supporting data or considerations.

Firstly, the statistical data about lost police officers in the line of duty was provided; the authors of this paper are confident that reader will agree that the necessity for efforts to change the situation does not need additional arguments.

Secondly, a high level of legal requirements and expectations for professional conduct were presented based on stipulations in the main documents regulating police officers' professional activities.

Thirdly, it was discussed that in the case of the slightest controversy, in a contemporary society, almost always an officer will have to defend his/her case, and that the benefit of the doubt is not extended by either the public or the legal system. On the one hand, it is symptomatic of how democracy should work, however, it illustrates the extreme pressures our officers are under.

The fourth argument is the ever-changing (deteriorating) regional and global political landscape, as well as the national socio-demographic changes, and the dynamics of the level and sophistication of criminal activity due to technological and other factors.

Lastly (fifthly), it was noted that the number of officers in the service is decreasing, as exemplified by official data, and that this also exacerbates pressure in the form of increased workload for those in service.

A sensitive, reasonably targeted focus on the EI of officers and on support, including psychological support for them, that is, emphasis on synergy between requirements and EI, may positively impact the maintenance of effective law enforcement services. While surely EI (or its elements) does not provide ultimate answers to the high demands of police officers' work, yet, it may provide at least some additional source of resilience in high-pressure situations that officers face in their everyday activities.

In response to RQ1 (Is a synergy or a dichotomy evident between the requirements for law enforcement officers and the support (in terms of attention to EI) they receive in their highly demanding work?), during the first step of the empirical study, when selected official documents were analysed, it was concluded that a dichotomy rather than a synergy was more pronounced. It is noticeable that Lithuanian officers are assigned a wide array of tasks and responsibilities; moreover, these requirements are high, yet immediate sources of support for maintaining or even increasing resilience and other elements of EI are not indicated alongside these high requirements. Preliminary analysis established that the study's premise is reasonable and warrants further investigation, which the authors of this paper plan to follow up on in the future.

During the second step of the empirical study, a positive perspective by respondents was found to dominate written reflections. The synergy, or at least its potential, rather than dichotomy dominated the written reflections of young respondents. As the second step of the study generated these surprising results (they may be attributed to generational differences of perspective, or the lack of on-hand experience of respondents (students), or to the relative stubbornness and rigidity of thinking of the researchers/authors of this paper, or due to a combination of these three reasons), nevertheless, these differences of initial premises and the findings of previous studies prompt motivation for further analysis and will shape the design and direction of further studies.

The empirical findings partly support the position that we should promote the support paradigm for our officers, for whom we have many requirements and expectations, as exemplified by five arguments. As the findings indicate the validity of the direction and contents of the chosen thematic focus, it is intended to implement the next steps for a more in-depth analysis of the matter.

These findings enable us to recommend that educators of future police officers inform and consult them about current support systems within the service, especially during professional practice, which is an integral part of the studies in most cases (both in higher education and in VET). Another recommendation is to inform students and organize discussions about the importance of mutual support while in service, thereby educating the next generation of law enforcement officers, who are more open to providing and receiving psychological support.

Regarding future research, it is reasonable to expand the investigation, particularly by including additional police stations in Lithuania and monitoring changes in the coming years.

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