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## RELATION BETWEEN FEEDBACK IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICE COMMUNICATION

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*SUMMARY: The study aims to explain what dimensions of the satisfaction of Croatian police officers with internal feedback are predictors of their readiness to explain their actions to citizens. The survey was conducted in 2020 on a convenience sample of 1260 police officers. The questionnaire measures satisfaction with feedback as one of eight dimensions of satisfaction with internal communication and police legitimacy in two dimensions of police and citizen interaction: accountability (citizens) – attitude and behaviour. The purpose is to compare feedback in internal and external police communication and examine to what extent the satisfaction of police officers with feedback contributes to the understanding of their attitudes and behaviour towards explaining actions to citizens. The results indicate the weak predictive power of variables that measure satisfaction with feedback in understanding the attitudes and behaviour of police officers related to explaining their actions to citizens. However, when introduced into the predictor model that contains the criterion variable "Behaviour related to explaining police actions to citizens" is the variable of attitude, the proportion of the variance explained increases significantly. The contribution of the paper is an analysis of the connection between internal and external communication of police officers in Croatia, and communication research is extremely important in police organizations in transition countries that undergo a transition from the traditional policing models to citizen-oriented policing models. A limitation of the paper is that only one aspect of internal communication has been examined in isolation. Therefore, new research should examine the complex nature of internal communication within a police organization in the context of the quality of police officers' relations with citizens, especially in relation to the willingness to explain police actions, as an important dimension of trust in the police.*

**Key words:** attitudes, behaviour, external communication, feedback, internal communication, police

### INTRODUCTION

Contacts between police and citizens occur in complex circumstances that are extremely stressful, complex and unpleasant for citizens, whether they are witnesses, victims, perpetrators of criminal acts or persons with whom the police is dealing. Police officers, for communication

in such situations, are required to develop interpersonal communication skills (Cajner Mraović et al., 2003, Vukosav and Glavač-Glišić, 2007). Effective communication is not possible without providing feedback and explaining actions, which is even more necessary in such specific stressful situations. Police officers must give orders to citizens, but also know how to comfort them and adapt to different situations and interlocutors (Vukosav and Glavač-Glišić, 2007). Good communication is a prerequisite for the development of good relations and citizens' trust in the police; furthermore, explaining police actions to citizens

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is important in terms of citizens' trust in the police and a higher level of citizens' safety (Borovec, 2011). However, in policing, sometimes one-way communication or the application of force is inevitable and necessary in order to protect police reputation or restore order in emergency situations with easy-to-understand messages. In addition to external communication with different publics, police officers communicate with each other, horizontally and vertically with superiors and subordinate police officers in the police organization. Providing feedback is an important aspect of internal communication in the police, as well as in any other working environment. In addition, quality internal communication is a prerequisite for effective external communication, as well as for overall public relations (Borovec, 2011). Research generally shows a link between internal and external communication (Cheney and Christensen, 2001, Ruchika and Prasad, 2017), but there is an insufficient body of research examining this link at the level of individual components of communication. Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to compare feedback in internal and external police communication in Croatia.

## FEEDBACK IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICE COMMUNICATION

Feedback is an important component of internal communication in organizations (Baker et al., 2013, Tourish and Robson, 2006) and includes information ranging from quality to complexity of the work performed, and how the work was performed. Feedback allows employees to identify and rectify errors, i.e. to perform the job in the desired manner, and is necessary in every profession, including the police profession (Johnson, 2015, McDermott and Hulse, 2012, Guo and Sanchez, 2005). Therefore, the importance of employee, i.e. police officer satisfaction with feedback at the workplace, is understandable, which was researched by Croatian authors Tkalac Verčič et al. (2009), including satisfaction with feedback as one of the eight dimensions of internal communication: the others being satisfaction with communication with a superior, satisfaction with horizontal communication, satisfaction with informal communication, satisfaction with corporate information, satisfaction with communication

climate, satisfaction with the quality of communication media and satisfaction with communication in meetings. The same authors explain that satisfaction with feedback refers to feedback on one's own and the organization's success. This factor describes satisfaction with the information about the goals of the organization and about the successes and failures of the organization. On the other hand, it contains items, such as satisfaction with information regarding the requirements of one's job and satisfaction with the information on how well one does his/her job (Borovec et al., 2011, Tkalac Verčič et al., 2009).

Police work is assessed, among other things, on the basis of communication between police and citizens, but we cannot expect high quality communication with citizens if communication within the police organization is poor (Borovec, 2011, Borovec et al., 2011, Kenney, 1956, Hoffmann, 2012). Research in other sectors has shown that quality internal communication contributes to providing better services to citizens, which is extremely important for the police as a public service of citizens. This concept is part of the procedural justice theory, which is based on the fact that internal and external communication of the police is equally important (Van Craen, 2016, Van Craen and Skogan, 2017). The police can incorporate the use of procedural justice not only when interacting with perpetrators, victims, witnesses, and the public at large, but also when interacting with other police officers (especially when interacting with those lower in the chain of command) (Haas et al., 2015, Mazerolle et al., 2014). Deriving from the same theoretical position, one of the important aspects of external police communication is explaining police actions to citizens. Procedural justice theory explains that police or criminal justice system can be important components of social capital and catalysts in improving collective efficiency if they have appropriate legitimacy in their community (Cajner Mraović et al., 2015, Kutnjak Ivković et al., 2019). The willingness of the police to explain their actions to citizens, is based on the attitudes and behaviour of police officers towards citizens, which is operationalized and conceptualized through the factors *accountability (citizens) – attitude* and *accountability (citizens) behaviour* defined by Van Craen and Skogan (2017). Explaining

actions to citizens is one of the most important principles of procedural justice in police-citizen relations (Haas et al., 2015, Kutnjak Ivković et al., 2019, Van Craen and Skogan, 2017) and is considered a fundamental principle of democratic society and affects police organizations and police officers who are personally responsible for the fair and efficient performance of their tasks under the law (Wu et al., 2017). The link between internal procedural justice and external procedural justice is in the officers' perception of internal procedural justice, which has a certain effect on their trust in people who have treated them (un)fairly, but it also has an effect on trust in other people in general (Van Craen and Skogan, 2017). Accountability means providing explanations to citizens for the decisions made by the police - why the citizens were given a fine, why their behaviour is illegal and explaining the modalities of police actions (Kutnjak Ivković et al., 2019). The positive effect of procedural justice on public perception of police legitimacy and cooperation with police must not be neglected (Jackson et al., 2012, Sunshine and Tyler, 2003, Tyler, 2004). Furthermore, when officers are more answerable to citizens' questions and requests, and transparent in their decisions and actions, regardless of the outcome, they are more likely to be considered legitimate by citizens and receive voluntary cooperation from the public (Wu et al., 2017). The authors Kutnjak Ivković, Peacock and Cajner Mraović (2019) believe that it is possible that policers who are treated fairly may also be more likely to, in turn, treat citizens fairly. Finally, external communication is not only about providing feedback, but also about behaviour, because it must be clear to citizens why the police are requesting something from them, while internal communication is about professional communication where it is important to provide feedback to employees. In addition, by improving communication skills, police officers can reduce the use of force and improve procedural justice (Novak et al., 2017).

## CURRENT STUDY

Based on the overview of existing research and appropriate theoretical frameworks, the following research question has been formulated: *What items of the satisfaction of police officers*

*in Croatia with feedback as a dimension of internal communication in the police are predictors of their readiness to explain their actions to citizens?*

The methodology of the analysis is quantitative research, whereby the theory of planned behaviour is applied, according to which attitudes and behaviours do not necessarily coincide (Ajzen, 2008, Ajzen, 2020). Therefore, the construct *readiness of police officers to explain their actions to citizens* is operationalized through the attitudes of police officers on explaining their actions to citizens, and through the actual behaviour of police officers when it is necessary for them to explain their actions to citizens. In the external communication of the police, giving feedback is actually providing an explanation to the citizens in order to understand what the police officer at that moment requires of them. Communication between police and citizens usually takes place in person in concrete situations, therefore, it is necessary to provide feedback immediately, for example when a vehicle is pulled over in traffic.

## METHODS

### Sample

The target population in this study are police officers from police stations in all 20 police administrations in Croatia. The survey sample included those respondents who were at the workplace at the time when the survey was conducted (convenience sample). A total of 1384 questionnaires were distributed, and two individuals refused to take part in the study. 122 respondents who did not answer all questions from the questionnaire were excluded from the data processing, and the analysis was carried out on a sample of 1260 survey participants.

According to data obtained by direct insight into the data of the Human Resources Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, the total population of police officers in Croatia, with regard to sex and police rank, is well-represented by the sample. In 2020, there were 20.2% of women in the police force, and when analysing police ranks, the majority were sergeants (41.2%), followed by officers (36.2%)

and inspectors (19.6%). The only deviation in the sample refers to the highest rank of advisor, which was 2.6% in the Croatian police. The reason is that the respondents were police officers in police administrations and stations, while the Police Directorate, where the employees with higher ranks work, was not included. The structure of the Croatian police in terms of police unit type to which the research participants belong, is well-reflected in the sample because, in Croatia, 30.2% are uniformed police officers, 16.5% are criminal investigation police and 8.7% are traffic police. The only major deviation was found in the community police, represented by 2.2% at the level of the Republic of Croatia, which is very likely due to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, when community police officers were more present in police stations than the rest of the police force. There is no available data at the level of Croatia for the employees of the Police Operational and Communication Centre, who make up 7.8% of the respondents in the sample, while the remaining 11.8% of the survey participants are police officers who perform administrative and technical tasks.

Furthermore, Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, from which it is clear that the sample is dominated by respondents aged from 31 to 40 and from 41 to 50. This is followed by young people up to the age of 30 and those over 51. The share of urban and rural respondents is the same. As for the education of police officers participating in the research, the majority are those with completed secondary police school or other type of school. The largest part of the sample consists of police officers with over 20 years of service, which is probably due to the fact that, in the police profession, as well as in other professions, employees remain in the service up to the maximum legally-enabled years of age, regardless of the accelerated retirement scheme, while least represented are those with 16 to 20 years of service. Managers make up 21.3% of the respondents.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

**Tablica 1. Sociodemografske karakteristike ispitanika**

|                           |   | n   | %    |
|---------------------------|---|-----|------|
| <b>Sex</b>                | Male  | 987 | 78.3 |
|                           | Female                                      | 273 | 21.7 |
| <b>Age</b>                | 20-30                                       | 259 | 20.5 |
|                           | 31-40                                       | 408 | 32.4 |
|                           | 41-50                                       | 398 | 31.6 |
|                           | 51-60                                       | 189 | 15.  |
|                           | >over 61                                    | 6   | 0.5  |
| <b>Education</b>          | Secondary police or other school            | 816 | 64.6 |
|                           | Bachelor                                    | 222 | 17.7 |
|                           | Master                                      | 216 | 17.2 |
|                           | PhD   | 6   | 0.5  |
| <b>Rank</b>               | Police officer                              | 474 | 37.7 |
|                           | Police sergeant                             | 521 | 41.3 |
|                           | Police inspector                            | 257 | 20.4 |
|                           | Police superintendent                       | 8   | 0.6  |
| <b>Work experience</b>    | up to 5                                     | 177 | 14.  |
|                           | 6 to 10                                     | 181 | 14.4 |
|                           | 11 to 15                                    | 251 | 19.9 |
|                           | 16 to 20                                    | 85  | 6.7  |
|                           | over 20                                     | 566 | 44.9 |
| <b>Police unit type</b>   | Uniformed police officers                   | 520 | 41.2 |
|                           | Criminal investigation police               | 298 | 23.7 |
|                           | Traffic police                              | 106 | 8.4  |
|                           | Community police                            | 99  | 7.9  |
|                           | Police Operational and Communication Centre | 98  | 7.8  |
|                           | Other                                       | 139 | 11   |
| <b>Managerial status</b>  | Yes   | 269 | 21.3 |
|                           | No  | 991 | 78.7 |
| <b>Type of settlement</b> | Urban                                       | 636 | 49.5 |
|                           | Rural                                       | 624 | 50.4 |

## Instrument

The questionnaire used to collect data consists of three parts. The first part measures eight dimensions of satisfaction with internal communication, defined by the Croatian authors Tkalac Verčič et al. (2009). In this study, we used the one dimension about feedback. The second part of the questionnaire measures police legitimacy in fifteen dimensions of police and citizen interaction, developed by the authors Van Craen and Skogan (2017). For the purpose of this study, we used two dimensions: accountability (citizens) attitude and accountability (citizens) behaviour. The last part of the questionnaire contains socio-demographic variables.

## Independent variable

The level of satisfaction of police officers in Croatia with the feedback they receive within their organizations was measured using four variables, the values of which were distributed on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 - very dissatisfied, 2 - dissatisfied, 3 - somewhat dissatisfied, 4 - neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 5 - somewhat satisfied, 6 - satisfied and 7 - very satisfied. The independent variable in this study is *satisfaction with feedback*, and it comprises four items/claims (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2009) about feedback on the consequences of poor job performance, how much the work of

police officers is valued within the organization and how much they contribute to joint success, as well as how they perform their job. The scale satisfaction with feedback exhibited an adequate level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha 0.89, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.806) and was coded so that higher values corresponded to higher levels of perceived satisfaction with feedback (Mean = 16.48, SD = 6.274). In previously conducted research (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2009, Borovec et al., 2011), this scale also showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha: 0.86, 0.88).

According to the results of descriptive statistics and reliability of this variable shown in Table 2, police officers are relatively satisfied with the feedback because the mean values on the variables range from Mean = 3.85 to Mean = 4.33, with the lowest value (Mean = 3.85) obtained on the variable *feedback on how much my work is appreciated within the organization*. Observing the obtained loyalty shown in Table 2, it can be concluded that the highest level of satisfaction of police officers is present when it comes to *feedback on consequences due to poor job performance*, and the lowest when it comes to *feedback on how much my work is appreciated within the organization*.

**Table 2. Independent variables, descriptive statistics and reliability**

**Tablica 2. Nezavisne varijable, deskriptivna statistika i pouzdanost**

| Variables   | 1    | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7    | Mean | SD   | Factor Loadings |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-----------------|
| <b>Satisfaction with feedback</b><br>(Cronbach's $\alpha=0.89$ ,<br>KMO=0.806, Mean=16.48,<br>SD=6.274) |      |       |       |       |       |       |      |      |      |                 |
| Feedback on consequences due to poor job performance  | 2.2% | 9.8%  | 17.9% | 24.1% | 19.0% | 22.7% | 4.2% | 4.33 | 1.46 | 0.741           |
| Feedback on how much they contribute to joint success   | 5.2% | 12.7% | 15.7% | 21.9% | 20.8% | 20.0% | 3.7% | 4.15 | 1.56 | 0.895           |
| Feedback on how much my work is appreciated within the organization                                     | 8.7% | 18.0% | 14.4% | 21.0% | 17.9% | 16.4% | 3.6% | 3.85 | 1.67 | 0.907           |
| Feedback on how I am doing my job   | 4.3% | 14.5% | 16.0% | 20.9% | 20.0% | 20.4% | 4.0% | 4.15 | 1.57 | 0.914           |



### Dependent variables

In this study, we used dependent variables *accountability (citizens) – attitude and accountability (citizens) – behaviour* that measure police legitimacy in police-citizen interaction (Van Craen and Skogan, 2017). Accountability is one of the core principles of procedural justice in police-citizen relations, along with neutrality, respect and voice (Haas et al., 2015, Van Craen and Skogan, 2017, Kutnjak Ivković et al., 2019). In the original questionnaire, the variable *accountability (citizens) – attitude* was operationalized by using six survey items, and in this survey, three were used because the variables that had the opposite direction were excluded. Namely, after translation into Croatian and recoding, these variables did not work well with other questions and had low Factor loadings and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values. The variable *accountability (citizens) – attitude* is a composite variable resulting from the addition of three items (Table 3) in that set of variables, which also exhibited an adequate level of internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.78$ , Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = 0.670) and was coded so that higher values corresponded to higher levels of agreement with the need to provide feedback to citizens (Mean = 12.54, SD = 3.192).

Three of the attitude variables were also scaled on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 6, whereby the values are: 1 - I fully agree, 2 - mostly agree,

3 - agree, 4 - disagree, 5 - mostly disagree and 6 - I fully disagree. The results presented in Table 3 show mostly positive attitudes of police officers on the need to explain police actions to citizens, however, the frequency of results by individual categories of answers shows that there is a certain proportion of respondents who have negative attitudes on these issues (e.g. 14.8% of respondents agree with the claim that explaining police decisions to citizens makes police officers seem weak).

When it comes to how police officers treat citizens, in the context of explaining police actions, important, in addition to attitudes, is actual behaviour. In this study, it was measured using a composite variable created by merging four variables that measure *accountability (citizens) – behaviour* (Table 4). For all four variables, the following scale of possible answers was offered: 1 - never; 2 - only exceptionally; 3 - sometimes; 4 - regularly; 5 - quite often; 6 - very often. That variable was also a summated scale that exhibited an adequate level of internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.802$ , Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = 0.784, Mean = 13.53, SD = 4.408). It was scaled in such a manner that higher values represent a more frequent occurrence of such behaviour. The results (Table 4) show that police officers participating in the survey explain their actions to citizens and that most of them do so sometimes (from 35.9% to 45.0%). There are far fewer police officers who never, as well as those who always do that.

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables (*attitude*) and reliability**

**Tablica 3. Deskriptivna statistika zavisnih varijabli (stav) i pouzdanost**

| Variables  | 1    | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | Mean | SD   | Factor Loadings |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-----------------|
| <b>Accountability (citizens) – attitude</b><br>(Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$ ,<br>KMO=0.670, Mean=12.54, SD=3.192) |      |      |       |       |       |       |      |      |                 |
| Explaining decisions to people just makes officers seem weak.  | 1.3% | 5.3% | 8.2%  | 53.8% | 14.1% | 17.2% | 4.26 | 1.08 | 0.850           |
| Explaining your decisions to the public is a waste of time.  | 2.1% | 6.3% | 12.2% | 55.2% | 15.6% | 8.7%  | 4.02 | 1.03 | 0.772           |
| It is a waste of time to explain to citizens your reasons for acting.  | 1.8% | 4.3% | 8.4%  | 53.2% | 16.3% | 16.0% | 4.26 | 1.07 | 0.880           |

**Table 4. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables (*behaviour*) and reliability****Tablica 4. Deskriptivna statistika zavisnih varijabli (ponašanje) i pouzdanost**

| Variables   | 1    | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5    | 6    | Mean | SD   | Factor Loadings |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|-----------------|
| <b>Accountability (citizens) – behaviour</b><br>(Cronbach's $\alpha$ =0.802,<br>KMO=0.784, M=13.53, SD=4.408) |      |       |       |       |      |      |      |      |                 |
| I explain to citizens why the police focus more on certain problems than on others.                           | 7.6% | 16.4% | 45.0% | 22.0% | 5.3% | 3.7% | 3.12 | 1.10 | 0.715           |
| I explain to citizens why certain actions and measures are necessary.   | 3.7% | 12.8% | 41.7% | 29.0% | 7.3% | 5.5% | 3.40 | 1.09 | 0.827           |
| I explain to citizens why the police act in a certain way.  | 3.6% | 10.5% | 37.5% | 34.0% | 8.2% | 6.3% | 3.52 | 1.10 | 0.842           |
| I explain to citizens why the police see to it that he or she abides by the laws and rules.                   | 3.4% | 12.4% | 35.9% | 34.4% | 7.6% | 6.3% | 3.49 | 1.11 | 0.783           |

### Data collection and research ethics

The research was conducted in the period from 15 December to 30 December 2020, using the pen-and-paper method. The answers collected in the research were anonymous and respondents were exposed to no risks related to participation in the research. Participation was voluntary and respondents had the option, at any time, to withdraw or not to answer certain questions, without any negative consequences. By returning a completed questionnaire, respondents agreed to voluntary participation in the research. After the questionnaires were completed, sealed and placed in a box, there was no way to determine the origin of individual answers. Only the authors of this paper have access to the research data, and the results will be stored electronically for at least three years following the data collection.

### ANALYTICAL PLAN

In the processing of the results, a hierarchical regression analysis was used in such a manner that, in the first step, socio-demographic variables were included in the regression model, and in the second step, four variables related to feedback. Such an approach allowed insight into the contribution of feedback variables to understanding

of criterion variables, regardless of the impact of socio-demographic variables. The first regression examined the relationship between providing feedback and police officer attitudes on explaining their actions. The second regression observed the relationship between providing feedback and police officer behaviour. Research data were analysed using SPSS software 18 version.

### RESULTS

The main goal of this research was to answer the question to what extent the satisfaction of police officers with the feedback they receive within their organizations determines their attitudes towards explaining police actions to citizens, while eliminating the impact of measured socio-demographic variables. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted, keeping in mind that the confirmatory factor analysis confirms that the attitude variables represent a unique construct that was used as a criterion variable in further research. Preliminary analyses proved that the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homogeneity of variance were not violated. Results of collinearity diagnostics of predictor variables are shown in Table 5 (Values of variation factors and of tolerance in the regression model).

**Table 5. Values of variation factors and of tolerance in the regression model****Tablica 5. Vrijednosti faktora varijacije i tolerancije u regresijskom modelu**

| Independent variables   | Tolerance | VIF   |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Sex   | 0.913     | 1.095 |
| Level of education  | 0.420     | 2.379 |
| Police rank   | 0.233     | 4.295 |
| Years of experience in the police                                   | 0.409     | 2.445 |
| Police unit type  | 0.641     | 1.559 |
| Managerial status   | 0.557     | 1.796 |
| Feedback on consequences due to poor job performance                | 0.630     | 1.588 |
| Feedback on how much they contribute to joint success               | 0.353     | 2.832 |
| Feedback on how much my work is appreciated within the organization | 0.262     | 3.819 |
| Feedback on how I am doing my job                                   | 0.258     | 3.869 |

The results of the regression analysis (Table 6) show that the model that includes socio-demographic variables as predictors proved to be statistically significant ( $R = 0.213$ ;  $R^2 = 0.045$ ;  $F(6; 1253) = 9.925$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). This means that the set of socio-demographic variables has a statisti-

cally significant share in predicting the attitudes of police officers towards explaining police actions to citizens. Statistically significant predictors among the socio-demographic variables are sex ( $\beta = 0.059$ ), police rank ( $\beta = 0.166$ ) and type of police work ( $\beta = 0.107$ ). Considering the sign of standardized coefficients of partial regression ( $\beta$ ), women and police officers of higher police ranks have more positive attitudes towards explaining actions to citizens, as well as those officers who perform community policing tasks, who are on-call for operational-communication tasks and who perform administrative tasks.

After entering into the model all remaining predictors (feedback satisfaction variables), the entire model explained 6.2% of the variance of criterion  $F(10, 1249) = 8.301$ ,  $p < 0.000$ . The remaining included predictors explained only the 1.7% variance of the criterion after the impact of socio-demographic variables was removed.  $R^2$  changed by 0.017, indicating a relatively weak predictive model (Table 6). Namely, with a small share of the explained variance of attitudes of police officers towards explaining police actions to citizens, no variable of satisfaction with feedback is a statistically significant predictor.

**Table 6. Regression analysis for criterion: Attitudes towards explaining police actions to citizens****Tablica 6. Regresijska analiza za kriterij: Stavovi prema objašnjavanju postupanja policije građanima**

|   |   | Beta         | Sig.         | Model Summary  |
|---|---|--------------|--------------|--|
| Step 1  | Sex   | <b>0.059</b> | <b>0.040</b> | R=0.213<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.045<br>F(6; 1253)=9.925<br>p=0.000  |
|   | Level of education                                    | -0.003       | 0.952        |  |
|   | Police rank   | <b>0.166</b> | <b>0.004</b> |  |
|   | Years of experience in the police                     | -0.049       | 0.260        |  |
|   | Police unit type                                      | <b>0.107</b> | <b>0.002</b> |  |
|   | Managerial status                                     | -0.008       | 0.822        |  |
| Step 2  | Sex   | <b>0.066</b> | <b>0.021</b> | R=0.250<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.062<br>F(10; 1249)=8,301<br>p=0.000 |
|   | Level of education                                    | -0.008       | 0.846        |  |
|   | Police rank   | <b>0.165</b> | <b>0.004</b> |  |
|   | Years of experience in the police                     | -0.048       | 0.262        |  |
|   | Police unit type                                      | <b>0.101</b> | <b>0.003</b> |  |
|   | Managerial status                                     | 0.003        | 0.942        |  |
|   | Feedback on consequences due to poor job performance  | 0.036        | 0.301        |  |
|   | Feedback on how much they contribute to joint success | 0.030        | 0.509        |  |
| Feedback on how much my work is appreciated within the organization | 0.028   | 0.605        |              |  |
| Feedback on how I am doing my job                                   | 0.057   | 0.287        |              |  |



This research also tested the regression model in which, in addition to the previously described set of predictor variables, the attitude on explaining police actions to citizens is used as a criterion variable (behavioural variables were previously factored and they explained a total of 62.9% of the variance). The results of the hierarchical regression analysis for the criterion *Behaviour related to explaining police actions to citizens* are presented in Table 7.

The results indicate a very weak predictive model because no socio-demographic variable, in the first step of regression analysis, has a statistically significant contribution to predicting the behaviour of police officers in explaining police actions to citizens, the same as the variables of satisfaction with feedback in the second step of the regression analysis. The model that includes socio-demographic variables as predictors proved to be statistically significant ( $R = 0.120$ ;  $R^2 = 0.014$ ;  $F(6;1259) = 3.062$ ;  $p = 0.006$ ). Thus, only 1.4% of the criterion variance was explained, while the introduction into the model of feedback satisfaction variables explained only an additional

0.5% of criterion variance ( $R = 0.136$ ;  $R^2 = 0.019$ ;  $F(10; 1259) = 2.365$ ;  $p=0.009$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite the literature that points to the connection between internal and external communication (Borovec, 2011, Cheney and Christensen, 2001, Ruchika and Prasad, 2017), the results of this research show that satisfaction with feedback in internal communication is not a statistically significant predictor of feedback in external police communication. In this research, we started from the assumption that if feedback in internal communication is a predictor of feedback in external communication, then this component of internal communication should be more encouraged in order to manifest itself in external communication. However, such an idea has actually proven to be a limitation of this research. Namely, the obtained results show that feedback in external communication is a far more complex phenomenon, which is clearly the result of a number

**Table 7. Regression analysis for criterion: Behaviour related to explaining police actions to citizens**

**Tablica 7. Regresijska analiza za kriterij: Ponašanje povezano s objašnjavanjem postupanja policije građanima**

|                                   |   | Beta   | Sig.  | Model Summary  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------|-------|--|
| Step 1                            | Sex   | -0.014 | 0.632 | R=0.120<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.014<br>F(6; 1259)=3,062<br>p=0.006  |
|                                   | Level of education  | 0.018  | 0.677 |  |
|                                   | Police rank   | 0.033  | 0.573 |  |
|                                   | Years of experience in the police                                   | 0.030  | 0.494 |  |
|                                   | Police unit type  | 0.067  | 0.057 |  |
|                                   | Managerial status   | -0.004 | 0.916 |  |
| Step 2                            | Sex   | -0.012 | 0.687 | R=0.136<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.019<br>F(10; 1259)=2,365<br>p=0.009 |
|                                   | Level of education  | 0.017  | 0.687 |  |
|                                   | Police rank   | 0.027  | 0.639 |  |
|                                   | Years of experience in the police                                   | 0.031  | 0.482 |  |
|                                   | Police unit type  | 0.062  | 0.076 |  |
|                                   | Managerial status   | -0.001 | 0.989 |  |
|                                   | Feedback on consequences due to poor job performance                | -0.007 | 0.832 |  |
|                                   | Feedback on how much they contribute to joint success               | 0.023  | 0.631 |  |
|                                   | Feedback on how much my work is appreciated within the organization | 0.079  | 0.147 |  |
| Feedback on how I am doing my job | -0.038  | 0.490  |       |  |

of factors, and not only of feedback in internal communication. This is an important realization from the perspective of police education, which means that the approach should be holistic, i.e. that all components of quality internal and external communication should be encouraged.

This study identified socio-demographic characteristics of police officers that have a statistically significant predictive significance for feedback in external communication at the level of attitudes. Noteworthy is the fact that women in the police, police officers with higher ranks and police officers who work in community policing and the Police Operational-Communication Centre are more inclined to have positive attitudes towards providing feedback to citizens, yet they are not more inclined to do so at the level of behaviour. In explaining this fact, it is possible to apply the theory of planned behaviour, which states that not only the attitudes of the individual are important for predicting individual behaviour, but also other factors such as subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, intentions and normative beliefs (Ajzen, 2020, Goldenhar and Connell, 1993, Sniehotta et al., 2014). Intention is an indicator of willingness and the decision to perform a behaviour and is a direct cause of the behaviour, and the stronger the intention, the more likely it is that the behaviour will follow (Ajzen, 2020).

In the future, it would certainly be worth exploring the reasons why these positive attitudes do not reach the level of intention and realization through the behaviour of police officers in their daily work. Such research is especially necessary in order to better understand the functioning of community policing, because most is expected from such police officers in terms of quality communication with citizens and their work is designed to provide citizens with relevant information and explanations (Cajner Mraović et al., 2003, Cordner, 2014). It is certainly important to determine this for the employees of the Police Operational and Communication Centre, but we can at least somewhat assume the reasons why their positive attitudes on providing an explanation to citizens are not realized in practice. In their work, it is very often crucial to act in the shortest possible time, which then limits the duration of communication (Regulation on the internal or-

ganization of the Ministry of the Interior, Official Gazette nos. 70/12, 140/13, 50/14, 32/15, 11/17, 129/17, 5/18, 109/18, 24/19, 79/19, 97/20, 7/22 and 149/22). However, the fact that these police officers want to provide explanations to citizens, but most often do not have time to do so, can be frustrating for them, an area to be examined in future research.

The fact that women are more willing to provide explanations to citizens than their male counterparts can be understood from several perspectives. According to some studies, women show a higher level of empathy than men (Urban et al., 2003, Rueckert and Naybar, 2008, Toussaint and Webb, 2005). However, the Croatian police have not yet achieved the desired representation of women in all police unit types. Thus, women are mostly engaged in jobs related to juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, treatment of victims of crimes against sexual freedom (Balgač, 2017, Becker et al., 2012, Cajner Mraović et al., 2002a). These are jobs where providing explanations and instructions are a necessary component because it prevents secondary victimization (Cajner Mraović, 2002, Cajner Mraović et al., 2002b). This is also partly regulated by legislation such as the Act on Juvenile Courts (Official Gazette nos. 84/11, 143/12, 148/13, 56/15, 126/19), which requires careful treatment of juvenile perpetrators and victims of crime, as well as a number of national and international documents that provide recommendations for the treatment of vulnerable groups. Literature shows that women are better at verbal communication (Baker, 1991, Johnson et al., 2014), and particular attention should be devoted to male trainees during police training in order to provide them with sufficient opportunities to develop their verbal skills as well.

The fact that police officers who hold higher ranks are more inclined to provide explanations to citizens seems understandable at first glance. It can be assumed that, during their career, by advancing through various ranks and various trainings, these police officers were able to gain better insight and better understanding of the importance of quality communication for the overall effectiveness of police activities. This is another important realization of this research for the education of police officers because it shows how

communication skills can be systematically developed in the context of the police profession and, accordingly, police officers should be given opportunities for such training. Given the fact that communication skills can be improved through training, this reopens the dilemma about the required level of education for the police profession, a topic that is highly present in the professional public (Novak et al., 2017, Veić and Cajner Mraović, 2004). Namely, in Croatia, the basic police education does not imply the tertiary level of education, as is the case in many other countries. However, even in the existing modality of basic police training in Croatia, it is possible to provide more space to the development of communication skills of students, and it would be especially important, in a systematic and planned manner, to continue working on this in accordance with the requirements of individual positions through vocational training programmes.

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### **ODNOS IZMEĐU POV RATNIH INFORMACIJA U INTERNOJ I EKSTERNOJ KOMUNIKACIJI POLICIJE**

**SAŽETAK:** Studija ima za cilj objasniti dimenzije zadovoljstva internim povratnim informacijama hrvatskih policijskih službenika te koji su prediktori njihove spremnosti da građanima objasne svoje postupke. Istraživanje je provedeno 2020. na prigodnom uzorku od 1260 policijskih službenika. Upitnik mjeri zadovoljstvo povratnom informacijom kao jednom od osam dimenzija zadovoljstva internom komunikacijom i policijskim legitimitetom u dvije dimenzije interakcije policije i građana: objašnjavanje odluka i postupaka policije građanima – stav i ponašanje. Svrha je usporediti povratne informacije u unutarnoj i vanjskoj komunikaciji policije te provjeriti koliko zadovoljstvo policijskih službenika povratnim informacijama pridonosi razumijevanju njihovih stavova i ponašanja prema objašnjavanju postupaka građanima. Rezultati govore o slaboj prediktorskoj snazi varijabli kojima se mjeri zadovoljstvo povratnim informacijama u razumijevanju stavova i ponašanja policijskih službenika povezano s objašnjavanjem njihovih postupaka građanima. Međutim, kada se u prediktorski model, u kojem je kriterijska varijabla „Ponašanje u vezi s objašnjavanjem građanima policijskih postupaka“, uvede varijabla stava, znatno se povećava udio objašnjene varijance. Doprinos rada jest analiza povezanosti interne i eksterne komunikacije policijskih službenika u Hrvatskoj, a komunikacijska istraživanja iznimno su važna u policijskim organizacijama tranzicijskih zemalja koja iz tradicionalnog modela rada prelaze u modele rada orijentirane prema građanima. Ograničenja rada naziru se u tome što je izolirano promatran samo jedan aspekt interne komunikacije. Stoga bi se u novim istraživanjima trebala promatrati složena priroda interne komunikacije unutar policijske organizacije u kontekstu kvalitete odnosa policijskih službenika prema građanima, a posebno u odnosu na spremnost objašnjavanja policijskih postupaka, kao važne dimenzije povjerenja u policiju.

**Ključne riječi:** stavovi, ponašanje, eksterna komunikacija, povratne informacije, interna komunikacija, policija

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