Finding motivational factors for working with the police as an important tool for personnel stabilization of the security corps

Identificação de fatores motivacionais para o trabalho com a polícia como uma ferramenta importante para a estabilização do efetivo do corpo de segurança

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Resumo

A seleção e, especialmente, a estabilização do capital pessoal devem ser áreas-chave de interesse para todos os gestores seniores das forças de segurança. A motivação dos agentes policiais é um elemento fundamental para o desempenho eficiente e profissional do seu trabalho. Um dos elementos funcionais mais importantes da organização é a análise de qualidade do processo de aquisição de novos funcionários. Dado que a Polícia da República Checa tem lidado com o problema da reposição de pessoal há muito tempo, esta contribuição centra-se nos fatores motivacionais dos membros da Polícia da República Checa, que têm um efeito significativo na estabilidade do pessoal e no recrutamento de pessoal devidamente orientado. O artigo apresenta os resultados de uma investigação em que participaram agentes policiais da República Checa e da República Eslovaca.

Palavras-chave: recrutamento de policiais, fatores motivacionais do policial, estabilização da polícia, rendimento de serviço do policial

Abstract

The selection and especially the stabilization of personnel capital should be a key area of interest for all senior managers of security forces. Police officers' motivation is a key element in the efficient and professional performance of their work. One of the most important functional elements of the organization is a quality analysis of the process of acquiring new employees. Given that the Police of the Czech Republic has been addressing the problem of replenishing its staff for a long time, this contribution focuses on the motivational factors of members of the Police of the Czech Republic, which significantly affect personnel stability and targeted personnel recruitment. The article presents the results of a research investigation in which police officers from the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic participated.

Keywords: *recruitment of members of the police, motivational factors of the member, stabilization of the police, service income of the member*

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Introduction

Ensuring public order and the safety of the population is a globally significant task for every state. At the same time, the field of security and its protection is a highly dynamic and technologically demanding industry, driven mainly by the gradual transfer of selected types of crime to cyberspace.

The security situation is constantly changing and evolving, so it is necessary to be adequately prepared, respond appropriately, adapt, and create new tools and means to make the overall company environment as secure as possible and reduce threats to the lowest risk. Security, in general, can be divided into internal and external. Both components affect the state's security situation. The state must fulfill certain basic obligations directly related to ensuring security (Hrinko, 2021).

The evolving, frequently changing forms and methods of crime pose a critical challenge for all security actors in every country. In the Czech Republic, this issue is primarily handled by the Police of the Czech Republic, whose task is to detect, investigate, and prevent all types of criminal activity. Just like any other organization, especially if it is a security force, the Police of the Czech Republic needs not only adequate technological equipment that aligns with modern trends, but also sufficient and qualified personnel to perform all tasks in the field of detection, investigation, and prevention of criminal activity.

The performance of the profession of a police officer is specific compared to most professions due to several special authorizations granted to the police and their members, which may interfere with the rights and freedoms of other persons. Society generally establishes the police to provide a service to it, in the form of impartial and dispassionate law enforcement. One of the inherent characteristics of the police should therefore be their social neutrality. The police and individual police officers must not show any bias, for example, political, religious, racial, ethnic, or similar. (Kudrna, 2021) The Constitutional Act No. 110/1998 Coll. on security states in Article 3, paragraph 1: "The security of the Czech Republic is ensured by the armed forces, armed security forces, rescue forces, and emergency services."

The selection and especially the stabilization of personnel capital should be a key area of interest for all senior managers of security forces. However, the competitiveness of security force recruitment varies across countries and time periods. The Czech Republic is among the countries currently reacting to the unfavorable development of the economic and financial situation by extensive consolidation of public finances, which is, of course, also reflected in the economic sphere of the security forces. Stagnation, or even a possible reduction, in the volume of financial resources allocated to the service income of members of the security forces does not correspond to the parallel increase in average wages in the private sector. Such a situation, however, can cause a flow of potential applicants for police jobs to private-sector employers.

Number of police officers in the Czech Republic

As of January 1, 2023, the total registered number of members of the Police of the Czech Republic was 39,422. According to statistical data from the Police of the Czech Republic, in 2022, the highest proportion of applicants accepted into the service of a member of the Police of the Czech Republic were male persons aged 20-29 with

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completed secondary education and a school-leaving exam (see figures 1 and 2). It is therefore a group of people representing a dominant source of potential candidates for service at the police station, which should be reflected in the recruitment strategy.
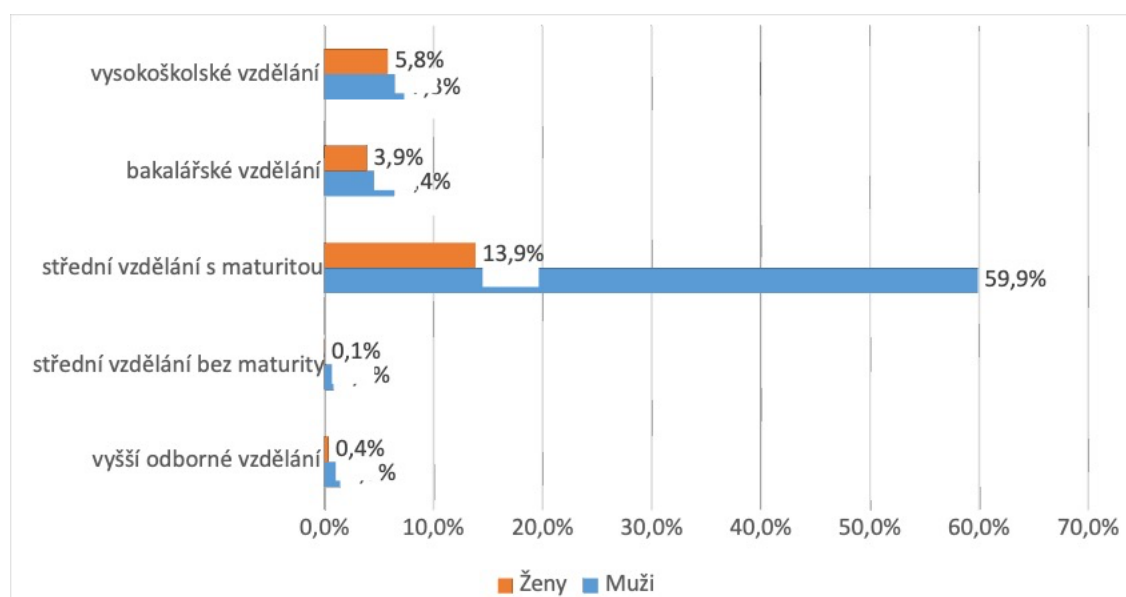
Figure 1

Share of persons hired by members of the police of the Czech Republic in 2022 by age and gender
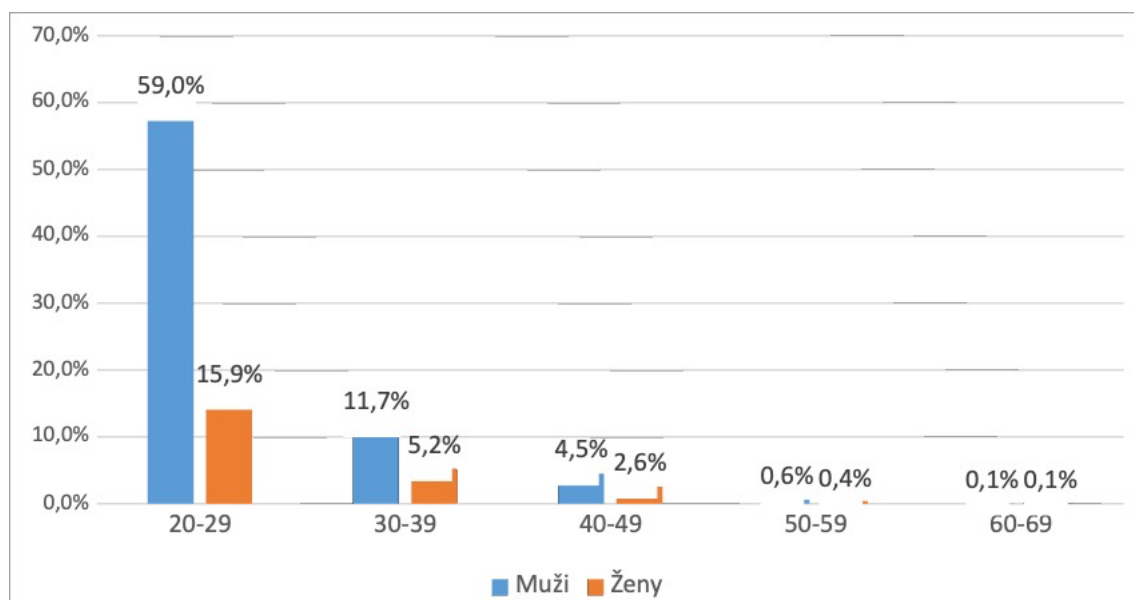
Source: Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

Figure 2

Proportion of persons hired as a member of the Police of the Czech Republic in 2022 by educational attainment and gender

Source: Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

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Based on these facts, the interest of the police and other security forces must be directed towards maintaining and developing the personnel recruitment of high-quality individuals with optimal personal prerequisites for work in the field of ensuring security, and to stabilize and maintain existing members of the security forces, whose experience is a valuable asset for any security force. In this context, identifying a person for a specific profession is also important; the motivation to perform such work is related to this, and, in practice, this is a significant added value and a guarantee that a qualified employee will fill the relevant position. (Stárek, 2022) At the same time, several questions arise regarding the correct setting of the recruitment policy, the creation of suitable conditions for the performance of the service, and the motivation of potential and existing members to work for the security corps.

This article examines the motivation to work for the police and the factors that influence it in greater detail. The Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague carried out a research investigation as part of a partial research task entitled "Analysis and expected development of the competences of the Police of the Czech Republic and police security entities in selected areas", the aim of which was to find out what motivational factors influenced the respondents' decision to become a member of the Czech Police of the Republic and what are their attitudes towards this profession.

Methodology

The authors chose a quantitative research technique - a questionnaire survey - to find out important motivational factors influencing the entry into the service of a member of the Police of the Czech Republic and attitudes towards the long-term performance of the police profession. Respondents were approached based on availability, according to the selection key - (1) newly appointed members of the Police of the Czech Republic who are simultaneously studying a university bachelor's degree program at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague and (2) newly appointed members of the Police of the Czech Republic who are simultaneously preparing for service as part of the basic qualification course "Basic vocational training", newly joined members of the Police Force of the Slovak Republic, who are also preparing for service at the Academy of the Police Force in Bratislava (Slovak Republic).

A total of 159 questionnaires were distributed in person by trained interviewers. A total of 159 evaluable questionnaires were collected, yielding a 100% return rate. Of these, 44 respondents were from group (1) and 115 from group (2). (Note: Group No. 1 are members of the Police of the Czech Republic studying at the Police Academy in a bachelor's study program (full-time study), and Group No. 2 are members of the Police of the Czech Republic and members of the police force of the Slovak Republic who perform service income for up to 3 years of service.) There were 106 male and 53 female respondents.

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Results and Discussion

Determination of criteria and indicators for the evaluation of categorized variables

As a basic criterion for verifying research assumptions for categorized variables, the material significance of a real difference at the level of 10% (note: Previous experience from data analysis shows that the detected minimum 10% difference in line relative frequencies is usually accompanied by the minimum size of Cohen's index "w" at the level of $w \geq 0.10$.) Between the adequate line relative frequencies within the compared nodes in the classification trees (the same lines at the end nodes of the classification tree, which have the greatest heuristic significance) can be chosen.

The basic criterion will be supplemented by an appropriate auxiliary indicator that quantifies the degree of asymmetric statistical association between the categorized variables (Řehák & Řeháková, 1986). For this, association indicators are based on proportional error reduction (PRE) models. The authors discuss PRE measures in more detail (Vogt et al., 2014), which are accurate, user-friendly, and most suitable (Řehák & Řeháková, 1986).

Considering the nature of the analyzed data, an asymmetric coefficient will be used to determine the influence of the independent nominal variable on the dependent nominal variable - this is Goodman's and Kruskal's tau. The given coefficient indicates the percentage of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable. (Note: The term "explanation" must be understood in the sense of reducing the statistical dispersion of the data, not in the sense of a causal interpretation (which may not apply). Or, in other words, on the ratio of the reduction of the variability of one variable in the classes of the other variable.) The answer is always expressed as a proportion ranging from 0 to 1, or as a percentage ranging from 0% to 100%. Similarly, the influence of the independent nominal variable on the dependent ordinal variable is measured by the asymmetric coefficient β, and the influence of the independent ordinal variable on the dependent ordinal variable is determined by the asymmetric coefficient Somers delta. Expressing the asymmetric relationship as a percentage for the above-mentioned coefficients (GK tau, coefficient β, and Somers' delta) to explain dispersion is a beneficial and understandable approach for researchers. These rates have the character of objectively significant indicators. In practical analysis, in the search for truly acceptable effects, the so-called effect-size analysis is increasingly coming to the fore. Petr Soukup provides a relatively clear definition of material significance:

"The objective significance of the result means that the measured difference or the established connection is important for scientific knowledge or practical purposes. In contrast to statistical significance, which determines whether the found result is generalizable (i.e., whether it is not caused by chance influencing the selection of units or experimental conditions), substantive significance tells us whether it makes sense to talk about the result at all and whether it has practical consequences (including consequences for science itself). In order to find out whether the result is materially significant, and if so, then how much, it is necessary to have certain indicators, measures of material significance." (Soukp, 2013, 127)

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In his monograph, Roger E. Kirk defined the point estimates of an acceptable materially significant effect explaining variance for the PRE ω2 measure as follows: 0.01 – small effect; 0.059 – medium effect; 0.138 – significant effect. (Kirk, 2008) The w2 coefficient, as an indicator of relative factual significance independent of sample size (N), is also of fundamental importance for comparing results across different research studies. Also, it is a question of synthesizing results from many research articles, etc., in so-called meta-analytical studies. There, it is not possible to state statistical significance or non-significance, or to compare t-test values, etc., precisely because different research with different sample sizes are incomparable.

Table 1

Materiality table ω2

$$\omega^2 = .010 \text{ is a small association.}$$
$$\omega^2 = .059 \text{ is a medium association.}$$
$$\omega^2 = .138 \text{ or larger is a large association.}$$

Interval	Slovní označení
< (0,1–0,3)	small
< (0,3–0,5)	medium
0,5 a vyšší	large

Values of 0.01 (small effect), 0.06 (medium effect), and 0.14 (significant effect) provide certain comparative limits even for the indicated coefficient of asymmetric association, PRE, and Goodman and Kruskal's tau.

At this point, it is also necessary to mention another index, designated Cohen's w. It is intended only for categorical variables of nominal type. Cohen's w (Cohen, 2009) interval values for small, medium, and significant effects can be derived from the embedded table in the text. However, about the symmetrical form of this index, its use should be understood as auxiliary, only for a specific comparison with the adequate coefficient of proportional reduction of error (PRE) for nominal variables - the asymmetric coefficient of association, Goodman-Kruskal's tau. The starting point for defining Cohen's w is the calculation of the coefficient phi (...), which measures the strength of association in a table with two rows and two columns, i.e., one degree of freedom (df=1).

IBM SPSS V13 software was used to create first-level classification tables. The IBM SPSS Statistics V26 program was used to create the classification trees – the decision trees module. Its advantage is combining classes into one for independent variables when they have a homogeneous character (similar answers across the classes of independent variables to the given question). The values of Goodman's and Kruskal's tau and Cohen's w index (fi) were also determined using the IBM SPSS Statistics V26 program (contingency tables), using the bootstrap method (which in our

case means 1000 selections with returns from the given sample set (159 respondents) and determining the bootstrap confidence interval for the estimated value of Goodman's and Kruskal's tau asymmetric coefficient.

Selected results of the research investigation

Figure 3

Do I want to combine my professional life with the profession of a police officer?
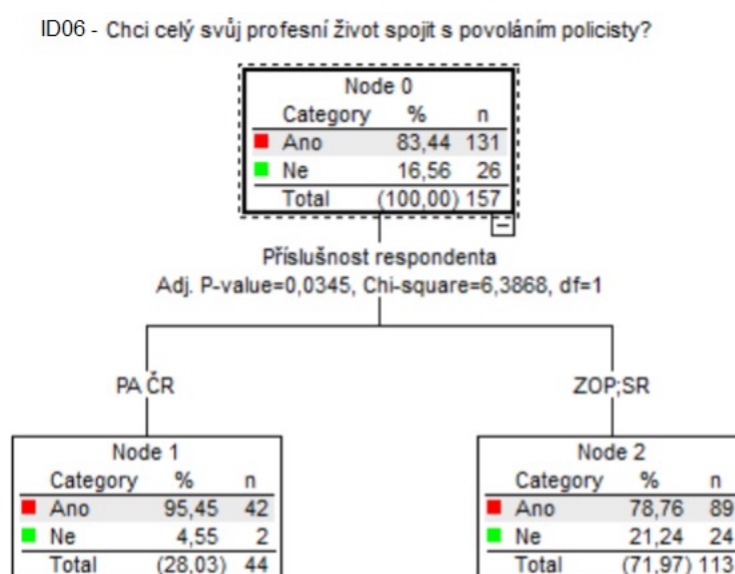
Note: Goodman and Kruskal's tau = 0.054. Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (0.014; 0.138). Cohen's w = 0.202 (small substantive effect).
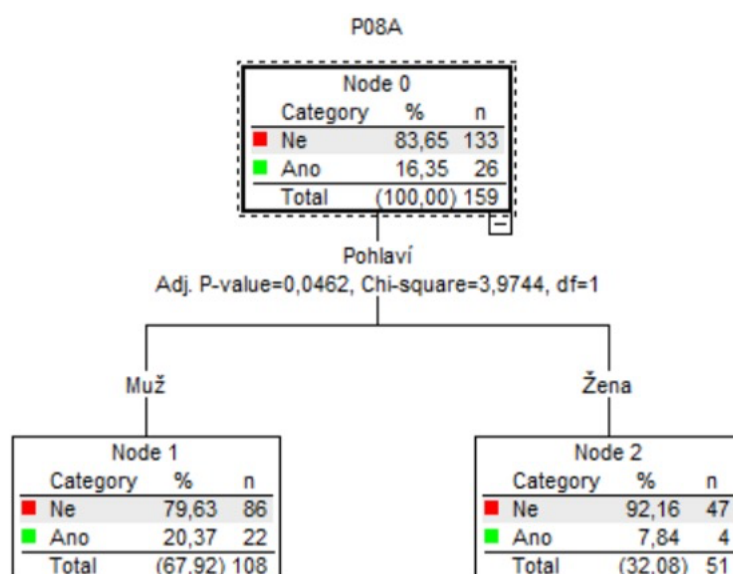
Conclusion to the research assumption for question No. 1

A materially significant difference in the relative frequency of answers was found regarding the affiliation of the sample group respondents to the given question. The difference exceeds the defined 10% in the relative frequencies of responses. The value of Goodman and Kruskal's asymmetric tau coefficient is 5.4% of the explained variance. It follows from the above that the relationship between the two classes of respondents' affiliations (PA CR on the one hand; ZOP and SR on the other) and their answer to question ID04 is a statistical nominal relationship. It can be concluded that 5.4% of the explained variance of the nominal variable (I want to connect my entire professional life with the profession of a police officer) is caused by the two classes of the nominal variable of the respondent's affiliation.

The indicated asymmetric coefficient of 0.054 is close to the "medium materially significant association" interval. An acceptable materially significant influence of the independent variable was found for the given dependent variable.

Figure 4

Within the police force, my goal is to serve in a basic unit (district/local department)

Note: Goodman and Kruskal's tau = 0.025. Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (0.001;0.08). Cohen's w = 0.158 (small substantive effect).
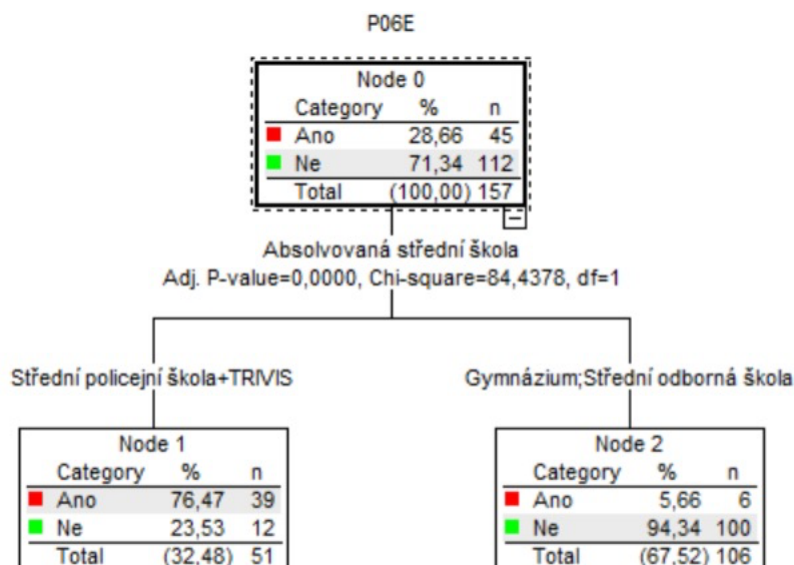
Conclusion to the research assumption for question No. 2

Regarding the gender of the respondents in the sample group, a materially significant difference in the relative frequency of answers to the given question was found. The difference exceeds the defined 10% in the relative frequencies of responses. The value of Goodman and Kruskal's asymmetric tau coefficient is 2.5% of the explained variance. It follows from the above that the relationship between respondents' gender and their answer to question P08a is a statistical nominal relationship. It can be concluded that 2.5% of the explained variance of the nominal variable (Within the police, I aim to serve in a basic unit (district/local department) is due to the two classes of the nominal variable (gender – male and female). The reported skewness coefficient value of 0.025 exceeds the "small materially significant association" interval.

An acceptable materially significant influence of the independent variable was found for the given dependent variable.

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Figure 5

I started thinking about working for the police because my studies inspired me in high
school

Note: Goodman and Kruskal's tau = 0.538. Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (0.375;0.715). Cohen's
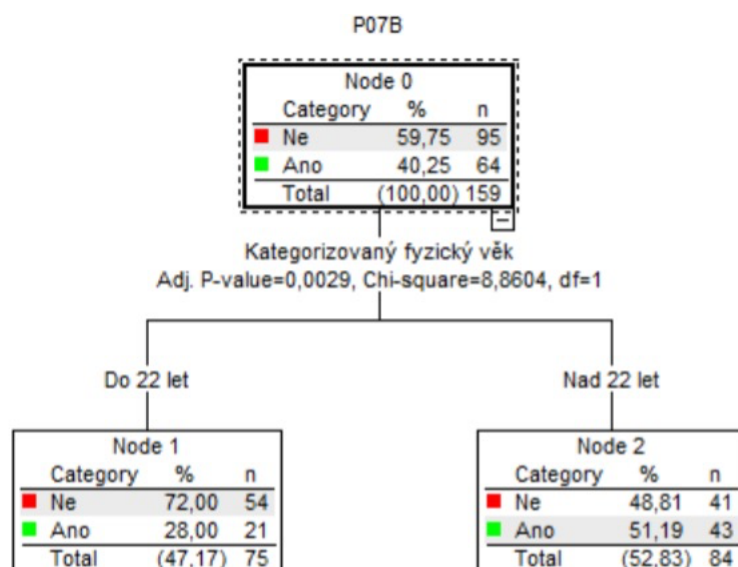w = 0.733 (significant substantive effect).

Conclusion to the research assumption for question No. 3

A materially significant difference in the relative frequency of answers was
found regarding the affiliation of the sample group respondents to the given question.
The difference exceeds the defined 10% in the relative frequencies of responses. The
value of Goodman and Kruskal's asymmetric tau coefficient is 53.8% of the explained
variance. It follows from the above that the relationship between the two classes of
respondents' education (secondary police school + TRIVIS on the one hand and
gymnasium and secondary vocational school on the other) and their answer to question
P06e is of a statistical nominal character. It can be concluded that 53.8% of the
explained variance in the nominal variable (I started thinking about working for the
police because my studies inspired me in high school) is attributable to the two classes
of the respondent's educational institution. The indicated value of the asymmetric
coefficient, 0.538, is well outside the interval for "large materially significant
association".

An acceptable materially significant influence of the independent variable was
found for the given dependent variable.

Figure 6

For me, the biggest motivation for working for the police is long-term job stability

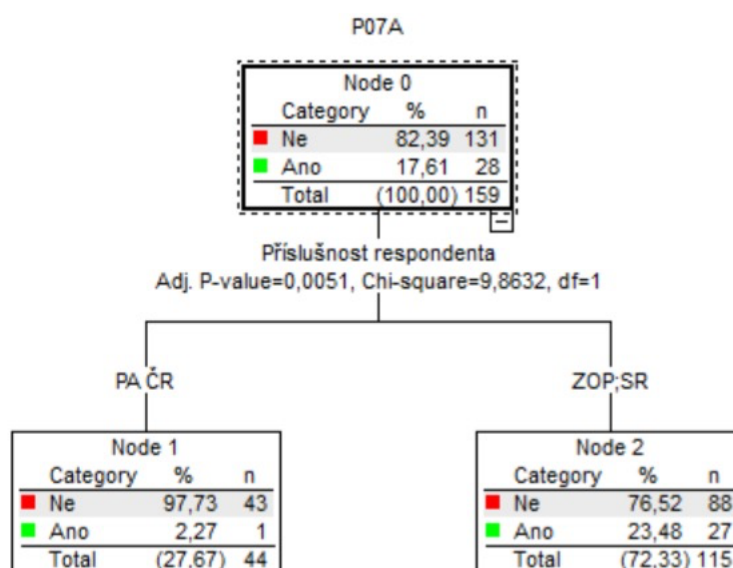Note: Goodman and Kruskal's tau = 0.056. Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (0.008; 0.149).

Cohen's w = 0.236 (small substantive effect).

Conclusion to the research assumption for question No. 4

Regarding the categorized physical age of the respondents in the sample group, a materially significant difference in relative frequencies of answers was found to the given question. The difference exceeds the defined 10% in the relative frequencies of responses. The value of Goodman and Kruskal's asymmetric tau coefficient is 5.6% of the explained variance. It follows from the above that the relationship between the two classes of respondents categorized by physical age (under 22 years; over 22 years) and their answer to question P07b is a statistical nominal relationship. It can be concluded that 5.6% of the explained variance of the nominal variable (For me, the biggest motivation for working in the police is long-term job stability) is attributable to two classes of the categorized physical age variable. The indicated value of the asymmetric coefficient of 0.056 reaches the interval of "almost moderate materially significant association". An acceptable materially significant influence of the independent variable was found for the given dependent variable.

Figure 7

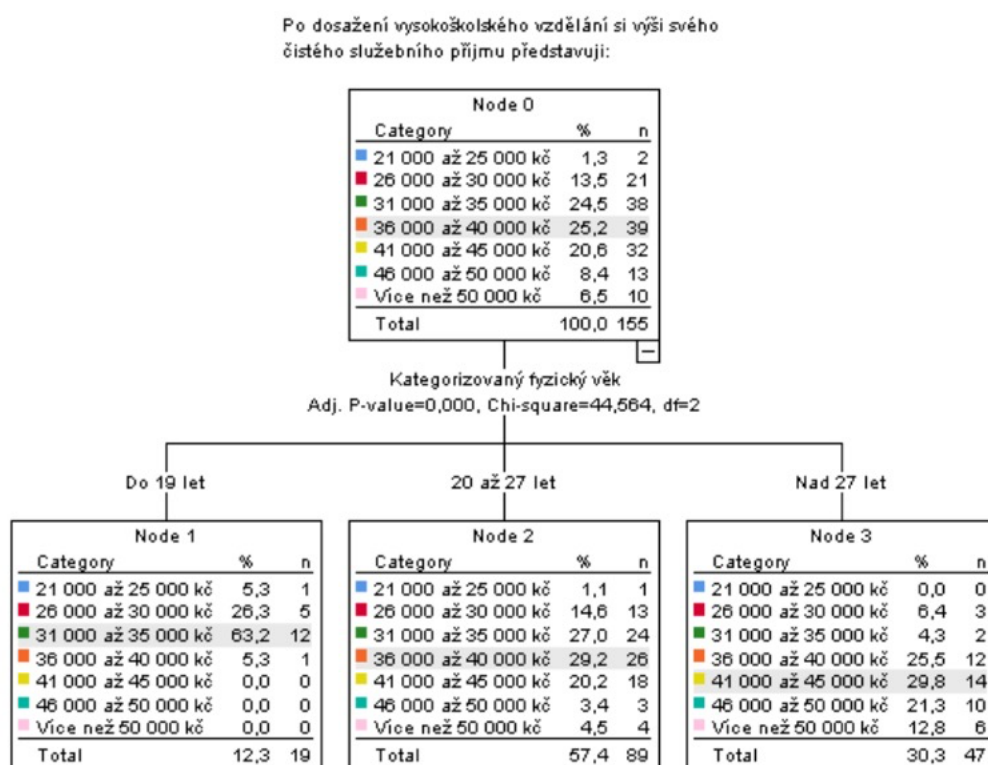For me, the biggest motivation for working for the police is a steady income

Note: Goodman and Kruskal's tau = 0.066. Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (0.025;0.132). Cohen's w = 0.249 (small substantive effect).

Conclusion to the research assumption for question No. 5

A materially significant difference in the relative frequency of answers was found regarding the affiliation of the sample group respondents to the given question. The difference exceeds the defined 10% in the relative frequencies of responses. The value of Goodman and Kruskal's asymmetric tau coefficient is 6.6% of the explained variance. It follows from the above that the relationship between the two classes of respondents' affiliations (PA CR on the one hand and ZOP and SR on the other) and their answer to question P07a is a statistical nominal relationship. It can be concluded that 6.6% of the explained variance of the nominal variable (For me, the biggest motivation for working at the police is a permanent service income) is attributable to two classes of the respondent's affiliation. The indicated value of the asymmetric coefficient, 0.066, falls within the interval for "moderate objectively significant association". An acceptable materially significant influence of the independent variable was found for the given dependent variable.

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Figure 8

After obtaining a university degree, I imagine the amount of my net income

Note: one dollar is 23 Czech crowns. The table below represents the salary that police officers imagine after obtaining a university education. Goodman and Kruskal's tau = 0.072. Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (0.050;0.124). Somer's delta = 0.532. Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (0.402;0.647).

Conclusion to the research assumption for question No. 6

Regarding the categorized physical age of the respondents in the sample group, a materially significant difference in relative frequencies of answers was found to the given question. The difference exceeds the defined 10% in the relative frequencies of responses. The Goodman and Kruskal tau asymmetric coefficient value is 7.2% of the explained variance, while the Somers delta asymmetric value is 0.532. It follows from the above that the relationship between the three classes of respondents categorized by physical age (under 19 years, 20 to 27 years, and over 27 years) and their answer to question P09 is of a statistical ordinal nature. It can be concluded that 53.2% of the explained variance of the ordinal variable (After obtaining a university education, I imagine the amount of my net work income) is due to the three classes of the ordinal variable of categorized physical age. The indicated asymmetric coefficient of 0.532 clearly exceeds the interval for "large objectively significant association". An acceptable materially significant influence of the independent variable was found for the given dependent variable.

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Conclusions

In conclusion, the most significant proportion of applicants to the Police of the Czech Republic in 2022 were male, aged 20-29, with secondary education, who had completed the school-leaving examination. In 2022, 59% and 15.9% of women among the total of 2,044 recruited were recruited into the Police of the Czech Republic in this category—a total of 7,454 applicants applied for employment with the Police of the Czech Republic in 2022. The most significant failure in the recruitment process for the Police of the Czech Republic was due to a lack of psychological fitness (2,540 applicants).

As part of the research survey, 83.4% of respondents stated that they want to connect their entire professional life with the profession of a police officer. The most significant proportion of police members who would like to devote their entire professional life to the profession of a policeman was among those studying at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic (95.5%). It can therefore be assumed that a university's professional education can have a significant effect on the respondent's long-term vision for their profession.

The research revealed that, on average, only 16.4% of respondents want to serve in the basic police department (20.4% of men, 7.8% of women). The rest of the respondents envision more qualified positions in their careers with the police. Based on the above, it can be stated that a significant motivational stimulus can be the vision or promise of a police officer's career advancement, provided that official duties are fulfilled correctly and that professional and personal development are pursued. In this regard, the results show, in particular, very little interest among women in performing service at the basic unit.

Another fascinating result of the research is the interest in working with the police already in high school. Most respondents were inspired to work for the police by studying at secondary police schools of the Ministry of the Interior and other vocational schools specializing in security and legal work - 76.47% of respondents from among students at these schools. At other secondary schools, only 5.66% of respondents considered working for the police. It clearly follows from the above that secondary school education with a security or police focus is demonstrably motivating for a future career in policing. In this regard, it is appropriate for the security forces to support police and security-oriented secondary schools.

Approximately 40% of respondents stated that the biggest motivation for working for the police is the long-term stability of this job. Among respondents under 22 years of age, only 28% are inspired by the long-term stability of work in the police. Respondents over 22 years of age perceive the long-term stability of work at the police as the most important motivating factor in 51.2%. This result can be explained by older respondents' greater concern for the material security of their current or future family, which younger respondents may not consider significant.

Permanent service income is considered one of the basic factors in stabilizing police officers' employment relationships. However, for only 17.6% of respondents, a permanent service income is the greatest motivation to work for the police, which,

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given the economically and socially turbulent times, can be considered an interesting finding.

Respondents under the age of 19 imagine their employment income after obtaining a university education in the range of USD 1350 - 1520, respondents aged 20 - 27 in the range of USD 1565 – 1740, and respondents over the age of 27 imagine their employment income after graduating from university to be in the range of USD 1780 – 1956. The increase in claims relative to employment income with respondents' age can be explained by rising costs of meeting one's own living needs (own housing, family care, etc.). However, respondents vary in their estimates of the actual amount of service income (younger respondents even underestimate it). The average service income of members of the Police of the Czech Republic after three years of service was USD 1,744 in 2022 (Policie ČR).

Considering that, on 1 January 2022, the planned number of members of the Police of the Czech Republic was 45,665, and the actual number was only 40,182, it is necessary to increase interest among quality applicants for this job. The most tremendous success of the recruitment campaign for the police should therefore target a group of people between 20-29 years of age with a secondary education with a high school diploma and studying at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic or at a secondary police school established by the Ministry of the Interior, or at secondary schools with a field of security and legal work. When it comes to recruitment for the police's basic units, female respondents' interest prevails.

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List of abbreviations used in the text

Ano - Yes

Bakalářské vzdělání – Bachelor´s degree

Gymnázium – Grammar school

Interval - interval

Kategorizovaný věk – categorized age

Kč – Czech crowns

Let - years

Muž - man

Žena - woman

Ne - no

PAČR – Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague

Pohlaví - gender

Příslušnost respondenta – Jurisdiction of the respondent

Slovní označení – verbal designation

SR – Slovak Republic

Střední odborná škola - college

Střední Policejní škola – secondary police school

Střední vzdělání bez maturity – secondary education without matriculation

Střední vzdělání s maturitou – secondary education with high school diploma

Vysokoškolské vzdělání – higher education

Vyšší - higher

Vyšší odborné vzdělání – higher professional education

ZOP (základní odborná příprava) – basic vocational training

PUC-SP