



Emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience in police forces

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Abstract. *Purpose.* This study delves into the relationship between emotional intelligence, mobbing, and resilience in the police force of Tirana, Albania. *Study design.* The sample population consisted of 117 police officers, with a male to female ratio that mirrors the actual gender ratios in the Tirana police force. The participants were asked to complete self-assessment questionnaires to determine their levels of emotional intelligence, mobbing, and resilience. *Findings.* The results showed a clear correlation between increased mobbing in the workplace and decreased resilience. Furthermore, the study found no statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience. Additionally, those participants who reported experiencing mobbing in the workplace demonstrated lower levels of resilience compared to those who did not experience it. The sample demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence, which was positively correlated with the participants' age. However, it could not be definitively determined whether this correlation was specific to the workplace or a general trend. *Value of results.* This study highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in enhancing well-being in the workplace and suggests that the police force should invest in training and development programs to enhance emotional intelligence among its officers. It also underscores the need for increased awareness of mobbing and the implementation of measures to prevent it from occurring in the workplace. The findings of this study add to the existing body of research in the field of emotional intelligence and its impact on workplace well-being.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; mobbing; resilience; police force; Albania.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence

In 1995, psychologist Daniel Goleman published his book “Emotional Intelligence”, which became a bestseller because of the topic it deals with (Goleman, 1995). D. Goleman emphasized the importance of feelings, emotions and other cognitive characteristics as an integral part of human intelligence. According to D. Goleman, emotional intelligence (EI) is based on five pillars: emotional awareness, managing emotions, using emotions effectively, empathy or reading emotions, and managing relationships.

Emotional intelligence is divided into two categories: the first includes the ability model and the second includes the mixed model (Mayer, Caruso, Salovey, 1999). Researchers argue that both models have their pros and cons. The ability model has empirical validity, does not include traits such as personality traits and cognitive traits, and is not a model that claims to appear in the work environment. The mixed model includes features that are somewhat valuable but are nonetheless vital to the workplace.

Emotional intelligence can be viewed as a skill rather than a personality trait. "For this reason, the ability model is used, which defines emotional intelligence as the ability to accurately understand one's own emotional state constructively and to accurately understand the emotional state of another person, reacting in a way that produces a desirable behavior (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2004). C.-S. Wong and K. S. Law define three variables that focus on skills which are: being aware of your own emotions, being aware of others' emotions and regulating your own emotions (Wong, Law, 2002). Being aware of one's emotions is the basis for evaluating individual emotions and responding emotionally and refers to the degree to which people are able to identify their feelings and understand the causes of those feelings. People who are able to recognize their own emotions well and are good at reading emotions in others may be more skilled at their jobs (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2008).

R. J. Sternberg proposes another definition of emotional intelligence, which he calls successful intelligence (Sternberg, 1997). Successful intelligence includes three distinct types of mental abilities: analytical, creative, and practical. Analytical intelligence refers to the mental process used to learn how to solve problems, how to choose a problem-solving strategy, and how to implement it. Creative intelligence is the ability to solve new situations by relying on existing skills and knowledge. The intelligent person effectively draws on past experiences to cope with new situations, which often involve finding an unusual way to connect old information with new information. Practical intelligence includes the ability to adapt to the environment and often reflects what is commonly called street smarts.

About 75% of public service jobs have intense work-related demands, and this is the case for every job in government and nonprofit organizations (Guy, Newman, Mastracci, 2008). Since they are in constant contact with people, a certain level of adaptability is required from the public service employee and to be able to cope with difficult situations at all times. It can be said that any job that has constant contact with people requires a management of emotions, but there are some jobs that make it more difficult, and in this case the police is one of the professions that has the most difficult job at an emotional level. In an emergency and panic situation, they need to control their emotions, in order to perform at a high level, keeping both the citizens and them under control. There is a great debate in the case of professions dealing with public relations: whether they should keep their emotions to themselves and continue to carry a heavy psychological weight or share these emotions with citizens, whether they are welcome or not. In the case of the police, despite the fact that it is very difficult, one should not share emotions with others, because spreading panic in a dangerous situation negatively affects the citizens as well.

Emotionally intelligent individuals are aware of their own and others' emotions and manage their emotions to elicit desirable behaviors from others in the workplace (Lee, Brotheridge, 2006). Police work often involves meeting people, experiencing a wide range of emotional states, therefore it is expected that police officers are able to manage their emotions when faced with different situations (Bakker, Heuven, 2006). Various studies have shown emotional intelligence predicts performance in professions that face high emotional intensities, such as: police work (Joseph, 1994). It is important to be aware of the strength of emotions, as they can affect perceptions, thoughts, motivation and interpretation of various events.

Mobbing

The word “mobbing” was first used by the ethologist Konrad Lorenz to describe the behavior of a group of animals. He called the attacks of a group of small animals against a single larger animal “mobbing” (Lorenz, 1974). Then a Swedish doctor used the word to describe the behavior of a group of children directed at a single child. H. Leyman decided to borrow this concept when he observed a similar behavior in workplaces (Leyman, 1990). He did not choose to use the word “bullying” because this destructive communication did not always include the characteristics of bullying. Mobbing is carried out in a more sensitive way, despite having a very stigmatizing style. Bullying involves physical violence and threats, while mobbing is carried out in a more sophisticated manner, such as social isolation of the victim (Leymann, 1996).

Resilience at work

J. A. Joseph argued that a resilient individual is one who is responsible, positive, self-aware and socially competent (Joseph, 1994). She argued that a resilient individual has an inner strength that helps him avoid problems that could lead the person to certain failure. In some definitions, resilience refers to an ability to overcome high loads of stressful events (eg, trauma, death, economic loss, disasters, political unrest, and cultural change) and maintain psychological vitality and mental health (Agaibi, Wilson, 2005). Resilience is the ability to maintain a healthy psychological and physical state when facing difficult situations and helps to cope with burnout at work, coping with work stress and trauma (Klinoff, Van Hasselt, Black, 2015). Resilient people have developed healthy techniques to deal effectively with stress and various traumas. Organizational or institutional behavior increases self-esteem, competence at work, problem solving and coping with challenging situations (Rutter, 2006). So far studies suggest that resilience is not specifically related to gender and does not increase or decrease with age, but it is related to psychological development and changes in emotional and cognitive competence (Crowe, Glass, Lancaster, Raines, Waggy, 2017).

Police officers are constantly faced with difficult and unexpected situations, and therefore they are required to be resilient. But what does it mean to be resilient? Most studies define “resilience” as the ability to cope with adversity, recover from negative experiences, and find a balance between burden and capacity. In various studies, the term “professional resilience” is used. “Professional resilience is grouped into three categories: individual, interpersonal and organizational. Individual factors relate to emotional stability, coping with problems, confidence, persistence and determination, but also depression, fear, anxiety and sleep problems. Interpersonal factors are related to good communication, trust in the team, sharing of experiences and the use of social networks. But they are also related to the lack of social support, collective resilience and lack of control over the work environment. Organizational factors, among others, are related to the quality of decision-making, to the quality of information distribution of the organization, but also to the lack of balance between the interests of the organization and individual interests, as well as the lack of opportunities for training” (McCraty, Atkinson, 2012).

Police work is considered one of the most stressful professions, considering the dynamics and different situations that are presented every day. In general, our body, if faced with acute stress, tends to return to its previous state, while chronic stress prevents the body from returning to its previous state. Prone to being stressed, for most people work represents a constant stress. Stress in police forces can cause cardiovascular problems, depression, problems with alcohol consumption as well as aggression on and off the job. New police officers who have experienced significant trauma before becoming police officers cope with future traumatic situations better than those who have not, and officers who are psychologically resilient are better suited to the role of the police officer (Violanti, 2006).

Resilience is seen as an individual characteristic, related to coping skills in problematic situations. It is important to understand that not all people experience post-traumatic stress after a stressful event, which is automatically associated with resilience. Seen differently, resilience is one's psychological, physical, and emotional readiness to return to a functional position at work and is often used to assess individuals who have just recovered from a traumatic experience such as, accident, failure or some kind of loss (Srivastava, 1999). While, on the other hand, the lack of institutional support and a good distribution of information negatively affects professional resilience. Other factors that influence resilience are age, years of service, gender and personal characteristics of each person (Brunetti, 2006).

Police officers are emotionally exposed to interpersonal interactions (such as death, illness, accidents and crime) on a daily basis and as part of their job they must work on the psychological side in order to deal with emotions properly. From an organizational point of view. Police officers must possess certain skills that are considered very important to perform their job effectively, such as emotional intelligence, resilience, empathy and stress management. Rates of depression among police officers are higher than those reported in the general population, in part because of their job responsibilities.

In everyday life, people face different circumstances, to which they must adapt, and resilience is the ability to face these challenges successfully. People who are resilient are less likely to be affected by stress and this allows them to perform better in their work. Cognitive, behavioral, and existential factors such as self-care, embracing a personal moral ethic, optimism, flexibility, and cognitive abilities are aspects of resilience that protect against depression (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Brick, Yehuda, 2014).

The relationship between emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience

Regarding the relationship of emotional intelligence with resilience, numerous studies show that people with a high level of EI have a higher level of resilience. In fact, four EI skills were shown to help alleviate stress, challenge appraisal, more positive and less negative affect, and physiological responses. EI can also be defined as the ability to use awareness and sensitivity to discern the feelings that underlie human communication, and to resist the temptation to respond impulsively and without thinking (Ryback, 1998). At the highest level, it deals with influence without manipulation or abuse of authority. It is about perceiving, learning, connecting, innovating, prioritizing and acting in ways that consider and legitimize emotions, rather than relying solely on logic or intellect or technical analysis.

Workplace resilience was defined as the ability of employees to bounce back after experiencing hardship (i.e. acts of workplace bullying) without exhibiting any psychological disorders. Resilience is the process that allows employees to develop as a result of adversity, becoming stronger. R. Fraccaro showed that mobbing victims presented with increased PTSD (posttraumatic stress) symptoms, thus becoming more resilient after experiencing workplace mobbing (Fraccaro, 2014). She proved that victims of mobbing, who had higher levels of resilience, presented higher levels of task self-efficacy at work, despite the difficulties experienced. People who had higher levels of resilience recovered faster after facing mobbing than those with lower levels of resilience (Narayanan, Betts, 2014).

Ethical considerations

For the realization of this study, important ethical aspects were taken into consideration, which are related to the informed consent of each participant. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, to maintain data privacy and confidentiality for any information coming from this study, and to guarantee that this study does not affect the physical or psychological well-being of participants.

Limitations of the study

This study focused on emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience in the police force and the sample was selected only from two police stations in Tirana, Albania. For a wider generalization, it would be good to get representatives from other police stations. Second, all data collected relies on participant self-report. In this case, another way to collect data can be conceptualized to be more objective, and to reconcile objective data with self-reports.

Objectives

This study aimed to examine the relationship between the variables: the level of emotional intelligence, the level of mobbing and resilience among the police forces in the city of Tirana, Albania, as well as the relationship between these variables. The hypotheses raised in the study are as follows.

Hypothesis 1. There is a negative correlational relationship between mobbing and emotional intelligence among the police forces in Tirana. The higher the emotional intelligence, the less high levels of mobbing are reported.

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive correlational relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience among police officers in Tirana. The higher the emotional intelligence, the higher the resilience.

Hypothesis 3. Emotional intelligence has a moderating influence between mobbing and resilience among police officers in Tirana. When controlling for emotional intelligence, the relationship between mobbing and resilience is stronger than when emotional intelligence is not controlled for.

These hypotheses derive from the model that the researcher proposed, related to the influence that emotional intelligence would have on the relationship mobbing — resilience.

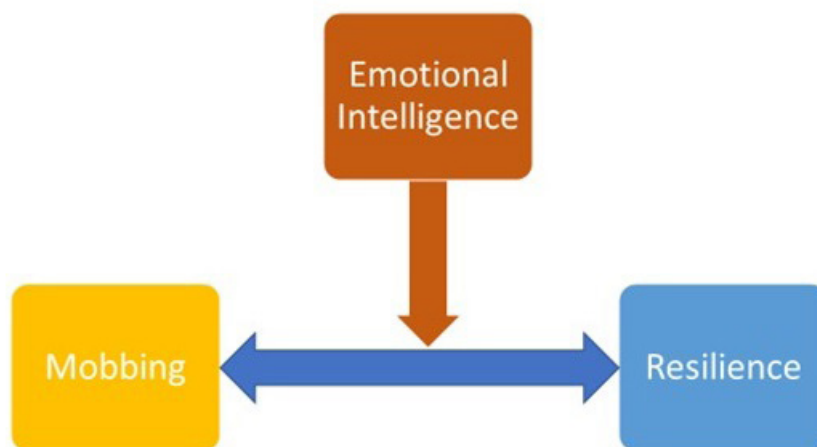


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of study

Methodology

Sample

In this study, the participants were members of the police force ($N = 117$) employed by the Tirana Police Directorate and Police Station No. 2 Tirana, Albania. Questionnaires were distributed in two different institutions. In Police Station No. 2 Tirana 55 questionnaires were distributed and returned completed $n = 51$; while 70 questionnaires were distributed in the Tirana Police Directorate and $n = 66$ completed questionnaires were returned. The highest number of participants was men with a percentage of 74.4% ($N = 87$), while women had a percentage of 25.6% ($N = 30$). The age of the participants ranged from 21 to 60, with mean $M = 40.89$, and standard deviation $SD = 11.02$. The work experience of the participants varied from two years to 36 years, with mean $M = 16.08$.

and standard deviation $SD = 8.81$. This sample was not randomly selected, therefore its level of representation for all police forces throughout Albania is limited.

Instruments

For this study, three different instruments were used that measure the level of emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience.

Emotional Intelligence Test

The first instrument is that of emotional intelligence and consists of 33 questions divided into four sections, which measure the perception of emotions, the management of the emotions of the person performing the test, the management of the emotions of others and the use of these emotions. The Emotional Intelligence Test (SEIS) was created by N. S. Schutte with colleagues (Schutte et al., 1998). This test is based on P. Salovey and J. D. Mayer's original model on EI (Salovey, Mayer, 1990). This test has certainly undergone some changes since its creation, but the basis remains the same. The SEIS includes 33 self-report statements and asks subjects to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree. Participants answer on a Likert scale and a total score comes from summing up the questionnaire's points. The SEIS assesses the perception, understanding, expression, regulation, and utilization of emotions in oneself and others. The instrument's total score is calculated by reversing three statements and then adding them all together. The more points you score from this instrument, the higher emotional intelligence the person has.

Luxemburg Workplace Mobbing Scale

The second instrument is that of mobbing and the Luxemburg Workplace Mobbing Scale (LWMS) was used, which consists of five questions (Steffgen, Sischka, Schmidt, Kohl, Christian, 2019). The answer scale of this instrument is on the Likert scale, where "1" = "Never", while "5" = "Always". This test measures the criticism, games, disregard and ridicule that can be directed at them and are characteristics of mobbing. The five questions were following. 1. How often is your work criticized by your colleagues or superiors? 2. How often are you ignored by your colleagues or superiors? 3. How often are you assigned trivial tasks by your superiors? 4. How often are you teased by your colleagues or superiors in front of others? 5. How often do you have conflicts with your colleagues or superiors? At the end, all points were collected and the higher the score, the more likely it is that the person is a victim of mobbing.

Brief Resiliency Scale

The third instrument measured the level of resilience, using the Brief Resiliency Scale (BRS) instrument (Smith et al., 2008). The questionnaire consists of 6 statements, using the Likert scale, where "1" = "Strongly disagree", while "5" = "Strongly agree". The total score of the instrument is calculated from the reverse statements 2, 4, 5, 6. The higher the score in this instrument, the higher the resilience of the person.

Results

The variables that were considered in this study were emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience. These variables were measured using the SIES, LWMS and BRS. Based on the database, Cronbach's alpha was performed, and in Table 1 presents the reliability coefficients for each of the instruments used.

The reliability coefficient of the questionnaires used in the case study is greater than 0.7, which is the lower limit accepted in the literature for the validity of questionnaires. This shows that the questionnaire is understood and there are no problems in the reliability of the data. The mobbing

and resilience instrument results in a lower alpha, also because the number of statements is lower. 117 people participated in the study, all police officers at the Police Directorate ($n = 66$) of Tirana and Police Station No. 2 ($n = 51$) Tirana. In this study $n = 87$ (74.4%) were male and $n = 30$ (25.6%) females.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of questionnaires

| Instrument | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of statements |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Emotional intelligence | .919 | 33 |
| 2. Mobbing | .747 | 5 |
| 3. Resilience | .702 | 6 |

Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience. The correlation between emotional intelligence and resilience is $r(117) = .39$, $p < 0.01$. Based on the correlation coefficient, it is noted that there is a statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and resilience at work in the police force. This means that as emotional intelligence increases, so does resilience at work.

Table 2. Correlational analysis between emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience

| Variables | Emotional intelligence | Mobbing | Resilience |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------|------------|
| Emotional intelligence | Pearson corr. | 1 | -.052 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .581 |
| | N | 117 | 117 |
| Mobbing | Pearson corr. | | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .689 |
| | N | 117 | 117 |
| Resilience | Pearson corr. | | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | |
| | N | | 117 |

Note: ** — Correlation is significant at the $p 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

The correlation between mobbing and emotional intelligence showed that $r(117) = -0.05$, $p = 0.58$, where $p < 0.01$. Based on the correlation coefficient, it is observed that there is no statistical relationship between emotional intelligence and mobbing among police forces.

The correlation between mobbing and resilience showed that $r(117) = -0.037$, $p = 0.689$. The correlation coefficient shows that there is no correlation between mobbing and resilience.

Table 3. Partial correlation for the controlling the effect of EI on the correlational relationship between mobbing and resilience

| Control variable | Correlations | | |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | Mobbing | Resilience |
| Emotional intelligence | Mobbing | Pearson corr. | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . |
| | | N | 117 |
| | Resilience | Pearson corr. | -.247 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .012 |
| | | N | 117 |

To identify the moderating role of emotional intelligence, partial correlation was used. The direct correlation showed that there was no relationship between mobbing and resilience. By means of partial correlation, when the level of emotional intelligence is controlled, it is observed that mobbing and resilience are negatively correlated with each other $r = -.24$, $p < 0.012$. This means that if all the participants had the same level of emotional intelligence, with the increase in resilience, the possibility of being a victim of mobbing would decrease.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience among police officers in Tirana. The raised hypotheses were as follows.

Hypothesis 1. There is a negative correlational relationship between mobbing and emotional intelligence among the police forces in Tirana. The higher the emotional intelligence, the less high levels of mobbing are reported.

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive correlational relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience among police officers in Tirana. The higher the emotional intelligence, the higher the resilience. To validate these hypotheses, the Pearson correlation test was performed between the variables as well as the partial correlation for the last hypothesis. The results showed that there was no correlational relationship between emotional intelligence and mobbing, nor between mobbing and resilience. The only statistically significant correlation was the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience.

The literature also suggests that a high level of emotional intelligence is associated with high levels of resilience. Both emotional intelligence and resilience had a normal distribution and, as expected, had a positive relationship between them. P. Salovey and J. Mayer (1990) concluded that EI and resilience are directly related, as the behavior of people with emotional intelligence can be adapted based on situations (Salovey, Mayer, 1990). Other factors that can influence resilience are family and social support, high expectations, positive thinking and even in certain cases resilience is seen as a personality characteristic (Brunetti, 2006). Older people tend to have higher emotional intelligence and stronger resilience. This finding indicates that both of these variables change over the years and can be learned. In this context, the most appropriate ways can be planned to teach police officers techniques to increase their emotional intelligence and to better cope with the various problematic and stressful situations they face.

Hypothesis 3. EI has a moderating influence, between mobbing and resilience, among police officers in Tirana. When emotional intelligence is controlled, the relationship between mobbing and resilience is stronger than when EI is not controlled.

To examine the third hypothesis, Pearson's partial correlation was used, which showed that EI has a moderating influence on mobbing and resilience. When the level of emotional intelligence is controlled, the negative relationship between mobbing and resilience is evident, which means that as mobbing increases, the level of resilience decreases. Despite the fact that in this study the number of people who were identified as victims of mobbing according to the LWMS is low ($n = 9$), they showed lower resilience when EI is not included in the equation. Various studies show that mobbing victims recover faster than non-mobbing victims. In fact, A. Naranayan and L. R. Betts showed that people who had higher levels of resilience recovered faster after facing mobbing than those with lower levels of resilience (Naranayan, Betts, 2014). One's personality and positive thinking in many cases makes it easier to overcome the symptoms of mobbing. The definition of resilience is related to the recovery of the psychological state after various traumas, mobbing is a phenomenon that affects the psychological state of the victims.

The moderating effect is a very strong indicator of the importance of emotional intelligence: when EI is included in individual ways of managing mobbing, or increasing resilience, the last two variables are not related to each other at all. While when EI is controlled — that is, at a statistical level all persons have the same level of emotional intelligence — the correlation between mobbing and resilience immediately passed to statistically significant levels.

Recommendations

Scientific research in Albania regarding emotional intelligence, mobbing and resilience in police forces is scarce. This study can serve as a guide for leaders in the ranks of the police, to understand how important the level of emotional intelligence is. Good communication with the public and responding in a timely and appropriate manner to one's own and others' feelings and emotional situations also creates a good image for the police force. EI may be one of the most important skills for a police officer. In fact, in this study it was proven that high levels of emotional intelligence are suitable for a better performance, but also for reducing coping with mobbing and increasing resilience. EI remains one of the skills that should be improved and provided as training for all police officers. EI is a learnable skill, so for those who do not have a high level, they can learn it during trainings; for those who have an above average level, it can be developed even more.

Despite the fact that the number of people who are victims of mobbing was not very high, this study showed that mobbing is an existing phenomenon in the police force. Mobbing not only damages the victim psychologically and socially, but also has costs for the institution. The costs for the institution can range from economic costs to image damage, and it may even happen that the institution loses the best employees. Consequently, identifying the phenomenon and taking measures against mobbing would be in the best interest not only of the employee, but also of the institution. Identifying victims of mobbing and providing them with the psychological support services they need is an important part of police work, because it is undoubtedly reflected in performance.

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Аннотация. *Цель.* Это исследование углубляется во взаимосвязь между эмоциональным интеллектом, моббингом и жизнестойкостью (*resilience*) в полиции Тираны, Албания. *Дизайн исследования.* Выборка состояла из 117 полицейских, соотношение мужчин и женщин соответствует фактическому гендерному соотношению в полиции Тираны. Участникам было предложено заполнить анкеты для самооценки, чтобы определить уровень их эмоционального интеллекта, моббинга и жизнестойкости. *Выводы.* Результаты показали чёткую корреляцию между усилением моббинга на рабочем месте и снижением жизнестойкости. Более того, исследование не выявило статистически значимой связи между эмоциональным интеллектом и жизнестойкостью. Кроме того, те участники, которые сообщили о том, что сталкивались с моббингом на рабочем месте, продемонстрировали более низкий уровень жизнестойкости по сравнению с теми, кто с этим не сталкивался. Выборка продемонстрировала высокий уровень эмоционального интеллекта, который положительно коррелировал с возрастом участников. Однако не удалось окончательно определить, является ли эта корреляция специфичной для рабочего места или она является общей тенденцией. *Ценность результатов.* Это исследование подчёркивает важность эмоционального интеллекта для повышения благополучия на рабочем месте и предлагает полиции инвестировать в программы обучения и развития для повышения эмоционального интеллекта среди своих офицеров. Это также подчёркивает необходимость повышения осведомлённости о моббинге и принятия мер по предотвращению его возникновения на рабочем месте. Результаты этого исследования дополняют существующую совокупность исследований в области эмоционального интеллекта и его влияния на благополучие на рабочем месте.

Ключевые слова: эмоциональный интеллект; моббинг; устойчивость; полиция; Албания.