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The Police and Local Community Safety: an Assessment by School-Age Youth

Abstract

Local public safety consists in ensuring that members of a given local community lead their lives in safety, using both lawful and legal means. The Police, being the organ specifically vested with this responsibility, especially with regards to crime, exercises direct control over a given local community. The aim of the article is to examine whether the results of police work appraisal by the minors could influence the behaviour of the assessors.

The hypothesis presented in the article tests the existence of a correlation between the opinions regarding police work by juvenile respondents and their motivations to engage in reprehensible acts, including contacts with drugs.

Analysis of the results of the survey, "The International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD-3)", conducted in 2017 on a sample of over 2,000 pupils of the last grades

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of elementary schools and the first and second grades of lower secondary schools in two Polish municipalities: Rzeszów and Białystok show that there exist statistically significant relationships between negative perceptions of the police by minors and their demoralising behaviours.

Introduction

The physical space that defines one's place of residence pervades the local community's social space as most of the community's life needs are taken care of in the local institutions. The socialization of the geographical space is, thus, accomplished (Lipińska, 2019). Therefore, the district's status (life quality), "pathological" or "exclusive" does not only impact on living standards, but also shapes patterns of education for the younger generation.

Given the increasing pathological behaviours observed amongst the final year pupils of all types of schools, numerous studies are being conducted to assess the reasons, scale and dynamics of the social pathology phenomena in juveniles, and how various social risks in contemporary school-age adolescents are combated by the police units responsible for the public safety of particular local communities (Moczuk, 2016). From the sociological and social policy points of view, it does seem appropriate to undertake a deeper study of the not often researched issues relating to police work by unruly youth that often engage with these organs.

The aim of the article is to examine whether the results of police work appraisal by the minors could influence the behaviour of the assessors. The subject of the analysis is to indicate how the work of the police in charge of the local community safety is perceived by school-age youth, who have engaged in contacts with police authorities in Białystok and Rzeszów. The article characterizes the school-age youth that have had contacts with the police, based on the criteria of sex, age and local specificity.

Based on the empirical studies, the following research hypothesis was tested, namely observing victims of social pathology and the low evaluation of police work by school-age youths of the local community and its correlation with their indulgence in committing undesirable social acts.

This hypothesis has been verified based on the results of empirical research conducted by means of a survey method, using the technique of surveying in the final years of primary school, as well as in the first and second years of junior secondary schools in Białystok and Rzeszów, using the electronic questionnaire tool.

The article describes the activities of the Police regarding safety in the local community. The results of the self-authored survey indicate a correlation between the assessment of police work in pathological neighbourhoods and the demoralizing behaviours of the school-age youth residing there.

Local community police work aimed at ensuring safety

Safety is a concept referring to the certainty of an individual's survival, existence and operation, both in the individual and social context, provided that some requirements are satisfied. Safety is not a permanent state, given once and for all. It depends on factors that influence it, including risks existing in its external environment, whether natural or social (Moczuk, 2013a). The complexity of the process of studying safety results from the linearity of its components, their variation, dynamics and hierarchical structure. In addition, the fact that the discipline has emerged only recently there is a lack of recognised research methodology (Jaroczkin, 2000; Kardaszowa, 2005; Korzeniowski, 2008; Moczuk, 2013b; Pastorczak, 1984; Skvrnda, 2003; Szopa, 1998; Wozżenikow, 2002).

The area of safety analysed in this paper is the perception of safety by members of a given local community. Local safety operates at the level of a local community, characterized by such factors that are necessary for its existence: a common area, social interactions and interactions between the residents (Odoj, 2007).

Local safety "is a condition within a locality, regulated by a set of legal and non-legal norms, the observance of which enables normal coexistence of the people in such a locality in a particular place and time" (Płowucha, 1995). Local safety consists in ensuring, with lawful and legal means, that members of a given local community may lead their normal lives, being protected from crime and other dangers which may appear in such a community. The objective of local safety is to ensure appropriate standards of living at the local level, by minimising the natural, economic and social threats (Moczuk, 2009).

The understanding of local safety is also influenced by other factors (Moczuk & Leśniak-Moczuk, 2016), including the way the media present and comment criminal and "para-criminal" acts, extremism, terrorism, organized crime, economic fraud and crime, illegal drug-related crime, cyber-crime (Ostaszewski, 2014), the delinquency related to the on-going globalization process, the development of a networking society dependent on the IT and digital technologies, as well as the emergence of the new forms of political influence on states (Łabuz, 2015). Local safety, hence the residents' sense of safety, is one of major types of safety to be found in contemporary world (Bratton, 1999; Smolak, 2015). It determines the comfort of living by shaping the local ties and social identities as it is an endogenous factor of development (Grobelny, 2007).

The bodies responsible for local safety are both the local government and the police. The police create the conditions for the citizens to feel safe through crime prevention, i.e. by undertaking activities that make it impossible or more difficult to embark on criminal acts, thus increasing the individual safety by eliminating the sense of fear of becoming victims of crime (Moczuk & Bajda, 2015; Spelman & Eck 1989; Trojanowicz & Carter, 1988).

The tasks of the police in the field of combating dysfunctional phenomena of the youth are regulated in sections 3, 4, 7 of the Regulation No. 1619 of the Police Commander in Chief (KGP) of November 3, 2010, regarding the methods and ways of performing tasks by police officers in the area of combating demoralization and juvenile delinquency as well

as actions taken in respect of minors (Journal of Laws of KGP of 2010 No. 11, item 64), which refers to Art. 7 section 1 point 2 of the Act of April 6, 1990 of the Police (Journal of Laws of 2020, items 360, 956, 1610). One of the strategies of the Police for local safety is Community policing, which is a system of cooperation between the Police and the local community (Działoszyński, 2012). It is a "new philosophy" of policing (Kappeler & Gaines, 2011), which includes the following components: a) creating trust for effective partnership with the society, b) employing tactics and strategies in resolving issues, c) changing the police organizational structure and mentality in support of the Police in-house transformations (Miller et al., 2014). Crime prevention involves all direct actions of the state and social institutions as well as the citizens aimed at preventing or hindering criminal actions, improving individual safety by eliminating the fear of becoming a victim and, in consequence, improving the quality of life (Moczuk & Bajda, 2016). As part of preventive activities, the Police cooperate with schools to prevent the demoralization of minors. The basic legal provision regulating the codes of conduct by the police with juvenile perpetrators of criminal acts is the Act of 26 October, 1982 on proceedings in juvenile cases (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 969), where the Police, pursuant to Art. 37 of the Act, in urgent cases, collects and records evidence of criminal acts, if necessary, apprehends minors, as well as performs activities commissioned by a family judge. An internal document specifying these rules is the Order of the Police Commander in Chief No. 1619 of November 3, 2010 on the methods and ways of performance of tasks by police officers in the field of combating demoralisation and juvenile delinquency as well as activities undertaken in respect of minors (Journal of Laws of the Police Headquarters of 2010, No. 11, item 64).

Crime statistics (records) remain the main source of information on juvenile delinquency, and one of the best-known methods of studying the scale of crime is by analysing the dynamics of juvenile delinquency (KGP Monthly Statistical Bulletins). Specific crime maps are thus created using available statistical data (https://www.policja.pl/). Juvenile delinquency is one of the unfavourable social phenomena that have emerged in Poland in recent times. Currently, this crime has hit levels never attained previously, and criminologists, sociologists, psychologists, educators and representatives of other sciences are making all efforts to find the causes of youth criminal behaviour (Moczuk & Bajda, 2016). Studies have shown that the phenomena are dependent on particular local circumstances, prevailing in specific local realities that are rooted in the socialisation process existing in primary groups (families, peer groups) (Moczuk, 2003). The youth who come in with the work of the Police do have specific expectations regarding the image of the Police. These include being specific in their actions, direct in respect of law breakers, actions taken should be relevant to a given situation, quick response, professionalism, a sense of trust and security, education, culture and respect for law-abiding citizens, complying with its provisions (Jaworski, 2015). Sociological studies conducted by CBOS in Poland have confirmed the increased assessment of police work in recent years. The findings from the studies conducted in March 2020 indicate that 80% of respondents assessed the activities of the Police as very positive, the best of such results compared

to September 1990 (https://policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/). Such assessments are most often performed by the district responsible for ensuring local security.

The Police is responsible for gathering knowledge concerning their service area, including the territory, the people, and events that influence levels of public safety and order. They perform social prevention tasks, prosecute perpetrators of crimes and offences, verify the observance of legal regulations, both general and local, learn about the interpersonal relationship in order to "penetrate" the structure of a given community (Gontarzewski, 2007). The residents of the area supervised by a community police officer expect him/her to ensure their safety through crime-preventing activities, prosecuting offenders and responding quickly to risky situations (Jaworska & Stefański, 2007), hence they want to have direct contacts with him/her. Consequently, a community police officer should know the residents, their expectations and should co-operate with them (Cielecki, 2004).

Optimally, community police officers should live in their service neighbourhoods, rather than arrive to work there, as being part of the given local community they would understand its specificity and problems. They ought to maintain contacts with residents through blogs and social medias, serving in a given district for a longer time, rather than being frequently moved to other police units. They should be recognisable persons and given *ex officio* seats on the neighbourhood or district collegial bodies, be conversant with issues vital to the community, be present in hypermarkets, pubs and clubs, at public events, festivities, parties and church celebrations. In this way, the community police officer engages in performing "a new mission" in their local environments (Clarke & Eck, 2003; Działoszyński 2012; Kappeler & Gaines 2011; Miller et al., 2014; Moczuk, 2013c; Stefański, 2007).

Empirical research methodology

Empirical studies were conducted as part of the international project ISRD-3: The International Self-Report Delinquency Study, presenting the image of the juveniles' involvement in demoralizing behaviours. The ISRD-3, which comprises of 35 countries worldwide, presents the circumstances and motivations of minors involved in dysfunctional behaviours, including addiction and crime, as both victims and perpetrators. The main goal of the ISRD project is to observe and compare the differences, similarities and trends in juvenile delinquency and victimization of minors in selected cities in countries covered by the study.

The field research was conducted on a sample of pupils in the final years of primary school, as well as in the first and second years of junior secondary schools in Białystok and Rzeszów. The selected cities met the criteria of medium or large cities as defined by a given country as required in the ISRD project. They are located in culturally different regions that determine the processes of socialization and upbringing of the young generation, which is an appropriate basis for comparing variables influencing dysfunctional behaviours of school pupils in the ISRD-3 project.

The research applied the diagnostic survey method, consisting in collecting facts, information, statistical data on the state and dynamics of development of structural and functional phenomena. As a research technique, a questionnaire was used in this study, with the questionnaire tool consisting of questions relating to the purpose of the research, together with a cafeteria of the proposed answers, from which the respondent independently selected relevant answers.

The participating pupils indicated their levels of participation in the following manifestations of demoralization, namely Internet piracy (movies, music), causing injury to animals, drawing graffiti, carrying a gun, shoplifting, stealing without violence, participation in a fight in a public place, vandalism, robbery car, threatening to collect money, beating causing injury, bicycle theft, drug sale, burglary, motor or car theft, contact with drugs such as alcohol, marijuana / hashish, soft drugs, Relevin, hard "drugs".

The results of the research constitute a reliable source of information as the survey was carried out with particular care for the anonymity of the respondents. Each school received a scheduled deadlines and instructions for conducting the survey. Links to on-line versions were generated for one day only. The presence of teachers in the computer labs for the entire period while the pupils were filling in the questionnaires was ensured. On the completion of the study, having been filled information was immediately sent to the survey organisers, "SAF", informing them that the pupils were focused and that questions were answered independently.

Team selection, which is a part of the probabilistic scheme was applied for selecting the research sample. The research sample was drawn from the general population, consisting of all grades VI of primary as well as 1st and 2nd classes of secondary schools in Białystok and Rzeszów.

Within the framework of the ISRD-3 delinquency study, a sample made of 92 schools in both cities was selected (51 in Białystok and 41 in Rzeszów). The sample obtained out of the entire pupil population in these towns was 4,572 pupils. A response rate of 40% was adopted as the survey was implemented in the last week of the school year, when the filling in of online questionnaires by pupils could be achieved in the computer labs without disrupting the schools' timetables. Since there was a high rate of absenteeism, the research team established a proportionately larger sample so that the desired number of completed and returned questionnaires is achieved.

A total of 2,179 respondents, consisting of 1033 pupils in Białystok and 1146 in Rzeszów participated in filling out the questionnaires. The electronic version of the questionnaire survey made up approximately 0.5% of the pupil population.

After conducting the survey, the collected data was adapted for suitability of analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical calculations of survey data, using this program were carried out. The interdependence of variables was tested using the chi^2 chi-square independence test.

Analysis of School Pupils' Appraisal of Police Activities in Local Communities

In order to verify the thesis formulated for the needs of this paper appropriate questionnaire questions were selected (the questionnaire question numbers are given in brackets in the tables below). The analysis of the results obtained is presented in the following section. The correlations have been marked as follows: strongest ones (p close to 0.00) — ***; medium level ones — **; weakest ones (p close to 0.05) — *. The tables show the correlation coefficient r_{pb}, (Pearson's) together with the evaluation of its statistical significance. The * symbol signifies the significant correlations at level 0.05; the darker the colour, the stronger the statistical significance.

Table 1. Pupils' contacts with the police

Contacts with the police	Count	Per cent
no	2053	94.2% (96.1%)
yes	84	3.9% (3.9%)
no answer	42	1.9%

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Approximately 4% of the pupils polled have had contacts with the police due to their delinquent behaviour. Approximately 2% of those polled failed to answer the question. This is not a high rate, but given that they are juveniles in legal terms (12–15 years old), any number of such police interventions should raise concern and result in the need to take preventive measures.

Table 2. Pupils' contacts with the police, by sex

Contacts with the police	Sex ($p = 0.0479*$)		Total
	Girls	Boys	
no	1057 (96.9%)	996 (95.2%)	2053
yes	34 (3.1%)	50 (4.8%)	84
Total	1091	1046	2137

Source: The authors' own research and calculations.

The risk of the contacts with the police is higher amongst the boys. This difference has a low level of statistical significance, not as large as one would expect (4.8 vs. 3.1%) given the habitus according to which males come into conflict with the law more often than females. Changes regarding norms of behaviour are a symptom of the social anomaly during periods of transformation and on-going globalization, providing for multi-

cultural contacts and a networking society, that enable virtual diffusion of cultures in the cyberspace.

Table 3. Pupils' contacts with the police, by age

Contacts with the police	Age ($p = 0.0001***$)				Total
	12 years old	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	
no	349 (98.9%)	639 (97.0%)	602 (96.0%)	463 (93.0%)	2053
yes	4 (1.1%)	20 (3.0%)	25 (4.0%)	35 (7.0%)	84
Total	353	659	627	498	2137

Source: Authors' own research and calculations.

Age is the factor which evidently determines the occurrence of school pupils' contacts with the police due to delinquent acts. The most prominent is the group of 15-year-olds: 7% of whom had had contacts with the police. This figure for the youngest (12-year-old) category of respondents is 1.1%.

Table 4. Pupils' contacts with the police, by region

Contacts with the police	Town ($p = 0.0018**$)		Total
	Białystok	Rzeszów	
no	963 (94.7%)	1090 (97.3%)	2053
yes	54 (5.3%)	30 (2.7%)	84
Total	1017	1120	2137

Source: Authors' own research and calculations.

The juveniles in the Podlaskie province have more contacts with the police than those in Podkarpackie province. The difference is 2.6 percentage points, which is a medium level of statistical significance.

The amount of time taken by the Police to reach a caller to undertake an intervention was taken into account in assessing the work of the Police. This factor was correlated with variables indicating pupils' illegal behaviours.

**Table 5. Correlation between the police response time following the call and the pupils'
delinquent behaviours**

Delinquent behaviour (7.1)	Police response time following the call (10.2)
graffiti drawing	–0.10*
vandalism	–0.03
shoplifting	0.01
burglary	–0.06
bicycle theft	–0.14*
motorcycle or car theft	–0.08*
stealing from a car	–0.08*
making threats to extort money	–0.06
non-violent theft	–0.05
carrying arms	–0.08*
getting into a fight in a public place	–0.11*
battery resulting in grave bodily injury	0.00
internet piracy (films, music)	–0.06
drug dealing	–0.01
injuring an animal	–0.18*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

**Table 6. Correlation between the police response time following the call and pupils' use
of alcohol and drugs**

Alcohol and drugs (8.1-8.5)	Police response time following the call (10.2)
alcohol	–0.14*
marijuana/hashish	–0.11*
sedatives and hypnotics	–0.01
soft drugs	–0.13*
hard drugs	–0.09*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

The promptness of arrival of the police at the crime scene or burglary in the vicinity of the respondent's place of residence was mildly related to the probability of success of assessment of actions undertaken by minors who are in conflict with the law. Only slight correlations were observed in respect of some specific offenses. The observed relationships between police mobility, assessed as the speed of reaction of officers to a call for intervention, and the risk of juveniles engaging in crime-culpable illegal behaviours, and the frequency of contact with alcohol and drugs, may be of a two-way nature. Due to the fact that most of the analysed dependencies have very low levels of correlation, it is not possible to draw conclusions concerning the existence of cause-and-effect relationships based on such findings.

Table 7. Correlation between being treated with respect by the police and the youth's delinquent behaviour

Delinquent behaviour (7.1)	The police treat young people with respect (10.3)
graffiti drawing	–0.18*
vandalism	–0.13*
shoplifting	0.00
burglary	–0.04
bicycle theft	–0.06
motorcycle or car theft	–0.03
stealing from a car	–0.06
making threats to extort money	–0.06
non-violent theft	–0.09*
carrying arms	–0.09*
getting into a fight in a public place	–0.13*
battery resulting in grave bodily injury	–0.04
internet piracy (films, music)	–0.05
drug dealing	–0.09*
injuring an animal	–0.19*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Table 8. Correlation between being treated with respect by the police and the use of alcohol and drugs by juveniles

Alcohol and drugs (8.1-8.5)	The police treat young people with respect (10.3)
alcohol	–0.15*
marijuana/hashish	–0.16*
sedatives and hypnotics	–0.04
soft drugs	–0.09*
hard drugs	–0.04

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Both the correlation coefficient r_{pb} and its statistical significance assessment examine the relationship between the treatment of juveniles by the police and dysfunctional behaviour by juveniles. The data analysis shows that opinions held by pupils on how they are treated by the police is of varied significance with their engagement in illegal behaviour as well as in the use of drugs. The strongest correlations were in respect of drawing graffiti, vandalism, non-violent theft, carrying weapons, participating in fights in public places, selling and using drugs at school, injuring animals and reaching for alcohol and illegal psychoactive substances.

Table 9. Correlation between being treated fairly by the police and the delinquent behaviour of juveniles

Delinquent behaviour (7.1)	The police treat young people fairly (10.4)
graffiti drawing	−0.12*
vandalism	−0.10*
shoplifting	−0.01
burglary	−0.04
bicycle theft	−0.08*
motorcycle or car theft	−0.06
stealing from a car	−0.09*
making threats to extort money	−0.09*
non-violent theft	−0.05
carrying arms	−0.07
getting into a fight in a public place	−0.13*
battery resulting in grave bodily injury	−0.03
internet piracy (films, music)	−0.04
drug dealing	−0.09*
injuring an animal	−0.18*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Table 10. Correlation between being treated fairly by the police and the use of alcohol and drugs by the juveniles

Alcohol and drugs (8.1-8.5)	The police treat young people fairly (10.4)
alcohol	−0.09*
marijuana/hashish	−0.14*
sedatives and hypnotics	−0.03
soft drugs	−0.10*
hard drugs	−0.05

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

The correlation coefficient r_{pb} and its statistical significance illustrates the relationship between the fair treatment of juvenile delinquents by the police and the undertaking of dysfunctional behaviours by minors. The strongest correlations concern doing graffiti, vandalism, bicycle theft, car theft, extortion, participating in fight in public places, selling and using drugs at school, injuring animals, alcohol abuse and use of illegal psychoactive substances.

Table 11. Correlation between minors' knowledge of police actions, including their approaches to persons involved in dysfunctional behaviour and their delinquent behaviour

Delinquent behaviour (7.1)	Police activities are explained to young people (10.5)
graffiti drawing	–0.12*
vandalism	–0.05
shoplifting	–0.03
burglary	–0.08
bicycle theft	–0.05
motorcycle or car theft	–0.07
stealing from a car	–0.10*
making threats to extort money	–0.08
non-violent theft	–0.04
carrying arms	–0.11*
getting into a fight in a public place	–0.12*
battery resulting in grave bodily injury	–0.01
internet piracy (films, music)	–0.07
drug dealing	–0.05
injuring an animal	–0.08*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Table 12. Correlation between knowledge that minors have about police actions, including behaviour towards persons engaging in dysfunctional behaviour, and their use of alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drugs (8.1-8.5)	Police activities are explained to young people (10.5)
alcohol	–0.10*
marijuana/hashish	–0.09*
sedatives and hypnotics	0.00
soft drugs	–0.07
hard drugs	–0.02

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

The correlation coefficient r_{pb} and its statistical significance shows the relationship between higher knowledge about the actions and behaviours of the police towards

persons undertaking dysfunctional behaviours and the undertaking of such behaviour by minors. The higher the knowledge minors have about the actions and behaviour of the police towards people who engage in dysfunctional behaviour, the lower the risk of them engaging in illegal behaviour. Higher knowledge about the actions and behaviours of the police towards persons undertaking dysfunctional behaviour is related to the refraining of persons from committing prohibited acts. The strongest correlations concern drawing graffiti, robbing a car, carrying weapons, participating in a fight in a public place, injuring animals and reaching for alcohol and illegal psychoactive substances.

Table 13. Correlation between the obligation to comply with police orders in given situations by minors, and their delinquent behaviour

Delinquent behaviour (7.1)	Obligation to obey the police in any situation (10.6)
graffiti drawing	–0.17*
vandalism	–0.19*
shoplifting	–0.04
burglary	–0.04
bicycle theft	–0.08*
motorcycle or car theft	–0.04
stealing from a car	–0.10*
making threats to extort money	–0.09*
non-violent theft	–0.10*
carrying arms	–0.12*
getting into a fight in a public place	–0.12*
battery resulting in grave bodily injury	–0.02
internet piracy (films, music)	–0.06
drug dealing	–0.15*
injuring an animal	–0.22*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Table 14. Correlation between the obligation to comply with police orders in given situations by minors, and their use of alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drugs (8.1-8.5)	Obligation to obey the police in any situation (10.6)
alcohol	–0.18*
marijuana/hashish	–0.23*
sedatives and hypnotics	–0.02
soft drugs	–0.09*
hard drugs	–0.07

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

The correlation coefficient r_{pb} and its statistical significance presents the relationship between the knowledge of minors' obligation to obey police orders in certain situations, and their dysfunctional behaviour. Higher awareness of minors that they are obliged to obey police orders in certain situations is related to the existence of a lower risk of illegal behaviour by minors. The strongest correlations concern drawing graffiti, vandalism, bicycle theft, car theft, threats to extort money, carrying weapons, participating in a fight in a public place, selling and using drugs at school, injuring animals and reaching for alcohol and illegal psychoactive substances.

Table 15. Correlation between minors' attitudes towards the police and their delinquent behaviour

Delinquent behaviour (7.1)	The police share young people's values	The police understand young people	I support the police activities
graffiti drawing	–0.16*	–0.17*	–0.23*
vandalism	–0.18*	–0.17*	–0.19*
shoplifting	–0.04	–0.01	–0.06
burglary	–0.09*	–0.09*	–0.14*
bicycle theft	–0.10*	–0.06	–0.09*
motorcycle or car theft	–0.09*	–0.04	–0.06
stealing from a car	–0.07	–0.06	–0.05
making threats to extort money	–0.09*	–0.12*	–0.15*
non-violent theft	–0.08*	–0.08*	–0.07
carrying arms	–0.17*	–0.17*	–0.17*
getting into a fight in a public place	–0.13*	–0.09*	–0.17*
battery resulting in grave bodily injury	0.00	–0.06	–0.10*
internet piracy (films, music)	–0.25*	–0.28*	–0.17*
drug dealing	–0.06	–0.09*	–0.16*
injuring an animal	–0.10*	–0.08*	–0.10*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Table 16. Correlation between minors' attitude towards the police and their use of alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drugs (8.1-8.5)	The police share young people's values	The police understand young people	I support the police activities
alcohol	–0.15*	–0.15*	–0.16*
marijuana/hashish	–0.08*	–0.01	–0.15*
sedatives and hypnotics	–0.03	0.00	–0.04
soft drugs	–0.03	0.03	–0.11*
hard drugs	0.00	0.00	–0.10*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

The minors' positive attitudes towards the police are related to their less frequent engagement in dysfunctional behaviours, drinking alcohol and taking drugs by the youth. The value of the correlation coefficients for internet piracy is as high as 0.28. Correlation coefficients for graffiti (0.23), vandalism (0.19) or carrying of weapons (0.17), using alcohol (0.16) and illegal psychoactive substances (0.15–0.10) are also high.

Table 17. Correlation between bribe-taking among the police and the delinquent behaviour by minors

Delinquent behaviour (7.1)	Bribe-taking among the police (10.8)
graffiti drawing	0.13*
vandalism	0.16*
shoplifting	0.05
burglary	0.08*
bicycle theft	0.09*
motorcycle or car theft	0.08*
stealing from a car	0.10*
making threats to extort money	0.17*
non-violent theft	0.08*
carrying arms	0.18*
getting into a fight in a public place	0.15*
battery resulting in grave bodily injury	0.13*
internet piracy (films, music)	0.12*
drug dealing	0.13*
injuring an animal	0.11*

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

Table 18. Correlation between bribe-taking among the police and the use of alcohol and drugs by minors

Alcohol and drugs (8.1-8.5)	Bribe-taking among the police (10.8)
alcohol	0.12*
marijuana/hashish	0.14*
sedatives and hypnotics	0.06
soft drugs	0.06
hard drugs	0.05

Source: Authors' own research and analysis.

The minors' positive attitudes towards the police are related to their less frequent engagement in dysfunctional behaviours, drinking alcohol and taking drugs. The value of the correlation coefficients for internet piracy is as high as 0.28. Correlation coefficients for graffiti (0.23), vandalism (0.19), or carrying weapons (0.17), drinking alcohol (0.16) and illegal psychoactive substances (0.15–0.10) are also high).

Conclusions

The appraisal of the degree of safety in the locality is not only important from the perspective of the comfort of living but also as a factor determining the young generation's behaviour, since the interpersonal contacts in environments threatened with social pathologies shape the awareness and also encourage juveniles to imitate delinquent behaviour. The necessary intervention of public safety institutions, e.g. the police, in the local environment may be a consequence of the demoralization of young people brought up in families that do not live up to their educational responsibilities.

Due to violations of local safety by the school pupils covered by the study, it is necessary for the police to conduct delinquency prevention activities focused on the adolescent population, with the aim to prevent risks, demoralization and pathology in the young generation. If the demoralisation symptoms occur in youngsters, intervention is undertaken by community police officers. In their particular service districts, community police officers are representatives, rather than executors of the law. Hence, local communities expect them to ensure safety. How this function is performed by community police officers has been subject to the appraisal of adolescents in order to verify the thesis that the method applied by community police officers and the quality of their interactions with the residents of the neighbourhoods supervised by them may influence the young generation's behaviour.

The hypothesis concerning the relationship between being a victim of social pathology and assessing the work of the police in their neighbourhoods by minors, including engagements in socially undesirable acts by these youths was tested using a questionnaire survey.

Positive opinions of the juvenile respondents concerning police activities coexisted with their deterrence to commit reprehensible acts and having to do with drugs. The relationship between the negative perception of police activities and the demoralization of minors was demonstrated. The relationships between all the parameters of the police assessment and the majority of evidences of demoralization of minors are at the level of statistical significance. The results of the research showed statistically significant dependencies of regional differentiations at average levels, gender at a low level and age at a high level in respect of the evidences of demoralization of the surveyed pupils, including their contacts with police personnel.

The correlations between all the parameters of the police work appraisal and the majority of evidences of juvenile demoralization attained statistically significant levels. The results of the study show statistically significant correlations between respondents'

demoralization and their contacts with the police relative to regional variation (a medium level), sex (a low level) and age (a high level).

The results of the research presented in this paper justify the need to pay more attention to the appointment of police officers for community patrols, especially with regards to their education, values and moral principles cherished by them, and their politeness. This important in modern societies as they perform an important mission of ensuring the safety of local communities through cooperation with local authorities, school institutions and citizens.

Local education supervisory authorities are in possession of knowledge concerning the demoralization of minors, based on available statistics and reports from organs responsible for local safety and public order. However, in order to undertake prophylactic actions information concerning pupils' motivations and the circumstances of their engagement prohibited acts is needed. Such knowledge is provided by empirical surveys.

The research findings obtained are useful both to exercise effective pedagogical supervision that meets current needs, and to make educational decisions. Ultimately, this project aims to build scientific frameworks for improving children's lives and also to implement measures aimed at preventing social pathology.

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