Demographic Variations in Self-Reported Delinquency and Victimisation amongst Juveniles in Ljubljana

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Understanding juvenile delinquency and victimisation is essential for safely guiding juveniles into adulthood and designing effective prevention strategies. This chapter examines self-reported juvenile delinquency and victimisation in Ljubljana, Slovenia, utilising data from the ISRD4 study collected in 2022 and 2023, involving 873 respondents. The focus of this chapter is on understanding the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency and victimisation, in particular gender, grade and immigration status, consistent with the 16th UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Our results show that girls do not statistically differ from boys in victimisation experiences but that boys are more delinquent in several categories. Disparities exist between native and first- as well as second-generation immigrant respondents. Immigrant respondents report experiencing more hate crimes, while they also seem to report being more delinquent overall. There are no apparent age/grade trends for victimisation or delinquency, except for the delinquent category of drug dealing.

DOI
https://doi.org/10.18690/um.fvv.7.2024.5

ISBN
978-961-286-883-3

Keywords:
juvenile delinquency, juvenile victimisation, Sustainable Development Goals, ISRD4, Ljubljana

University of Maribor Press

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ISBN
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DEMOGRAFSKE RAZLIKE V SAMONAZNANJENEM PRESTOPNIŠTVU IN VIKTIMIZACIJI MED MLADOLETNIKI V LJUBLJANI

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Ključne besede:
mladoletniško prestopništvo,
mladoletniška viktimizacija,
Cilji trajnostnega razvoja,
ISRD4,
Ljubljana

Razumevanje mladoletniškega prestopništva in viktimizacije je ključno za oblikovanje mladih v odgovorne odrasle in oblikovanje učinkovitih prevencijskih strategij. Poglavje s pomočjo podatkov študije ISRD4, zbranih v letih 2022 in 2023, ki je vključevala 873 anketirancev, preuči samonaznanjeno mladoletniško prestopništvo in viktimizacijo v Ljubljani. Poglavje se osredotoči na razumevanje dejavnikov, ki prispevajo k mladoletniškemu prestopništvu in viktimizaciji, zlasti spol, razred in priseljenski status, skladno s 16. ciljem trajnostnega razvoja Združenih narodov (SDG). Dekleta se od fantov statistično ne razlikujejo v viktimizacijskih izkušnjah, vendar so fantje v več kategorijah bolj delinkventni. Obstajajo razlike med anketiranci, rojenimi v Sloveniji ter prvo in tudi drugo generacijo priseljencev. Priseljeni anketiranci izkusijo več kaznivih dejanj iz sovraštva, medtem ko so na splošno tudi bolj prestopniški. Pri viktimizaciji in prestopništvu ni opaziti očitnih trendov v starosti/razredu, z izjemo prestopniške kategorije preprodaje drog.

Univerzitetna založba Univerze v Mariboru

1 Introduction

Juvenile delinquency represents a global phenomenon that impacts all modern societies to varying degrees. While it can be narrowly defined as criminal offences committed by juveniles, it is a heterogeneous concept encompassing a broader spectrum of deviant acts and maladaptive behaviours of adolescents (Filipčič, 2015). The term "delinquency" typically refers to the delinquent behaviour of juveniles, often characterised by repeat offending (Azeredo et al., 2019). In a broader sense, juvenile delinquency includes criminal offences, misdemeanours, and other forms of deviant behaviours or status offences, such as bullying, truancy, curfew violations, running away from home, and licit and illicit drug use (Cardwell et al., 2020; Filipčič, 2015). It is not uncommon for juveniles to exhibit some delinquent behaviour or engage in minor delinquent acts; approximately 90% or more of all adolescents reportedly engage in delinquency at least once during adolescence (Agnew & Brezina, 2018). According to Agnew and Brezina (2018), common deviant acts committed by juveniles typically include minor offences like petty theft, fighting, underage drinking, truancy, curfew violations, and vandalism. Understanding the range and nature of juvenile delinquency is essential for developing distinct interventions and preventive measures in addressing the diverse behaviours exhibited by juveniles. Researchers, including Berg (2012), Cuevas et al. (2007), and Turanovic and Young (2016), agree on the interconnectedness of juvenile delinquency and victimisation. They emphasise similarities between offenders and victims, often coming from the same population.

Juvenile victimisation, manifesting in diverse forms, is a significant concern for researchers and practitioners alike. Turanovic (2017) elucidates that as children transition into adolescence, their growing autonomy and increased time spent with peers elevate the risk of victimisation. The author defines victimisation as a traumatic and stressful life event with lasting negative consequences on emotional, physical, cognitive, and behavioural well-being. Consequently, victimisation can lead to negative behavioural outcomes such as heightened aggression, delinquency, and the misuse of licit and illicit drugs. Particularly noteworthy is the prevalence of peer victimisation, a pervasive problem significantly impacting the well-being of juveniles, as highlighted by Felix and McMahon (2007). Understanding this phenomenon and its development is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems to address the complex dynamics of juvenile victimisation.

Researching juvenile delinquency and victimisation and their causes also directly correlates to several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs strive for the sustainable development of society and the well-being of all people, presenting a solid plan to address global polycrises (United Nations, 2023). Research on juvenile delinquency and victimisation aligns with several of the 17 goals, such as investigating the link to poverty, exploring implications for the health and well-being of both perpetrators and victims, examining the quality of educational backgrounds and their connection to early dropouts, studying gender disparities and potential inequalities, exploring disparities in the justice system and society at large, and fostering collaboration and partnerships between governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other stakeholders. The most significant connection to the set goals can be recognised in the 16th SDG, which addresses Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, as it involves understanding the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquent behaviour and victimisation.

The findings from research on juvenile delinquency and victimisation can inform the development of effective and fair justice systems and contribute to evidence-based policies and strategies. Recognising the unique needs of juveniles, the justice system mainly emphasises rehabilitation and correctional programs over punitive measures (Agnew & Brezina, 2018). Roche and Hough (2018) underscore the importance of recognising that juveniles often underreport crimes, meaning only a small proportion of juvenile delinquency and victimisation, excluding severe cases, comes to the attention of the police. To overcome the limitations of official statistics, self-report and victimisation studies prove effective, especially when engaging with juveniles through the school system, providing valuable insights into their experiences and behaviours (Meško & Bertok, 2013a).

In this chapter, we delve into a comprehensive examination of self-reported juvenile delinquency and victimisation in Ljubljana, Slovenia, shedding light on crucial demographic differences and similarities, including gender, immigrant status, and grade/age. We emphasise the importance of recognising the unique needs of juveniles within the justice system, advocating for evidence-based interventions and targeted prevention. By exploring the intricate dynamics of juvenile delinquency and victimisation, our study contributes to national and international literature and a broader discourse on societal well-being, aligning with several SDGs. Our findings inform policy development and intervention strategies and underscore the

significance of utilising self-report and victimisation studies, such as the data from the ISRD4 study, to capture the true extent of juvenile delinquency and victimisation, particularly by engaging with juveniles through educational institutions.

2 Juvenile Delinquency and Victimisation

Delinquency or deviant behaviour does not stem from a single cause, as diverse backgrounds and factors contribute to varying experiences among adolescents. Nevertheless, several factors have repeatedly been connected to the onset of delinquency and victimisation or have emerged as significant predictors of the seriousness and extent of these phenomena. Both delinquency and victimisation share similar environmental factors and individual characteristics, and they are strongly interrelated; for instance, previous victimisation experiences can increase the risk of delinquency onset (Cuevas et al., 2007). However, there are notable differences in the emergence of risk and protective factors associated with delinquency, such as exposure to delinquent peers and substance abuse, compared to victimisation, which may involve exposure to factors like unsafe neighbourhoods and domestic violence (Pauwels & Svensson, 2011).

Among the most frequently discussed and substantiated predictors, demographic factors play a prominent role, including gender, age, and ethnicity/immigration status. Undoubtedly, a multitude of risk and protective factors, encompassing individual propensities, peer influence, family dynamics, community environment, socioeconomic status, and other factors, either hinder or influence the incidence of delinquency or victimisation. Several delinquency theories have emerged over the decades that tackle the emergence of delinquent behaviour, study various risk and protective factors, and their correlations (e.g., Routine Activity Theory, General Strain Theory, Self-Control Theory, Social Bonding Theory). However, our study exclusively focuses on examining demographic dynamics.

2.1 Gender and Juvenile Delinquency and Victimisation

Several authors over the decades found that males generally report higher rates of delinquency and exhibit greater delinquency rates (e.g., Azeredo et al., 2019; Blackmon et al., 2016; Cohen, 1955; Cuevas et al., 2007; Kruttschnitt, 2013;

Savolainen et al., 2017). Agnew and Brezina (2018) observe that gender differences are most noticeable in severe property and violent crimes but are less prominent in status offences or minor offences, where both genders exhibit similar rates of involvement. Enzmann and Wetzels (2002), who studied self-reported delinquency among several ethnic groups, found that boys report more violent delinquent acts regardless of the ethnic group they belong to. However, gender differences are more significant in certain ethnic groups, and these differences are more pronounced for boys than for girls. In brief, the gender gap in delinquent behaviour is a well-established fact.

Despite most studies indicating that males are more likely and frequent delinquents, Hart et al. (2007) emphasise that researchers have frequently overlooked females in their examination of juvenile delinquency or have only conducted tests on samples with small percentages of females. The authors highlight the distinction between female and male juvenile delinquency, underscoring the essential need for research particularly focused on females in the context of delinquency. They report that the nature and extent of females' involvement in crime differs from that of males. Girls are statistically more inclined toward non-aggressive delinquent behaviours, such as minor property crimes or substance use, while boys are more inclined toward violent and aggressive delinquent acts (Liu & Miller, 2020). Smith et al. (2020) examined the varying degrees of girls' involvement in delinquency, identifying four distinct subtypes distinguished by the severity of their self-reported victimisation experiences and mental health issues. They found that girls with higher levels of victimisation tended to report increased engagement in delinquent acts.

Researchers have also found significant gender differences in terms of victimisation; males are more likely to be involved in risky lifestyles and consequentially often become victims of criminal offences (Bunch et al., 2015; Heimer & Kruttschnit, 2006). Additionally, the frequency of bullying among males is two to three times higher than among girls (Dekleva & Razpotnik, 2001; Hamby et al., 2013). Authors like Hamby et al. (2013) and Finkelhor et al. (2005), who studied multiple forms of victimisation at home, in school, and in the community, report that males experience physical assault and property victimisation more frequently. In contrast, females experienced higher rates of sexual victimisation. Females are also more likely to experience relational victimisation (indirect aggression), whereas males are more likely to experience direct verbal and physical victimisation.

2.2 Age and Juvenile Delinquency and Victimisation

The role of age in offending has been debated for a long time (e.g., DeLisi & Vaughn, 2015). Crime rates are highest for juveniles in mid to late adolescence (Agnew & Brezina, 2018; Farrington et al., 2013). Agnew and Brezina (2018) observe that arrest rates for property crime peak in mid to late adolescence and then decline rapidly, while arrest rates for violent crime and rates of illicit drug use peak in late adolescence to early adulthood and then decline somewhat more slowly. In the Seattle Social Development Project, Farrington et al. (2003) compared delinquency rates between the ages of 11 and 18, revealing an increase in the prevalence of offending, either through court referrals or self-reports, with age. Additionally, Farrington et al. (2013) demonstrate that the prevalence of certain property crimes (such as burglary, shoplifting, and vandalism) is highest at ages 10–14 and then declines, while some property crimes, assault, and drug use are most prevalent at ages 15–18 and then also decline.

There is some evidence suggesting that the apparent high crime rates during adolescence may be somewhat exaggerated, possibly due to adolescents being more prone to arrest than adult offenders, either because they do not plan their crimes as carefully or are more conspicuous, often committing offences in groups of friends (Agnew & Brezina, 2018; Snyder, 1999). Nevertheless, the peak of delinquency during adolescence is mainly attributed to many juveniles starting to commit crimes during that time, with the majority ceasing their delinquent behaviour upon reaching adulthood (Agnew & Brezina, 2018).

Adolescence is a period during which delinquency is almost normalised, and occasional delinquent acts are considered part of the usual social and psychological maturation process for juveniles. However, these acts can pose a problem if minor delinquent acts escalate into more serious offences and persist into adulthood, potentially leading to a criminal career (Morgan & Newburn, 2012). Farrington et al. (2013) note that an early onset of delinquency typically predicts multiple convictions and an extended criminal career. The authors reveal that men who began their conviction careers at the earliest ages tended to commit the largest number of offences and have the longest criminal careers, lasting up to age 56.

2.3 Immigrant Status and Juvenile Delinquency and Victimisation

The global phenomenon of growing immigration and increasing ethnic diversity has made the study of the involvement of ethnic minorities in crime, particularly juvenile crime, a highly controversial topic. Enzmann and Wetzel (2002) highlight how official German statistics consistently reveal a disproportionate number of offenders of non-native origin, with prison statistics indicating a significant predominance of foreigners. However, the authors caution that analysing the relationship between migration and crime, based on data from the police or the federal judicial information system, has its limitations. There is a question about whether the overrepresentation of non-native ethnic groups in police statistics, a statistical artefact, might be, as the inclusion of offenders not accounted for in population statistics (such as tourists and illegal immigrants) can artificially inflate the calculated crime rate. Conversely, immigrants with native passports (for example, those with native ancestors) are categorised among the native population in police and judicial statistics. The authors also note substantial differences between the native-born population and immigrants in socio-economic status, education, employment, place of residence, and related variables, all linked to crime.

Some studies, such as those by Agnew (2006) and Bersani (2014), emphasise distinguishing between first- and second-generation immigrants. Siegmunt and Lukash (2019) conducted a study in Switzerland on International Self-Report Delinquency Study 3 (ISRD3) data ($n = 4{,}158$) and tested the link between classroom heterogeneity (mixture of native, 1st generation immigrant, and 2nd generation immigrant respondents) and delinquency. They argue that delinquency reflects a lack of social integration, suggesting that students in more heterogeneous classrooms may struggle to communicate and form strong bonds. Their findings indicate that juveniles were likely to commit offences in classes with higher heterogeneity, significantly impacting the frequency of graffiti, vandalism, shoplifting, group fights, robbery, burglary, bicycle theft, vehicle theft, and theft.

Roche and Hough (2018) confirm the challenges faced by juveniles with an immigrant background in integrating into society, both in adhering to moral norms that prohibit violence and in socio-economic aspects such as neighbourhood or poor family supervision. Marshall and Marshall (2018) discuss the role of migration status and religion in the multi-nation ISRD3 study, influencing the moral condemnation

of violent behaviours. For instance, in that multinational sample of youth, native respondents condemn robbery more than 1st generation immigrants. Relatedly, Cohen and Nisbett (1997) proposed the theoretical concept of a "Culture of Honor" to explain differences in violence between citizens of Northern and Southern states in the United States. Their theory suggests that in cultures where individuals rely on themselves for protection, violence becomes a positively valued activity, serving to maintain reputation and honour. Young immigrants may exhibit more positive attitudes toward norms of masculinity legitimising violence, as found by Enzmann and Wetzels (2002) in their study of juvenile immigrants from Turkey. Furthermore, delinquent immigrant juveniles often come from underprivileged families and are frequently exposed to family violence (e.g., Enzmann & Kammigan, 2018). Enzmann and Kammigan's analysis (2018) of the ISRD3 study data documented substantial differences in prevalence rates of parental punishment between immigrant and native youth in several countries.

2.4 Juvenile Delinquency and Victimisation in Slovenia

The available official crime data, released annually by the police, only provides a general count of juvenile crimes, lacking details on municipalities or broader delinquent behaviours. Figure 1 illustrates a significant decrease in juvenile criminal offences since 1991, with a notable spike in 1992 and a slight rise between 1998 and 2000. Despite a minor increase in 2022, the trend has steadily declined, reaching 922 offences in 2021. Juvenile delinquency comprises approximately 2% of total crime on average and has sharply declined for almost two decades in Slovenia.

However, to achieve a better understanding of the state of delinquency and victimisation in Slovenia and particularly Ljubljana, official statistics must be complemented by victimisation and self-report studies. We present the primary findings of delinquency and victimisation studies conducted in Slovenia since its independence in 1991, focusing mainly on demographic factors such as gender, immigrant status, and grade/age.

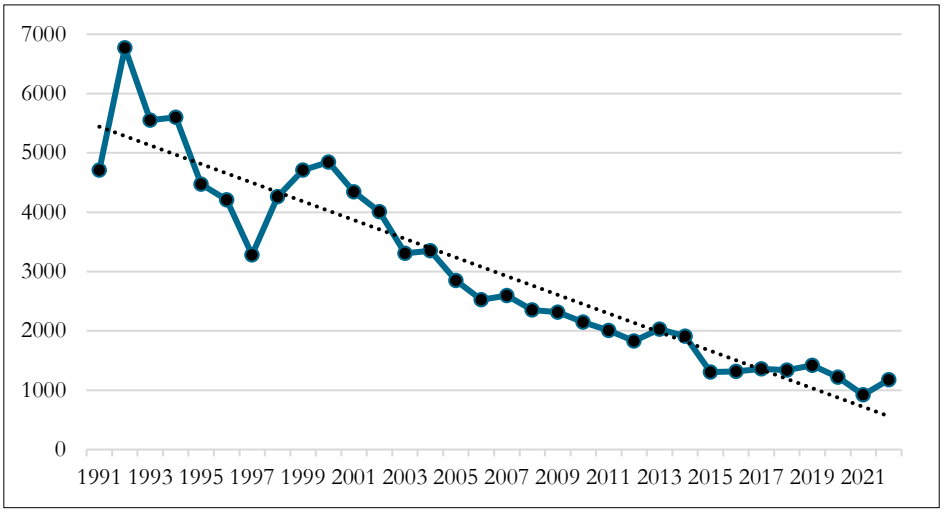

Figure 1: Juvenile Crime in Slovenia from 1991–2021 According to Official Police Statistics
Source: Filipčič (2004), Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, Policija (2020, 2023).

The prevalence of peer violence and bullying is a recurring theme across multiple studies and proves to be significant and frequent among students (e.g., Cvek & Pšunder, 2013; Črešnik et al., 2005; Jeriček Klanšček et al., 2019; Koprivnikar et al., 2015; Muršič, 2010; Pušnik, 1999; Scagnetti, 2011; Stergar et al., 2006). It is prevalent across different grade levels, from primary to secondary schools. Physical fights and various forms of delinquent behaviours are also evident among students (e.g., Bučar Ručman, 2004; Dekleva, 1996; Dekleva & Razpotnik, 2001; Gorenc, 2007; Tivadar, 2000). Online bullying is recognised as a significant issue as well, with studies reporting a substantial percentage of adolescents experiencing or engaging in cyberbullying (Bučar Ručman et al., 2022; Lobe & Muha, 2011; Jeriček Klanšček et al., 2019, 2023). Meško and Bertok (2013a) note that Ljubljana exhibits higher rates in most delinquency categories than Slovenia's third biggest city, Kranj. In contrast, Dekleva (2010) notes that the prevalence of most delinquent categories in Ljubljana was lower than in the other cities in the Slovenian ISRD2 sample.

Boys consistently appear to be more involved in aggressive behaviours such as bullying and physical fights, as well as more violent offences (e.g., Bučar Ručman, 2004; Dekleva, 2010; Gorenc, 2006; Jeriček Klanšček et al., 2019; Meško & Bertok, 2013b; Pušnik, 1996; Tivadar, 2000). They are also recognised as victims more often

than girls, who report less violence and bullying (e.g., Dekleva & Razpotnik, 2010; Gorenc, 2006; Kralj et al., 2013; Scagnetti, 2011). Age trends are observable in many studies, indicating variations in the prevalence of peer violence among different age groups. Generally, the frequency of bullying and physical fights tends to decrease with age (Dekleva, 1996; Jeriček Klanšček et al., 2023; Pušnik, 1996; Scagnetti, 2011). Some studies indicate higher rates of delinquency and victimisation among the immigrant population compared to the native population (Dekleva & Razpotnik, 2001, 2010; Meško & Bertok, 2013b; Razpotnik, 2006). Other studies also establish a link between family violence and peer violence, emphasising the importance of considering family dynamics in understanding adolescent behaviour (Filipčič et al., 2017; Muršič, 2010).

In short, there have been a significant number of empirical studies of youth in Slovenia over the last three decades. The results indicate that bullying, as well as physical, psychological and verbal violence, are not unusual within a school setting. Based on the official statistics (Figure 1), there appears to be a consistent decline in delinquency levels in Slovenia. However, due to the different designs and samples used in these self-report surveys, it is not possible to use these studies to draw conclusions about changes over time in the extent and nature of juvenile delinquency and victimisation in Slovenia. This chapter gives insight into the current landscape of delinquency and victimisation by focusing on self-reported data, which provides new information on juvenile delinquency and victimisation in Ljubljana, Slovenia, since the last comprehensive study conducted in 2013. It also examines demographic variations, compares the findings to previous studies in Slovenia, and aligns key findings with the SDGs.

3 Methods

The 4th sweep of the ISRD study (ISRD4) commenced in 2020 and will be completed in 2024 (for details on the ISRD project, see Marshall et al., 2022). About 40 countries from across the globe are participating in this study. Slovenia participated in ISRD2 and has now re-engaged in the study for the 4th cycle, with the third author of this chapter leading the initiative. The ISRD4 study was conducted using standardised questionnaires in all participating countries. The questionnaire includes topics related to experiences with delinquency and

victimisation and insights into individuals' social backgrounds, including aspects such as friends, family, leisure time activities, and individual characteristics.

To adapt the questionnaire to the Slovenian context, we translated it into Slovenian language, conducted back translation and conducted a pilot study involving first-year students from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, and a few willing participants aged 13–17. Approval was obtained from the Ethical Board of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, declaring the study suitable for application to underage individuals. Before initiating data collection, we secured cooperation permissions from schools, obtained parental consent – where parents could choose to opt their child in or out of the survey – and provided juveniles with anonymity, the option to opt out of the survey themselves, and assured them they would suffer no repercussions for their cooperation.

We used Probability Proportional to Size sampling (PPS), where the probability of selecting a unit is proportional to its size (Skinner, 2016). The ISRD4 survey and its sampling method are designed to ensure the representativeness of the cities where they are conducted, rather than at the country level. According to Enzmann et al. (2018), the ISRD study samples are city-based because their main objective is theoretical explanation rather than the production of national statistics.

Data collection for the ISRD4 sample took place between October 10, 2022, and March 30, 2023. It was conducted on-site at schools, with individual sessions held for each selected class, employing a mixed-method approach. The questionnaire was administered to juveniles either online through the online survey tool LimeSurvey (70% of the sample) or in person using the paper-and-pencil method (30% of the sample). While the ISRD4 study protocol originally intended to use exclusively online questionnaires, practical constraints such as insufficient computers in some schools or lack of access to computer classrooms necessitated paper-and-pencil-based questionnaires. Survey administrators dedicated at least one school hour (45 minutes) to the survey for each class. Notably, some students required only 20–30 minutes to complete the questionnaire, while others needed additional time or did not fully finish it. Given the extensiveness and complexity of the questionnaire, coupled with potentially sensitive content for juveniles, respondents were free to choose not to answer specific questions. Despite some questionnaires not being fully

completed, all respondents were retained in the sample for further analyses, as the authors recognise that even partially completed surveys can provide valuable insights.

3.1 Sample Description

The original Slovenian ISRD4 sample includes 2,653 juveniles from urban environments (Ljubljana and Kranj) and rural environments (across Slovenia). In this chapter, we only focus on about a third of the sample (n = 873), which includes juveniles from Ljubljana (response rate of 59%). As the largest city and the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana is the most representative urban setting. While this sample does not represent the entire country, it is representative of the population of juveniles from 8th to 12th grades in Ljubljana.

In the Ljubljana sample, there were 436 (49.9%) girls and 409 (46.8%) boys. For the first time, the ISRD4 study incorporated an option to include another category in gender – non-binary – to examine its prevalence among students. Ultimately, about 2% of students opted for this alternative category. Available statistical data for Ljubljana (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023a) show that the juvenile population consists of 51.5% females and 48.5% males. Our sample closely matches the population of juveniles in Ljubljana.

The ISRD4 study was initially designed for juveniles aged 13 to 17; however, its primary focus is collecting data from grades where these age groups are typically found. Consequently, the sample may include juveniles younger and older than the specified target population, a characteristic reflected in the sample description. We collected more data in primary schools – 8th and 9th grade – than in secondary schools (10th, 11th, and 12th grade that correspond to the first three years of high school in the Slovenian school system). The most data were collected from 14-year-olds (22.3%) and in 8th grade (23.5%).

Most of Ljubljana's juveniles are native residents (75.7%), 16.3% are 2nd generation immigrant residents, and only 8% are 1st generation immigrant residents. Most immigrant respondents or their parents come from former Yugoslav countries (e.g., Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and North Macedonia). In the case of Ljubljana's population, 13.6% of all citizens are foreign citizens (Statistical

Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023b). Our collected data seems to be representative of the composition of juveniles in Ljubljana.

3.2 Measures

Respondents were asked to report if they had experienced victimisation in the past year in the following nine categories: robbery, assault, theft, hate crime, social media hate, social media threats, sharing intimate content, physical punishment from parents, and parental maltreatment. They were also asked to report if they had committed any acts in the 14 delinquent categories in the past year: graffiti, vandalism, shoplifting, burglary, vehicle theft, robbery, weapon carrying, group fight, assault, drug dealing, sharing intimate content online, online hate speech, cyber fraud, and hacking. The response options for these questions were no (0) and yes (1). We used these categories as items measuring the self-reported prevalence of victimisation and delinquency in the past year among respondents. Furthermore, we created the binary variables "last-year general delinquency" and "last year general victimisation", which comprised involvement in at least one or more categories of delinquency or victimisation. Non-delinquent and non-victimised were coded as 0, and delinquent and victimised respondents were coded as 1.

The following analyses also incorporate the demographic variables "gender", "immigrant status", and "grade." Gender includes male and female (because a small number of respondents selected this category, we excluded the respondents who selected 'non-binary' from the analyses). Immigrant status includes native respondents, 1st generation immigrant respondents, and 2nd-generation immigrant respondents. Grade includes 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. We use 'grade' rather than 'age' to conform to the recommendation made by Enzmann et al. (2018) to accommodate the classroom-based sampling design.

Our initial analysis consists of descriptive statistical examinations to portray self-reported lifetime and last-year victimisation and delinquency prevalence among juveniles from Ljubljana. Subsequently, we conducted logistic regressions to assess the effect of the demographic variables of "gender", "immigrant status" and "grade" solely on last-year prevalence of juvenile victimisation and juvenile delinquency categories. When testing for the effect of "grade", using lifetime prevalence would be expected to show higher levels of involvement among higher grades, as the 'at

risk' period is longer. Therefore, using last-year victimisation and delinquency prevalence is more appropriate when testing for the effect of grade/age. Initially, we compared lower grades using the highest grade (12th) as the comparison category. Still, due to some of the delinquency categories in the 12th grade having rates of zero, interpretation of the findings was challenging. Consequently, we decided to compare the delinquency rates in the different grades to those in the 11th grade, which reported one of the highest general delinquency and victimisation rates (as seen in Figures 6 and 11). Using logistic regressions, we aimed to identify any disparities in prevalence rates in Ljubljana related to gender, immigration status, and grade. In presenting the results, we use a threshold of $p \leq .05$ for statistical significance.

4 Results

4.1 Victimisation

Figure 2 displays self-reported lifetime prevalence for nine victimisation categories and shows that victimisation rates are generally low, typically below 10%. The exceptions include a few categories: physical punishment has been reported by about 41% of students, theft by around 38%, receiving threats over social media by 21%, and parental maltreatment by almost 16% of students.

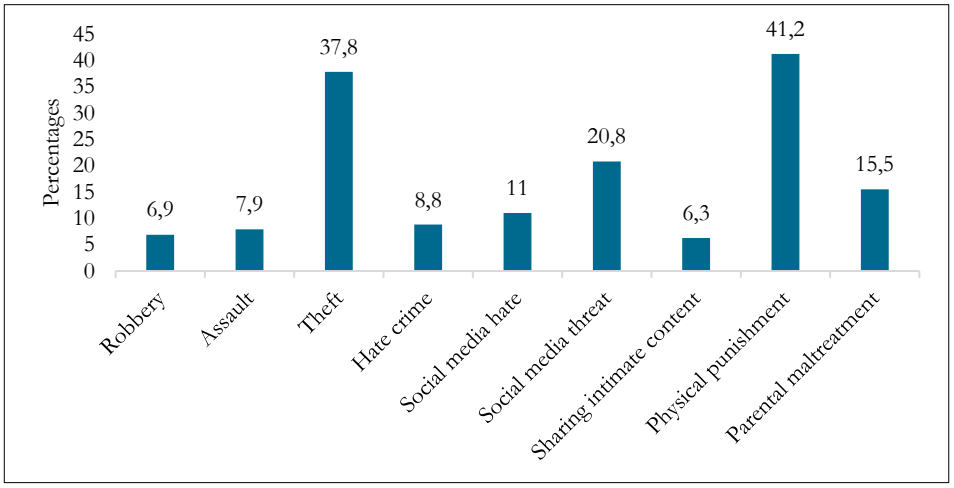

Figure 2: Lifetime Prevalence in Percentages for Victimisation Categories in Ljubljana

Figure 3 shows that 37.8% of students report they have been victimised in at least one category last year. The three most prevalent victimisation categories for the previous year are theft (21%), physical punishment (14%) and social media threat (12%). As expected, compared to lifetime victimisation prevalence, the victimisation rates are lower than last year's prevalence and match the most frequent categories of victimisation.

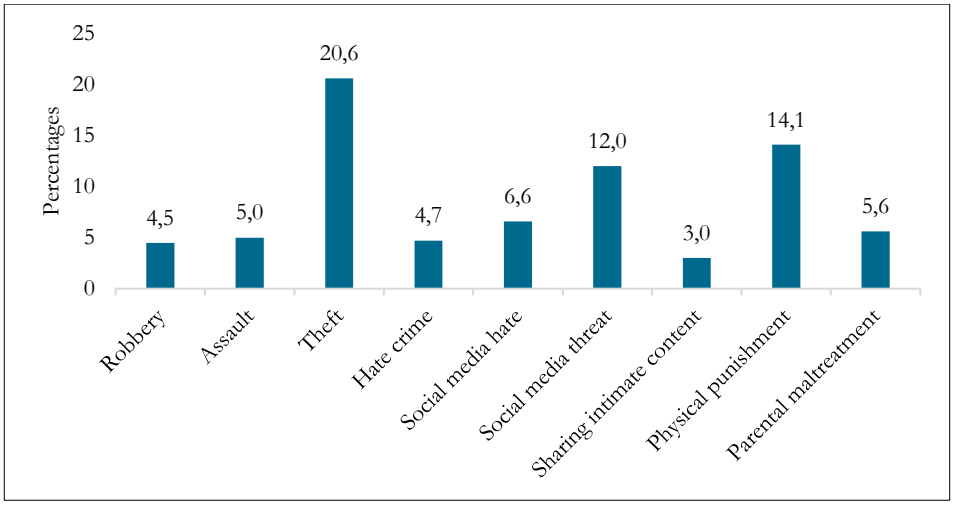

Figure 3: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Victimisation Categories in Ljubljana

Figures 4, 5 and 6 display last-year prevalence of victimisation categories in percentages by demographic variables of gender, immigrant status, and grade while also showing prevalence for general victimisation. In Table 1, we present the results of 10 logistic regressions used to explore the effect of gender, immigrant status, and grade on the nine categories of last year's victimisation and general victimisation.

Boys and girls report similar involvement in victimisation experiences in most of the categories. Figure 4 shows girls report they have been victims in at least one category in the last year (general victimisation) (36.2%) to a similar extent as boys (37.9%). Some categories show bigger variations between genders, where boys report experiencing robbery more often (5.8%) compared to girls (3%), while girls experience more physical punishment (18.2%) and parental maltreatment (7.8%) compared to boys (physical punishment = 14.9%; parental maltreatment = 4.7%). However, as can be seen in Table 1, "Gender" is neither a significant predictor for

any of the victimisation categories nor the general victimisation variable, indicating no statistical differences between genders for last-year victimisation when other demographic factors are included in the analyses.

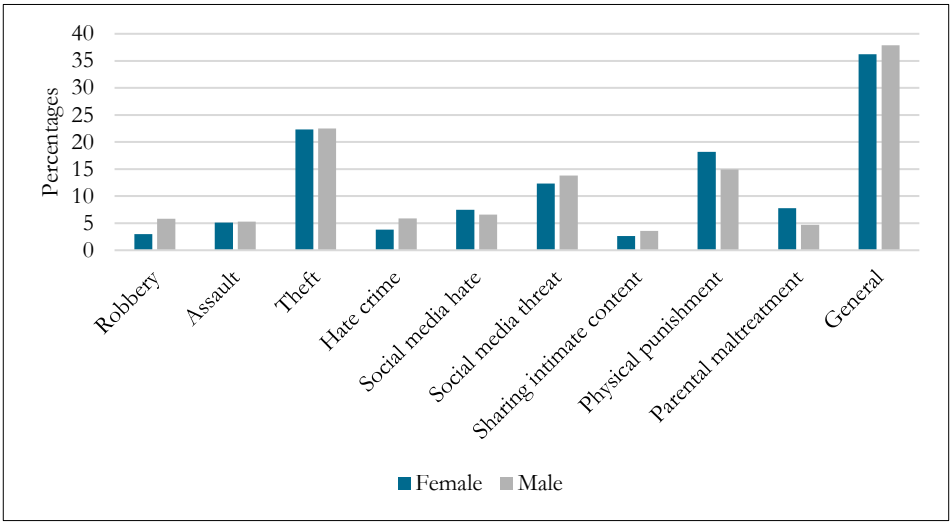

Figure 4: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Victimisation Categories by Gender in Ljubljana

Figure 5 shows that generally, 1st generation immigrant respondents have reported being victims in at least one category in the last year the most (45.7%) compared to 2nd generation immigrant respondents (39.4%) and native respondents (35.9%). Involvement in specific victimisation categories shows some variations, with 1st and 2nd generation immigrant respondents usually in the lead. However, as seen in Table 1, "Immigrant Status" is a statistically significant predictor only for the victimisation category of hate crime ($p = .033$), where 2nd generation immigrant respondents have higher odds of experiencing hate crime ($OR = 2.525$) than native respondents.

General experiences with victimisation, according to Figure 6, are highest in the 11th grade (40.2%) and lowest in the 12th grade (36.1%). Involvement in specific types of victimisation across grades shows variation without following a certain pattern or trend. The most noticeable difference between the grades is in the category of physical punishment, where 11th graders self-report the most experiences (22.7%) compared to other graders (14.5% – 16.2%). Table 1 shows that "Grade" is a

significant predictor for 2 out of 9 categories of victimisation (p = .045; p = .050) and is not significant for general victimisation. 9th graders have higher odds of experiencing social media hate (OR = 2.268) than 11th graders, while 8th graders have lower odds of experiencing physical punishment (OR = .560) than 11th graders.

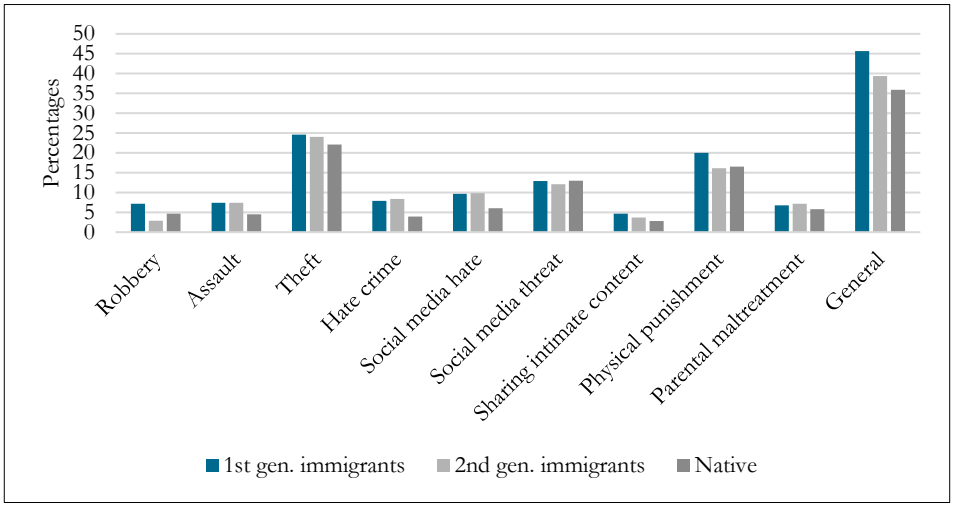

Figure 5: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Victimisation Categories by Immigrant Status in Ljubljana

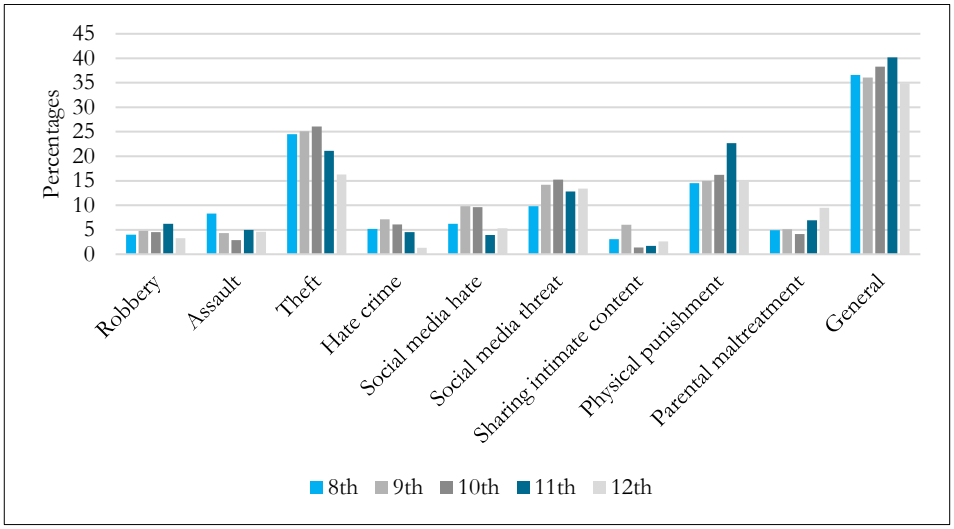

Figure 6: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Victimisation Categories by Grade in Ljubljana

Table 1: Logistic Regression Analysis of Last-Year Prevalence in Victimisation Categories by Gender, Immigrant Status, and Grade

Demographic (independent)	Male			1st gen. immigrants			2nd gen. immigrants		
Victimisation (dependent)	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*
Robbery	.653	.363	1.920	.121	.630	1.129	-.047	.380	0.954
Assault	-.038	.319	0.962	.272	.557	1.313	-.439	.546	0.644
Theft	.027	.177	1.027	.012	.334	1.012	.077	.236	1.081
Hate crime	.504	.345	1.656	.509	.567	1.664	.819	.385	2.268
Social media hate	-.024	.283	0.976	.512	.467	1.669	.444	.339	1.559
Social media threat	.177	.216	1.194	.125	.405	1.134	-.061	.296	0.941
Sharing intimate content	.284	.416	1.329	.548	.652	1.730	.217	.523	1.243
Physical punishment	-.283	.207	0.754	.341	.378	1.406	.055	.280	1.057
Parental maltreatment	-.573	.311	0.564	.336	.555	1.399	.263	.391	1.301
General	.075	.146	1.078	.288	.268	1.334	.172	.193	1.187

Table 1: Continued

Demographic (independent)	8th Grade			9th Grade			10th Grade			12th Grade			*n*	χ^2	pseudo *R2*
Victimisation (dependent)	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*			
Robbery	-.723	.524	0.485	-.190	.469	0.827	-.306	.567	0.736	-.569	.554	0.566	827	7.025	.028
Assault	.435	.439	1.545	-.227	.503	0.797	-.568	.622	0.567	-.092	.519	0.912	821	6.066	.022
Theft	.244	.255	1.277	.175	.264	1.191	.215	.294	1.240	-.270	.293	0.764	773	4.516	.009
Hate crime	-.034	.505	0.967	.390	.472	1.477	.298	.547	1.347	-1.243	.801	0.288	810	13.847	.053
Social media hate	.432	.490	1.540	.926*	.462	2.525	.943	.493	2.567	.309	.532	1.362	815	9.820	.030
Social media threat	-.222	.339	0.801	.203	.322	1.224	.260	.353	1.297	.141	.337	1.152	792	3.060	.007
Sharing intimate content	.606	.720	1.833	1.188	.674	3.280	-.091	.931	0.913	.487	.774	1.627	816	7.020	.036
Physical punishment	-.579*	.296	0.560	-.546	.301	0.579	-.525	.347	0.592	-.505	.307	0.604	713	7.163	.017
Parental maltreatment	-.419	.458	0.657	-.417	.460	0.659	-.724	.555	0.485	.266	.414	1.305	779	8.656	.029
General	-.167	.214	0.846	-.194	.219	0.823	-.073	.239	0.930	-.162	.231	0.851	845	2.756	.004

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

4.2 Delinquency

Figure 7 displays self-reported lifetime prevalence for 14 delinquency categories and shows that 48.1% of students report having committed at least one delinquent act in their lifetime. Juveniles, in general, report low rates of involvement in various delinquent categories. Three categories that stand out the most and have the highest self-report prevalence rates are shoplifting (26%), weapon carrying (15%), and graffiti (14%).

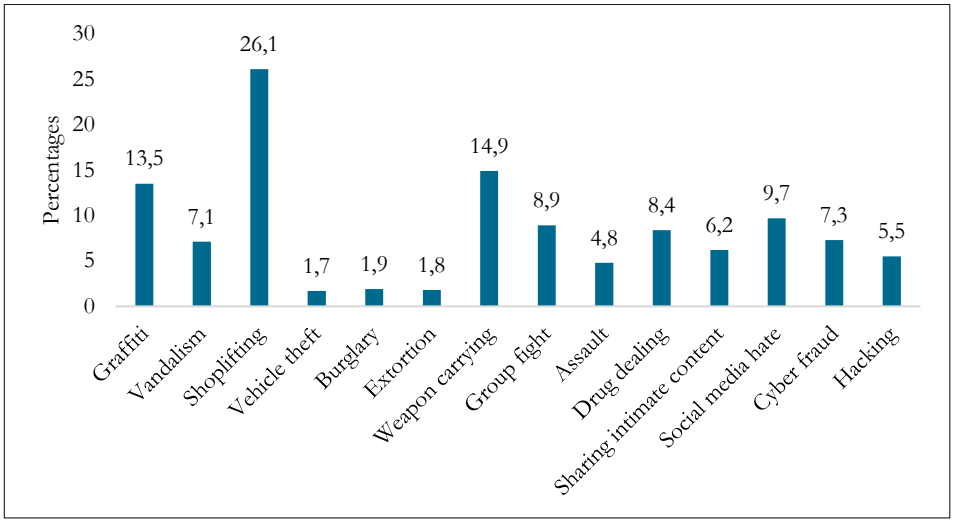

Figure 7: Lifetime Prevalence in Percentages for Delinquency Categories in Ljubljana

Figure 8 shows that 29.8% of students report having committed at least one delinquent category in the last year. The three most prevalent delinquent categories for the previous year remain shoplifting (12.7%), weapon carrying (9.5%), and graffiti (7.8%). As expected, in comparison to lifetime delinquency prevalence, the delinquency rates are lower than last year's prevalence.

Figures 9, 10, and 11 display the prevalence of delinquency categories in percentages by demographic variables of gender, immigrant status, and grade while also showing the prevalence of general delinquency. In Table 2, we present the results of the logistic regressions used to explore the effect of gender, immigrant status, and grade on the 14 categories of lifetime delinquency and general delinquency.

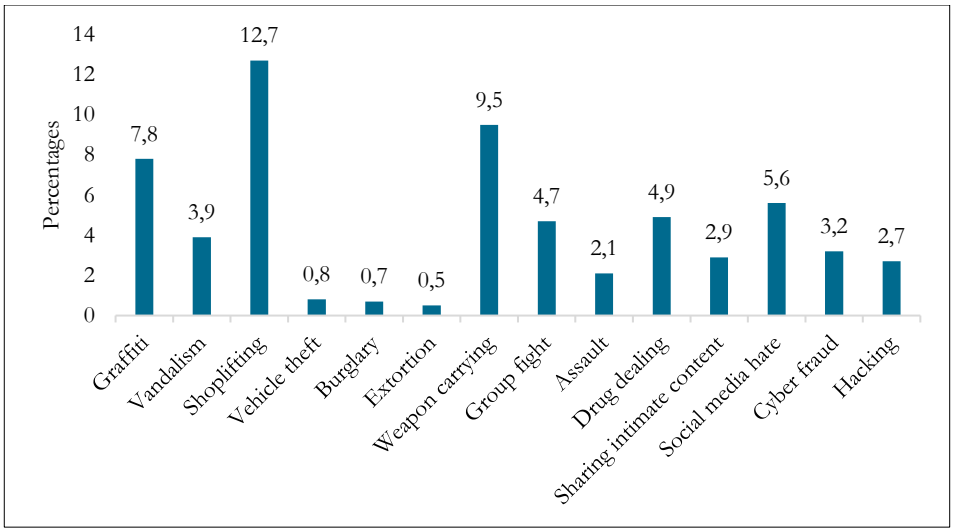

Figure 8: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Delinquency Categories in Ljubljana

Boys and girls report similar involvement in victimisation experiences in most categories. Figure 9 shows that boys self-report higher involvement in most delinquency categories than girls. Still, they report being victims in at least one category in the last year (general victimisation) (29.3%) to a similar extent as girls (27.4%). Particularly, some categories show bigger variations between genders, where boys report more involvement in painting graffiti (10.9%), weapon carrying (14.1%) and social media hate (10%) compared to girls (graffiti = 6%; weapon carrying = 6.7%; social media hate = 2.4%). As seen in Table 2, "Gender" is a significant predictor for 5 out of 14 delinquency categories (p = .010; p = <.001; p = .043; p = < .001; p = .025) but is not significant for general delinquency. In all the significant delinquency categories, boys have higher odds of being involved in painting graffiti (*OR* = 2.013), weapon carrying (*OR* = 2.351), group fighting (*OR* = 2.019), social media hate (*OR* = 4.681), and hacking (*OR* = 2.853) than girls.

Figure 10 shows that 1st generation immigrant respondents have generally reported being involved in at least one delinquency category in the last year the most (34.3%), compared to 2nd generation immigrant respondents (33.3%) and native respondents (27.3%). Involvement in specific delinquency categories shows some variations, with 1st and 2nd generation immigrant respondents typically in the lead. However, as seen in Table 2, "Immigrant Status" is a statistically significant predictor for 2 out of

14 delinquency categories (p = .003; p = .006; p = .034) but is not significant for general delinquency. 1st generation immigrant respondents have higher odds of involvement in vehicle theft (OR = 15.678) than native respondents, while both 1st and 2nd generation immigrant respondents have higher odds of involvement in sharing intimate content (OR = 4.664; OR = 2.851) than native respondents.

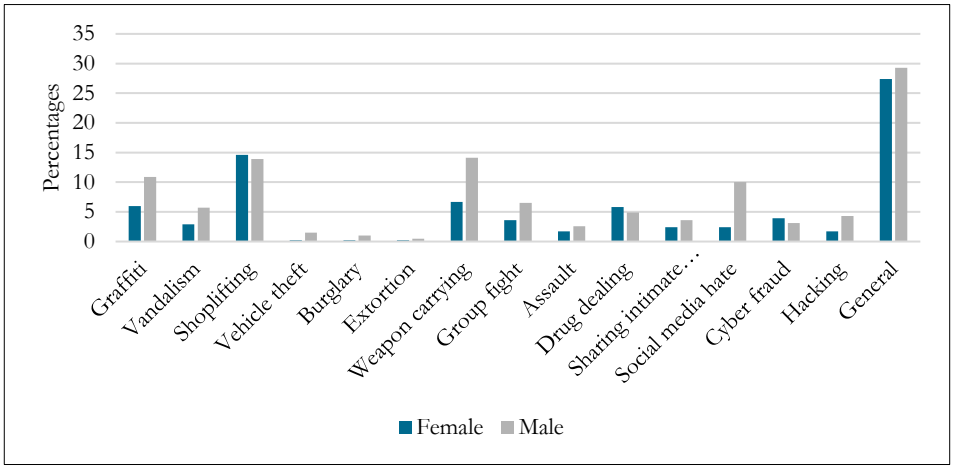

Figure 9: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Delinquency Categories by Gender in Ljubljana

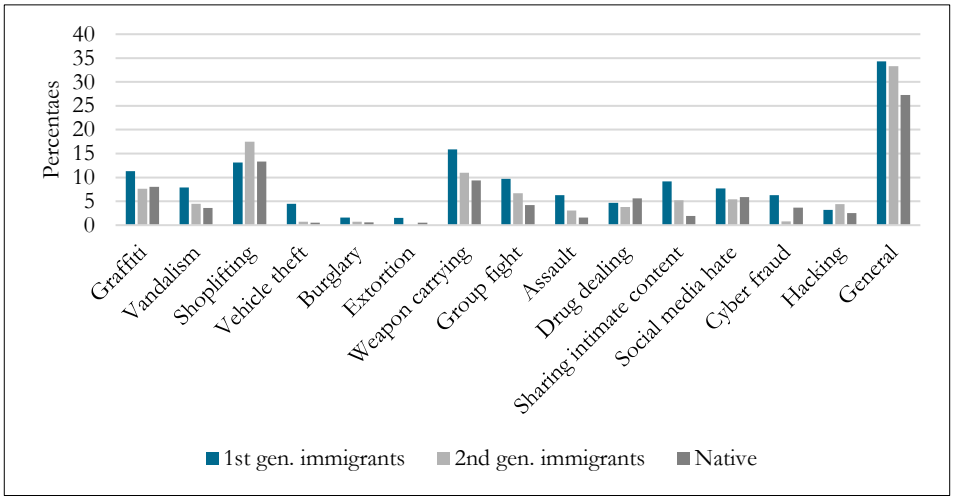

Figure 10: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Delinquency Categories by Immigrant Status in Ljubljana

General involvement in delinquency, according to Figure 11, is highest in the 12th grade (34.4%) and lowest in the 8th grade (21.4%). Involvement in specific types of delinquency across grades shows variation, with no discernible pattern or trend. The most noticeable differences between the grades are in the categories of weapon carrying, where 11th graders self-report the highest involvement (13.6%) compared to other graders (6.7% – 10.5%), and cyber fraud, where 12th graders self-report the highest involvement (6.2%) compared to other graders (2.2% – 3.3%). Table 2 shows that "Grade" is a significant predictor for 3 out of 14 categories of victimisation (p = .016; p = .020; p = .007; p = .007; p = .029) and is not significant for general victimisation. Eighth graders have lower odds of involvement in painting graffiti (*OR* = .348) and weapon carrying (*OR* = .404) than 11th graders. Eighth, ninth, and tenth graders all have lower odds of being involved in drug dealing (*OR* = .213; *OR* = .214; *OR* = .282) than 11th graders.

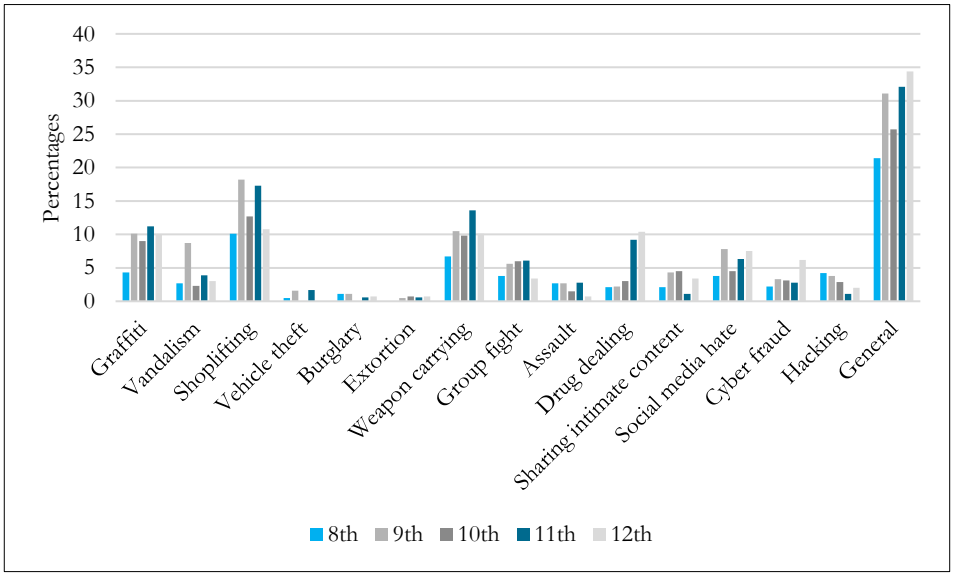

Figure 11: Last-Year Prevalence in Percentages for Delinquency Categories by Grade in Ljubljana

Table 2: Logistic Regression Analysis of Last-Year Prevalence in Delinquency Categories by Gender, Immigrant Status and Grade

Demographic (independent)	Male			1st gen. immigrants			2nd gen. immigrants		
Delinquency(dependent)	***b***	***se***	***OR***	***b***	***se***	***OR***	***b***	***se***	***OR***
Graffiti	.700**	.273	2.013	.577	.441	1.781	.009	.367	1.009
Vandalism	.695	.376	2.003	.843	.532	2.324	.139	.478	1.150
Shoplifting	–.083	.212	0.920	–.079	.425	0.924	.305	.267	1.357
Vehicle theft	1.808	1.104	6.098	2.752**	.924	15.678	.560	1.182	1.751
Burglary	1.323	1.123	3.756	/*	/	/	.246	1.131	1.279
Extortion	.985	1.269	2.679	/	/	/	/	/	/
Weapon carrying	.855***	.254	2.351	.719	.401	2.053	.256	.322	1.292
Group fight	.702*	.347	2.019	.817	.520	2.264	.575	.406	1.777
Assault	.405	.510	1.499	1.235	.686	3.438	.722	.607	2.060
Drug dealing	–.290	.326	0.748	.194	.635	1.214	–.283	.496	0.753
Sharing intimate content	.649	.440	1.913	1.540**	.564	4.664	1.048*	.494	2.851
Social media hate	1.543***	.371	4.681	.240	.563	1.271	–.062	.435	0.940
Cyber fraud	–.199	.398	0.820	.678	.569	1.970	–1.622	1.029	0.197
Hacking	1.048*	.467	2.853	.102	.773	1.108	.526	.497	1.693
General	.075	.146	1.078	.288	.268	1.334	.172	.193	1.187

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: These delinquent categories also had a 0 rate, which is why comparison among all the grades was not possible. Consequentially, these grades were not included in the analysis.

Table 2: Continued

Demographic (independent)	8th Grade			9th Grade			10th Grade			12th Grade			*n*	χ^2	pseudo R^2
Victimisation (dependent)	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*	*b*	*se*	*OR*			
Graffiti	–1.055*	.438	0.348	–.150	.356	0.860	–.015	.399	0.985	–.488	.408	0.614	803	15.668	.044
Vandalism	–.446	.603	0.640	.846	.475	2.330	–.342	.713	0.711	–.632	.702	0.532	806	17.697	.074
Shoplifting	–.615	.324	0.540	.002	.288	1.002	–.359	.345	0.699	–.554	.337	0.575	772	8.449	.019
Vehicle theft	–1.790	1.239	0.167	–.458	.901	0.633	/	/	/	/	/	/	540	12.656	.179
Burglary	.709	1.233	2.031	.053	1.429	1.054	/	/	/	.328	1.424	1.388	683	2.211	.039
Extortion	/	/	/	/	/	/	.589	1.465	1.803	.299	1.424	1.349	453	0.688	.020
Weapon carrying	–.907*	.389	0.404	–.277	.336	0.758	–.089	.379	0.914	–.326	.361	0.722	791	20.406	.053
Group fight	–.570	.504	0.566	–.258	.472	0.773	.179	.498	1.196	–.569	.555	0.566	798	9.701	.037
Assault	–.140	.653	0.869	–.347	.691	0.707	–.616	.865	0.540	–1.437	1.104	0.238	805	6.900	.046
Drug dealing	–1.548**	.573	0.213	–1.544**	.574	0.214	–1.266*	.581	0.282	.111	.382	1.117	797	22.452	.081
Sharing intimate content	.438	.883	1.549	1.061	.819	2.889	1.588	.843	4.895	1.152	.850	3.164	805	15.375	.080
Social media hate	–.527	.505	0.591	.237	.436	1.267	.102	.538	1.108	.348	.450	1.417	792	24.896	.084
Cyber fraud	–.283	.686	0.753	.193	.622	1.213	.028	.694	1.028	.831	.575	2.296	797	10.267	.049
Hacking	1.407	.803	4.086	1.309	.816	3.702	1.334	.889	3.798	.726	.923	2.066	812	11.304	.059
General	–.167	.214	0.846	–.194	.219	0.823	–.073	.239	0.930	–.162	.231	0.851	845	2.756	.004

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: Male gender is compared to female, 1st generation and 2nd generation immigrant respondents are compared to native respondents, and all grades are compared to 11th grade.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Reports of general victimisation rates appear high in our study, with around two-thirds of students (66%) reporting they have been victims in at least one category in their lifetime. While the percentage of students victimised in the last year is lower (38%) than the lifetime prevalence, it is nonetheless considerably high. Although our general measures include many relatively non-serious types of victimisation, such high rates are still concerning. Although some studies have primarily focused on bullying among adolescents, several studies have confirmed comparable relatively high victimisation rates (20–68%) (e.g., Bučar Ručman, 2004; Cvek & Pšunder, 2013; Jeriček Klanšček et al., 2019; Pušnik, 1999; Scagnetti, 2011). One of the most prevalent victimisation categories is theft (lifetime = 38%; and last year = 21%), a commonly reported experience among adolescents (Dekleva & Razpotnik, 2010).

Rates of parental punishment (lifetime = 41%; and last year = 14%) and parental maltreatment (lifetime = 16%) are also significant, especially concerning adolescents and their family situations. Filipčič et al. (2017) note that juveniles experiencing violence in the family and domestic strain are more likely to be delinquents, particularly exhibiting aggressive behaviours and vandalising property. They emphasise the need to consider and explore family dynamics when trying to understand adolescent behaviour, as it may be connected to their involvement in further victimisation or the onset of delinquency.

Reports of general delinquency rates are likewise relatively high, with almost half of the students (48%) reporting involvement in at least one type of delinquent category in their lifetime and nearly 30% of students in the last year, which coincides with findings from previous studies on delinquency, peer violence, and bullying prevalence (e.g., Dekleva, 1996; Gorenc, 2007; Jeriček Klanšček et al., 2023; Meško & Bertok, 2013b; Muršič, 2010). Shoplifting remains one of the most prevalent (lifetime = 26%; and last year = 13%) delinquent categories among juveniles, followed by less severe acts of delinquency such as graffiti and weapon carrying.

Generally, around 29% of boys and about 27% of girls reported involvement in at least one delinquent category in the last year. Although the gender difference in general delinquent involvement is not statistically significant, a closer analysis of specific delinquent categories shows boys report higher involvement in certain types

of delinquency (graffiti, weapon carrying, group fighting, social media hate, and hacking), while in the other categories, girls do not statistically differ from boys. Boys, in general, seem to report more involvement in violent and destructive offences, while girls are on par with boys, particularly in minor offences such as shoplifting and sharing intimate content, as well as in other property offences and drug dealing. Several studies confirm boys' inclination toward more violent behaviour and girls catching up to them in delinquency rates (e.g., Agnew & Brezina, 2018; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2002; Liu & Miller, 2020). While last year, victimisation affects a slightly larger proportion of boys (almost 38%) than girls (around 36%) in general, the gender disparity lacks statistical significance. Upon closer examination of victimisation experiences by type, it remains evident that there are no statistically significant differences between boys and girls.

Our finding of some differences in the involvement of immigrant and native-born youth in delinquency is consistent with several national and international studies (Dekleva & Razpotnik, 2001, 2010; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2002; Meško & Bertok, 2013b; Razpotnik, 2006). General involvement in last-year delinquency differs among native respondents (27.3%), 2nd generation (33.3%), and 1st generation (34.3%) immigrant respondents, although the differences are not statistically significant. However, disparities become more evident in individual categories of delinquency. Although both 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrant youth exhibit higher rates for most delinquency categories compared to natives, 1st generation immigrant respondents report higher involvement mainly in vehicle theft (4.5%) and sharing intimate content (9.2%) compared to 2nd generation immigrant respondents (*v. t.* = 0.7%; *s. i. c.* = 5.2%). This finding confirms the notion of Agnew (2006) and Bersani (2014), emphasising the importance of distinguishing between immigrant respondents of the first and second generation. While 2nd generation immigrant youth may be more involved in delinquency than native youth, they might have assimilated and integrated into their environment, thus showing slightly lower rates of delinquency compared to 1st generation immigrant youth. A similar observation may be made regarding victimisation. Both generations of immigrant respondents (1st generation = 45.7%; 2nd generation = 39.4%) report having at least one victimisation experience in the last year at a higher rate than native respondents (35.9%), with 1st generation immigrant respondents in the lead. We find that immigrant youth generally seem to experience more victimisation, a finding which is consistent with several studies (Enzmann & Kammigan, 2018; Meško & Bertok,

2013b; Razpotnik, 2006), particularly in categories of hate crime, social media hate, and parental maltreatment.

We find that general involvement in last-year delinquency is lowest in 8th grade (21.4%) and highest in 12th grade (34.4%), although the increase across grades is not exactly linear. Generally, there is an upward trend in reported victimisation experiences up until the 11th grade (36.6%–40.2%) with a noticeable drop in the 12th grade (34.9%). The individual delinquent categories do not seem to show an apparent decrease or increase with age, except for drug dealing, which exhibits a notable increase with age (2.1%–10.4%). Individual victimisation categories also do not show any apparent linear trends in increase or decrease with age. Previous studies have shown that bullying and physical fights tend to decrease with age (e.g., Dekleva, 1996; Gorenc, 2007; Jeriček Klanšček et al., 2023; Pušnik 1996; Scagnetti, 2011), while Meško and Bertok (2013b) found that there does not seem to be an age-related decrease in reported criminal acts. Grade differences in our study, in general, vary significantly for each victimisation or delinquency category, with peaks at different ages/grades.

Our study is not without limitations. One limitation is that we only tested discriminant validity for categorical variables of victimisation and delinquency, verifying if last-year prevalence in specific categories differs according to gender, immigrant status, and grade (as a substitute for age). Additionally, the current study is limited in exploring the risk and protective factors of delinquency and victimisation, merely touching upon the disparities in these phenomena. Future research should focus on exploring causes and mitigating factors to gain comprehensive insight into delinquency and victimisation among juveniles. Among the study's limitations, we also acknowledge the possibility that, despite their voluntary participation and the assurance of anonymity, juveniles may have under- or over-reported their experiences or provided socially desirable responses due to the fear of disclosure and potential sanctions that might follow.

The findings of this study have significant implications for advancing the SDGs, particularly SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Insights into juvenile delinquency and victimisation emphasise the critical need for effective and accountable institutions that address disparities based on gender, age, and immigration status. The study advocates for interventions that ensure access to

justice for all, contributing to the overarching goal of building peaceful and inclusive societies. Juvenile delinquency in Ljubljana appears to echo broader Slovenian and international trends. By recognising demographic variations, it enhances our understanding of juvenile delinquency, guiding future efforts toward localised, targeted, and effective strategies to address both juvenile delinquency and victimisation in Ljubljana. Continued research on these phenomena and their causes is recommended to monitor evolving trends and ensure ongoing effectiveness. The study significantly contributes to our understanding of juvenile experiences in Slovenia, particularly in Ljubljana, and aims to support the global pursuit of a just, peaceful, and institutionally strong society.

Acknowledgement

The Slovenian ISRD4 study has been conducted as a part of the Research Program: Safety and Security in Local Communities – Comparison Between Rural and Urban Settings (P5-0397 (A), 2019–2024) financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

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