

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL POLICE OFFICER PROGRAM¹

Saša Milojević, PhD

Bojan Janković, PhD

Boban Milojković, PhD

Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies

Slaviša Djukanović, MA

Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to determine the effects of the “School policeman” program that is being implemented in the Republic of Serbia on safety in schools. Data on crime in schools from the official police evidence as well as attitudes collected during the survey of 572 members of school staff are analysed in the paper. The data on crime, based on the results of two-factor analysis of variance, are used to indicate the change of frequency in the number of crimes under the influence of activities of the school policeman. On the other hand, the surveyed respondents stated their opinion on perception of their own safety before and after the school policeman was engaged, as well as the effectiveness of his activities. There has been a significant increase in number of criminal offences in schools in which the school policeman was engaged. Nevertheless, a very high percentage of the surveyed respondents declared that they felt safer after the school policeman had been engaged in schools. There has been no studies that dealt with real effects of police officers’ activities in schools in Serbia and wider so far. This paper, based on statistical data (objective indicators) and attitudes of school staff (subjective indicators), reveals that the “School policeman” program has achieved positive effects ensuring the increase of overall level of safety in schools.

Keywords: *school policeman, effectiveness, perception, school, safety.*

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade there has been an increase in socially negative phenomena directly affecting the safety and security of schoolchildren, resulting in increased public awareness of the problem and attention paid to it². In 2007 and 2008, there were about 2,000,000 criminal offenses in educational institutions in the USA, 62% of them in public schools³. Certain media overestimated the problem of school violence despite a drop in the rate of such violence at a

1 This paper is the result of the research on project: “Management of police organization in preventing and mitigating threats to security in the Republic of Serbia”, which is financed and carried out by the Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Belgrade – the cycle of scientific projects 2015–2019.

2 Jovančičević, O. i Reljić, L. (2008). Prevencija i rešavanje disciplinskih problema u nastavi. *Nastava i vaspitanje*, god. 57, br. 3, 338–356; Starčević, J. (2009). Činioci i oblici nasilnog ponašanja u školi i moguće preventivne strategije. *Nastava i vaspitanje*, god. 58, br. 2, 237–252.

3 Stevenson, Q. W. (2011). School resource officers and school incidents: A quantitative study. (Doctoral dissertation), The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

national level⁴. On the other hand, the public attention is not sufficiently drawn to other types of school violence⁵ although they are very frequent. The fact that during only one school year of 2009/2010 there were 433,800 serious disciplinary measures implemented in public schools in the USA supports the data about frequency⁶.

The problem of violence in schools is widely spread in other countries as well. In Great Britain 6% of teachers declared they had been threatened or attacked in schools, 20% of students in Spain confirmed they had participated in vandalism, and more than 25% of French students were involved in physical assaults⁷. In the last several years, there have been numerous violent incidents recorded among schoolchildren in Turkey⁸.

Under the influence of wars in the 1990s, difficult economic situation and social crisis in Serbia, there has been a significant increase of crime and violence. This increase has permeated all segments of social life, and has reflected in schools as well. Young people in Serbia grow up in conditions that encourage aggression (armed national clashes in the recent past, poverty, hooliganism at sports events and the like), and this has led to an increase in crime in schools⁹.

POLICE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL SAFETY

Public perceptions of failing, disorderly schools and fears of increased school violence have created demands for the reform of safety measures in schools in certain countries¹⁰. One of methods for meeting these requests was the presence of the police in schools. Increased presence of the police in schools was first noted in the USA¹¹, but also in Great Britain, Portugal and in other countries of the EU¹², Serbia¹³, Turkey¹⁴ and South Korea¹⁵.

4 Bracy, N. L. (2010). Circumventing the Law: Students' Rights in Schools with Police. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 294–315.

5 Chrusciel, M. M., Wolfe, S., Hansen, J. A., Rojek, J. J. & Kaminski, R. (2015). Law enforcement executive and principal perspectives on school safety measures – School resource officers and armed school employees. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 24–39.

6 Shuler Ivey, C. A. (2012). Teaching, Counseling, and Law enforcement functions in South Carolina High Schools: A Study on the Perception of Time spent among School Resource Officers. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 550–561.

7 Petrosino, A., Guckenburger, S. & Fronius, T. (2012). 'Policing Schools' Strategies: A Review of the Evaluation Evidence. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation*, Vol. 8, No. 17, 80–101.

8 Öğülmüş, S., Pişkin, M. & Kumandaş, H. (2011). Does the school police project work? The effectiveness of the school police project in Ankara, Turkey. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 15, 2481–2486.

9 Milojević, S., Simonović, B., Janković, B., Otašević, B. i Turanjanin, V. (2014). Youth and hooliganism at sports events. Belgrade: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Mission to Serbia.

10 Bracy, N. L. (2010). Circumventing the Law: Students' Rights in Schools With Police. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 294–315.

11 Chrusciel, M. M., Wolfe, S., Hansen, J. A., Rojek, J. J. & Kaminski, R. (2015). Law enforcement executive and principal perspectives on school safety measures – School resource officers and armed school employees. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 24–39.

12 Petrosino, A., Guckenburger, S. & Fronius, T. (2012). 'Policing Schools' Strategies: A Review of the Evaluation Evidence. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation*, Vol. 8, No. 17, 80–101.

13 Bošković, G. i Simić, B. (2004). Iskustva u realizaciji projekata "Školski policajac – prijatelj i zaštitnik dece". *Bezbednost*, God. 46, Br. 5, 761–774.

14 Öğülmüş, S., Pişkin, M. & Kumandaş, H. (2011). Does the school police project work? The effectiveness of the school police project in Ankara, Turkey. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 15, 2481–2486.

15 Brown, B. (2006). Understanding and assessing school police officers: A conceptual and methodological comment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 34, No. 6, 591–604.

The increased presence of police officers in schools was most often realized through the implementation of special police programs, which Shaw¹⁶ classified in three categories: 1) school-based police officers, 2) police officers as teachers, and 3) programs in which the police and other social institutions worked together with schools. The first group of programs was the most widespread practice. The most famous such programs are School Resource Officers (SRO) – USA, School Liaison Officers – England, Safer School Partnerships – England, The School Agent – The Netherlands; School-Based Policing – Australia¹⁷. The program that has been implemented in Turkey since 2007¹⁸ and the “School Policeman” program implemented by the Ministry of Interior in Serbia since 2002¹⁹ belong to the same group.

The trend of more intense engagement of school policemen is noted in Serbia, regardless of the fact that safety conditions in schools have remained relatively stable. However, under the influence of media which assessed the situation in schools most attentively, and very often in a sensationalistic way, in 2002, the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Education introduced school policemen to improve safety conditions. When the “School Policeman” program was introduced, 185 police officers were engaged²⁰, and in 2014 the number amounted to 354 (Table 1). Together with the increased presence of the police in schools, according to the data of the Ministry of Interior²¹, a number of other activities have been undertaken in schools (Table 1) in which police officers have taken part in.

Table 1. Activities of the police in all schools on the territory of the Republic of Serbia

Type of the police activities	Year				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
School policemen engaged	345	343	343	327	354
No. of lectures presented in schools	1960	2125	3004	3359	3294
No. of meetings held with the participants in educational process	2326	1621	2326	2621	2222
Participation in prevention projects and programs in schools	291	207	214	317	285

Although the concept of School Resource Officer (SRO) program is very popular in the USA, policemen involved in this program do not have the same assignments in all federal states. For example, in some places SRO are more focused on building relationships with students, while in others they act as a connection between law enforcement institutions with

16 Shaw, M. (2004). Police, Schools and Crime Prevention: A preliminary review of current practices. Retrieved March 10, 2015 from the World Wide Web http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/2005-1999/2004.ENG.Police_Schools_and_Crime_Prevention_A_Preliminary_Review_Of_Current_Practices.pdf.

17 Shaw, M. (2004). Police, Schools and Crime Prevention: A preliminary review of current practices. Retrieved March 10, 2015 from the World Wide Web http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/2005-1999/2004.ENG.Police_Schools_and_Crime_Prevention_A_Preliminary_Review_Of_Current_Practices.pdf.

18 Ögülmüş, S., Pişkin, M. & Kumandaş, H. (2011). Does the school police project work? The effectiveness of the school police project in Ankara, Turkey. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 15, 2481–2486.

19 Bošković, G. i Simić, B. (2004). Iskustva u realizaciji projekata “Školski policajac – prijatelj i zaštitnik dece”. *Bezbednost*, god. 46, br. 5, 761–774.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova Republike Srbije (2015). Statistički podaci o bezbednosno interesantnim pojavama na području škola, 04/2 br.: 050-4686/15-1, Beograd.

the aim to prevent potential problems²². However, the role of SRO is most often understood through the “triad model” which implies that SRO has the role of an advisor/mentor, a teacher, as well as the role of law implementation²³.

Unlike SRO in the USA which has a triple role defined through the “triad model”, the role of the school policeman in Serbia is exclusively law enforcement. The school policeman in Serbia does not have a role of a teacher, or a students’ advisor. Tasks of the school policeman are defined in such a way that they emphasize the preventive role of members of the police who do the job of the school policeman. Namely, the tasks are directed towards: (1) collection and analysis of data on situations which jeopardize the safety of participants in the process of education; (2) timely informing the immediate superior officer in the line of duty, school representatives or the local community on security-threatening incidents and (3) taking adequate measures to eliminate sources of threat to the safety of participants in the educational process²⁴. The school policeman intervenes only when it is really necessary, and in order to protect students and the school property. As in the USA²⁵, even in Serbia there are neither comprehensive criteria for the selection of police officers who will perform the role of school policemen, nor the manner of conducting their further specific training.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICE PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

The latest research has shown that there is no evidence that the presence of SRO in schools contributes to the decrease of crime and violence²⁶ while there is an increase of certain forms of crime²⁷. On the other hand, some studies have shown that the perception of safety has been on a higher level in schools after the introduction or increased presence of the police. Studies have shown that the presence of SRO reduces fear of crime and increases the feeling of safety in students while in school²⁸, and that they have a positive opinion about SRO²⁹. Also, studies show that employees in schools, principals and teachers have a positive attitude towards the

22 May, D. C., Rice, C. & Minor, K. I. (2012). An Examination of School Resource Officers’ Attitudes Regarding Behavioral Issues among Students Receiving Special Education Services. *Current Issues in Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1–13.

23 Brown, B. (2006). Understanding and assessing school police officers: A conceptual and methodological comment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 34, No. 6, 591–604; Ruddell, R. & May, D. C. (2011). Challenging our perceptions of rural policing: An examination of school resource officers in rural and urban Kentucky schools. *Kentucky Journal of Anthropology and Sociology*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 5–18.

24 Bošković, G. i Simić, B. (2004). Iskustva u realizaciji projekata “Školski policajac-prijatelj i zaštitnik dece”. *Bezbednost*, god. 46, br. 5, 761–774.

25 Raymond, B. (2010). *Assigning Police Officers to Schools* (U. S. D. o. Justice & O. o. C. O. P. Services Eds. Vol. 10). Washington: Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

26 Na, C. & Gottfredson, D. C. (2013). Police officers in schools: Effects on school crime and the processing of offending behaviors. *Justice Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 619–650; Chrusciel, M. M., Wolfe, S., Hansen, J. A., Rojek, J. J. & Kaminski, R. (2015). Law enforcement executive and principal perspectives on school safety measures - School resource officers and armed school employees. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 24–39.

27 Stevenson, Q. W. (2011). *School resource officers and school incidents: A quantitative study*. (Doctoral dissertation), The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

28 Chrusciel, M. M., Wolfe, S., Hansen, J. A., Rojek, J. J. & Kaminski, R. (2015). Law enforcement executive and principal perspectives on school safety measures - School resource officers and armed school employees. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 24–39; Raymond, B. (2010). *Assigning Police Officers to Schools* (U. S. D. o. Justice & O. o. C. O. P. Services Eds. Vol. 10). Washington: Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

29 Jackson, A. (2002). Police-school resource officers’ and students’ perception of the police and offending. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 631–650.

presence of SRO, believing that they prevent students from bad behaviour and contributes to the reduction of crime³⁰.

The study into the effectiveness of the “School Policeman” program presented in this paper is founded on the assumption that school policemen perform their duties effectively because of the following: 1) data from the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia show that school policemen activities lead to a change in the number of criminal offenses committed in schools; and 2) opinions of staff in schools where school policemen are employed confirm an increased feeling of safety because of the effectiveness of school policemen in performing their duties.

SAMPLE AND METHOD

Data were collected in two ways. Statistical data on the number of criminal offences were obtained from the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia which has records and carries out the statistical processing regarding crime in schools all over Serbia. For the needs of this paper, the sample on which these data were collected was stratified in the following way:

- The data encompassed the period from 2007 to 2014 because the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia has started separated records on the number of criminal offences in schools with or without a school policeman since 2007;
- The data referred to 5 police directorates – Belgrade, Novi Sad, Pančevo, Smederevo and Jagodina. These police directorates were chosen because the largest number of criminal offences had been registered on their territory in the period from 2007 to 2014;
- The data on the number of criminal offences in schools which participate in the “School Policeman” program and in those who do not were examined in these police directorates.

The sample included 628 schools, out of which 285 were in the “School Policeman” program. The total of 180 police officers are engaged in these schools, bearing in mind that the same school policeman may be engaged in several schools situated in the imminent vicinity. A test method, the survey technique, was used to collect data on perception of school staff on the condition of safety in schools. The total of 572 respondents was surveyed, in schools with school policeman. Spatial distribution of schools in which survey was conducted is equivalent to the spatial distribution of data collected in the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia.

Bearing in mind that in schools with school policeman, which are covered by the sample, around 22,800 employees works, the interviewed population is a representative sample, with the confidence level of 95%, and the confidence interval of 0, 81. The spatial distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The spatial distribution of the respondents

City	No. of Schools	%	No. of respondents	%
Belgrade	4	21,1	179	31,3
Smederevo	7	36,8	111	19,4

30 May, D. C., Rice, C. & Minor, K. I. (2012). An Examination of School Resource Officers’ Attitudes Regarding Behavioral Issues among Students Receiving Special Education Services. *Current Issues in Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1–13; Ögülmüş, S., Pişkin, M. & Kumandaş, H. (2011). Does the school police project work? The effectiveness of the school police project in Ankara, Turkey. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 15, 2481–2486.

Novi Sad	2	10,5	144	25,2
Jagodina	3	15,8	73	12,7
Pančevo	3	15,8	65	11,4
Total	19	100,0	572	100,0

The survey was anonymous, and the respondents were given clear and unambiguous instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of similar studies conducted in several countries³¹. Questions related to the feeling of safety in school before and after the introduction of the school policeman, the relationship of the school policeman with school staff and the effectiveness of school policemen work.

The data collected were analyzed using statistical tests: 1) descriptive statistics; (2) χ^2 -test to determine differences between answers given by respondents from schools located in different police directorates and 3) two-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) of different groups to determine the influence of SPOs on changes in the scope of criminal offenses by year and by police directorate.

RESULTS

Two-factor analysis of variance of different groups was used to examine the influence of school policeman (the first factor) and years of occurrence (the second factor – time distribution) on the number of criminal offences done in schools. Time distribution of committing such offences encompassed the period from 2007 to 2014. The influence of interaction between activities of the school policeman and the year of occurrence was not statistically significant in relation to committing criminal offences in schools, $F(7.64) = 0.09$, $p = 0.99$. Statistically significant main influence of the school policeman was determined $F(1.64) = 6.98$, $p = 0.01$, and the influence is mean – partial eta squared = 0.1 (Cohen, 1988). Subsequent comparisons using Tukey's HSD test show that the observed years do not differ significantly. The main influence of the observed years $F(7.64) = 0.55$, $p = 0.80$ did not achieve statistical significance.

Two-factor analysis of variance of different groups was also used to examine the influence of the school policeman (the first factor) and the police directorate in which the offence was reported (the second factor – spatial distribution) on the number of criminal offences that happen in school. Spatial distribution of committing a criminal offence included 5 police directorates – Belgrade, Novi Sad, Pančevo, Smederevo and Jagodina. The influence of interaction between activities of the school policeman and the police directorate where the offence was reported was statistically significant in relation to committing criminal offences in schools, $F(4.70) = 26.91$, $p = 0.00$, at which the influence is considerable – partial eta squared = 0.61³². Statistically significant main influence of the school policeman $F(1.70) = 36.66$, $p = 0.00$ was also determined, and the influence is considerable – partial eta squared = 0.34³³.

31 Johnson, I. M. (1999). School violence: The effectiveness of a school resource officer program in a southern city. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 173–192; May, D. C., Rice, C. & Minor, K. I. (2012). An Examination of School Resource Officers' Attitudes Regarding Behavioral Issues among Students Receiving Special Education Services. *Current Issues in Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1–13; Ögülmüş, S., Pişkin, M. & Kumandaş, H. (2011). Does the school police project work? The effectiveness of the school police project in Ankara, Turkey. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 15, 2481–2486.

32 Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd edn.). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

33 Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd edn.). Hillsdale, New

There is statistically significant main influence for the police directorate in which the offence was reported $F(4.70) = 45.56$, $p = 0.00$, and the influence is also considerable – partial eta squared = 0, 72³⁴. Subsequent comparisons using Tukey’s HSD test show that the observed police directorates are significantly different. Namely, values of the test show that the police directorate of Belgrade and the police directorate of Novi Sad are significantly statistically different from other observed police directorates by the number of committed criminal offences in schools. At the same time, police directorates of Belgrade and Novi Sad do not differ from each other at the level of statistical significance. Likewise, police directorates of Pančevo, Smederevo and Jagodina are not statistically different from one another.

The results of processing answers to the question “Do you feel safer at school now or before the introduction of the school policeman?” collected during survey show that 91.1% of respondents stated that they feel safer after the school policeman had been engaged. The results of χ^2 - test used to compare answers to this question by the police directorates show that there is no statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(4, n = 572) = 20.59$, $p = 0.23$).

Likewise, answers of respondents to the question “Assess the influence of the school policeman on the safety in your school,” are distributed in the following way: “none” – 3.7%, “poor” – 8.9%, “good” – 57.5% and “very effective” – 29.8%. There is a statistically significant difference among answers of the respondents by different police directorates ($\chi^2(12, n = 572) = 84.58$, $p = 0.00$), at which Cramer’s quotient is $V = 0.11$ and points to the slight difference.

DISCUSSION

Figure 1 presents the total number of recorded criminal offences in schools in the period from 2007 to 2014 both with the school policeman program and without such arrangement.

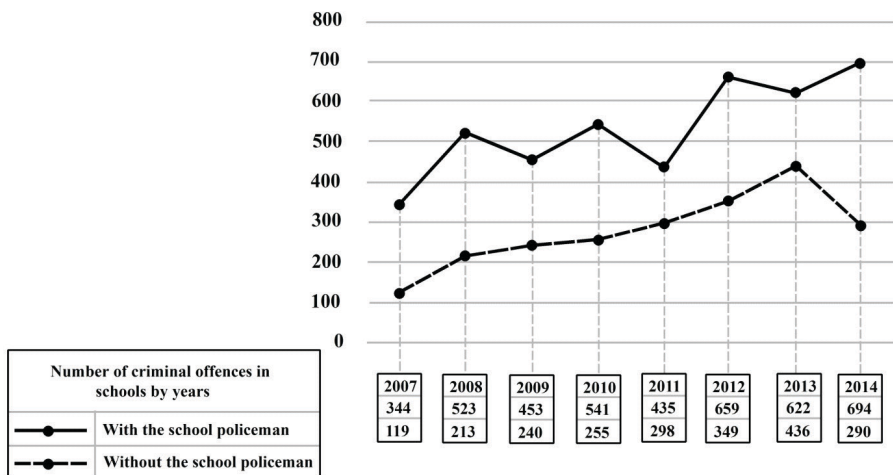


Figure 1. Number. of criminal offences in schools by years in five observed police directorates

Figure 1 clearly shows that the number of recorded criminal offences is much larger in schools in which the school policeman is engaged, than in those where there is no policeman. The first thing noted observing the results of two-factor analysis of variance of the number of criminal offences committed in schools in time distribution is the fact that there is no statistically significant interaction between the activities of the school policeman and the year of occurrence. At the same time, there is statistically significant main influence of activities of the school policeman. This, in fact, means that the number of criminal offences in school does not depend on the observed year or on the activity of the school policeman in the observed year. This change is influenced solely by the activity of the school policeman.

Figure 2 shows the total number of committed criminal offences in school by the police directorates in which these offences were recorded, namely in schools with a school policeman and in those without.

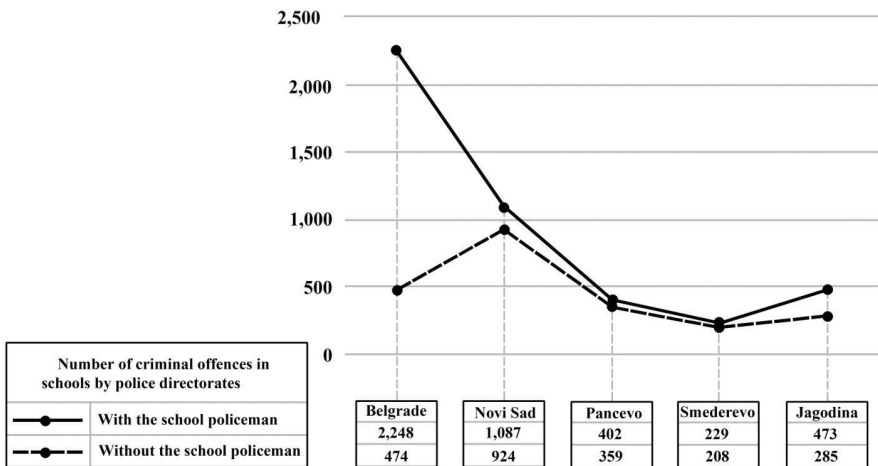


Figure 2. The number. of criminal offences in schools by police directorates in the period from 2007–2014

Figure 2 shows that the number of recorded criminal offences is larger in schools with the school policeman engaged than in those without the one. At the same time, there are clear differences between larger environments (Belgrade and Novi Sad) with a considerable number of such offences. At the same time, the difference in the number of criminal offences done in schools with the school policeman and those without one in Belgrade is much bigger. In other environments that difference is slight or not as much pronounced. Results of two-factor analysis of variance point to the statistically significant interaction of influence of the school policeman and the police directorate where the offence was recorded. This interaction can be explained if we examine the condition of crime by the listed police directorates for the observed period, as well as the analysis of responses given by responders who evaluated the school policeman work.

Figure 3 presents nearly identical trend of distribution of criminal offences by the police directorates such as the distribution of recorded offences in schools where the school policeman is engaged (Figure 2). That means that there is significance of interaction between the school policeman and the police directorate where the offence was recorded; in fact, it

shows that the state of crime in a police directorate is reflected in the safety in schools– the more crime in the territory of the police directorate, the more offences in schools and vice versa. This is confirmed by the result of χ^2 - test between the number of criminal offences in a school and the total number of criminal offences by the police directorates, which showed the existence of statistically significant correlation between them ($\chi^2(4, n = 524123) = 334.55$, $p = 0.000$), at which Cramer's coefficient is $V = 0.03$ and points to the average correlation. Therefore, the state of crime on the total territory of the police directorate is similar to the state in schools, and the image of crime in the police directorate is reflected on schools, which is partially a reason for high statistically significant interaction between the police directorate and activities of the school policeman.

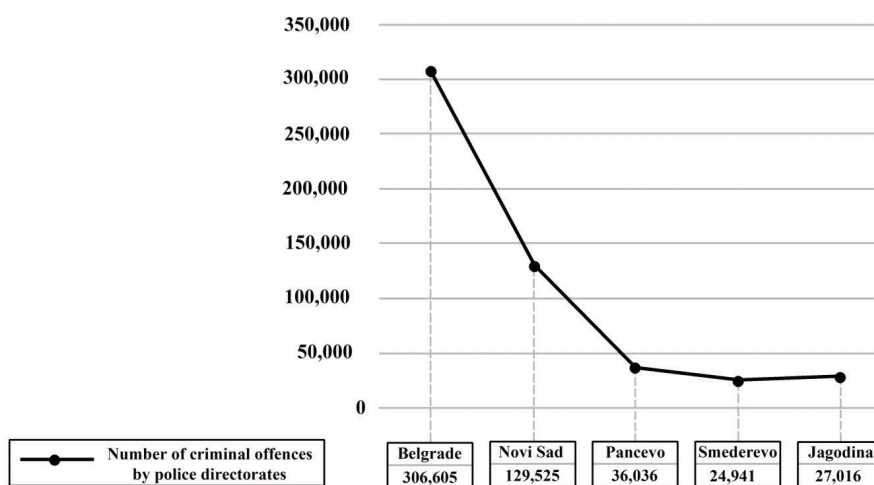


Figure 3. The total number of criminal offences in analyzed police directorates

On the other hand, that significance of interaction also marks the difference in quality and quantity of implemented activities of school policemen in certain police directorates, i.e. difference in the level of training, experience, motivation, dedication, ways of organising work of school policemen and the like. A small, but nevertheless statistically significant difference is shown in responses of the respondents from different police directorates on effectiveness of work of the school policeman. That difference is noted in responses of those from Belgrade and Novi Sad which are significantly statistically different from responses of those from other observed cities. At the same time, Belgrade and Novi Sad are not different on the level of statistical significance. Moreover, Pančevo, Smederevo and Jagodina are not different on the level of statistical significance. This shows that there are differences in quantity or quality of work of school policemen in large cities and smaller city environments. For example, as one school policeman is engaged in several schools, and has no official vehicle available, in large cities he loses a lot of time in public transport, on his way between schools, and has far less time to dedicate himself to solving safety problems in schools. In smaller cities, schools are relatively close to each other, and there is no such restricting factor. Moreover, in large cities schools have much more students, and the school policeman does not have the possibility to get to know them all. In smaller cities, the school policeman knows almost all students of one

school, especially those involved in deviant behaviour. Many such examples can be listed, and all of them may influence the quality and quantity of work of the school policeman.

On the basis of Cramer's coefficients, it can be concluded that there is a moderate influence of reflecting a crime in a police directorate on safety issues in the vicinity of schools and in schools themselves, and that there is a small, but statistically significant difference in quality and quantity of policemen's work by the police directorates. Resultant of these influences represents a big statistically significant interaction of influences of the school policeman and the police directorate where the offence was recorded. Values of F and partial eta squared point to the fact that the influence of the police directorate is stronger in interaction. However, since the main influence is statistically significant in both factors, it cannot be said that there is no significant influence of the school policeman on the number of criminal offences done in school regardless of interaction.

Statistically significant influence of activities of the school policeman on the change of number of criminal offences in their time and spatial distribution can be noted from previous considerations. Based on the above, we can use inductive method to conclude that activities of the school policeman influence the change in number of criminal offences in schools. Results of the analysis show that in schools with an active school policeman there is an increase of number of recorded criminal offences. There are similar results obtained in other studies that the increased presence of the police in schools does not lead to reduction of number of recorded criminal offences, but, on the contrary, certain types of crime are even rising³⁵.

If the obtained results of this and earlier studies are accepted, that the increased engagement of the police in schools leads to the increase of number of recorded criminal offences, the question we ask is: Why does it happen? There are two possible explanations for this increase. First of all, it can be concluded that the increase in number of recorded criminal offences is actually the consequence of the school policeman's activities that uncovers such offences, records them and solves them. Although at the first glance, without more profound understanding of the obtained results it seems that the state of crime is getting worse in schools in which there is a school policeman because the number of offences is increasing, it is actually the opposite – by revealing and solving these offences and recording them, the school policeman positively influences safety conditions in schools in which he is engaged. Such conclusion corresponds with the results of studies carried out in the USA³⁶ that states that official statistics obtained from the state bodies can mislead the researcher because they show the increase of crime. Also, the increase in number of criminal offences happens because delinquent activities were sanctioned by teachers and school administration which treated them as the breach of school rules in the past and now school policemen deal with these problems recognizing them as crime. These attitudes are in line with previous qualitative research³⁷, which determined that the presence of the police in schools leads to the fact that disciplinary sanctions are redefined as a problem of criminal law and not a social, psychological or educational problem.

Brown³⁸ provides another explanation which relates to the possibility that policemen in schools may manipulate with their reports on committed criminal offences to create a per-

35 Na, C. & Gottfredson, D. C. (2013). Police officers in schools: Effects on school crime and the processing of offending behaviors. *Justice Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 619–650; Stevenson, Q. W. (2011). *School resource officers and school incidents: A quantitative study*. (Doctoral dissertation), The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

36 Brown, B. (2006). Understanding and assessing school police officers: A conceptual and methodological comment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 34, No. 6, 591–604.

37 Kupchik, A. (2010). *Homeroom security: School discipline in an age of fear*: NYU Press

38 Brown, B. (2006). Understanding and assessing school police officers: A conceptual and methodological comment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 34, No. 6, 591–604.

ception in the public and their superiors that they do their job effectively, so as to justify additional financing of the crime prevention program in schools, as well as to show that their further engagement is necessary. Bearing that in mind, we should consider the fact that the effect of work of police officers in the Republic of Serbia is measured on the basis of number of recorded and solved criminal offences. In accordance with that, the increase of number of such offences in schools with the active police officer engaged can be interpreted as their attempt to exaggerate by presenting false numbers to show their effectiveness and successfully solved tasks given to them within the "School Policeman" program. The presented explanation can be denied by the results of the survey of the school staff on the effectiveness of school policemen. Similar research was carried out in Turkey³⁹, where 80.69% of the surveyed teachers stated that the school policeman does his job effectively, as well as in the research in the USA⁴⁰, where 76.5% of the surveyed school staff stated that SRO effectively influences the safety in schools. We should add results of the survey carried out for the need of this study which show that a very large number of surveyed respondents (87.3% cumulatively) declared that the school policeman does his duties effectively. This provides the foundation to reject the possibility of manipulation with the number of committed criminal offences because it cannot be applied for the Republic of Serbia.

Results of the survey clearly show that a vast majority of respondents feel safer after the introduction of the school policeman and that such an attitude is not statistically different in cities in which the survey was conducted. Together with objective effects confirmed by previous analyses, this shows that engagement of the school policeman subjectively influences participants in education process making them more secure about their own safety. As Jackson⁴¹ points out, the school policeman has completely fulfilled one of the most important tasks during his engagement in schools, and that is improvement of citizens' perception about the police.

Therefore, since both objective and subjective indicators of the effective policeman work have been proved, it can be concluded with the great reliability that the "School Policeman" program effectively influences the state of safety in schools.

CONCLUSION

Special police programs directed towards the increase of safety in schools have evolved from a few experimental programs in certain countries to permanent programs that have been carried out all over the world. These programs can certainly help in overcoming safety problems in schools, although they cannot be an individual part, but only a constitutive part of the overall police work undertaken outside schools. At the same time, police work must be a part of comprehensive efforts of the whole society on increasing the level of safety, especially safety in schools.

Results of the study show that the number of discovered criminal offences has increased several times, but not because of lack of safety, but because the school policeman was introduced. This points to the fact that the "School Policeman" program is a model which certainly has positive effects on the safety in schools because the activities of school policeman include

39 Ögülmüş, S., Pişkin, M. & Kumandaş, H. (2011). Does the school police project work? The effectiveness of the school police project in Ankara, Turkey. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 15, 2481–2486.

40 Johnson, I. M. (1999). School violence: The effectiveness of a school resource officer program in a southern city. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 173–192

41 Jackson, A. (2002). Police-school resource officers' and students' perception of the police and of-fending. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 631–650.

gathering evidence and solving cases which in school environment without him are qualified as a mere breaking of schools rules. Moreover, results of the study point out that the “School Policeman” program is a good model which, together with the function of protecting participants in educational process from crime and violence, has also the function of improving confidence of citizens in the police because of the increased level of safety in schools in students, school staff and parents.

Although the “School Policeman” program has positive effects, the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia has encountered a line of problems during its implementation. As a priority, it imposes the problem of economical implementation of the program. Therefore, the fact whether there is a real need for engaging policeman in a certain school should be carefully examined, i.e. the real indicators which should direct us to the need of engaging a school policeman should be determined. Does every school need a school policeman? Probably not. Therefore, it is necessary to define clear criteria on the basis of which police officers may be engaged in schools, i.e. parameters that would unambiguously define where the “School Policeman” program should be implemented.

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