

Measuring crime seriousness in Slovenia

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The unweighted crime index (the number of reported crimes per 100.000 in the population), is among the most widely used methods in studying crime rates and trends in particular areas, and for analysing inter-country differences. Due to inappropriate calculations (number of cases of different crimes are simply aggregated), the results of unweighted methods are biased. Using Thurstone's method, we explore how Slovenian residents perceive the seriousness of fifteen different criminal offences. Our research was conducted on a non-representative sample. However, we confirmed the validity of selected methods and results obtained with high correlations between calculated weights and criminal offences in the Slovenian Criminal Code, with high negative correlations of the weighed crime index with GDP in Slovenia, as well as high correlation between our results and results of the similar study conducted in Hong Kong in the year 2000. For each year in the period from 2004 to 2014, we calculated the weighted crime index. This is the first study in Slovenia, where crime rates, using crime weights corresponding to public perceptions of crime seriousness, were explored. Similar analyses for comparing crime rates between countries, should also be performed.

Key words: crime rates, inter-country comparisons, crime seriousness weights, Thurstone's method

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