Japanese juvenile delinquency

By Ken Y-N (February 9, 2011 at 16:51) · Filed under Polls, Society

This is a survey I wanted to split into two parts, but it didn’t really lend itself to it, so instead here is a big survey from the Cabinet Office Japan into juvenile delinquency.

Demographics

Between the 25th of November and the 5th of December 2010, 3,000 members of the general public selected at random from resident registers were approached for face-to-face interviews. 1,886 people, or 62.9% of the sample, agreed to do so. 54.5% of the sample were female, 9.9% in their twenties, 16.3% in their thirties, 16.1% in their forties, 16.4% in their fifties, 22.1% in their sixties, and 19.1% aged seventy or older.

I must admit to not having seen much in the way of delinquency. I don’t think kids hanging out outside convenience stores really is an issue, and although I occasionally hear noisy motorcycle gangs, I don’t associate it with delinquency, just criminality and ineffective policing.

Research results

Q1: Do you feel that compared to five years ago, the number of serious incidents involving juveniles has increased or decreased? (Sample size=1,886)
### Q2: What kinds of juvenile delinquency do you think has increased in the last five years? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased significantly</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased to some degree</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not changed</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased to some degree</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased significantly</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lack of self-control causing outbursts: 62.5%
Brutality, violence: 47.6%
Age group has got younger: 42.3%
Unclear motivations: 31.5%
Rash motives such as curiosity, thrill-seeking: 25.9%
Gang-based: 24.4%
Coercion by others: 11.8%
Nothing has increased: 3.2%
Other: 0.7%
Don’t know: 3.2%

### Q3: What kinds of juveniles do you think are becoming delinquent? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles growing up with guardians not interested in their education, upbringing</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles who feel isolated at both home and school</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles who have been abused by their guardians, etc</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles who don’t appear to have any problems</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles with problems with their relationships with friends</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles who don’t fit in at school</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles growing up with guardians too strict with their education, upbringing</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles who have a history of hooliganism, crime</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q4: What kinds of juvenile delinquency do you think have been an actual problem around you? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of bicycles, motorcycles</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoplifting</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking, drinking, loitering about outside, late at night</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lashing out from trivial sparks</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purse–snatching by bicycle, motorcycle riders</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Biker gangs (bosozoku) 8.6%
Domestic violence 5.2%
Violence in schools 4.4%
Stimulant, cannabis, ecstasy, glue sniffing, other drug abuse 4.1%
Stabbing incidents 3.8%
Robbery, intimidation 3.6%
Carrying knives 3.3%
Child prostitution, other sexual activity 2.9%
Other 0.8%
Nothing in particular 44.3%
Don’t know 4.5%

Q5: What kinds of juvenile delinquency do you think are a problem in wider society? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

Bullying 53.0%
Lashing out from trivial sparks 48.8%
Stabbing incidents 46.4%
Stimulants, cannabis, ecstasy, glue sniffing, other drug abuse 42.4%
Shoplifting 29.0%
Smoking, drinking, loitering about outside, late at night 28.6%
Domestic violence 27.1%
Child prostitution, other sexual activity 23.6%
Purse-snatching by bicycle, motorcycle riders 23.3%
Robbery, intimidation 22.3%
Violence in schools 17.9%
Carrying knives 16.9%
Biker gangs (bosozoku) 16.8%
Theft of bicycles, motorcycles 16.3%
Other 1.3%
Nothing in particular 2.1%
Don’t know 2.8%

Q6: What do you think are the problem with the character, nature of today’s juveniles? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

No patience, cannot control their own emotions 72.5%
Cannot properly communicate with others 51.2%
Self-centered, don’t or can’t understand the other person’s position of feelings 50.8%
Lack of societal ethics, morals 39.1%
Emotional immaturity 37.5%
Strong emotional dependence 36.1%
No purpose in life, no goals 33.1%
Q7: What elements of the societal environment do you think are problems with regards to juvenile delinquency? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

- With the spread of mobile phones, internet, etc, can easily meet up with strangers: 63.4%
- With the spread of mobile phones, internet, etc, can easily obtain violent, sexual, suicide-related information: 47.3%
- Easy to obtain books, videos on violent, sexual subjects: 43.5%
- Karaoke halls, game arcades, internet cafes, etc are open until late at night: 40.1%
- With the spread of mobile phones, internet, etc, it becomes harder to discover who juveniles are associating with, getting up to: 38.9%
- Can easily obtain stimulants, cannabis, ecstasy, glue for sniffering, other drugs: 31.8%
- Lots of karaoke halls, game arcades, internet cafes, etc: 28.4%
- Few facilities, locations for juveniles to play, do sports: 22.4%
- Can easily obtain knives: 20.2%
- Inundation of telephone dating clubs, one-on-one chat lines: 16.8%
- Lots of tobacco, alcohol vending machines: 16.1%
- Supermarket, etc, surveillance is weak: 5.9%
- Other: 1.1%
- Nothing in particular: 2.1%
- Don’t know: 2.5%

Q8: What societal trends do you think are problems with regards to juvenile delinquency? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

- Lack of interest in other children, weakening of local bonds: 57.4%
- Morals standards of society on the whole have dropped: 48.5%
- Society on the whole has lost its spiritual richness, considerate nature: 42.8%
- Insufficient time for children and guardians to spend together in society on the whole: 37.9%
- A society where it is difficult for juveniles to have dreams, hopes: 37.0%
- Deterioration of child-rearing abilities: 36.1%
- Prolonging of reliance on guardians, young people being slow to stand on their own two feet: 25.9%
- Widening of disparity within society: 23.6%
- Society on the whole spoiling children: 21.5%
Sexualisation of young teens, pre-teens 16.5%
Tendency to attach too much importance to school background 15.1%
Other 0.7%
Nothing in particular 0.6%
Don’t know 2.4%

Q9: If you were to see an unknown juvenile smoking, see a group of juveniles hanging out in a park late at night, etc, what would you do? (Sample size=1,886)

Tell them off 11.9%
Want to tell them off, but pretend I didn’t see them (to SQ) 49.2%
Not think it was worth telling them off, so overlook the matter 12.2%
Inform the police 17.9%
Inform the school 4.3%
Other 1.3%
Don’t know 3.1%

Q9SQ: Why would you pretend you didn’t see them? (Sample size=928, multiple answer)

Worried that they’d attack me 70.9%
They wouldn’t listen if I told them off 18.3%
Too much bother to tell them off 4.3%
They are other people’s children, so nothing to do with me 2.6%
Someone else will tell them off 2.0%
Other 1.5%
Don’t know 0.3%

Q10: Who has the biggest role in stopping juvenile delinquency? (Sample size=1,886)

Family 76.4%
Local society 12.9%
Police, other official organisations 5.2%
Schools 3.7%
Other 0.1%
Don’t know 1.7%

Q11: In order to try to prevent juvenile delinquency, what sorts of things do you think guardians, etc should do within the family unit? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

Increase time spent talking, etc, with children 67.1%
Praise when praise is needed, scold when scolding is needed 65.9%
Listen to the child’s feelings, words 46.7%
Be aware of the responsibilities as a parent of child-rearing 44.0%
Get all the family to cooperate in child-rearing 40.8%
Don’t bottle up child-rearing problems, but instead discuss with others 33.6%
Have consistent behaviour when dealing with the child 29.9%
Set rules for the child’s use of the internet, mobile phones 27.9%
Understand the characteristics of children’s bodies, minds 19.7%
Try not to make the principles of child-rearing based around academic achievement 17.7%
Other 0.9%
Nothing in particular 0.2%
Don’t know 1.4%

Q12: In order to try to prevent juvenile delinquency, what sorts of things do you think schools should do? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

Deal firmly with children 51.9%
Have closer contact with families 39.0%
Understand each and every child 38.9%
Sufficient education for the spirit, such as moral education 36.6%
Raise the leadership ability of those involved in student guidance, etc 34.6%
Establish specialists in schools who can talk with children about their worries, etc 28.0%
Hold school events when children can interact with local residents 27.8%
Cooperate, coordinate with police, child consultation centres, social welfare functions, etc 27.5%
Promote activities to experience volunteering and other social services, the natural environment, jobseeking, etc 26.0%
Cooperate, coordinate with PTA, probation officers, other local people 21.6%
Education such as anti-delinquency lessons 16.7%
Deal more strictly with delinquent children 16.1%
Other 1.1%
Nothing in particular 1.1%
Don’t know 3.0%

Q13: In order to try to prevent juvenile delinquency, what sorts of things do you think the residents of the local community should do? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

Scold other people’s children when they are naughty 50.2%
Regularly greet the local children 46.9%
Get to know the neighbours, interact with fellow parents and families 45.8%
Make opportunities for children’s play, sports, other experiences 29.9%
Get interested in the school by participating in school activities, etc 26.4%
Carry out activities to clean up the local environment by working to eliminate pornographic advertising, vending machines, etc 23.4%
Cooperate with government agencies to create local support systems 22.6%
Participate in or cooperate with volunteer activities regarding healthy child-rearing 20.9%
Participate in local child-related events, gatherings 16.1%
Other 0.4%
Nothing in particular 2.8%
Don’t know 2.7%

Q14: When juveniles are arrested for delinquency, many of their crimes are not enough to warrant being sent to a reformatory, but instead they remain in the community. To help them get back onto the right track, what do you think is necessary? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

Have locals who they can discuss problems with 52.6%
Make them lead a regular lifestyle 43.4%
Get them employed, make them attend school regularly 43.1%
Get the understanding of the locals regarding their recovery, return to society 42.5%
Get them to review how they were delinquent, hear how victims feel, and make them think about victims’ feelings 40.7%
Give them an age-appropriate degree of social responsibility 37.4%
Get them to review how they were delinquent, and think about their problematic behaviour 35.9%
Give them various experiences like community service, widen their field of vision 30.3%
Ensure they stay away from bad people 24.5%
Strict guidance if they appear to be reoffending 20.9%
Make them meet their victims and directly apologise 20.9%
Other 1.1%
Don’t know 3.3%

Q15: In order to prevent juvenile delinquency, what sorts of measures would you like to see the police, other governmental organs taking? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

Stronger crackdowns to clean up the internet, such as on dating sites or others harmful to children 51.7%
Stronger guidance to juveniles encountered smoking, drinking, loitering at night, etc 48.3%
Promote the creation of scheme for families, schools, local residents to create a society where juveniles will not fall into delinquency 44.8%
Strengthen ongoing support for helping juvenile delinquents get back on their feet through creating places for them to hang out, support in job seeking, education, etc 40.6%
Consultations with troubled juveniles, their guardians 39.6%
Stronger crackdowns on juvenile crime 36.8%
Stronger crackdowns to clean up the local area, such as on adult entertainment businesses 31.3%
Strengthen ongoing support for juvenile victims of crime through home visits, counseling, etc 30.2%
Promote to the general public the importance of preventing juvenile delinquency, etc 15.0%
helping juvenile delinquents get back on their feet

Strengthen educational activities to instil social norms in juveniles, such as proactively hold juvenile delinquency prevention classes, etc

Other

Nothing in particular

Don’t know

Q16: Regarding activities that the police, other official organisations carry out to prevent juvenile delinquency, what sorts of activities would you personally want to participate in? (Sample size=1,886, multiple answer)

Juvenile street cleaning, graffiti removal

Juvenile sports activities

Outreach to juveniles at nighttimes in downtown areas, etc

Juvenile study support

Juvenile cooking classes

Keeping in touch with, talking to juveniles on an individual basis

Don’t have time to participate

Don’t want to participate

Other

Don’t know

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The latest figures I can find are to 2008, but it appears that juvenile crime has been *decreasing* since a peak in 2002, and much faster than any demographic shift could explain. I'm not surprised about the perception of rising crime – it's fed by the media. Things appear to have been much worse about twenty or so years ago.


Of course, these are events as recorded by police, which will under-report the true figures. However, I don't know of any reason why this measure should show an artificial fall over time in juvenile delinquency measures, so it does look as if things aren't as bad as people think. This is par for the course across many countries – a persistent belief that crime is worse now than before, particularly when it comes to children being victims or criminals.