

Research Department Report 63
Research on Attitudes and Values of Offenders and Juvenile Delinquents

Outline

The purpose of this report is to understand the various attitudes and values held by offenders and juvenile delinquents, as well as to identify risk factors for crime and delinquency and needs for rehabilitation. This report is an analysis of the fifth survey conducted in 2021 following four surveys of 1990, 1998, 2005, and 2011 by the Research and Training Institute. Although the previous surveys mainly targeted juvenile classification home inmates ("juvenile inmates"), the latest survey added prisoners in penal institutions and offenders/delinquents under probation/parole so as to expand the target into the following four groups for analysis: the prisoners in penal institutions, the offenders under probation/parole, the delinquents under probation/parole, and the juvenile inmates. We also compare the latest survey with the previous ones, as well as by criminal tendency, categorized into three levels. In this Outline, "offenders" refer to prisoners in penal institutions and probationers/parolees aged 20 or older, and "juvenile delinquents" refer to juvenile classification home inmates ("juvenile inmates") and probationers/parolees aged under 20.

1. Attitudes and values of offenders and juvenile delinquents

(1) *Family life*

The proportion of those who rated their family life as "satisfied" is higher for the juvenile delinquents than the offenders. Regarding the reasons for dissatisfaction, "Family has a low income" ranks the highest for the offenders, whereas "Parent(s) do not understand me" and "There are disputes in the family" rank the highest for the juvenile delinquents.

Compared to the past surveys for the juvenile inmates, the proportion of those who rated their family life as "satisfied" has increased, and the proportions of "neutral" and "dissatisfied" have decreased. Regarding the reasons for dissatisfaction, "Family has a low income" changed from an upward to a downward trend, while "Parent(s) do not understand me" and "There are disputes in the family" changed from a downward to an upward trend.

(2) *Friendship quality*

Approximately 80% of the juvenile delinquents rated their friendship quality as "satisfied", which is higher than the offenders. Regarding the reasons for dissatisfaction among the four groups, "I don't have like-minded friends" ranks the highest for all the groups, followed by "We can't confide in each other" for offenders, and "They don't understand me" for juvenile inmates. For the juvenile probationers/parolees, "We can't confide in each other" also ranks the highest.

The latest survey for juvenile inmates shows a growing proportion of those rating their friendship quality as "satisfied", and a diminishing proportion of those answering "neutral" and "dissatisfied". Regarding the reasons for dissatisfaction, "I don't have like-minded friends" ranks the highest, whereas "We can't confide in each other," the highest ranking answer in the 2011 survey, fell by approximately half.

(3) *Relationship with surrounding people*

In the list of people the respondents rated to be important in their daily interactions, "same-sex friends" ranks the highest. The offenders have a higher proportion of those who rated "no one" and they also selected fewer options when asked to rate the important people.

For the latest survey on juvenile inmates, the percentage of "siblings" rated as the person easy to talk to decreased by more than 10 percentage points. The proportions of "mother" rated as the person they obey and aspire to be have an upward trend.

(4) *School life*

More than half of the offenders and the juvenile delinquents reported that they had not been able to understand their schoolwork, and more than 40% reported that they had been unmotivated to attend school, showing many of the respondents were maladapted to school. The offenders have lower proportions of "I was understood by my teacher(s)" and "I was understood by my classmate(s)", whereas a higher proportion of the juvenile delinquents selected these options, showing they have a better perception of interpersonal relationships in school.

Compared to the 2011 survey, the latest survey for juvenile inmates has a higher proportion of "I was understood by my teacher(s)", and a lower proportion of "I had a bad reputation among students and teachers".

(5) *Work*

Roughly 80% of the offenders and the juvenile delinquents expressed positive attitudes toward independence and obtaining certifications or licenses. The prisoners, however, have a higher proportion of "I prefer a light-duty job than a heavy-duty one" and "Interpersonal relationships in the workplace are troublesome." In contrast, the trend for juvenile delinquents is different from the offenders in that a higher proportion answered, "People can obtain a satisfactory position and income with effort." The respondents unemployed at the time of the offense are more avoidant of interpersonal relationships at the workplace than ones employed.

Compared to the 2011 survey on juvenile inmates, the latest survey displays a higher proportion for "I need not work unless I get the job I want."

(6) *Local community*

The proportion of those who often participated in community events like festivals is higher for the juvenile delinquents than the offenders. Many offenders and juvenile delinquents reported, "I want to do something that makes people in the community happy."

(7) *Society*

More than 40% of the juvenile delinquents rated society as "satisfied," which is higher than the offenders. Regarding the reasons for dissatisfaction, "There is a wide gap between the rich and the poor" and "Hard work doesn't pay off" rank the highest for the offenders, whereas "Society doesn't reflect opinions of our generation (the young)" ranks the highest for the juvenile delinquents.

The proportion of satisfaction in the latest survey for juvenile inmates has an upward trend.

(8) *Values*

The proportion of those who reported, "I prefer humorous people to earnest people" is higher for the juvenile delinquents than the offenders. The prisoners have a tendency to value their duties and humanity, as well as prioritize their desires at the same time, while the probationers/parolees at the age of 20 and older have a tendency to not do anything despite wanting to do something for the people around them. The juvenile inmates have positive attitudes toward violence and egoistic behavior, while the juvenile probationers/parolees have positive attitudes toward hedonistic behavior.

Compared to the previous surveys for juvenile inmates, the proportions of "Men should work outside and women stay home to care for the family," and "In some cases, people may resort to force to defeat bad guys" have a downward trend, whereas the proportions of "People should enjoy daily life, not work hard," and "People should take action for the sake of their own desires than for that of society " changed from a downward to an upward trend.

(9) *Feelings*

The offenders have higher proportions of "I am left behind" and "I have a weak will." The prisoners have higher proportions of "I don't trust others" and "Money is all you can count on in the world." Meanwhile, the juvenile delinquents have lower proportions of these items as a whole, with a higher proportion of "My effort is gradually paying off."

Compared to the previous surveys for juvenile inmates, the proportions of options with negative attitudes toward themselves and society have a downward trend, and the proportions of ones with positive attitudes such as "I'm relied on" and "My effort is paying off" have an upward trend.

(10) *Crime and delinquency*

We asked the respondents what they believe leads people to commit a crime or delinquency. Both the offenders and juvenile delinquents rate "themselves" as the cause, and a higher proportion of juvenile delinquents answer "friends/peers" than the offenders. Regarding the attitudes toward offenders/delinquents, most respondents agree with the idea of "People should generously guide offenders/delinquents," while a relatively high proportion of juvenile probationers/parolees agree with the idea of "People should severely punish

offenders/delinquents."

In the latest survey, a growing proportion of juvenile inmates select "themselves" as the cause of crime or delinquency. Regarding the attitudes toward offenders/delinquents, most respondents agree with the idea of "People should generously guide offenders/delinquents," while the proportion in agreement with the idea of "It's good to severely punish offenders/delinquents" has an upward trend.

(11) *Offenders/delinquents*

Regarding a variety of offenders/delinquents such as drug abusers and *boryokudan* (criminal organization) members, a higher proportion of offenders answered, "I can understand their feelings" compared to the juvenile delinquents. Comparing the types of crimes committed by the offenders, property and sexual offenders are sympathetic to the same-type offenders/delinquents, whereas violent and drug offenders are sympathetic not only to the same-type offenders but also to different-type ones.

2. Attitudes toward their crime/delinquency

(1) *Causes of crime/delinquency by risk category*

We asked the respondents what they considered to be the possible cause of them committing an offense/delinquency from among a list of possible causes categorized into nine risk factors: family, school, work, friendship, substance abuse, leisure/recreation, daily habits, personality, and attitudes. Many offenders acknowledged their mental factors such as attitudes were linked to their offense, whereas many juvenile delinquents recognized not only their mental factors but environmental and behavioral factors such as friendship, daily habits, and leisure/recreation to be linked to their delinquency. The group with more advanced criminal tendencies acknowledged more risk factors as the causes. Among the group with less advanced criminal tendencies, the offenders acknowledged causes related to consumption of time and/or money such as work, leisure/recreation, and daily habits were linked to their offense/delinquency, while the delinquents tended not to acknowledge ones related to deviant lifestyles such as friendship, daily habits, and attitudes.

(2) *Sentence/protective measure and attitudes during/after*

Regarding the latest sentence/protective measure rendered, the offenders and the juvenile delinquents rated the community treatment as "light" and the institutional treatment as "heavy." In particular, many juvenile delinquents rated the institutional treatment as "heavy." Regarding the attitudes during/after the latest sentence/protective measure, a high proportion of offenders who were sentenced to imprisonment without suspension of sentence answered, "I was making an effort to rehabilitate myself." The delinquents who were referred to juvenile training school have a lower proportion of those who answered, "I was making an effort to rehabilitate myself"

than ones who were placed under probation. In general, offenders/delinquents with a more advanced criminal tendency have a lower proportion of those who answered, "I was making an effort to rehabilitate myself."

(3) *How the sentence/protective measures worked*

The proportion of the respondents who acknowledge that sentence/protective measures worked for them is higher for the delinquents than the offenders. The offenders with a record of juvenile training school or imprisonment have higher proportions of those who answered that previous sentence/protective measures made them "realize the importance of family and my role in the family," "improved patience," "improved health/physical fitness," and "came to care about others' feelings." The same applies to the delinquents with a record of a juvenile training school. For the person who had an impact, "mother" or "father" rank the highest for both the offenders and the delinquents.

(4) *Factors that led to re-offense/delinquency*

When respondents identified the reason for re-offense/delinquency, the highest response was "I could not control my feelings and attitudes." Many offenders acknowledge that mental factors such as their personality and attitudes are linked to their re-offense, whereas many delinquents acknowledge that environmental factors such as daily habits, friendship, and leisure/recreation, as well as behavioral factors, are linked to their re-delinquency.

(5) *Deterrence of crime/delinquency*

Approximately 78%-92% of both the offenders and delinquents rated "parent(s)," "partner," "child(ren)," and "family including sibling(s)" as stoppers against crime/delinquency, showing that family is an important factor to deter crime/delinquency. The offenders with a more advanced criminal tendency, however, have a high proportion of "nothing," which suggests their worse situations.

(6) *Important factors for the future*

For the offenders, "I should lead an orderly life" and "I won't waste money" rank the highest in the list of important factors for the future while "I should lead an orderly life" and "I should keep up school/work with perfect attendance" are the highest for the juveniles. The juvenile inmates have a higher proportion of "I should apologize to a victim(s)" than the other three groups.

(7) *Life satisfaction*

The proportion of those who rated their life as "satisfied" is higher for the juvenile delinquents than the offenders, and the proportion of "dissatisfied" is higher for the prisoners. In both groups, the respondents under community treatment have higher proportions of satisfaction than those under institutional treatment.

(8) *Necessary factors for future life and rehabilitation*

There are many comments related to problems, attitudes, life, work, and interpersonal relationships in a free-description section of the questionnaire on what is necessary for future life and rehabilitation. Many offenders and juvenile delinquents wrote matters related to their attitudes such as acting with self-discipline and reflecting on themselves. In addition, many offenders wrote about family, work, substance, life, and assistance, whereas many juvenile offenders, particularly the juvenile inmates, wrote they were reflecting on themselves and trying to work on themselves, and we also find that they have a tendency to focus on future friendships.

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