

Research Department Report 67

The Sixth National Crime Victimization Survey in Japan

Abstract

Part I. Objectives and Summary of the National Crime Victimization Survey

- Objectives of the National Crime Victimization Survey

As a prerequisite for effective public safety measures, it is necessary to accurately grasp the situation of the occurrence of crimes, and to measure unreported crimes (“dark figure of crime”). Accordingly, the objectives of the National Crime Victimization Survey are: (i) to estimate the types and number of unreported crimes; (ii) to obtain detailed information concerning crime victims and victimization; (iii) to collect data on crime trends by using fixed-point monitoring; (iv) to clarify the perception of public safety; and (v) to provide information on crime victimization to related organizations and citizens.

- Summary of the Sixth National Crime Victimization Survey

The sample of the Sixth National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) was chosen from 6,916 males and females (3,458 persons each) aged 16 or over (originally planned to be chosen from 7,000 males and females, but taking into account the damage caused by the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake, Ishikawa Prefecture was excluded from the survey area) by using the two-stage stratified random sampling. Between January 19 and February 29, 2024, survey staff visited subjects’ homes, conducted interviews and recorded their responses. If the subjects requested, they were able to answer online, and a self-administered questionnaire (questionnaire sheets were filled out by subjects and collected by survey staff, or submitted by post or online) was used for the survey on stalking (willful and repeated following, etc. (including mail stalking) due to unwanted romantic feelings), domestic violence (violence or physical abuse from close relatives such as spouses or domestic partners), child abuse (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and psychological abuse of children 17 years and under by their guardians), and sexual incidents. The number (rate) of valid respondents was 4,179 persons (60.4%) for the interview survey and 4,103 persons (59.3%) for the survey using the self-administered questionnaire.

The major change from the fifth NCVS (2019) to the sixth NCVS (2024) was that theft of cars, attempted burglary, and internet auction fraud were removed from the survey, whereas road rage incidents and incidents of slander, libel, and personal information spread on the internet were newly added. In addition, a new question asking about the impact of the spread of COVID-19 was

added to the survey on stalking, domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual incidents.

The survey results were analyzed by classifying the types of crime victimization into three categories: household victimization, personal victimization and fraud victimization. The respondents' residential area, occupational position and type of residence were classified into the following categories for analysis.

Residential area was classified into three categories based on the city size: "government-designated major city" (ordinance-designated cities and special wards (Tokyo 23 wards)), "municipality with a population of 100,000 or more" (municipalities with a population of 100,000 or more excluding "government-designated major city") and "municipality with a population of less than 100,000."

Occupational position was classified into five categories: "worker" ("full-time worker / self-employed / government worker" and "part-time worker / dispatched worker"), "homemaker," "unemployed / retired" ("job seeker (unemployed) / retired, disabled, etc. / unemployed (excluding former "unemployed / retired" definitions and "homemaker"), "student" and "other" (in the case of multiple responses, the responses were sorted into a single answer according to the following priority: (i) full-time worker / self-employed / government worker, (ii) student, (iii) part-time worker / dispatched worker, (iv) homemaker, (v) job seeker (unemployed) , (vi) retired, disabled, etc., and (vii) unemployed (other than (iv), (v), (vi))).

Type of residence was classified into three categories: "apartment" ("flat / apartment / maisonette" and "terraced house / row house" (houses with adjacent walls attached to each other)), "detached house" and "other."

- Crime victimization

People who experienced any type of overall crime victimization (defined as "household victimization" and "personal victimization (excluding child abuse)") accounted for 24.9% of all respondents over the past five years and for 11.5% in 2023. The overall crime victimization rate over the five-year period has been on a declining trend since the second NCVS (2004), however there was a slight rise in the sixth NCVS (2024 (24.9%)) compared to the fifth NCVS (2019 (23.8%)).

- Factors affecting victimization

Logistic regression analysis was conducted in order to investigate how people's attributes, etc. are related to whether they are victimized by crimes. Among factors adopted for analysis on overall victimization, city size, type of residence, number of household members, age group, occupational position, and availability of security equipment were significant. The victimization rate was significantly higher among those living in a "municipality with a population of 100,000 or more" than a "municipality with a population of less than 100,000," in a "detached house" than an

“apartment,” among those who were a “two-or-three person household” or “four-or-more person household” than a “single-person household,” “39 years and under” or “40-59 years of age” than “60 years and above,” a “worker” than a “homemaker,” “unemployed” or “retired” and among those who had “security equipment available” than those who had “no security equipment.”

- Worries about crime

Compared to the results of past surveys on worries about crime in the respondents’ residential areas, there were no major changes between the fifth NCVS (2019) and the sixth NCVS (2024).

- Public perception of safety in Japan

Compared to the results of past surveys on the public perception of safety in Japan, the percentage of respondents who consider Japan to be safe had consistently risen, while the percentage of those who consider Japan to be unsafe had consistently declined until the fifth NCVS (2019). However, in the sixth NCVS (2024), the percentage of respondents who consider Japan to be safe declined, while the percentage of those who consider Japan to be unsafe rose.

- Comparison between victimization rate and number of reported cases

As regards the seven types of crime victimization (theft from cars, theft of motorcycles, theft of bicycles, burglary, robbery, assaults and threats and sexual incidents), the figures show that there are not many differences in the trends displayed between the victimization rates based on the results of past surveys and the number of reported cases within the corresponding period.

Part II. Crime Victimization

- Household victimization

Household victimization is roughly divided into two categories: vehicle-related victimization (theft from cars, car vandalism, theft of motorcycles, theft of bicycles, and road rage incidents) and burglary. In the category of household victimization, the victimization rate was the highest for road rage incidents (16.5%), followed by theft of bicycles and car vandalism in the past five years.

As regards vehicle-related victimization, for theft of bicycles and road rage incidents, the percentage of respondents who experienced those victimization was significantly higher among those living in a “municipality with a population of 100,000 or more,” while for theft of bicycles, the percentage of respondents who experienced that victimization was significantly lower among those living in a “municipality with a population of less than 100,000 people” and for road rage incidents, the percentage of respondents who experienced that victimization was significantly lower among those living in a “government-designated major city.” The percentage of respondents who experienced car vandalism and theft of bicycles was significantly higher among those living in an “apartment” and significantly lower among those living in a “detached house.” The percentage of respondents who experienced road rage incidents was significantly higher among

those who were a “four-person household” and significantly lower among those who were a “single-person household” and a “two-person household.” As regards burglary victimization, the percentage of respondents who experienced burglary was significantly lower among those living in an “apartment.”

The percentage of respondents who reported theft of motorcycles to the police was the highest, followed by theft of bicycles and theft from cars. This shows that victims of theft were more likely to report their victimization than other types of household victimization. The percentage of respondents who reported road rage incidents to the police, which had the highest victimization rate, was the lowest (2.2%) among household victimization.

- Personal victimization

In the category of personal victimization (robbery, theft of personal property (other than theft of bicycles, theft of motorcycles, theft from cars, burglary and robbery), assaults and threats, incidents of slander, libel and personal information spread on the internet, stalking, domestic violence, child abuse and sexual incidents), the victimization rate was the highest for child abuse (2.9%) in the past five years (until 18 years of age for child abuse).

By type of victimization, the victimization rate of incidents of slander, libel and personal information spread on the internet was significantly higher for “39 years and under,” and significantly lower for “60 years and above.” The victimization rate of stalking was significantly higher for “female,” “39 years and under,” “single (unmarried)” and “married but living apart,” and significantly lower for “60 years and above” and “married.” The victimization rate of domestic violence was significantly higher for “female” and “40-59 years of age,” and significantly lower for “60 years and above.” The victimization rate of child abuse was significantly higher for “female,” “39 years and under” and “40-59 years of age,” and significantly lower for “60 years and above.” The victimization rate of sexual incidents was significantly higher for “female,” “39 years and under” and “living together as a couple (but unmarried),” and significantly lower for “40-59 years of age,” “60 years and above” and “married.”

As regards the locations of victimization, for robbery, theft of personal property, assaults and threats, domestic violence and child abuse, over 70% of those victimization occurred “at your home / residence,” “near your own home / residence” and “elsewhere in the city or local area,” with the exception of victimization by stalking and sexual incidents, which took place most frequently “at work.”

For all types of personal victimization (excluding child abuse), the number of respondents who did not report their victimization to the police was larger than those who did. For child abuse, the most common response was “nobody” (they did not tell anyone about their victimization), and the

percentage of respondents who answered “nobody” was over 60%.

- **Victimization by fraud or by identity theft**

In the category of victimization by fraud (credit card, etc. (credit card, debit card, electronic payment and QR code payment) abuse, special fraud and consumer fraud) or by identity theft, the victimization rate of “credit card, etc. abuse” was the highest (6.5%) in the past five years, followed by consumer fraud and identity theft.

By type of victimization, the victimization rate of “credit card, etc. abuse” was significantly higher for “worker,” and significantly lower for “homemaker.” The victimization rate of attempted special fraud (victimization of phone, email or internet fraud) was significantly higher for “male,” “40-59 years of age” and “worker,” and significantly lower for “60 years and above,” “homemaker,” “unemployed / retired” and “student.” The victimization rate of special fraud was significantly higher for “male” and “60 years and above,” and there were no victims for “40-59 years of age.”

For all types of “victimization by fraud or by identity theft,” the percentage of respondents who reported their victimization to the police was the highest for special fraud (57.1%), and less than 20% for other types of victimization by fraud or by identity theft.

Part III. Reasons for reporting or not reporting crime victimization to the police

- **Reasons for reporting crime victimization to the police**

Among victims of many types of crimes, the most frequently cited reasons for reporting to the police were “to prevent further crimes” and “to punish the offender (catch / find offender),” and for victimization of theft such as theft from cars and “victimization by fraud or by identity theft,” the major reasons for reporting to the police were “to recover property” and “to receive reimbursement from the offender.” Among household victimization and personal victimization, for road rage incidents, robbery, assaults and threats, stalking and domestic violence, several respondents cited “needed help after incident” as the reason.

- **Reasons for not reporting crime victimization to the police**

Among victims of most types of crimes, the most frequently cited reason for not reporting to the police was “minor / unsuccessful crime, small / no loss.” The most frequently cited reason for not reporting “abuse of credit card, etc.” to the police was “notified the card company (and the card company handled the problem).” As reasons for not reporting to the police, most of the robbery, stalking and domestic violence victims “resolved it myself (knew the offender),” and most child abuse victims responded “I did not know what to do,” or “I thought nobody would do anything about it.”

Part IV. Public Perception of Safety and Opinions about Punishment

The survey on people’s worries about crime in their residential areas focused on the fear of

walking alone after dark in the category of personal victimization and the fear of being burglarized in the category of household victimization. According to the results of logistic regression analysis, the proportion of respondents who feared walking alone after dark was significantly higher among those living in a “municipality with a population of less than 100,000 people” than a “government-designated major city,” and in a “detached house” than an “apartment,” among those who were a “single-person household” than a “two-or-three person household,” “female” than “male,” “39 years and under” or “40-59 years of age” than “60 years and above,” “married” or “living together as a couple (but unmarried)” than “single (unmarried)” and among those with experience of household or personal victimization than those without. According to the results of the analysis, the proportion of respondents who feared being burglarized was significantly higher among those living in a “detached house” than an “apartment,” among those who were “39 years and under” or “40-59 years of age” than “60 years and above,” a “worker” than a “homemaker,” “unemployed” or “retired,” “married” or “living together as a couple (but unmarried)” than “single (unmarried)” and among those with experience of household or personal victimization than those without.

The analysis also showed the following results. The proportion of respondents who considered Japan to be unsafe was significantly higher among those living in a “municipality with a population of less than 100,000 people” than a “government-designated major city,” among those who were “female” than “male,” a “homemaker,” “unemployed,” or “retired” than a “student,” and among those with experience of household or personal victimization than those without

The survey asked the respondents for their opinions about punishment for a specific type of crime. Among the respondents who have relatively lower levels of fear of crime, the proportion of those who selected a “fine” as a suitable sentence for the above-mentioned specific type of crime was higher and the proportion of those who selected “prison” was lower, whereas, among the respondents who have relatively higher levels of fear of crime, the proportion of those who selected “prison” was higher and the proportion of those who selected a “fine” was lower. Among the respondents who considered Japan to be unsafe, the proportion of those who selected “prison” as a suitable sentence for crime was relatively higher. Among the respondents who had experience of being victimized by crime, the proportion of those who selected “prison” was higher and the proportion of those who selected “don’t know” was lower.

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