

Trends & Policies in Criminal Justice

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Korean Crime Victim Survey 2018

Introduction

The Korean Crime Victim Survey is conducted every two years to measure unreported crime victimization and losses resulting from criminal acts, to analyze vulnerabilities of victims, and to gauge public perception and attitudes towards criminal victimization.

The official title of this research is “National Public Safety Survey” (designated as ‘Approved Statistics No. 403001’ by Statistics Agency Dept., Korea National Statistical Office)

Research Methods

- Target population: All households within the region under administrative authority in the Republic of Korea at the time of the survey and members of the family aged 14 and over
- Survey Population: All households and members of the family aged 14 and over, within general enumeration districts and apartment enumeration districts of the 2017 Population and Housing Census
- Stratification and Sampling
 - Stratified sampling (enumeration district): The first stratification divided the nation into 8 metropolitan cities and 9 provinces. Sejong City and 9 provinces were further divided into townships (eup) and municipalities (myeon, dong). The last step selected a total of 610 enumeration districts from those townships and municipalities.
 - Systematic sampling (11 households from each enumeration district)

- Weighting: Design weight, Nonresponse adjusted weight, Poststratification weight
- Data Collection: Door-to-door survey (either face-to-face interview or self-administered)
- Survey cycle: Two years (odd-numbered years)
- Survey period: May 30, 2019 to July 21, 2019
- Sample size: 13,136 participants aged 14 and over from 6,704 households

Results

Highlights of the national crime victimization in a time series

An increase in the number of crime victims driven by rising violent crime victimization

- It is estimated that 1,653,877 out of 45,553,126 people aged 14 years or over suffered crime and around 1,675,662 victimization cases occurred in 2018. The survey found that the total number of crime victims increased slightly compared to the previous survey conducted in 2016. The rate of crime victims was 3.63%, and the rate of crime victimization was 3.68%.
- In 2018, the rates of crime victims and crime victimization were on the rise compared to 2016 due to the rise in violent crime victimization. The number of victims of property crime came to 1,408,004 (3.09%) and the number of cases was 1,417,708 (3.11%), similar to the previous year. Meanwhile, the number of victims of violent crime reached at 245,873 (0.54%) and the number of cases was 257,954 (0.57%), which marked the highest number of victimization since 2014.

Number and rate of victimization cases per 100,000 population (2012-2018)					
Classification		Year			
		2012	2014	2016	2018
Violent crime	Victimization rate (%)	(0.77)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.57)
	Number of victimization cases per 100,000 population	768	372	388	566
Property crime	Victimization rate (%)	(3.83)	(3.29)	(3.17)	(3.11)
	Number of victimization cases per 100,000 population	3,832	3,290	3,168	3,112

Note: Victimization rate (estimated) = number of victimization cases (estimated) / (the number of population aged 14 and over in 2018) * 100

Victimization of voice phishing: compared to 2008

Experiences of voice phishing

- In 2018, 8,309,002 individuals or 18.24% of population aged 14 and over (45,553,126), answered that they had received a phone call, text message, or messenger message suspected to be voice phishing. In 2008, 27,697,328 respondents or 71.67% of people aged 14 or over (38,647,220) said that they had received voice phishing related calls, text messages or so. Compared to 2008, the total number of people exposed to the crime decreased remarkably but still a considerable number of people were exposed to it.

Voice phishing has become more sophisticated

- It is outstanding that the ratio of “institutional impersonation (pretending to represent a trusted institution, financial company and government agency)” scams among all suspected voice phishing increased in 2018 compared to 2008. 65.13% of all the voice phishing among people aged 14 or over in 2018 was impersonation of financial institutions including banks, or investigative or supervisory agencies such as Police, Prosecution Service and Financial Supervisory Service.

Most widely used phishing scams (2008 vs. 2018)

Year	Impersonating telephone or telecommunication companies	Impersonating financial institutions	Impersonating National Tax Service	Prize scam
2008	32.74%	25.55%	17.93%	10.21%
2018	36.08%	29.05%	18.37%	9.57%

Victimization of violent crime

Victims' self reviews on their response to crime

- In 2018, among the victims of violent crime, 41.57% said that they tried to protect themselves, while 58.43% did not. Even the victims who replied that they did not aggressively respond to attack by the offender believed that their response helped to deter further victimization or reduce the harm.

Psychological consequences caused by violent crime

- In 2018, 77.03% of violent crime victims experienced emotional impacts such as depression, helplessness or loss of self-confidence while 66.72% suffered from panic disorder or fear of shock. In addition, the survey found that violent crime victims experienced one or more psychological or mental disorders.

Victimization of property crime

Recognition of property victimization

- Given the fact that property victimization is often discovered after a certain period of time, it differs from violent victimization, where victims of violent crimes can directly perceive physical injury and damages. Regarding the survey of property crime, respondents had difficulties in recalling the exact time of crime occurrence. Some answered that they only remember the fact that the crime happened in the daytime or at night while others didn't remember even whether it occurred in the daytime or at night. The ratio of respondents answering that they did not know whether it happened in the daytime or at night increased from 36.18% in 2012, 38.81% in 2014, 41.97% in 2016, to 51.5% in 2018. In other words, the number of victims who belatedly finds out property victimization has increased.

Low restoration rates in fraud or burglary victimization

- The ratio of respondents who did not retrieve stolen items was 84.52% in 2012, 89.90% in 2014, and 90.66% in 2016, followed by 92.39% in 2018. Meanwhile, only 1.37% of respondents replied that they recovered all items stolen, and the rate of victims partially recovering theft losses only marked 1.10%. On the other hand, in 2018, the rate of crime victims reporting any property victimization to insurance companies was 47.56%, the highest level since 2012. Still, the restoration rates in fraud or burglary victimization are far lower.

Reporting to law enforcement and handling criminal cases

An increase in violent crime reports

- In 2018, 32.60% of those who experienced violent crimes answered that they reported the crime to the police, the highest rate of police reporting since 2012.

A difference in crime reports by types of crime

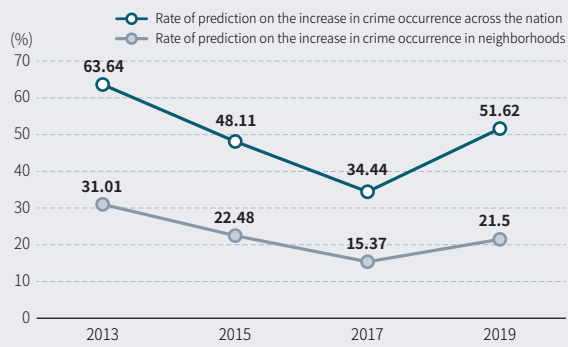
- In 2018, 32.60% of those experiencing violent victimization reported to the police, whereas in the case of property victimization, only 21.71% did. As for property victimization, restoration of loss resulting from crime is considered to be as a significant reason in reporting along with arrest or punishment of an offender. 54.28% of those who did not report to the police did not see their property damage as serious.

Perception on crime occurrence and fear of crime

The perception gap in crime occurrence across the nation and in neighborhoods, and the similar trends of the national victimization and perception on crime occurrence

- In particular, as for the question of whether the crime rate would increase in the future in Korea and neighbors, the answer to "yes" increased in 2019 compared to 2017, which confirmed the similar trend in the national victimization. As an increase in the criminal victimization and perception on crime occurrence affects individuals' perceptions of the future negatively, it is necessary to address the issues when developing policies.

Perception on crime occurrence across the nation and in neighborhoods

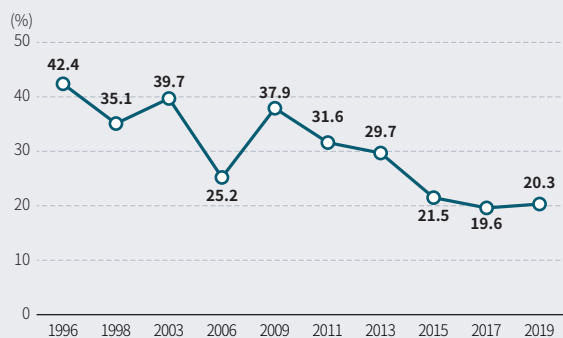


Note: The rates represent the number of people who answered 'little increase' or 'significant increase' in crime occurrence compared to the previous year.

Steady decline in fear of crime at night

- The rate of fear of crime at night increased slightly from 19.6% in 2017 to 20.3% in 2019. However, the figure has been on the decline from 20.7% in 2017 to 19.8% in 2019 reflecting demographic characteristics including sex and age.

Fear of crime at night by year

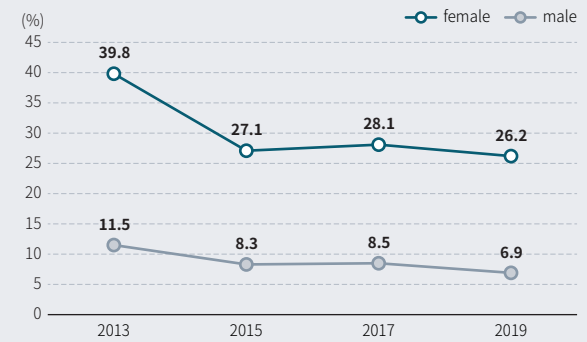


Note: 1. The figures represent the rate of people who answered 'afraid' or 'very afraid' when walking alone in a neighborhood alley at night.
 2. Until 2006, the survey was conducted on 2,000 people nationwide as a sample survey, excluding Jeju Island. After it was designated as a national approval statistics in 2009, the survey results representing the entire country with statistical accuracy are provided.

Gender difference in fear of becoming a victim of crime

Findings indicated that females were more fearful of crime than males. The gender difference decreased slightly in 2015 compared to 2013, however women's fear was about 20% higher than that of men. The result can be explained by the fact that women are more vulnerable to crime than men.

Fear of becoming a victim of crime by year



Note: The figures represent the rate for 'being afraid of becoming a victim of crime' or 'being very afraid'.

Policy Recommendation

Suggestions for Korean Crime Victim Survey

- This survey targeted population aged 14 or over of a member of household. However, it is required to have a separate survey considering the characteristics of children and under ages. Thus, it is necessary to come up with ways to have crime victimization survey on children and minors conducted on a regular basis as well as raise the age limit of survey.
- In addition, it is essential to continuously modify the questionnaire considering changes with the times and continuity of time series. In particular, the number of repeated victimization was not publicized as only handful number of them was reported (the same reason of the fifth survey in 2017). It is required to improve measuring repeated victimization and questionnaire.
- When it comes to constant review in methods of data collection and survey results, careful review and corresponding measures are needed in case of a collision between privacy protection and expanding the level of information disclosure for academic and policy development.

Expected Effects of the Policies

Provision of data for crime prevention and victim protection by identifying criminal victimizations and public perception and attitudes towards crime

- It is expected that the survey may contribute to improving existing policies for preventing criminal victimization and protecting victims as it identifies types of crimes that people experienced in 2018 and provides concrete and empirical basic data on what those victims experienced.
- Public anxiety about crime can be relieved by identifying factors that influence public perception about crime occurrence and fear of crime, and developing relevant policy responses.

Major Keywords

Korean Crime Victim Survey, Crime victimization, Voice phishing, Fear of crime, perception on occurrence of crime



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Change

Human Behaviors
Community Response
Social System