

Surveillance studies of attitudes toward juvenile delinquency

IKEDA Masahiro*, KOSUGI E. Koji

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to inspect how the factor structure of punishment feelings differs, depending on the perpetrator of a crime (i.e., whether the person is a juvenile or an adult) and the difference in feelings between varying generations. A factor analysis of data obtained from approximately 2,000 people, ranging in age from 10 years through to over 60 years, supported that four factors model for feelings on adult crime, and three factors model for feelings on juvenile delinquency. In addition, it was shown that the factor structure of punishment feelings varied greatly, according to generation.

Keywords: juvenile delinquency, punishment feeling, differences among generations

1. Introduction

Nowadays, across Japan, it is widely requested that juvenile delinquents be given severe punishment. Hamai and Serizawa (2006) suggested that violent juvenile crime possesses quantitative and qualitative factors. A crackdown on juvenile crime, in the wake of incidents that occurred in Kobe in 1997, meant that this type of crime came to be regarded as a major social problem, and discussions of the revision of juvenile law began at that time. The following is written in juvenile law that probation for performing adjustments to environmental enforcement and juvenile delinquents, and taking special measures for the juvenile delinquents (Ministry of Justice, 2010). But society requested to abolish of the juvenile law and to reduction of the application age of juvenile law.

However, official statistics produced since the 1990s have shown that juvenile crime is significantly reduced, compared to levels observed in the 1970s (Ministry of Justice, 2010). Moreover, even when regarded from a qualitative angle, there is no evidence to show that juvenile crime has become more brutal compared with the 1970s (Takahashi, 2004). With regard to age, there is evidence to suggest that juvenile delinquency is being elder than previously (Hamai & Serizawa, 2006).

In addition, Hamai (2004) stated that severe punishment is not an effective criminal deterrent. Rather, this type of punishment is more likely to lead to the loss of an offender's job and family than to serve as a restraint on criminal activity. And the risk to society of

*山口大学大学院教育学研究科

that individual becoming homeless and a habitual criminal rises.

We think the same can be said with regard to juvenile crime. Juvenile Law has been introduced in order to ensure that lighter sentences are considered, focusing as it does on the plasticity of the personality of minors. From this, we have serious doubts that a juvenile would be able to live easily in society after spending a long time in a reformatory. When considering the long period after discharge, we think that efforts should be concentrated on rehabilitating a juvenile offender, so that the individual can form successful relationships and make a useful contribution to society, rather than imposing criminal liability upon that person.

Although juvenile delinquency is showing a tendency to decrease, and there is evidence to show that it has not become more brutal than in previous times, why does society think that juvenile crime is actually getting worse? It may be due to excessive media coverage (Hamai, 2004). Although the number of cases of murder committed by juvenile has decreased every year since the 1970s, the number of newspaper articles in which such crimes are reported has increased (Makino, 2006). Therefore, we have more exposure to environmental reporting of juvenile crime now than ever before, and, as a result, society now thinks, as already mentioned, that juvenile crime is getting worse, in contrast to the reality—that it is on the decline. We think that society therefore regards minors with excessive uneasiness and this needless anxiety is at the root of demands for imposing severe punishment in juvenile law today.

Incidentally, “news value” is related to the reported standard of the mass media (Yamamoto, 2004). The news value of a story is its value to report it as news, and the news frequency increases as this value becomes higher. The risk cognition for the news contents rises, so that news frequency increases, and people become excessively uneasy the citizen holds excessive uneasiness (Okamoto, 1992). Since the reporting of juvenile crime report is increasing, we think that news value exists in a juvenile crime.

However, why does news value exist in a juvenile crime? For example, if identical incidents occur, some hold the opinion that if the person who committed the crime is a minor, then they pose more of a problem than if the criminal is an adult (Inaba, 2004). However, why does news value exist in a juvenile crime? For example, when the same incident occurred, there is an opinion that the person who is a minor is considered to be a problem than a criminal is an adult (Inaba, 2004). As for this, problems are explanation of attributing to the category of the perpetrator of the crime, and, evaluation of problems may change with the perpetrator of the crime. Therefore, it may be assumed that when a member of the society evaluates a crime the process of evaluation differs according to the perpetrator of the crime. The aim of the present study was to examine how the factor structure of punishment feelings differs depending on who has committed the crime, as well as how this difference in feelings is reflected among different generations.

2. Method

2-1 Sample

The participants of the present study were 153 undergraduates (73 males and 80 females) and 86 vocational school students (33 males and 53 females). Moreover, participants were 2,148 adults (1,064 males and 1,084 females) from 20s to 60s living in Japan.

Two types of sampling methods were used. Undergraduate and vocational school students answered questionnaires by paper and pencil. Other participants answered by the Web investigation via the Internet marketing company.

2-2 Measure

I. Punishment feeling; we created 17 items related to an adult crime and 20 items associated with juvenile delinquency, as described by Kusumi and Osawa (1999). Item responses were ranked on a 5-point scale, from 1 (“disagree”) to 5 (“agree”)

II. Demographic; we demanded an answer to gender or age from a participant.

2-3 Data analysis

Analysis of the study data employed statistical techniques with R (ver2.13.0). We used packages that were psych (ver1.0-96) and anovakun (ver4.2.0, Iseki 2010).

3. Results

3-1 Participant demographics

The gender and generation demographics of the participants are shown in Table 1. There were fewer numbers of participants in the 10 - 19 generation than there were in the other generations, but among the latter there was very little variation in numbers.

Table 1 Gender and Generation

	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	Total
Male	61	211	208	212	218	215	1125 (48.5%)
Female	110	217	217	217	214	219	1194 (51.5%)
Total	171 (7.4%)	428 (18.5%)	425 (18.3%)	429 (18.5%)	432 (18.6%)	434 (18.7%)	2319

3-2 Factor structure of measure

We performed exploratory factor analysis of 17 items on adult crime and 20 items on juvenile delinquency every generation (MLE, Promax rotation). A parallel analysis supported that five factors model in 10s, 20s, 30s and 50s, and four factors model in 40s, and six factors model in 60s on adult crime. Moreover, parallel analysis supported that five factors model in 10s, 30s and 60s, and six factors model in 20s, and four factors model in 40s and 50s on juvenile delinquency.

Secondly, we performed confirmatory factor analysis with structural equation modeling

(SEM) on the results of the exploratory factor analysis. As a result, SEM supported that four factors model on adult crime (Table 2), and three factors model on juvenile delinquency (Table 3).

Finally, after calculating the scale scores of each factor, we conducted generation comparisons using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) (Table 4). Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the means of the scale scores. Significant differences between the generations with regard to adult crime were observed for information desire, $F(5, 2313) = 36.784, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .074$; severe punishment-oriented, $F(5, 2313) = 3.746, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$; treatment and education, $F(5, 2313) = 2.451, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$; and complacency, $F(5, 2313) = 22.199, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .046$, and significant differences between the generations with regard to juvenile delinquency were observed for severe punishment-oriented, $F(5, 2313) = 2.906, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .027$; and information desire, $F(5, 2313) = 23.682, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .049$. The main effect due to treatment and education was not significant.

For the main effect of these variables, the scores were subjected to a multiple comparison test using Bonferroni test (Table 5). Bonferroni test on adult crime showed that with regard to information desire ($M = 2.82, SD = 0.56$), the score for the 10s generation was significantly lower ($p < .001$) than for the other generations. The score for the 20s generation was significantly lower ($p < .001$) than that for the 30s and the 40s, and the score for the 60s generation was significantly lower ($p < .01$) than that found for the 30s and the 40s.

For the severe punishment-oriented, it was shown that the score for the 20s generation ($M = 3.86, SD = 0.77$) was significantly lower ($p < .01$) than those obtained for the 10s and 40s. The generations were not significantly different from each other with regard to treatment and education scores.

The 10s generation score for complacency ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.61$) was significantly lower ($p < .05$) than the scores observed for the other generations. The score for the 30s ($M = 3.14, SD = 0.68$) was significantly higher ($p < .001$) than that for the 50s ($M = 2.95, SD = 0.61$) and the 60s ($M = 2.90, SD = 0.62$). The score for the 50s was significantly lower ($p < .05$) than that for the 20s ($M = 3.06, SD = 0.73$) and the 60s. The score for the 60s was significantly lower ($p < .01$) than that for the 20s, the 30s, and the 40s ($M = 3.09, SD = 0.63$).

Bonferroni test on juvenile delinquency showed that the severe punishment-oriented score for the 10s generation ($M = 3.69, SD = 0.55$) was significantly lower ($p < .05$) than the scores for the 20s ($M = 3.88, SD = 0.79$), the 30s ($M = 4.02, SD = 0.73$), the 40s ($M = 4.02, SD = 0.71$), and the 50s ($M = 3.88, SD = 0.70$). The score for the 30s was significantly higher ($p < .05$) than that for the 50s and the 60s ($M = 3.73, SD = 0.71$). The score for the 40s was significantly higher ($p < .05$) than that for the 20s and the 50s. Furthermore, the score for the 60s was significantly lower ($p < .05$) than that of the 20s, the 30s, the 40s, and the 50s. The 10s information desire score ($M = 2.80, SD = 0.46$) was significantly lower ($p < .001$) than was observed for the other generations. The score for the 50s ($M = 3.16, SD = 0.53$) was significantly lower ($p < .001$) than that for the 30s ($M = 3.29, SD = 0.58$) and the 40s ($M = 3.29, SD = 0.55$). Furthermore, the score for the 60s ($M = 3.10, SD = 0.57$) was significantly lower ($p < .001$) than that observed for the 20s ($M = 3.22, SD = 0.65$), the 30s, the 40s, and the 50s.

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis List on Adult Crime

No.	Item	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s
Factor1: Information desire							
1	The correction education does not have a meaning for the person who committed a crime.*	-.26	-.62	-.49	-.53	-.55	-.48
4	The criminal should take him to the prison during a period as long as possible to follow social order.	.45	.57	.69	.43	.51	.59
11	The person discharged from prison should announce an address.	.66	.76	.74	.74	.71	.66
33	The person discharged from prison should inform the location by GPS in real time.	.74	.83	.81	.78	.80	.77
Factor2; Severe punishment-oriented							
8	Oneself prevents you from doing a crime by a criminal being punished.	.16	.62	.51	.52	.28	.45
12	The assailant should show will of the apology for a victim and the bereaved in one way or another.	.26	.55	.47	.47	.40	.41
25	It is dangerous to let a criminal come back to his normal life only by education.	.53	.78	.77	.74	.63	.67
31	The criminal should be punished all saying that it was a slight crime.	.38	.65	.57	.44	.51	.50
Factor3; Treatment and education							
10	Because it is thought that the severe disposal is not good for the criminal, you should deal by education.	.29	.66	.75	.73	.72	.49
23	Even when a crime is committed, you should make it regenerated not by punishment but by education.	.27	.69	.70	.72	.69	.66
26	Because it is thought that the criminal has the mental diseases such as schizophrenia or mood disorders, at first you should perform it from the treatment.	.77	.84	.89	.80	.78	.88
28	Even if there were any circumstances, we must defend the privacy of the criminal.*	-.02	-.54	-.60	-.58	-.50	-.47
30	Because it is thought that the criminal has the problem of the mind, at first you should perform it from the counseling.	.89	.86	.88	.84	.81	.87
Factor4; Complacency							
7	The offender's family should also do a certain compensation.	.19	.41	.36	.40	.40	.40
18	Even if a criminal received what kind of judgment, it is not related with myself.	.11	.10	.09	.01	-.01	.07
35	If the final judgment of the case is lighter than one's judgment to think of, I cannot be satisfied.	.52	.81	.80	.79	.77	.76
36	When criminals are punished, i think that it serves him right.	.76	.72	.63	.63	.56	.57

*Reversal item

Table 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis List on Juvenile Delinquency

No.	Item	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s
Factor1; Treatment and education							
2	If it is minors even if it commits a crime, you should perform the education by not punishment but reform.	.59	.79	.79	.79	.84	.70
6	Because it is thought that the boy criminal has the problem of the mind, at first you should perform it from the counseling.	.44	.89	.88	.81	.76	.93
13	Even if there were any circumstances, we must defend the privacy of the boy criminal.*	-.43	-.60	-.65	-.62	-.63	-.44
16	Because it is thought that the boy criminal has the mental diseases such as schizophrenia or mood disorders, at first you should perform it from the treatment.	.34	.83	.87	.83	.75	.88
21	Because it is thought that the severe disposal is not good for the boy criminal, you should deal by education.	.65	.73	.88	.78	.84	.68
24	Even if there were any circumstances, minors should be applied to Juvenile Act.*	-.58	-.64	-.62	-.62	-.69	-.39
Factor2; Severe punishment-oriented							
5	It is dangerous to let a boy criminal come back to his normal life only by education.	.40	.77	.64	.67	.63	.56
20	The Juvenile Act should be abolished.	.51	.75	.68	.70	.70	.64
22	The boy criminal should show will of the apology for a victim and the bereaved in one way or another.	.21	.43	.44	.44	.34	.34
27	When you commit a crime, you should take responsibility by punishment such as the penal servitude even if it was a minor.	.68	.84	.81	.82	.75	.71
34	The Juvenile Act should not be applied and it should punish by the criminal code like the adult.	.67	.90	.86	.89	.87	.90
Factor3; Information desire							
3	It cannot be satisfied if the incident judgment seen by juvenile crime report is lighter than the judgment which he considers.	.27	.73	.68	.66	.59	.65
9	The boy criminal discharged from prison should inform the location by GPS in real time.	.54	.78	.70	.70	.73	.70
14	The boy criminal should take him to the training school during a period as long as possible to follow social order.	.50	.73	.65	.61	.64	.71
15	The boy criminal discharged from a trainig school should announce an address.	.66	.78	.72	.71	.74	.76
17	When boy criminals are punished, i think that it serves him right.	.42	.66	.60	.60	.58	.59
19	The boy criminal's family should also do a certain compensation.	.35	.53	.55	.42	.51	.48
29	The correction education does not have a meaning for the boy criminal who committed a crime.*	.32	.57	.55	.41	.43	.35
32	I cannot understand the minor committing a crime.	.27	.41	.38	.48	.50	.46
37	When I watch the crime news of the minor, I feel it when it is specific existence different from oneself.	-.37	-.62	.58	-.51	.61	.57

*Reversal item

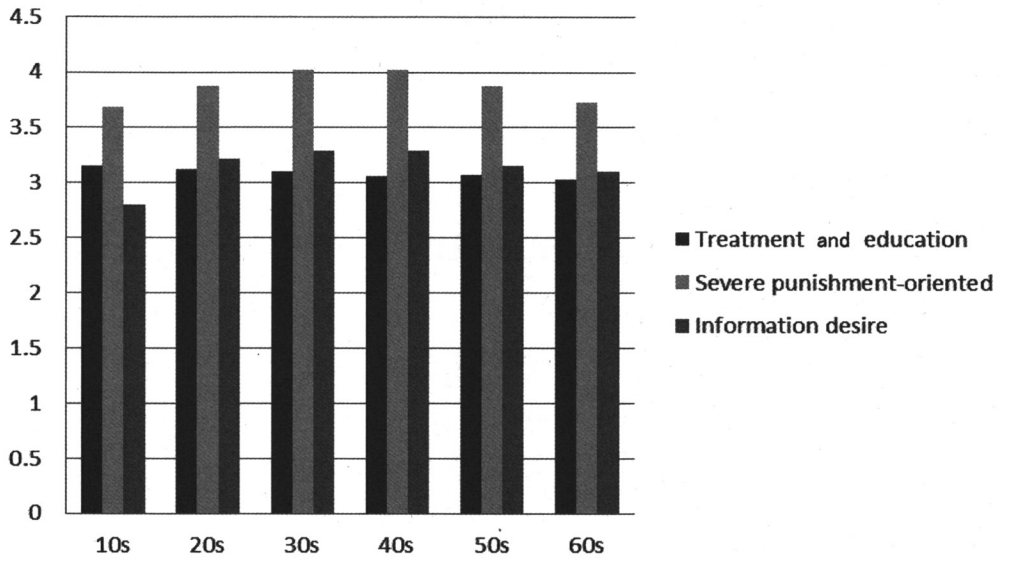


Figure 1 Mean of Scale Scores (adult crime)

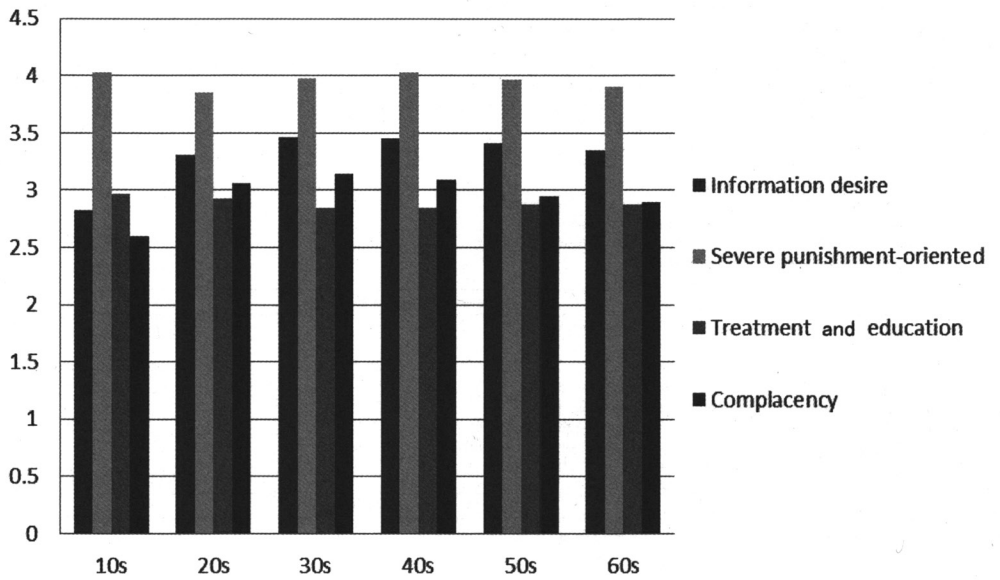


Figure 2 Mean of Scale Scores (juvenile delinquency)

Table 4 Punishment Feeling Factor Scores for each age on Adult Crime

	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	p.eta ²	multiple comparison(Bonferroni)
Information desire	2.82(0.56)	3.31(0.60)	3.46(0.60)	3.46(0.54)	3.41(0.53)	3.35(0.59)	0.737	10s<20s,30s,40s,50s,60s 20s<30s,40s 60s<30s,40s
Severe punishment-oriented	4.02(0.51)	3.88(0.77)	3.97(0.66)	4.03(0.63)	3.96(0.61)	3.91(0.67)	0.008	20s<10s,40s
Treatment and education	2.97(0.53)	2.93(0.63)	2.85(0.61)	2.84(0.60)	2.83(0.61)	2.88(0.60)	0.005	No significant difference in the 5% level
Complacency	2.80(0.61)	3.06(0.73)	3.14(0.68)	3.09(0.63)	2.95(0.61)	2.90(0.63)	0.045	10s<20s,30s,40s,50s,60s 30s>50s,60s 50s<20s,60s 60s<20s,40s

Table 5 Punishment Feeling Factor Scores for each age on Juvenile Delinquency

	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	p.eta ²	Multiple comparison(Bonferroni)
Treatment and education	3.16(0.43)	3.11(0.46)	3.10(0.47)	3.06(0.46)	3.07(0.44)	3.09(0.48)	-	-
Severe punishment-oriented	3.69(0.55)	3.88(0.79)	4.02(0.43)	4.02(0.71)	3.88(0.70)	3.73(0.71)	0.027	10s<20s,30s,40s,50s 30s>20s,50s 40s>20s,50s 60s<20s,30s,40s,50s
Information desire	2.80(0.46)	3.22(0.65)	3.29(0.58)	3.29(0.55)	3.16(0.53)	3.10(0.57)	0.048	10s<20s,30s,40s,50s,60s 50s<30s,40s 60s<20s,30s,40s

4. Discussion

The present study investigated how the factor structure of punishment feelings varies, by examining crime perpetrator (adult or juvenile) and difference in attitudes between generations. Exploratory factor analysis showed that the number of the factor structure of feelings toward punishment and the factors themselves varied greatly between generations. As a result of SEM showed that four factors model feelings on adult crime, and three factors model feelings on juvenile delinquency. Therefore, in this respect, the structure of punishment feelings changed depending on whether an adult or a juvenile committed the crime.

ANOVA revealed three further results. The first of these was that people belonging to the generations aged above that of the 20s need the crime to be reported. This can also be seen in both graph, and the score of the information desire factor is divided in the 10s and the 20s or more in both adult crime and juvenile delinquency in middle point 3. From this, we assume that people aged older than their 20s feel that it is dangerous to merely return a criminal to society.

Secondly, in the 30s and the 40s generations, the severe punishment-oriented factor scored highly with regard to juvenile delinquency. This may be victim consciousness at work; this is the generation who is most likely to be bringing up a small child, and they don't want their children to become involved in crime.

Finally, treatment and education was a factor for which there was no difference in attitudes across the generations, regardless of whether the crime was juvenile delinquency

or adult crime. Therefore, we can assume that opinions and expectations regarding the education and treatment of an offender do not vary according to generation.

The results of this study—that attitudes toward crime change according to generation and/or who has committed the crime (adult or juvenile) —lead us to suggest that attention should be paid to how civic education is conducted. Instead of uniformly providing the same information we should change the content provided, according to age of the group being educated.

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