



School Survey on Crime 2015

On crime victimisation and participation in crime

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English summary of Brå report 2016:21

**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) –
centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures**

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)
works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society
by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime
and crime prevention work.

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Summary

The overall purpose of the School Survey on Crime is to investigate crime victimisation and participation in crime, as well as other deviant behaviour among year-nine students on the basis of self-reported data.

The types of offences which are investigated differ somewhat in respect of crime victimisation and own participation in crime. In respect of crime victimisation, questions were asked regarding exposure to various forms of theft offences, assault, threats, robbery, and sexual offences. In addition to these, exposure to offensive behaviour via the Internet and to bullying were also investigated. In terms of student participation in crime, questions were primarily asked regarding participation in theft offences, violent offences, vandalism, and narcotics offences. In addition, participation in certain other types of criminal behaviour were also investigated (for example break-ins, illegal file sharing, and use of another person's ID or a false ID). Questions were also asked regarding certain other types of deviant behaviour, such as whether the student has been truant for an entire day and whether the student has consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication. The reference period for questions in respect of both victimisation and participation in crime is the most recent twelve months.

The survey was conducted among year-nine students at a selection of schools in Sweden. It comprises a printed survey which the students completed anonymously during school hours. A total of 4,659 students participated in this year's survey.

Almost one-half of the students were victims of a criminal offence

The results of the School Survey on crime shows that almost one-half of the students stated that they were victims of theft, assault, threats, robbery, or sexual offences at least once during the most recent twelve months. In other words, it is common for young people to be victims of crime.

Taken as a whole, crime victimisation is approximately equally common among girls and boys, although the structure differs between the genders. Theft is the type of offence of which the greatest percentage of both boys and girls state that they have been victims. Boys also state that it is common that they are the victims of assault and robbery, while a greater percentage of girls state that they are victims of threats and sexual offences. Aggravated assault and robbery appear to be the types of offences which students most commonly report to the police.

Exposure to offensive behaviour via the Internet is a widespread problem

Although exposure to offensive behaviour via the Internet is a relatively new problem, it has become very widespread; one-third of the girls and one-fifth of the boys state that they have been exposed to a person who has written offensive things about them on the Internet during the most recent twelve months. In addition, one in four girls and one in six boys state that, during the period, they were the victim of someone posting pictures or film clips of them that they did not wish to have spread. In respect of bullying, approximately four in ten girls and three in ten boys state that they have been the victims of bullying. Although the majority of the students state that bullying has taken place rather infrequently, a significant percentage state that they have been bullied sometimes or often (according to approximately 16 per cent of the girls and 11 per cent of the boys).

It is also common that students who have been the victims of threats state that this has occurred via the Internet or social media; one-third of the girls and one-fourth of the boys who were victims of threats state that the threats were made via the Internet or social media.

Clear pattern linking exposure to bullying and crime victimisation

The results show a clear connection between exposure to bullying and crime victimisation. Among those students who said that they had been the victims of bullying sometimes or often, a significantly greater percentage also stated that they were the victim of various types of offences (assault, threats, robbery, violence, and sexual offences). The pattern appears the same for both girls and boys.

Criminal victimisation in the school environment is common

In terms of the locations where the students are exposed to crime, the results show that it often takes place in the school environment. This applies, above all, to both minor and aggravated assault, as well as to threats and sexual molestation. Exposure to robbery and sexual coercion do not appear to occur in the school environment to the same extent as other types of offences.

Certain groups of students state, more often, that they are victims of crime

Certain tendencies appear in respect of specific groups of year-nine students who state that they have been victims of crimes. Generally, a greater percentage of students with a foreign background, students who live in apartments, and students with divorced/separated parents state that they are victims of various types of offences. Similarly, a greater percentage of students with parents lacking a university or college education and students who state that at least one of their parents is unemployed state that they are the victims of crime. The family's financial resources also appear to be significant in terms of crime victimisation, whereby students who state that their families have strained financial resources are more likely to state that they have been victims of crime when compared with other students.

Almost one-half of the students also participate in crime

Just as is the case with crime victimisation, it is not uncommon for year-nine students to participate in various types of offences or other deviant behaviours. Approximately one-half of the students stated that they committed some form of theft offence, violent offence, or vandalism, or experimented with narcotics, on at least one occasion during the most recent twelve months. A greater percentage of boys than girls state that they have committed one of the four types of offences, but the difference between the genders varies for the different types of offences. The smallest difference between the genders relates to theft offences and the greatest relates to violent offences. At the same time, the results show that as the severity and quantity of an individual's offences increases, the percentage of students who state that they have such experience decreases. For all four types of offences, it is most common that those students who committed offences stated that they did so 1–2 times during the most recent twelve months.

Participation in theft offences is the most common

Theft offences comprise the type of offence which the greatest percentage of students – almost 4 out of 10 – state that they have committed. This is followed by violent offences. Committing vandalism is also relatively common, while the lowest percentage of students state experimenting with narcotics as the type of offence which they have committed.

Illegal file sharing and fare dodging are common

Illegal file sharing and fare dodging¹ are the most common offences among the other criminal behaviour examined in the School Survey. A significantly greater percentage of boys than girls state that they have participated in illegal file sharing, but dodging fares is approximately equally common among girls and boys.

A number of background factors are significant in respect of participation in crime

There are a number of different background factors which vary in correlation with the risk of committing theft offences, violent offences, or vandalism, or experimenting with narcotics. The two background factors which have the greatest impact are whether the family has strained financial resources and whether the parents are divorced/separated. In addition to this, the risk that boys will commit violent offences, vandalism, and experiment with narcotics is greater than that for girls.

¹ "Fare dodging" in this survey means riding the bus, streetcar, underground, commuter train, or train without paying.