

Are Japanese Youth Keen on the Environment?

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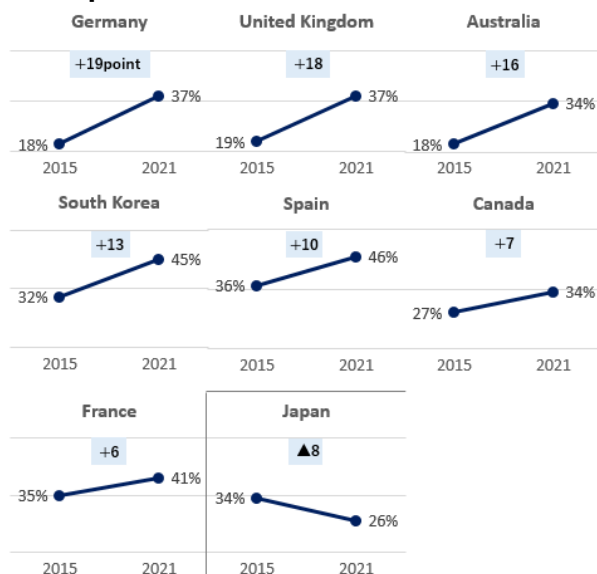
Awareness increasing for environmental issues among young people in Europe and the United States

In 2018, a 15-year-old environmental activist, Greta Thunberg, made a speech at COP24 that attracted worldwide attention. The "Global Climate March" by people who empathized with Greta became a global movement. Greta's activities, which call for urgent action to protect the environment, have gained the support of young people who are seeking a sustainable future.

Concerns of the Japanese citizens on environmental issues

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in multiple countries in 2015 and 2021, while the percentage of people who said they were "very concerned" about being negatively affected by climate change in their lifetime increased in many countries, it decreased by 8 percentage points in Japan (Figure 1).

Figure 1 % who are very concerned that global climate change will harm them personally at some point in their lifetime



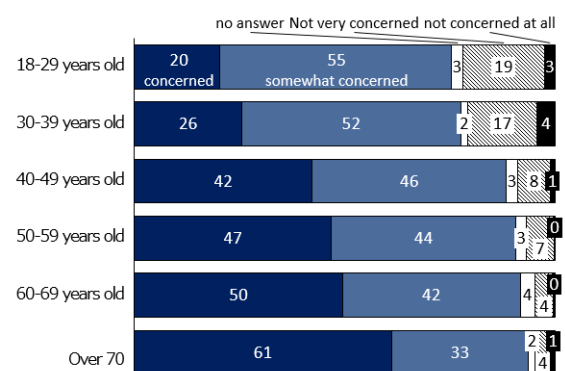
(Source) Pew Research Center (2021) "In Response to Climate Change, Citizens in Advanced Economies Are Willing To Alter How They Live and Work"

Despite the increase in awareness of the crisis in other countries, Japan's relatively high awareness of the crisis in 2015 has declined, resulting in a lower level of concerns compared to other countries. The Center also asked respondents whether they would change their lifestyles to mitigate climate change. Japan was at the bottom of the list, with the lowest percentage of respondents saying "yes" among the 17 countries surveyed.

Are Japanese youth keen on the environment?

According to the Cabinet Office's Public Opinion Survey on Climate Change published in 2021 (survey conducted in 2020), the 18-29 age group had the lowest total percentage of people who were "concerned" or "somewhat concerned" about environmental issues (Figure 2).

Figure2 Degree of concerns in global warming issue by generation



(Source) Cabinet Office (2021) "Public Opinion Survey on Climate Change"

In particular, only 20% of people in this age group said they were "concerned" in environmental issues, which is less than a third of those aged 70 and older. On the other hand, the largest age group of "concerned" in environmental issues is in the 70 years or older, which has increased significantly from 49.3% to 61.1% compared to the 2016 results (survey conducted in 2015).

Although the spotlight is often placed on young people who are involved in environmental activities, Japanese environmental awareness is not high by global standards and tends to be particularly low among young people. Society as a whole is once again expected to raise awareness of the importance of environmental issues.

Original in Japanese:

<https://www.dlri.co.jp/report/dlri/244980.html>

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