

Original Article

Apathetic and Withdrawing Students in Japanese Universities —with Regard to Hikikomori and Student Apathy—

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In recent years, the increasing number of young people withdrawing from society, so called Hikikomori, has been a cause for concern in Japan. These are people who stay at home and do not work or attend school for more than 6 months. Most of them are not regarded as having any psychotic illness such as schizophrenia. With respect to college students, “student apathy” syndrome has been discussed since the 1960’s.

Objectives: To evaluate the proportion of apathetic and withdrawing students among those who leave school, take off, or repeat academic years; to see how these situations have changed in the last 20 years; and to identify the characteristics of such high risk groups so as to provide them with effective psychiatric support services.

Methods: First I examined the mean rates of the academic events mentioned above among students of Japanese national universities. I then compared those rates statistically between males and females, and among 6 groups according to gender and academic majors. Then the reasons for those academic events were examined.

Results: The rates of each event have continually increased over the last 21 years, and a considerable number of the students were shown to have been in a state of “student apathy.” Male 4-year course students had a high risk, especially male science course students had serious problems.

Key Words; withdraw, Hikikomori, student apathy, drop out, suicide

Introduction

In recent years, the increasing number of young people withdrawing from society, so called Hikikomori, has been a cause for concern in Japan, and an article in the New York Times “Shutting themselves in”¹⁾ made the term “Hikikomori” famous throughout the world. These are people who stay at home and neither work nor attend school for more than 6 months²⁾. Most of them are not regarded as having any psychotic illness such as schizophrenia.

With respect to college students, the problem of “student apathy” syndrome has been discussed since the 1960’s. Such students are apathetic and tend to withdraw from academic activities. While some of these students may engage in part-time activities such as volunteer work, sports, or temporary work, their lack of school participation, which is their essential task, indicates at least partial withdrawal from society. In other words, “student apathy” may be a presentation of partial Hikikomori.

In 1961, the American psychiatrist Walters, P.A.³⁾ described the students as “Student Apathy” who withdraw from both academic activities and the larger society to some extent³⁾. He reported some characteristics of a group of college students, mostly men, who had academic problems and received psychological counseling at the student health center.

While interest in the topic of student apathy has faded in the United States, in Japan it has continued to be a topic of discussion since the term was first applied to campus mental health by Kasahara, Y.⁴⁾. He developed his own theory of “Student Apathy” through treating many students who repeated academic years.

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According to Kasahara, Y., the characteristics of "student apathy." were as follows. (a)They are apathetic and avoid competition owing to fear of losing, despite having high potential. (b)They have obsessive compulsive trait. (c)They withdraw themselves from academic tasks while participating to some extent in other pursuits. (d)They have an identity conflict. (e) They are mostly men.

Kasahara's definition about "student apathy" has a lot in common with "identity diffusion syndrome" or "identity crisis" described by Erikson, E.H.⁵⁾ about severely disturbed young people. He eventually concluded that "identity diffusion" or "identity crisis" occurred as a part of all normal adolescent development. Erikson, E.H. considered the period of prolonged adolescence, the time most individuals in our society spend in college or job training, as a "psychosocial moratorium", a period of delay in human development. For some students, temporary interruptions in school work seem necessary as a moratorium. Psychosocial factors, like highly educated and competitive society and prolonged training period, caused by the development of science and technology are considered to be related to this phenomenon. Okonogi, K.⁶⁾ developed his understanding of Japanese young people in terms of "moratorium" and mentioned about "student apathy" as a analogous concept.

Incidentally, "Student apathy" is in fact not a diagnostic term, rather an informal expression of a kind-of syndrome; and it is often accompanied by symptoms of anxiety and depression. This term is frequently applied to students who display the syndrome's characteristics are difficult to diagnose definitely with depression or an anxiety disorder. If we try to adopt the DSM⁷⁾ or ICD⁸⁾ diagnosis for this syndrome, the following designations are the closest, but not a perfect fit.

DSM-IV V62.3 Academic problem
309.4 Adjustment Disorder with disturbance
of emotion and conduct
ICD-10 F43.2 Adjustment Disorder

Such students do not attend classes regularly; moreover, they often miss taking mid-semester or final tests. Consequently, they tend to get failing grades and repeat or take off academic years. Some of them eventually leave school without graduating after a long stay at the university.

The mental condition of the students is reflected by such academic events as repeating or taking off academic years and leaving school.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate the proportion of apathetic and withdrawn students among those who leave school, take off or repeat academic years; to see how the situation has changed in the last 21years; and to find out the characteristics of such high risk groups so as to provide them with effective psychiatric support services.

Materials and Methods

Materials: The sample comprised data of the national universities participating in the study.

Methods: Staff members and mental health professionals of the participating universities filled out forms recording the numbers of enrolled students on April 30th of a school year, and of students leaving school, taking off, and repeating an academic year in that year. In addition, the universities that participated in the study of reasons for academic events filled out forms about those reasons.

The administrative data and reason study data were gathered from the universities participating in the study and sent to my university. The division of psychiatry of Ibaraki University has been in charge of this study and collecting and analyzing these data, representing the Mental Health Committee of the Student Health Service Association of Japanese National Universities.

In 2005, data were collected for 390,526 students--249,337 males (64%) and 141,189 females (36%) -- from 74 out of 83(89%) of all the national universities⁹⁾¹⁰⁾.

The number of universities in the study increased over the years, starting with 10 universities and 60,000 students in the first year, 1978.¹¹⁾

(1) First the mean rates of academic events, such as repeating or taking off academic years and leaving school, among the Japanese national university students were examined from the data of each university. Chi-square analysis was used to capture group differences between the male and female students of 2005 with respect to each academic event. Then all of the data from the years 1985 to 2005 were examined and also compared statistically between males and females.

(2) The students were separated into 6 groups according to gender and academic majors, such as liberal arts, the sciences, and 6-year courses (medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine). The groups were compared statistically by chi-square test, and residual analyses were done on the data for 2005 and the total data set for 1985 to 2005.

Table 1. Classification Standard of the Reasons for Taking off Academic Years or Leaving Schools

Classification	Examples
1 Physical Disorders	Physical Disease, Injury,
2 Mental Disorders	Diagnosed as Mental Disorders , Suicide
3 Negative Reasons, Other than maintaining academic progress	Most likely to have Mental Disorders, “Student Apathy”, Suspected suicide (Most of this group is considered as “Student Apathy” Syndrome.) Loss of Interest in studying, Drop-out because of insufficient credit, Indulged in attending campus activities such as Sports Clubs and Student Politics, Attending Activities outside of the Campus such as Religious Groups, Volunteering, Hobbies and temporary Jobs, Try to switch the major or school (go to 2-year colleges or occupational schools) , Permanent Employment , (Expelled out of Legal Problems)
4 Positive Reasons, maintaining academic progress	Study Abroad, Try to switch the major or school (get into other departments or Universities) , Study for getting licenses such as Lawyers and Accounts
5 Environmental (Familial and Economic) Reasons	Economic Reasons, Taking Care of Parents, Take over Family Business, Marriage, Child-birth, Child-care
6 Unknown	Not-inquiry

(3) The reasons for taking off academic years and leaving school were then examined and classified into 6 groups: physical disorders, mental disorders, negative reasons like “Student Apathy,” positive reasons like studying abroad, environmental reasons like economic hardship, and unknown reasons (Table 1). Subsequently, the rates for each academic event were calculated according to the 6 groups of reasons.

The classification of a reason being negative or positive may be arguable here; even though students may believe their behavior is beneficial to themselves, it is considered a negative reason to leave school to take a job, since by leaving school their academic progress is wasted

For psychiatrists, classification groups 2 and 3 are important; and “Student Apathy” is related to group 3. Group 2, Mental Disorders, means cases that were diagnosed by psychiatrists.

Group 3, negative reasons, contains the cases that are most likely to have mental disorders, suspected suicide, the cases described as “student apathy” and the cases that are considered as “student apathy state”, although they are not described as “student apathy”; loss of Interest in studying, drop-out because of

insufficient credit, indulged in attending campus activities such as sports clubs and student politics, attending activities outside of the campus such as religious groups and volunteering, hobbies and temporary Jobs without attending classes.

Trying to switch the major or school to 2-year colleges or occupational schools is regarded as negative reasons, because of not maintaining academic progress, whereas getting into other departments or universities is regarded as positive reasons.

In 2005, 49 out of 74 universities participating in studies (1) and (2) took part in the study of the reasons for taking off (study 3), that is, 221,209 students out of the 390,526 students of studies (1) and (2) (57%) were examined and 6,326 cases of taking-off out of 9,995 were investigated (63.3%).

With regard to leaving school, 47 out of 74 universities took part in the study of the reasons; that is, 218,082 students out of 390,526 students were examined (56%) and 3,364 leaving school cases out of 5,882 cases (57.2%) were investigated.

The 6 groups, divided by gender and majors, were compared for each category of reasons in 2005. Chi-

square test was used and residual analyses were done.

Results

(1) Mean rates of academic events such as repeating or taking off academic years and leaving school

Figure 1 shows that the longitudinal data on mean rates of taking time off (Taking-off) and quitting school (Leaving-school, Drop-out) have been increasing over the period of the study, with the rate of Taking-off exceeding the rate of Leaving-school beginning in 1989. In 2005, the rate of Taking-off was 2.56% and Leaving-school was 1.51%^{9,10}.

Figure 2 shows the longitudinal rates of Taking-off with regard to gender difference.

There was a gender difference in the rate of Taking-off academic years, with the rate for men being consistently higher than that for women throughout the study. In 2005, the men's rate was 2.65% and the women's rate was 2.41%. There was a significant difference between men and women by less than 0.01 probability. The total of these data for 1985 to 2005 also showed a significant difference between men (1.99%, 101541/5103362) and women (1.72%, 38742/2247134) by less than 0.01 probability.

Figure 3 shows longitudinal rates of Leaving-school with regard to gender difference.

In 2005, the men's rate of leaving school was 1.86% and the women's rate was 0.88%. There was a significant difference between men and women by less than 0.01 probability. The total data for 1985 to 2005 also showed a significant difference between men (1.71%, 87310/5103362) and women (0.80%, 18036/2247134) by less than 0.01 probability. The rate of leaving school increased until 2000 and has been flat recently.

Figure 4 shows longitudinal rates of repeating academic years with regard to gender difference.

There was also a gender difference in the rate of repeating academic years, with the rate for men being consistently higher than that for women throughout the study. In 2005, the men's rate of repeating academic years was 7.46% and the women's rate was 3.11%. There was a significant difference between men and women by less than 0.01 probability. The total data for 1985 to 2005 also showed a significant difference between men (7.83%, 399659/5103362) and women

(2.42%, 54295/2247134) by less than 0.01 probability. The total rate of repeating academic years increased during the study period, but the men's rate has been decreasing recently.

(2) Comparisons among 6 groups according to gender and academic majors

Figure 5 shows longitudinal rates of Taking-off with regard to gender and major differences.

When the data on taking off academic years were sorted by gender and major, male liberal arts majors had the highest rate, followed by female liberal arts majors in 2005. Chi-square test showed a significant difference among the groups by less than 0.01 probability and residual analyses showed that both male and female liberal arts majors were significantly more likely to have Taking-off students in 2005 by less than 0.01 probability. Regarding the total data for 1985 to 2005, there was also a significant difference among the groups by chi-square test ($< .01$) and residual analyses showed that male liberal arts major group was significantly more likely to have Taking-off students by less than 0.01 probability. Recently, however, the liberal arts major's rate of taking off has been decreasing.

Figure 6 shows longitudinal rates of leaving school with regard to gender and major differences.

Male science majors had the highest rate, followed by female liberal arts majors in 2005. Chi-square test showed a significant difference among the groups by less than 0.01 probability and residual analyses showed that male science majors and male liberal arts majors were significantly more likely to have leaving school students in 2005 by less than 0.01 probability. Regarding the total data for 1985 to 2005, there was also a significant difference among the groups by chi-square test and residual analyses showed that male science major and male liberal arts major were significantly more likely to have leaving school students by less than 0.01 probability.

Figure 7 shows longitudinal rates of repeating academic years with regard to gender and major differences.

Male liberal arts majors had the highest rate, followed by male science majors. In 2005, chi-square test showed a significant difference among the groups by less than 0.01 probability and residual analyses showed that male liberal arts majors and male science majors were significantly more likely to have repeating

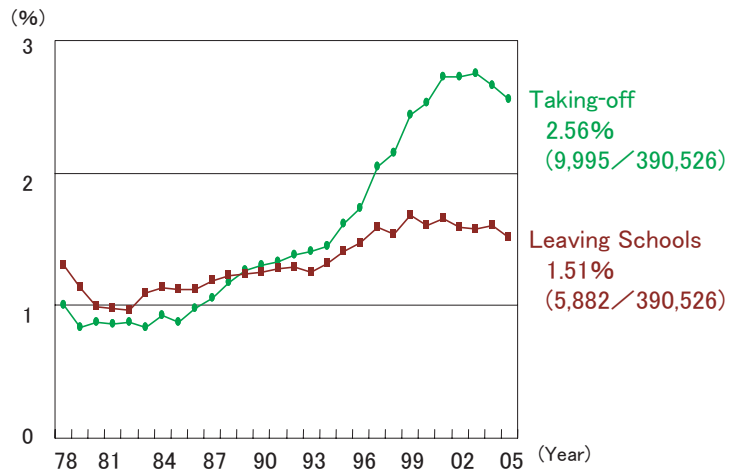


Figure 1 : Longitudinal Features of Rates of Taking-off and Leaving Schools

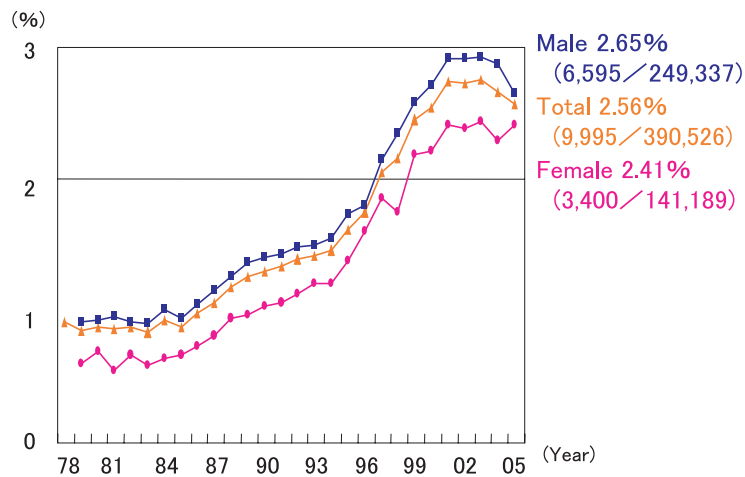


Figure 2 : Longitudinal features of Rates of Taking Academic Years off (Comparison between Genders)

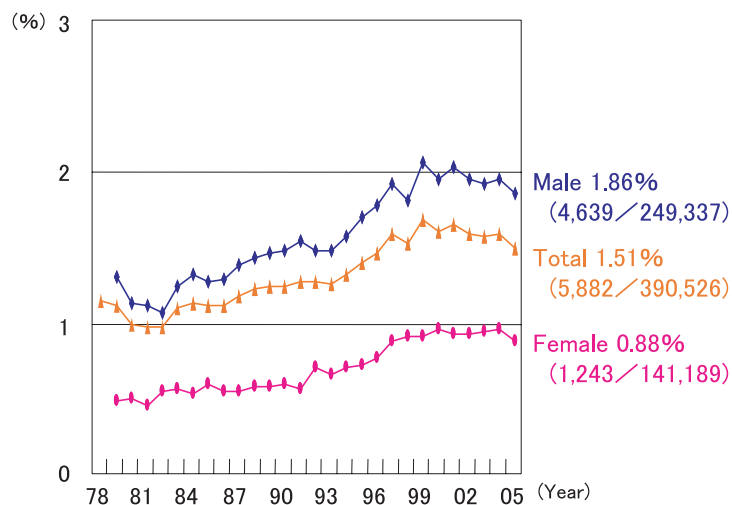


Figure 3 : Longitudinal Features of Rates of Leaving Schools (Comparison between Genders)

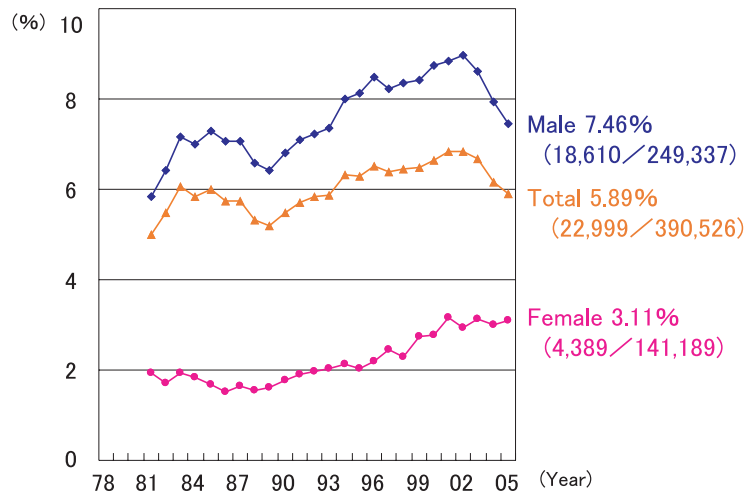


Figure 4 : Longitudinal Features of Rates of Repeating Academic Years (Comparison between Genders)

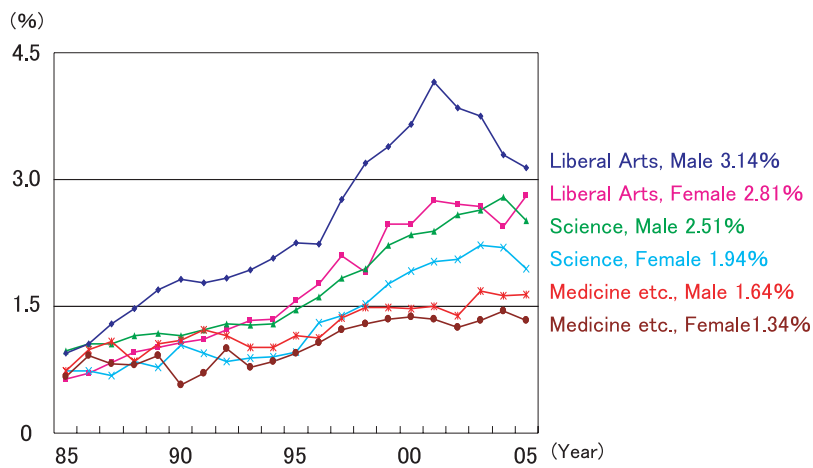


Figure 5 : Longitudinal Features of Rates of Taking Academic Years off (Comparisons among 6 groups according to Gender and Majors)

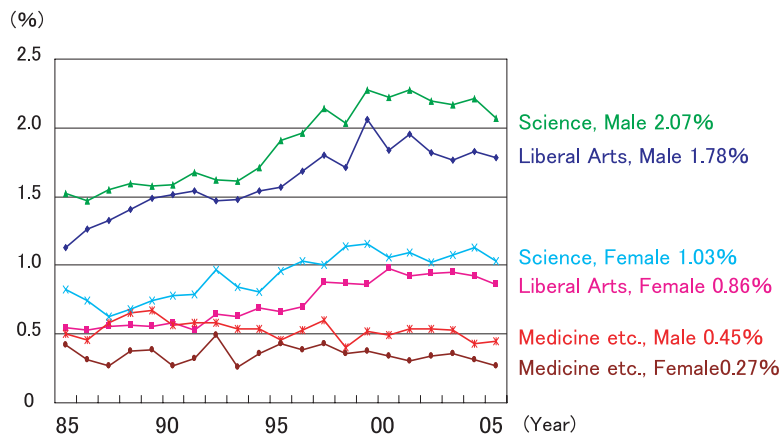


Figure 6 : Longitudinal Features of Rates of Leaving Schools (Comparisons among 6 groups according to Gender and Majors)

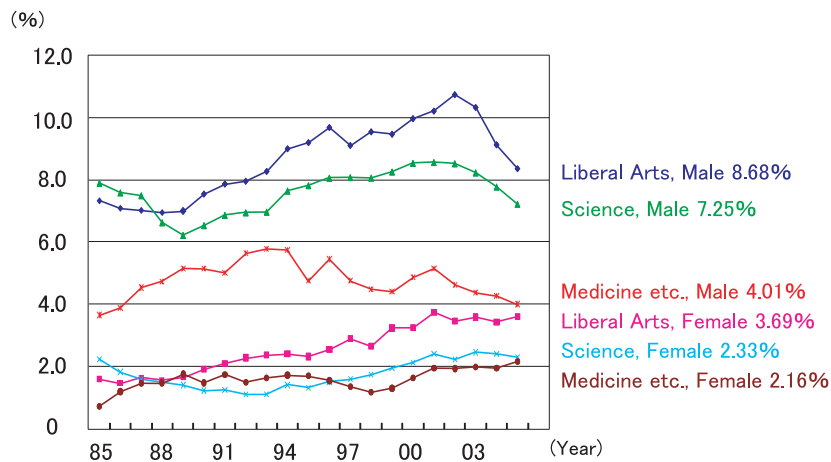


Figure 7 : Longitudinal Features of Rate of Repeating Academic Years (Comparisons among 6 groups according to Gender and Majors)

students by less than 0.01 probability. Regarding the total data for 1985 to 2005, there was also a significant difference among the groups by chi-square test and residual analyses showed that male liberal arts major and male science major were significantly more likely to have repeating students by less than 0.01 probability.

In summation, the results of the study on the rates of academic events were as follows.

The rate for men was larger than that for women for an each event. Each rate of academic event, such as repeating or taking off academic years and leaving school, has increased compared with that of 20 years ago. Nevertheless, the rates for men of taking off and repeating academic years have been diminishing recently.

Considered by major, the rate of taking off for male liberal arts majors was the highest. The rate of leaving school was highest for male science majors, followed by the male liberal arts majors. The rate of repeating academic years was highest for the male liberal arts majors followed by the male science majors. For all of these academic events, however, the students of 6-year courses had very low rates.

(3) Study of the reasons

The reasons for Taking-off and Leaving-school were examined and classified into 6 groups according to Table 1.

Figure 8 shows longitudinal features of the reasons for taking academic years off.

The two lines in the small graph represent the overall rates of the universities and the rates of the participants

in this study for taking academic years off. Although only a fraction of the total participated in the study of reasons, the data from the sample are similar to those of the whole number of participants, indicating that it is representative of the whole.

While the positive reasons (maintaining Academic Progress) have been taking an important place, the rate of the negative reasons (other than maintaining Academic Progress) still represents a high proportion of the total.

In 2005, the cases described clearly as "student apathy" was only 33 cases out of 2051 total negative reason cases. However, summing other cases except "switching the major or school" resulted 933 out of the total negative reason cases (45.49%). They were considered as "student apathy state". Moreover, some of the cases of "switching the major or school" might be considered as "student apathy state" in a broad sense.

The data were not gotten from clinical interviews, so there is limitation in this study of examining the actual psychiatric state of the students.

The rate of mental disorders is not high. The category of mental disorders only includes those students who were diagnosed by mental health professionals. Many students with mental disorders, however, might be involved in the negative reasons (classification 3) without seeing mental health doctors or receiving a diagnosis.

Environmental reasons, especially economic reasons, have also been increasing these days. The percentages of economic reasons out of environmental reasons were as follows: 70.0% in 2000, 70.3% in 2001, 75.0% in 2002, 77.2% in 2003, 79.0% in 2004, 76.4% in 2005.

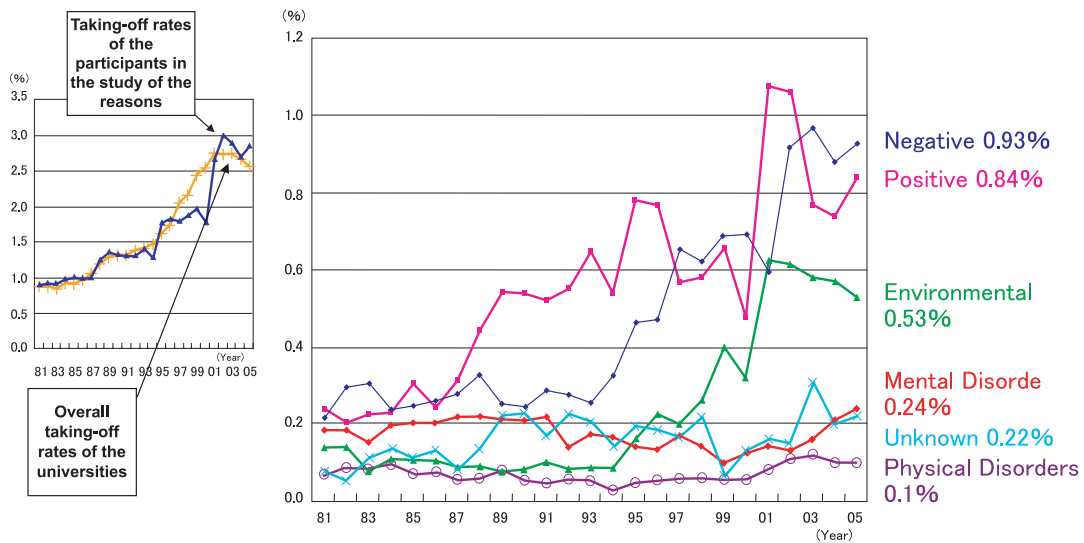


Figure 8 : Longitudinal Features of the Reasons of Taking Academic Years off

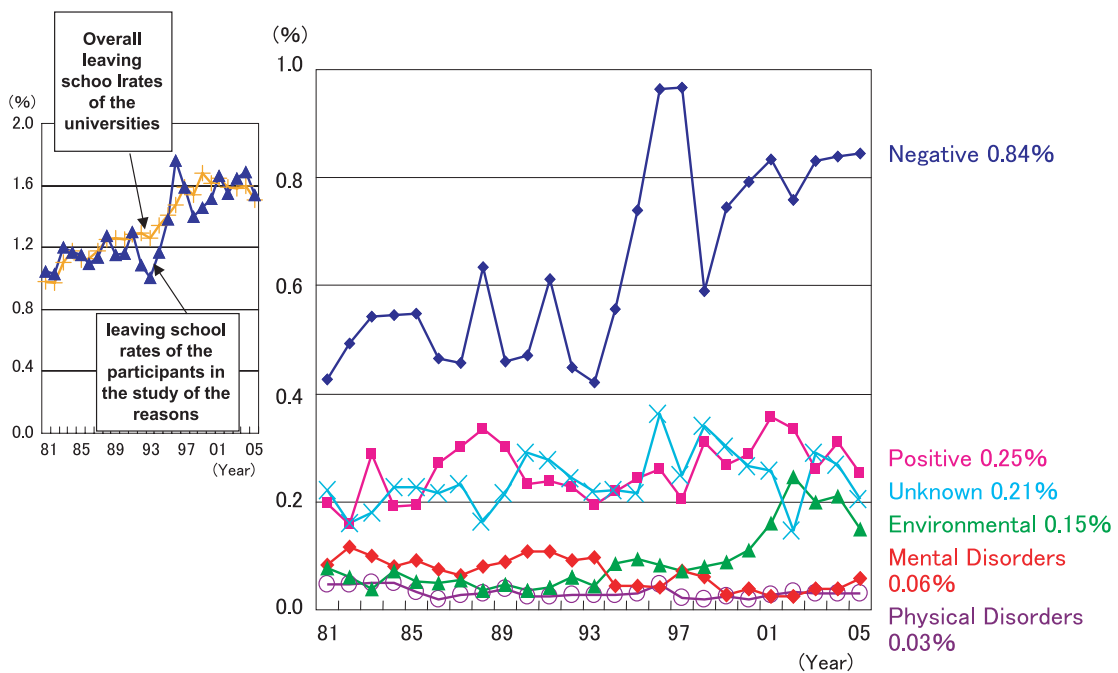


Figure 9 : Longitudinal Features of the Reasons of Leaving Schools

In Japanese national universities, taking time off from school gives students a break from paying tuition during which they can work and earn money.

Figure 9 shows longitudinal features of the reasons for leaving school.

The rate of negative reasons has been highest compared with all other reasons since the study began

years ago.

In 2005, the cases described clearly as “student apathy” was only 25cases out of 1842 total negative reason cases. However, summing other cases except “switching the major or school” and “expelled out of legal problems” resulted 791 out of the total negative reason cases: 42.94%. They were considered as “student apathy state”. “Switching the major or school”

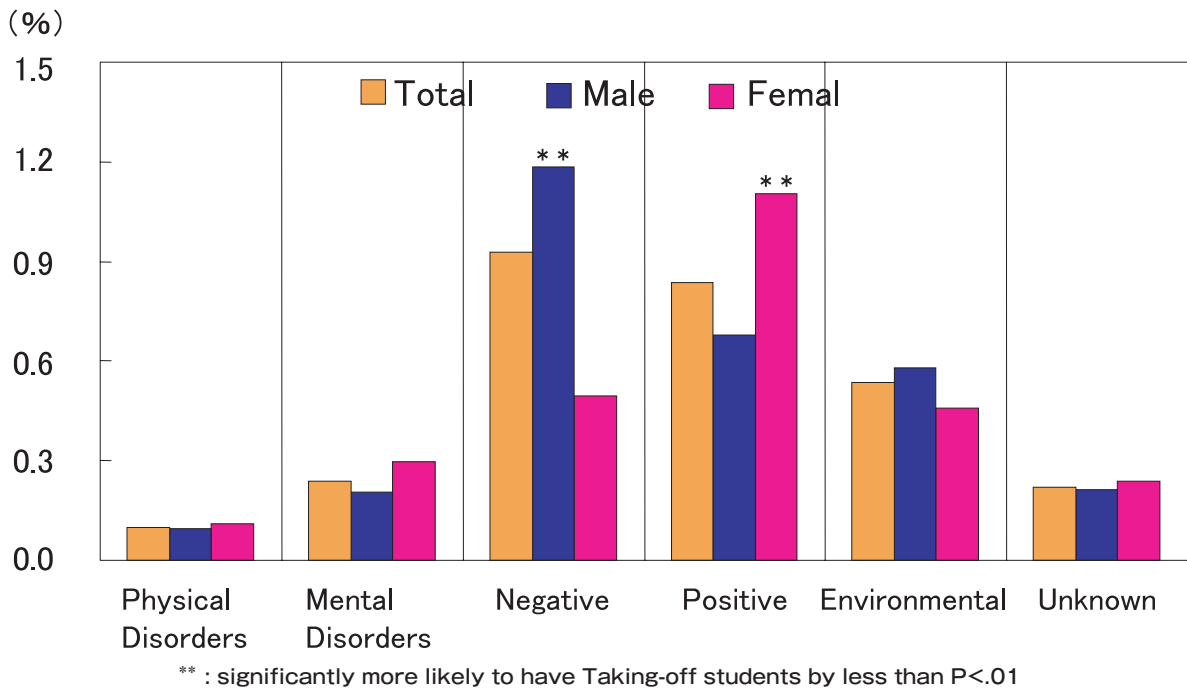


Figure 10 : Reasons of Taking Academic Years off in 2005 (Comparison between Genders)

cases were 1044: 56.68% and again “student apathy state” might be involved in a certain ratio.

The rate of mental disorders is low. The same phenomenon as that seen for the rates of taking-off could be happening; that is, many students with mental disorders might have been involved in the negative reasons classification group3.

Furthermore, economic reasons are also increasing these days, as may also be the case for taking off academic years. The percentages of economic reasons out of environmental reasons were as follows: 58.5% in 2000, 70.6% in 2001, 83.3% in 2002, 79.1% in 2003, 74.9% in 2004, 82.2% in 2005.

In Figure 10, the genders were compared for each category of the reasons for taking off in 2005. Chi-square test was used.

With respect to negative reasons, men were dominant (P<0.01); whereas women were dominant for positive reasons (P<0.01).

In Figure11, the 6 groups were compared, divided by gender and majors, for each category of the reasons for taking off in 2005. Chi-square test was used and then residual analyses were performed.

With respect to negative reasons, the rates of male science majors were the highest followed by those of

male liberal arts majors. Chi-square test showed a significant difference among the 6 groups by less than 0.01 probability and residual analyses showed that male science majors and male liberal arts majors were significantly more likely to have Taking-off students because of negative reasons in 2005 by less than 0.01 probability. For the positive reasons, the rates of female liberal arts and male liberal arts majors were high. The results of chi-square test and the residual analyses showed that those groups were significantly more likely to have Taking-off students because of positive reasons in 2005 by less than 0.01 probability.

In Figure12, the genders were compared for each category of the reasons of leaving school in 2005. Chi-square test was used.

Men dominated for both negative reasons (P<0.01) and positive reasons (P<0.01), although the population of positive reasons was very small.

In Figure 13, the 6 groups were compared according to gender and majors for each category of the reasons for leaving school in 2005. Chi-square test was used and residual analyses were performed.

With regard to negative reasons, the rates of male science majors were the highest followed by that of the male liberal arts majors. Chi-square test showed a

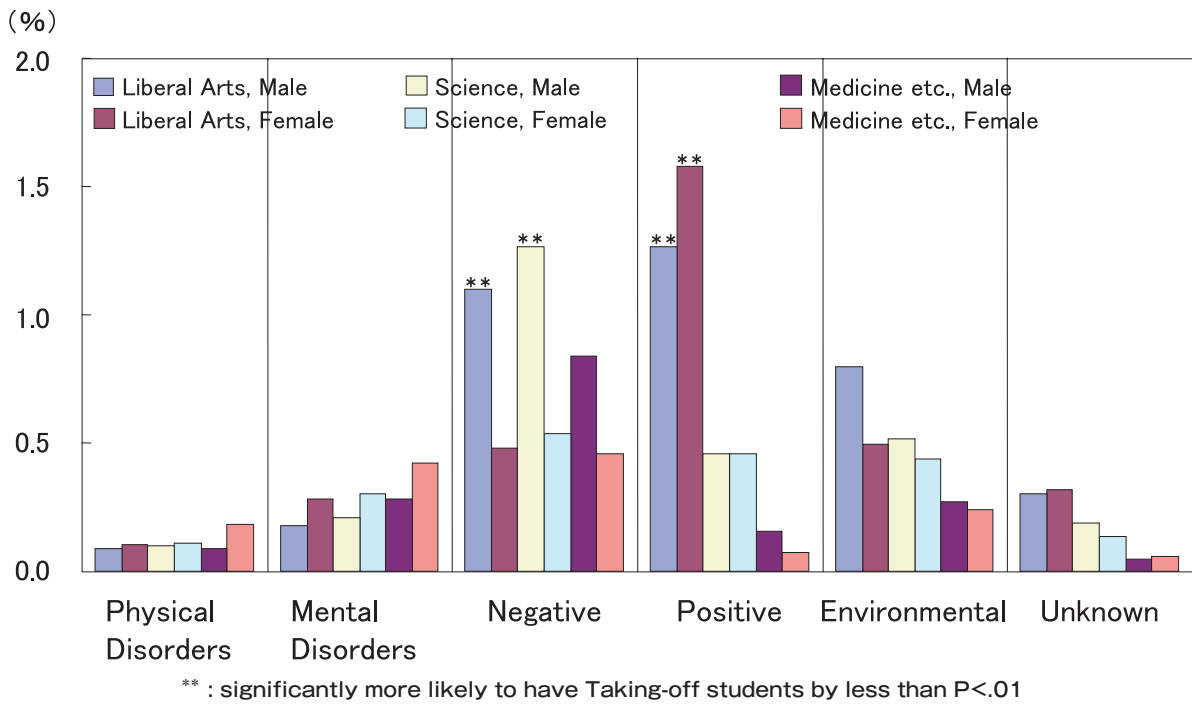


Figure 11 : Reasons of Taking Academic Years off in 2005 (Comparisons among 6 groups according to Gender and Majors)

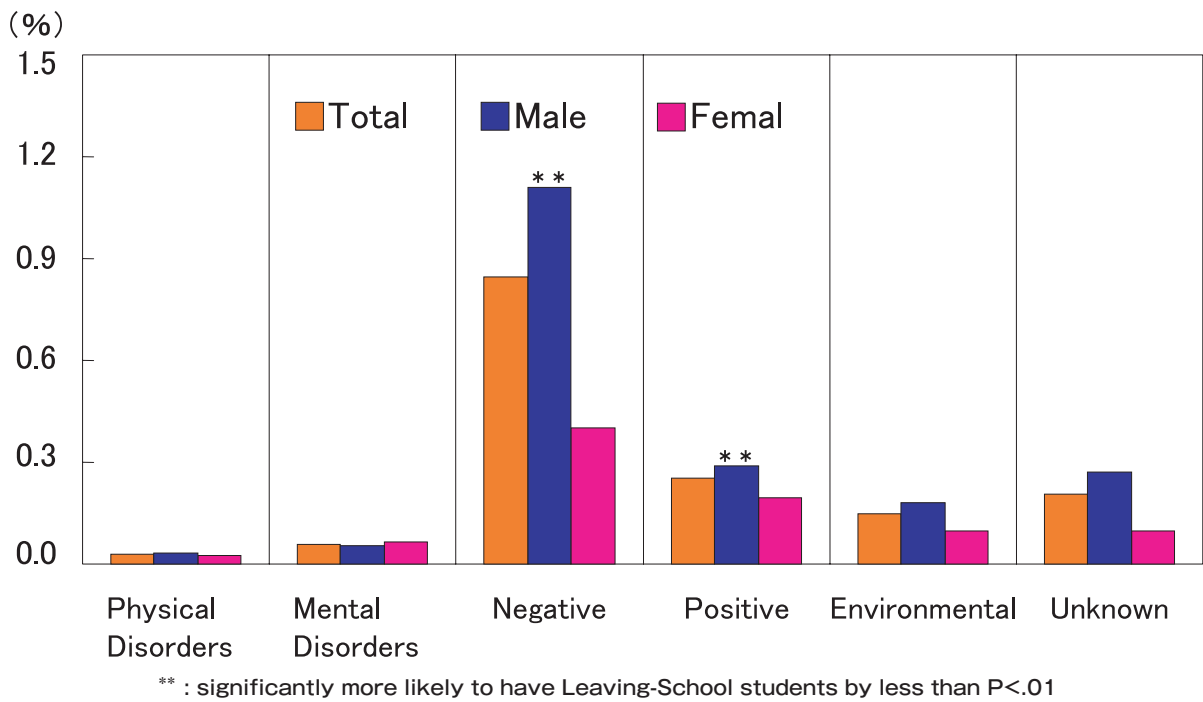


Figure 12 : Reasons of Leaving Schools in 2005 (Comparison between Genders)

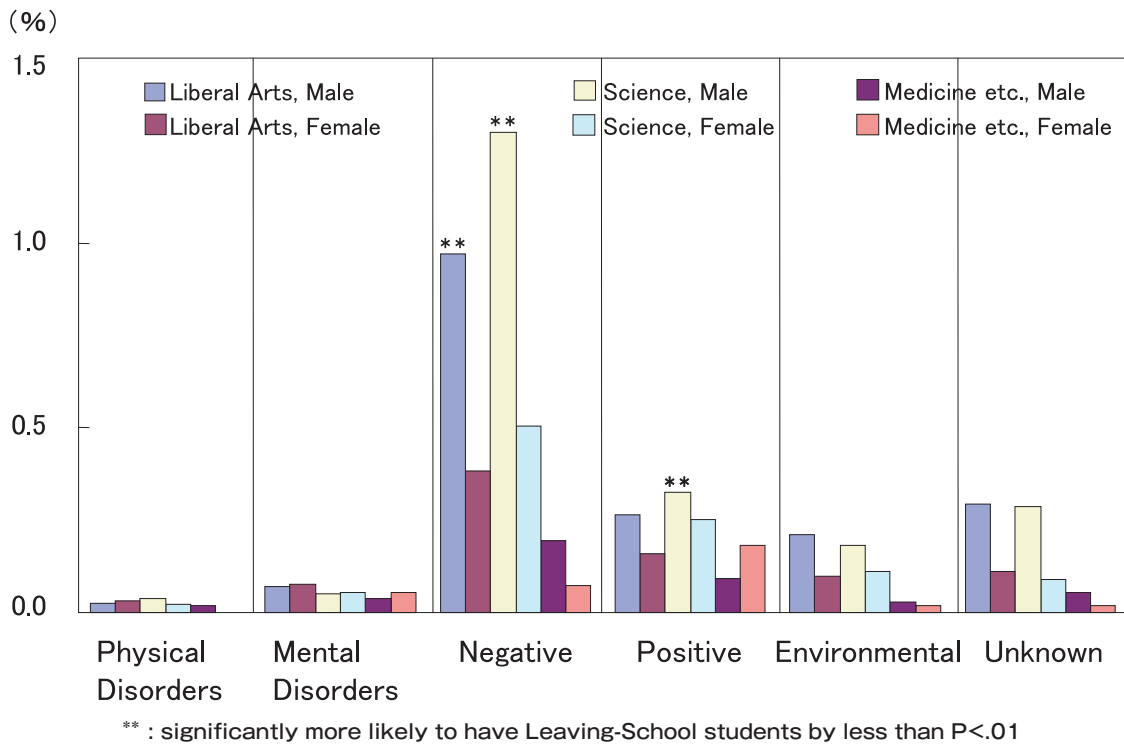


Figure 13 : Reasons of Leaving Schools in 2005
(Comparisons among 6 groups according to Gender and Majors)

significant difference among the 6 groups by less than 0.01 probability and residual analyses showed that male science majors and male liberal arts majors were significantly more likely to have leaving school students because of negative reasons in 2005 by less than 0.01 probability. For positive reasons, the rates of male science majors were higher than the others, although the population of positive reasons was very small. Chi-square test showed significant difference among the 6 groups by less than 0.01 probability and residual analyses showed that male science majors were significantly more likely to have leaving school students because of positive reasons in 2005 by less than 0.01 probability.

Discussions

In conclusion, a considerable number of Japanese national university students, especially 4-year course males, leave school, repeat or take off academic years because of an apathetic state. In terms of leaving school, which is the most serious academic event, the group of male science majors has had the highest rate throughout the study period. In contrast, the rate of

students in the 6-year courses being involved in each academic event is rather low.

Incidentally, the mortality rate by suicide has been the highest among Japanese university students⁹⁾¹⁰⁾; and the suicide rate has been higher for the students who repeated or took academic years off than others⁹⁾¹⁰⁾.

In the first place, it is necessary to watch out for those students who are absent from classes or have a lack of earned credits. Those students are likely to be in a state of "student apathy" and have more serious problems. Professors and staff are expected to recommend that they go to a psychiatric service of the university. Intensive psychiatric and psychological support is necessary for those students. Not only to prevent the result of them leaving school because of their student-apathy state, but also to prevent them from committing suicide.

According to the statistical report of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the population of 18 year-old people has been diminishing during the past 20 years, whereas the rates of getting into colleges have been increasing. While people say that the standard of students has

gone down, this is obviously so on the basis of this statistic. As the rates of getting into colleges increased, the rates of academic events like leaving school, taking off, and repeating academic years went up. The change of recent features of the rates of academic events might also be related to the economic depression in Japan and to the national universities attaining corporate status. Regardless of the reasons, however, it is the universities obligation to provide support in accordance with students' standards.

Here I propose some questions.

(A) Why men? Gender Difference?

(B) Why do science majors have more serious problems like leaving school?

(C) Why is student apathy syndrome such a big problem in Japan, whereas it is not so in the U.S. where the term of the syndrome was first proposed?

(A) Why men? Gender Difference?

It is expected that the quality of female students should be better than that of male students. The rate of going to universities was still lower for women (36.8%) than men (51.3%) in 2005¹²⁾, thus female students are regarded as being more carefully selected.

Female students study hard to prepare for getting good work opportunities in the future, and they can not afford a reckless way of life, since they are minorities.

Men have a greater desire for success, and so they are too sensitive to failure to be able to deal with situations in which compromise is required. Consequently, they develop an all-or-nothing attitude and withdraw from academic life when failure seems possible.

Female students come to counseling to seek help much more frequently than do male students in any of the universities studied. Women are good at receiving support from others to solve problems. On the other hand, men believe they are not supposed to disclose their weakness. They try to solve problems by themselves, which can result in withdrawing from society and dropping out of school. This is a big issue of gender difference, which is even related to the higher suicide rate of men¹³⁾.

(B) Why science majors?

Compared with liberal arts programs, science courses require more compulsory classes and accumulated knowledge and skills, especially as the amount of requirements has been increasing through recent scientific developments. Once a student misses several

classes or fails, it is more difficult to get back on track; and it may seem easier to withdraw from the academic life.

In the 6-year courses like medicine, dentistry, and veterinary, the curriculums are organized to provide training for passing the national licensing examinations; thus it might be easier for students to get on the track of studying, and end up with low rates of leaving school, taking off, and repeating academic years.

It also seems that male science major students are more likely to have difficulty to communicate with others. That is my impression through clinical interviews and the annual survey for first year students at Ibaraki University. That aspect of these students might lead to their withdrawal.

Intensive care is necessary for them in terms of both academic and psychiatric support¹⁴⁾.

(C) Why is student apathy a big issue in Japan?

It is highly competitive to get into universities with high standards, and students can apply to only one or two national universities per year. Consequently, there are many students who end up studying at schools they did not want to attend, and they are not satisfied with their present situation in terms of academic standards or their majors.

Due to institutional rigidity, it is not easy for a student to change majors or schools without losing credit for the work they have already completed at a former university. It is not easy to come back to the university after leaving school, either. Students, therefore, just stay at universities without having any interest in their major subject and become apathetic¹³⁾.

Moreover, students often have to spend a whole year, when they fail in only one subject. In other words, they repeat an academic year just because of a credit. Consequently, Japanese students are more likely to enter into a "student apathy" state, in other words, a Hikikomori state.

Compared to Japanese universities, American universities have more institutional pliability. Students take courses and get credits at a semester. Students do not have to stay at a university whole year for one failed class. In many American universities it seems not difficult for students to come back after leaving or switch departments. Therefore they do not have to stay at a university without any interest on studying the subject. The institutional pliability like this kind of thing will affect students' mental health and behavior. That should be one of the reasons why the problem of "student apathy" faded out in the USA, whereas it is still

a big issue in Japan.

Institutional pliability is necessary for Japanese universities, not only to prevent students from being in a student apathy state, but also to respond to the recent trend toward increasing transfer of majors or changing schools¹⁴⁾.

After all, mental health problems in the college population seem to be increasing in the U.S. and other countries. We share the concern that mental health problems lead to students dropping out, failing in college, committing suicide, or engaging in other serious behaviors, if left unrecognized and untreated¹⁴⁾. Mental health professionals have been trying to find effective ways to help them in the situation where counseling services are limited. Cook LJ¹⁵⁾ explains about offering courses on mental health issues and help for seeking grant opportunities to be used to develop and enhance services for the college community.

Many of the counseling services on the U.S. campuses are carried out in very brief psychological interventions, that is in 5 or fewer sessions. It is said that brief interventions are still beneficial and effective for students¹⁶⁾.

We have to keep trying to find ways to encourage students in the "student apathy" state to come to counseling services.

It is also necessary to watch out for students' absence and lack of earning credits as I mentioned above to prevent "student apathy" "Hikikomori" and further mental problems of university students. Additionally, it should be important to educate professors and staff about relationship between mental health problems and academic problems like drop out and so on. I have been trying to teach students about this subject in the class as well as giving a lecture to professors and staff of universities in Japan.

Recently, many Japanese universities have got to adopt Teaching Assistants or professors in charge of a small group of students, who are expected to take care of students both academically and privately, and they have been functioning as mentors for them to intervene their crisis.

In the U.S., several programs about teaching mental health have been tried at high schools and middle schools, especially regarding suicide prevention¹⁷⁾. Head start education about mental health seems effective.

We have to keep trying to find effective ways to prevent "student apathy" "Hikikomori" and other mental problems of university students.

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