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Japanese General Social Survey
Beginning and Development

by Noriko Iwai [1]

Zusammenfassung

Der Japanese General Social Survey wird seit 2000 jährlich erhoben. Die Entwicklung dieser Umfrage, die Inhalte und Details der Datenerhebung werden beschrieben.

Abstract

The Japanese General Social Survey started in 2000 and is conducted yearly since. The development of this survey, the contents and details of data collection are described.

1 Introduction

The Japanese General Social Surveys (JGSS) Project is the first attempt in Japan to conduct a nationwide general social survey on a regular basis and to provide its data for secondary analyses without delay for use by social scientists in Japan and overseas. This innovative project has been undertaken by the Institute of Regional Studies, Osaka University of Commerce, and the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo[2].

The JGSS project endeavours to supply survey data which makes time-series analyses and international comparisons possible, as does the U.S. GSS. It aims to collect information essential for understanding Japanese society: values, attitudes and behavioural patterns of the Japanese people. To make analyses in various fields of

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2 The Zentralarchiv is holding a Japanese version of the 2000 codebook. In the near future an English version will be archived under the ZA-study-no. 3912.

study possible, JGSS surveys cover a wide range of topics: the respondents' family structure, working conditions, income, occupations of respondents, those of parents and spouses, political affiliations, family life, life/death, religion, leisure, experience of trauma, criminal victimization, etc.

Like GSS data, JGSS survey data does not always give detailed information in a specific area; rather, JGSS data aims to provide non-specific and general information that can be utilized by scholars in various fields of the social sciences. JGSS data thus promotes studies and discussions of many different themes. In order to obtain high quality data, the JGSS project team thoroughly scrutinizes its survey methods. Two pilot surveys were conducted prior to JGSS-2000, the first full-scale survey. JGSS data is open to academia and is accessible through the Social Science Japan (SSJ) Data Archive of the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo.

This paper consists of six parts: 1) beginning of the JGSS Project; 2) the project team; 3) survey schedule; 4) use of data; 5) JGSS questionnaires; and 6) coming development.

2 Beginning of the JGSS Project

Hundreds of surveys are conducted every year by the Japanese government, local governments, the mass media, non-profit/profit organizations, and/or academics in Japan. While they publish distributions of responses and results of analyses, their data are seldom available for secondary analyses, even for research purposes. It has been the custom of Japanese researchers or groups of researchers to keep their data to themselves and limit its usage. Therefore, being able to analyze the data of a nationwide survey has been the privilege of a limited number of scholars and their graduate students.

Looking at the rapid development of databases and data archives in U.S. and European academic circles, there has been a growing request among Japanese researchers for archiving data as common property. This request was especially urged by scholars who had studied at U.S. universities and had the experience of using survey data sets available through data archives. Prof. ***Ikuo Kabashima***, of the University of Tokyo released data sets of voting and political opinions to academic circles; it is called Leviathan Databank. Prof. ***Ichiro Miyake***, of Kansai University also released data sets of political opinions.

Then, the Faculty of Social Information of Sapporo Gakuin University founded an archive of information on surveys conducted by members of the Japanese Socio-

logical Association. This archive, which is called the Social and Opinion Research Database, also provides 16 data sets for secondary analyses. In 1998 the aforementioned SSJ Data Archive of the University of Tokyo was founded, which stores data sets deposited not only by individual researchers but also by research institutes of private firms. However, compared with data archives in Europe and the U.S., Japanese archives lacked comprehensive data from general social surveys on Japanese society for time-series analyses by social science researchers.

To this end, a joint project was launched by the Institute of Regional Studies, Osaka University of Commerce, and the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, with the following objectives:

(1) To collect and build cumulative data on general social surveys in Japan in a regular and consistent manner, thus enabling a time-series analysis;

(2) To provide data for secondary analyses to researchers and university students in social science fields; and,

(3) To provide data in a format useful for international comparative studies, research, and reports.

The joint project team commenced the preliminary study for the JGSS project in the autumn of 1998. In March 1999, the JGSS project obtained five years of financial support from the Japanese government. The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) at Osaka University of Commerce was designated as a "Gakujutsu-Frontier Suishin-kyoten" (a key institute on the frontiers of academic projects) by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, which subsidizes the project. The JGSS project became a 5-year (1999-2003) academic project in which the Japanese General Social Surveys are designed and carried out at IRS in collaboration with the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo. Its data sets are distributed by SSJ Data Archive, Information Center for Social Science Research on Japan, Institute of Social Science, the University of Tokyo.

3 The Project Team

The project is headed by Prof. ***Ichiro Tanioka***, (Osaka University of Commerce) and Prof. ***Michio Nitta***, (University of Tokyo). It is currently directed by Prof. ***Noriko Iwai***, (Osaka University of Commerce) with Ms. ***Minae Osawa***, (Osaka University of Commerce) as Project Manager. Prof. ***Hiroki Sato***, (University of Tokyo)

was a co-principal investigator for the period 1999-2004. The JGSS project office is located at Osaka University of Commerce in Higashi-Osaka City, Japan.

Although the core team members remain the same, members vary from survey to survey. The team consists of scholars from Osaka University of Commerce and the University of Tokyo as well as researchers from both public and private educational/research institutions to cover various fields of study of sociology, social psychology, economics, management, marketing, education, laws, communication, linguistics, demography, statistics, and information science.

4 Survey Schedule

The JGSS schedule is shown in Table 1. In 1999 two pilot surveys were conducted to scrutinize the survey methods to be employed in the full-scale survey. The first full-scale survey, JGSS-2000, was conducted from the end of October to the end of November 2000. Then, the survey has been conducted annually in autumn. The fourth survey, JGSS-2003 was conducted in October 2003 and its data is now being processed. The data sets of the two pilot surveys, JGSS-2000, JGSS-2001, and JGSS-2002 have already been released from the SSJ Data Archive.

In June 2003 JGSS International Symposium was held at Osaka University of Commerce. A new challenging stage for JGSS project is now developing from the symposium, the details of which I will discuss in the last section of this paper.

Table 1 Survey Schedule

March 1999	1st Pilot Survey conducted
November 1999	2nd Pilot Survey conducted
November 2000	JGSS-2000 survey conducted
November 2001	JGSS-2001 survey conducted
November 2002	JGSS-2002 survey conducted
November 2003	JGSS-2003 survey conducted
November 2005 (planned)	JGSS-2005 survey conducted
November 2006 (planned)	JGSS-2006/EASS-2006 survey conducted
November 2008 (planned)	JGSS-2008/EASS-2008 survey conducted

5 Use of Data

5.1 Data Availability and Documentation

The JGSS project is planned so that its survey data is released without delay for educational and academic purposes. The data set is released in March each year, approximately 18 months after each survey. Information on survey administration, which is essential to secondary analysis, can easily be obtained on the website (http://jgss.daishodai.ac.jp.) or from the published Codebook.

5.2 JGSS Website

The JGSS website provides such information as project summary, survey schedule, survey questions, sampling and administration methods, responses, and how to obtain information such as survey data in both Japanese and English. The website also has a subject index: by selecting a topic of interest, a visitor is led to the relevant JGSS variables, corresponding survey question(s) and data (frequency distribution of responses). The site is updated in March every year when a new data set is released.

5.3 JGSS Codebook

The JGSS Codebook is published in March each year when the data set is released (edited by Institute of Regional Studies, Osaka University of Commerce, and Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo).

5.4 Distribution of JGSS Data

Frequency distribution of the JGSS data can be seen on the JGSS website. Data sets can be obtained for academic purposes by researchers at universities and research institutes, graduate students, and college students guided by professors, from the SSJ Data Archive of the Japan Sociological Information Center, Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo (http://www.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ssjda/). Users are obliged to observe a written oath on confidentiality of data, rules on usage, publication, etc.

The data file of JGSS-2000 (Japanese version) was released from ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research) February 2004. The same data file is also being processed for release at Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozial-

forschung in Cologne. The English version of data files for JGSS-2000, JGSS-2001, and JGSS-2002 will soon be deposited at SSJDA, ICPSR and ZA.

5.5 Users

An increasing number of researchers and students are using JGSS data for educational and research purposes. The data sets are used not only in Japan but also overseas (the U.S., Germany, Hong Kong and Australia). Japanese or other Asian graduate students who study abroad intend to use JGSS for their Ph.D. theses and foreign students who study in Japan intend to use JGSS for their Master's or Ph.D. theses. JGSS data sets are utilized in courses or seminars in several fields of study, such as sociology, psychology, education, economics, political science and information science. Some of the courses and seminars which have made use of data sets include economics, education, journalism, political opinions, statistics, data analyses, psychostatistics, behaviormetrics, sociological methodology, applied sociological methodology, information system, economic information system, micro data analyses, applied micro economics and so on. It is expected that a substantial number of research papers will be produced using the JGSS data sets, and the project thereby will contribute to deeper understanding of Japanese society.

5.6 JGSS Monograph and Book

A collection of monographs written by the JGSS project members has been published annually in March. Its publication is also scheduled for March 2004 and 2005. In exchange for cleaning the data set, project members have the privilege of analyzing JGSS data sets prior to their release.

In the spring of 2002, JGSS co-principal investigators edited a book in which every member of the project team wrote a short monograph for their own field of study based on the analyses of JGSS-2000. As a whole, the book portrays values and behavioral patterns of Japanese people from a variety of perspectives: family, gender, work situations, social stratification, voting behavior and political opinions, victimization of crimes and social norms, environment of information technology, enjoying life, and attitudes toward life and death. The title of the book is Japanese Values and Behavioral Patterns Seen in the Japanese General Social Survey (***Iwai*** and ***Sato*** [eds.], 2002).

5.7 JGSS Paper Competition

Getting a hint from the GSS student paper competition, the JGSS project team decided to hold the JGSS paper competition for the purpose of increasing active users of the JGSS data sets. The steering committee of the JGSS project (co-directors and co-principal investigators) acted as judges. Winning papers are printed in the JGSS monographs published in every March.

6 JGSS Questionnaires

The JGSS questionnaire consists of an interview section and a self-administered section. We allocated complex branching questions to interview: respondent's work situations, household composition, marital history, and so on. On the other hand, questions on opinions and attitudes which are likely to elicit socially desirable responses if asked face-to-face, were included in the self-administered section.

6.1 Selection of Questions

At the outset of the 1st Pilot Survey, the project team selected questions for the JGSS questionnaire based on the following criteria.

1. Questions which have been asked frequently in GSS and in other well-known surveys in Japan.
2. Questions which are deemed useful for analyzing Japanese society.
3. Questions which are deemed necessary for time-series analyses or future sociological studies.

The 1996 GSS Cumulative Codebook was used as a base. After examining all the questions used in the GSS, we selected questions which are especially important and have appeared frequently in the five GSS surveys since 1990. Reflecting the differences between the U.S. and Japanese societies, JGSS includes far fewer questions relating to religion and race.

We also examined thoroughly questions asked in Japanese surveys which were repeatedly conducted nationwide by the government, private firms or groups of researchers. Especially, the following surveys provided us valuable information: The Study on the Japanese National Character conducted by the Institute of Statistical Mathematics, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (Hayashi, 2001), the Social Stratification and Social Mobility Survey conducted by a group of sociologists (***Seiyama*** et al., 2000), the Attitude Surveys on

Japanese and the ISSP (the International Social Survey Programme) International Comparative Survey conducted by the Research Institute of Broadcasting Culture, Nihon Hoso Kyokai (2000), the World Values Survey conducted by Dentsu Communication Institute and the Leisure Development Center (1999), and the National Fertility Survey in Japan (www.ipss.go.jp/Japanese/doukou12/doukou12) and the National Survey on Family in Japan (www.ipss.go.jp/Japanese/Nsfj2/NSFJ2_sum) conducted by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Consequently, the JGSS questionnaire involved various question fields including but not limited to: working environments, family, political opinions, social network, social stratification, religion, leisure activities, and experiences of victimization. Table 2 shows batteries of core replicating questions and topical modules which were asked in JGSS-2000/2001/2002/2003. In the codebook of each survey, we make a list of references for each question; we list the name of the survey which uses an identical or a similar question to the JGSS question.

Table 2 Core Replicating Questions and Topical Modules*

		JGSS-2000	JGSS-2001	JGSS-2002	JGSS-2003	
					Form A	Form B
Interview	Present job	x	x	x	x	
	Side job	x	x	x	x	
	First job	x	+channels	+channels	---	
	Last job	x	x	x	---	
	Education	x	x	x	x	
	Income	x	x	x	x	
	Marital status	x	x	x	x	
	Spouse's job/education/income	x	x	x	x	
	Father's/mother's education	x	x	x	x	
	Household composition	x	x	x	x	
	Sibling composition	x	+spouse's siblings	+spouse's siblings	---	
	Political opinions	x	x	x	---	
	Marital history	x	x	x	---	
	Year of children's birth	x	x	x	---	
	Parents' jobs at age 15	x	x	x	x	
	Place of residence at age 15	x	x	x	x	
	Housing: area, ownership	x	x	x	ownership	
	Social status	x	x	x	x	
	Labor union	x	x	x	membership	
	Job training	x	x	---	---	
	Topical Modules			Major Housing costs, School expenses	Time/means for commuting Holidays, Local characteristics	
Self-administered	Happiness/satisfaction	x	x	x	x	x
	Marital happiness	x	x	x	---	---
	Health condition/trauma	x	x	x	x	health only
	State of finances	x	x	x	x	x
	Social Stratification	x	x	x	x	x
	Religion	x	x	x	x	---
	Gender role attitudes	xx	xx	xx	xx	x
	Ideal no./sex of children	x	x	x	x	---
	Spouse's health/housework	x	x	x	---	---
	Last name of husband & wife	x	x	x	x	---
	Political opinions	x	x	x	x	xx
	Group membership	x	x	x	x	x
	Trust in people/organizations	x	x	x	x	---
	Leisure activities	x	x	xx	xx	---
	Violence	x	x	x	x	---
	Drinking/smoking	x	x	x	x	---
	Reading books/newspaper	x	x	+which paper	+which paper	---
	Use of information technology	x	x	x	x	---
	Morality: sex behavior, porno	x	x	---	---	---
	Euthanasia	x	x	x	x	---
	Non-native	x	x	x	xx	---
	Ecology	x	x	xx	xx	

		JGSS-2000	2001	JGSS-2002	JGSS-2003	
					Form A	Form B
Selfadministered	Aging/social security	x	x	x	x	---
	Topical Modules	Attitudes to grave, Pets, Death penalty, Adolescent prostitution, Juveniles Act Court decision, Female governor, Donator of organ, Victimization of violence, Life after death	JGSS-2000 plus: Care experiences (self/spouse), Japan Sports Advancement Lottery (toto)[except Juveniles Act]	Allergy disease Volunteer activity Ecology & consuming Meaning of schooling English study Gamble/casino	Allergy disease English study Consuming, Community, Bullying Juveniles Act Surrogate mom Casino, Female governor /Sumo	Social network (talk over troubles, work matters, politics), Political opinions

x: related questions, x: many questions, +: in addition to x, ---: not asked.

Some questions are repeated every year, some several times, and some only once. This is determined according to necessity, circumstance, and the future prospects as viewed by all researchers in the JGSS project team, which is comprised of sociologists, social psychologists, economists, demographers, and statisticians from various public and private universities and institutions.

6.2 Questionnaire of JGSS-2000

In addition to the core questions, the questionnaire of JGSS-2000 included the following topical questions or modules: attitudes toward the death penalty, the revision of the Juveniles Act, adolescent prostitution, life after death, one's own grave, organ donation, and the presence and meanings of pets in a household.

6.3 Questionnaire of JGSS-2001

The questions contained in JGSS-2001 were basically identical to those in JGSS-2000. There was only a minor change. The question on the revision of the Juveniles Act was omitted, since the Act had been revised before the enforcement of JGSS-2001. On the other hand, a question on Japan Sports Advancement Lottery (toto) and those on experiences caring for family members or relatives by the respondent and his/her spouse were included. Because of the identical features of JGSS-2000 and 2001, students and researchers can easily merge these two data files for their analyses.

6.4 Questionnaire of JGSS-2002

Topical questions and modules included in questionnaires of JGSS-2000 and 2001 were replaced by new questions in JGSS-2002. More than a year before the enforcement of JGSS-2002, co-principal investigators called for batteries of questions and modules to members of the JGSS project. Members who wanted to include questions or modules were asked to submit questions themselves, the rationale for their inclusion, and references. The steering committee of the JGSS project made the final decision on the replacement of questions. New topical questions and modules are as follows: allergy disease of the respondent and family members, names of the newspapers to which the respondent subscribes, kinds of volunteer activities done by the respondent and time spent for it, habits of gambling, habits in purchasing goods in relation to ecology, past experiences of studying English and the respondent's proficiency, and attitudes toward educational qualifications and the legalization of casinos.

Some questions which had been asked in the interview session were also replaced. Questions on the respondent's detailed educational background and the household's expenses for housing and for school were included.

Interesting modules on social networks and political opinions were submitted by three members of the project team. The steering committee made a decision to include these modules not in JGSS-2002 but in JGSS-2003, since the structure of the questionnaire would become more complicated by including these modules. It was also decided that a sample size of the JGSS-2003 would be increased and two different forms of questionnaires would be used for placement by split-balloting the sample of JGSS-2003. The three members who had submitted modules on social networks and political opinions were assigned to a project team which is responsible for making the questionnaire which contains social network modules and conducting a pilot survey in advance of the full-scale survey. The pilot survey was conducted October 2002.

6.5 Questionnaire of JGSS-2003

JGSS co-principal investigators called for batteries of questions and modules again to members of the JGSS project in the summer of 2002. By this time, some members of the project team were replaced and the project team expanded to include new members whose major fields are marketing, linguistics, law, human rights, and area studies. These members submitted questions or modules with their rationale

and references. The steering committee made a final decision on which questions to be included in the form-A questionnaire by placement for the JGSS-2003.

On the other hand, the form B questionnaire includes the modules on social networks and political opinions. Respondents are asked about his/her social network in three different spheres of life separately; to whom he/she talks over troubles of life, matters of work, and politics. To accommodate this module, the number of not so essential core questions included in questionnaires for the JGSS-2003 was further reduced for both placement and interview.

7 Coming Development

Thus far, the JGSS project team has conducted two pilot surveys and four full-scale national surveys during the last five years. The team has been cleaning the data from these surveys and has already released five data sets to academic circles for the purpose of education and research. The team has edited and published five volumes of codebooks, three monographs, and one book. The total number of data sets used amounts to more than eighteen hundreds. Users have written course papers, master's or doctor's theses and papers for professional journals by analyzing the data sets both in Japan and overseas. Members of the project team feel that we have produced a certain effect on education and research in the field of social sciences in Japan. Now there is an atmosphere among social scientists that survey data should be scheduled to be released to academic circles for the use of secondary analyses. Japan has become a nation which not only uses data sets collected by social scientists in other countries, but also provides Japanese data sets for users in other countries. The JGSS project undoubtedly contributes to the advancement of this process.

As mentioned earlier, from the JGSS International Symposium held in June 2003, a new challenge for JGSS has arisen. In November 2003, principal investigators of East Asian social surveys from China (Survey on the Social Change in Urban and Rural China: SSC), Taiwan (Taiwan Social Change Survey: TSCS), Japan (JGSS) and Korea (Korean General Social Survey: KGSS) gathered at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul for the Thematic Lecture Series, "Survey Researches in East Asia," and the Workshop on East Asian Studies organized by Sociology Department and Survey Research Center of the university. At the workshop all parties expressed mutual interest in carrying out a comparative study in East Asia by incorporating a set of common modules of questions into the regular surveys of each existing survey. The specifically Asian effort was felt necessary as similar attempts of international comparisons have often been dominated by the western countries in respect

with the choice of topics, administration techniques and so on. Out of the workshop a steering committee of East Asian Social Surveys (EASS) was formed.

EASS committee members met again in December 2003 at Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica in Taipei to further discuss a possibility of the first collaborative study. Then EASS committee organized a session titled "General Social Surveys in East Asia: Developments, Designs, and Dedications" at 36th World Congress of International Institute of Sociology in Beijing July 2004. The EASS committee agreed upon the schedules for the collaborative study, and the first EASS survey year was set to be administered in 2006. The theme of the first survey was set as the "family." The EASS committee plans to conduct a collaborative survey every two years.

Thus, a new perspective was developed for the JGSS Project during the final year of the first 5-year period of the project. The project applied for a continued sponsorship from the Japanese government and obtained its financial support for another five years (2004-2008).

We plan to conduct JGSS-2005, JGSS-2006/EASS-2006 and JGSS-2008/EASS-2008 as listed in Table 1 in the next five years. For these surveys, we intend to call for a battery of questions to be included in the questionnaire from researchers and graduate students at large. We have already called for questions for JGSS-2005 and received many proposals. The JGSS project intends to provide opportunities for researchers and students to participate in nationwide survey administration as well as encouraging them to utilize JGSS data.

8 Appendix

8.1 Sampling Design of JGSS-2000

Survey Area:	Nationwide
Population:	Males and Females 20-89 years of age
Sample Size:	4,500
Number of Sampling Spots:	300 points
Number of Valid Responses:	2,893
Response Rate:	64.9%
Sampling Method:	Two-stage stratified random sampling
Form of Register:	Register of electors

8.2 Sampling process

Stratification of population, by region (6) and by population size of cities/districts (3)

- 13 big cities: Sapporo, Sendai, Chiba, Tokyo Metropolitan Area, Yokohama, Kawasaki, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Hiroshima, Kitakyushu, Fukuoka
- Other cities
- Suburban districts

Allocation of 4,500 samples to each stratum according to the size of the population aged 20-89.

a) Sampling of spots

The number of sampling spots for each stratum is adjusted so that the number of the sampling individuals in each spot would be around 15.

The interval of sampling the spot is computed for each stratum based on the following formula: *(No. of primary units) / (No. of sampling spots)*
Primary sampling unit: Primary unit (about 50 households) used for the 1995 Census.

From a list of primary units for each stratum (units are ordered according to the code of cites/wards/towns and villages made by the Ministry of Home Affairs), sample the necessary number of spots starting from a random starting point.

b) Sampling of individuals

Using a register of electors, 15 individuals are sampled as the first targets and another 5 individuals as supplementary targets for each spot starting from a random starting point.

Sampling interval: 21 for a city whose population is over 40,000
11 for a city/suburban district whose population is less than 40,000

8.3 Use of the supplementary targets

When the first targeted individual has passed away, changed address or whose address is unidentifiable, a supplementary target starting from the top of the list of supplements was used.

8.4 Non-response case

Interviewers fill out a question sheet for every non-response case.

Table 3 The Number of Population, Target Sample Size and the Number Sampling Spots for Each Stratum

By population size / By Region	13 big cities	Other cities	Suburban districts	Total
Hokkaido/Tohoku	2,102,960 90 (6)	6,020,350 285 (19)	3,739,209 180 (12)	11,862,519 555 (37)
Kanto	10,700,400 495 (33)	16,508,164 765 (51)	3,740,719 180 (12)	30,949,283 1,440 (96)
Chubu	1,634,257 75 (5)	11,290,158 525 (35)	4,906,146 225 (15)	17,830,561 825 (55)
Kinki	4,195,429 195 (13)	9,523,335 450 (30)	2,110,274 105 (7)	15,829,038 750 (50)
Chugoku/Shikoku	834,684 45 (3)	5,528,151 255 (17)	2,824,111 135 (9)	9,186,946 435 (29)
Kyushu	1,742,678 75 (5)	5,407,678 255 (17)	3,611,327 165 (11)	10,761,683 495 (33)
Total Population No. of samples (spots)	21,210,408 975 (65)	54,277,836 2,535 (169)	20,931,786 990 (66)	96,420,030 4,500 (300)

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