

**Special Issue: Demography of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:  
Building a Foundation for Research in Japan (Part 1)**  
**Asking about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in  
Social Surveys in Japan: Findings from the Osaka City  
Residents' Survey and Related Preparatory Studies<sup>1)</sup>**

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Most studies on the measurement of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in representative surveys are conducted in Western countries. Whether the findings from these studies are applicable to countries with legal, religious, and cultural contexts regarding sexual and gender minorities distinct from Western societies is yet to be explored. To fill this gap, this paper summarizes the findings from focus groups and a pilot survey conducted to develop SOGI questions in the Japanese context. For sexual orientation identity, a six-category question that includes definition of each category, and for transgender status, a three-step method, are suggested for general use. The paper also reports on percentage distributions of SOGI by assigned sex at birth and by age group based on the Osaka City Residents' Survey, one of the first population-based surveys in Japan with SOGI questions. Overall, our findings illustrate the significance of examining the measurement of SOGI beyond Western societies.

Keywords: recommended survey questions on SOGI, measurement, population-based study, LGBT, focus groups

## I. Introduction

In recent years, there is a growing interest in estimating the size of sexual and gender minority populations (Cáceres et al. 2006, Oshima and Sato 2016) as well as socioeconomic and health disadvantages experienced by these populations (Klawitter 2015, Operario et al. 2008) across countries. Quantitative research on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) populations has historically relied on convenience samples due to the limited availability of the data

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1) Earlier versions of this article were presented at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Japan Sociological Society, the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, and the 6th Meeting of the Graduate Research Group on East Asian Demography and Inequality at Princeton University. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP16H03709 "Demography of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Building a Foundation for Research in Japan." The authors would like to thank Julie Brines, Jerald R. Herting, and Marieka M. Klawitter of the University of Washington and Yoshimi Chitose of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research for their helpful feedback. We would also like to thank Diana Khor of Hosei University for editorial as well as substantive assistance.

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collected by population-based surveys with questions on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) (Badgett 1997, Hiramori 2015). However, it is difficult, if not impossible, for studies using non-representative data to undertake statistical comparisons between LGBTQ people and non-LGBTQ people that are generalizable to the population of interest. While these studies offer precious insights on hard-to-reach LGBTQ populations, scholars have expressed a need to capture SOGI in representative surveys in order to explore first, the proportion of LGBTQ within the general population, and second, socioeconomic and health situations of LGBTQ populations in comparison to the non-LGBTQ population. A logical step is to develop survey questions to capture SOGI in a representative survey. One difficulty in such an endeavor comes from the fact that the general population consisting mostly of non-LGBTQ people are not familiar with terms describing different SOGI categories. To address this problem, more studies are devoted to exploring how best to ask questions to measure SOGI in population-based surveys (see e.g. SMART 2009, The GenIUSS Group 2014).

One drawback of these valuable methodological studies is that they are mostly conducted in Western societies, namely, North American and Western European countries (Knight et al. (2015) on Nepal is a notable exception). Since interest in LGBTQ issues is growing not only in Western countries but also in non-Western countries, it is important to examine the extent to which the findings of previous studies are generalizable to the countries that do not necessarily share the West's legal, religious, and cultural contexts regarding LGBTQ issues. This paper uses Japan as an illustrative case of such a country, introducing the findings from the "Survey on Diversity of Work and Life, and Coexistence among the Residents of Osaka City" (Osaka City Residents' Survey), one of the first population-based surveys in Japan that asked questions on respondents' SOGI. In addition, we also present the findings from focus group interviews and a pilot survey conducted prior to the Osaka City Residents' Survey for the purpose of developing SOGI questions that take the Japanese local context into account.

## II. Background

### 1. The Significance of Asking about SOGI in Social Surveys

In the field of demography, issues of sexuality have been taken up in connection to sexual behavior and reproduction, but research on LGBTQ issues was almost nonexistent (Baumle 2013). Recently, however, an increasing number of studies show the impact of SOGI on a range of socioeconomic and health outcomes (Valfort 2017) to illustrate the significance of SOGI as social factors that shape people's daily lives. In Japan, there are community-based surveys such as the "Survey on LGBT Issues in the Workplace Environment,"<sup>4)</sup> which collect data on the experiences

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4) The survey is conducted almost annually since 2014 as a collaborative research project of a nonprofit organization, Nijiuro Diversity, and the Center for Gender Studies at International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan. See Hiramori (2016) for a brief description of the research project in English.

of the diverse LGBTQ community. However, these surveys targeting mainly sexual and gender minorities are not conducive to statistically examine the impact of being a sexual and/or gender minority, as opposed to being a non-minority, on such outcomes as economic well-being, physical and mental health, education, family formation, and migration. Asking about SOGI in probability surveys makes it possible to capture LGBTQ people as a demographic group that was hitherto rendered invisible by mainstream survey practices. As governments and companies in non-Western countries have become interested in better understanding the experiences of sexual and gender minority populations (Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting 2020), collecting high quality data on SOGI in the context of non-Western societies has become increasingly crucial for both academic and policy purposes.

## 2. Current Survey Practices

### 2.1. Sexual Orientation

In the demography of sexuality literature in the United States, it is considered that sexual orientation is composed of three interrelated but distinct components: sexual behavior, sexual attraction, and sexual identity (Laumann et al. 1994). Sexual behavior and sexual attraction here focus on the gender of the person one has sex with or is sexually attracted to. Sexual identity means how one identifies oneself in terms of sexual orientation groupings/categories, such as "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," and so on. Making clear distinctions among the above three dimensions of sexual orientation is important for the purpose of measuring sexual orientation on surveys. On the one hand, for example, sexual identity may matter more than sexual attraction and behavior when studying labor market outcomes that are likely to be affected by career plans based on one's sexual identity and openness of one's sexual orientation at work. On the other hand, however, sexual behavior may be more salient than sexual identity when studying such health-related issues as sexually transmitted infections (Badgett 2007). In order to measure these three dimensions of sexual orientation, governmental organizations such as the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys (2016) as well as academic research groups such as the Sexual Minority Assessment Research Team (SMART) (2009) organized and institutionally supported by the Williams Institute have conducted and put together methodological studies on the measurement of sexual orientation.

For example, SMART recommends the following three questions to measure sexual orientation. For sexual orientation identity<sup>5)</sup>, the recommended question is "Do you consider yourself to be: (a) Heterosexual or straight; (b) Gay or lesbian; or (c) Bisexual?" For sexual behavior, the recommended question is "In the past (time period e.g. year) who have you had sex

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5) In our paper, we use the term "sexual orientation identity" to refer to "sexual identity" because the Japanese term for "sexual identity" —*seiteki aidentiti*— is used to indicate both sexual identity and, albeit to a lesser extent, gender identity. The Japanese term *sei* comprises sex, gender, and sexuality.

with? (a) Men only, (b) Women only, (c) Both men and women, (d) I have not had sex." For sexual attraction, the recommended question is "People are different in their sexual attraction to other people. Which best describes your feelings? Are you: (a) Only attracted to females? (b) Mostly attracted to females? (c) Equally attracted to females and males? (d) Mostly attracted to males? (e) Only attracted to males? (f) Not sure?" (SMART 2009).

In addition to these questions, SMART (2009) provides many other specific recommendations on questions to measure sexual orientation based on the methodological studies that they compiled. Among them, four important recommendations are relevant for this paper. Three recommendations relate to sexual orientation identity and one to sexual behavior and sexual attraction. The first recommendation is that the definition of each sexual orientation should not be included in the question. The reason is that these definitions typically refer to sexual attraction, and this may increase the number of respondents who choose their sexual orientation identity category based on their sexual attraction, rather than their sexual orientation identity. Second, choices such as "other," "don't know," "not sure," and "prefer not to answer" should not be included. It is because one cannot assume that those who choose these categories are necessarily non-heterosexual because heterosexual respondents might also choose these categories when they do not understand what is being asked in the question. In addition, the number of respondents who choose "other" would be small in a population-based survey and such cases tend to be dropped from the analysis; they would possibly choose one of the existing sexual minority categories if the "other" category were not an option. Third, in lieu of these "other" categories, it is suggested that two options "I am not sure yet" and "I am not sure what this question means" would be useful in separating two groups of people who would choose "other": those who are in search of their sexual orientation identity and heterosexual people who do not understand the question. Fourth, when asking about sexual behavior and sexual attraction, the response options should be ordered in such a way that the sex that is different from the respective respondent's sex is listed first. For example, "Only attracted to males" should be the first option for women and "Only attracted to females" should be the first option for men. When this is not possible, the "I have not had sex" option could be placed as the first option.

There are two additional recommendations derived from other methodological studies that are important for this paper. First, it is reported that adding the phrase "that is, not gay (or lesbian)" to the heterosexual category enhances heterosexual respondents' understanding of the response categories and guides their choice of an answer. While sexual and gender minorities consider sexual orientation identity to be highly salient, non-minority respondents are less likely to have a strong identification with the heterosexual category itself. Instead, these non-minority people understand their sexual orientation identity through disassociating themselves from sexual minorities, as exemplified by the comments such as "I'm not gay" or "I'm normal" (Miller and Ryan 2011, Ridolfo et al. 2012). Second, regarding the order of the response categories, when the phrase

"not gay" is included in the heterosexual category, it is recommended that the gay category be put before the heterosexual category. Putting the gay category before the heterosexual category ensures that respondents see the term "gay" before seeing the heterosexual category with the phrase "not gay." Moreover, this response order encourages respondents to read the question carefully (Miller and Ryan 2011).

As seen from above, many of these recommendations relate to what may be termed the "heterosexual problem" in the demography of sexuality. Prior research shows that while sexual minorities know what is being asked in sexual orientation questions, some heterosexual people do not understand the terms used in these questions (Miller and Ryan 2011). One important reason to focus on this "heterosexual problem" is related to the issue of false positive, where heterosexual respondents are mistakenly classified as non-heterosexual. Because the number of non-heterosexual respondents tend to be small in population-based surveys, even a small number of misclassifications of heterosexual respondents as non-heterosexual can lead to severe biases in the estimates of interest to us. On the other hand, the impact of false negative is less severe since the classification of some non-heterosexual respondents as heterosexual do not affect the estimates of our interest: the large number of cases of heterosexual respondents would make the estimates robust to the misclassifications of non-heterosexual respondents as heterosexual (SMART 2009).

## 2.2. Gender Identity

While there are fewer population-based surveys that incorporate measures to capture transgender status, there is a growing consensus in the United States that a "two-step" method can effectively differentiate the transgender population from the cisgender (non-transgender) population in representative surveys (Tate et al. 2013, Lombardi and Banik 2016). The "two-step" method, as explained by the Gender Identity in U.S. Surveillance (GenIUSS) Group (2014), convened by the Williams Institute, uses two questions, one for assigned sex at birth and the other for gender identity, to assess respondents' transgender status. For assigned sex at birth, the recommended question is "What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? -Male, -Female." For gender identity, the recommended question is "How do you describe yourself? (check one) -Male, -Female, -Transgender, -Do not identify as female, male, or transgender." There are several different versions of the two-step method, including the one tested among members of a sexual networking website targeting men who have sex with men in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries/territories in Latin America/the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal (Reisner et al. 2014), but common to most variations of the two-step method is measuring assigned sex at birth and gender identity to capture transgender status. Generally, when one's assigned sex at birth and gender identity are not the same, the person is treated as transgender in the data. In the United Kingdom, the Office for National Statistics (2020) recommends a different two-step method for Census 2021: the first question asks about sex (female or male) with a note that "A question

about gender identity will follow later on in the questionnaire" and the second question measures transgender status by asking "Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? This question is voluntary. Yes, No (Enter gender identity: )."

In addition to the two-step method, there are other ways to measure transgender status such as the "Multidimensional Sex/Gender Measure" that includes a third (optional) question for "lived gender": "What gender do you currently live as in your day-to-day life? 1. Male, 2. Female, 3. Sometimes male, sometimes female, 4. Something other than male or female" (Bauer et al. 2017). Another set of measures includes a question on the variety of gender identities. In addition to the assigned sex at birth and gender identity, it asks whether one has gone through or thought about any process of changing one's sex, and if yes, another question further asks about different gender identities within the trans population: "Which of the following describes how you think of yourself: -Trans man, -Trans woman, -Transsexual person, -Gender variant person, -Cross dressing person, - Transvestite person, -Intersex person, -In another way, -I prefer not to say" (Balarajan, Gray and Mitchell 2011).

### 3. The Japanese Context

Although these previous studies are important in developing methods to ask about SOGI across societies, it is likely that existing best practices cannot be directly applied to Japan or other non-Western societies. For example, even though as in many Western societies, Japan industrialized during the 19th century (Brinton 1993), many legal, religious, and cultural contexts constitutive of LGBTQ issues remained distinctive from those present in the West. First, Japan has never adopted a sodomy law prohibiting same-sex sexual behavior between men except between 1872 and 1882 (Pflugfelder 1999). Second, same-sex sexual relations between men were common and prevalent in the pre-modern Japanese Buddhism (Faure 1998). Similarly, ritual cross-gender dressing by men has historically been present in Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion (Mitsubishi 2008). Third, scholars of sexuality in Japan argue that less explicit legal and religious discrimination against sexual minorities in Japan may have made it difficult for them to engage in the type of collective mobilization seen in countries such as the United States (McLelland and Suganuma 2009). These variations suggest that the concept of a stable, rights/lifestyle-based "sexual identity" developed in the particular socio-cultural contexts of Western societies cannot be used uncritically in considering sexuality in Japanese society.

At the same time, however, it should be noted that this emphasis on the tolerance of non-normative gender and sexuality practices in Japan often found in the English language literature is highly criticized by other scholars as "a version of Orientalism [where] Japan seems to be constructed as the (male) (homo)sexual paradise, [...] a land free from legal constraints and religious condemnation, all of which could be attributed to the very "culture" of Japan" (Khor 2010:53).

Moreover, unlike in the demography of sexuality literature in the United States, "romantic attraction" is often included as a dimension of sexual orientation in Japan, in addition to, or in place of, sexual behavior, sexual attraction, and sexual orientation identity. In fact, community-based surveys on LGBTQ issues in Japan have typically used romantic attraction as the only indicator of sexual orientation (Nijiuro Diversity and the Center for Gender Studies at International Christian University 2020). Similarly, marketing surveys focusing on LGBTQ issues in Japan define sexual orientation as "the gender of people you like" (Dentsu 2019). Also, there is no expression in Japanese that is equivalent to "straight" in English to indicate heterosexuality. Hence, it is expected that it would be particularly difficult for heterosexual people to express their sexual orientation identity, as the term "straight" is not available to them and the term "heterosexual" is less known to the general population in Japan. These distinct contexts regarding sexual and gender minorities in Japan point to the need for socio-cultural considerations in collecting data on SOGI.

### III. Data and Methods

#### 1. The "Demography of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" Project

All of the data in this study are collected by the research team of the project "Demography of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Building a Foundation for Research in Japan," funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. The first author is a research collaborator, and the second author is the principal investigator of this project. In developing our version of SOGI questions, we first conducted a comprehensive literature review of exploratory studies of SOGI questions and the guidelines based on these studies as well as existing survey practices employed in community-based surveys in Japan, as reviewed above. Next, we conducted preparatory studies such as focus groups and a pilot survey to create a model questionnaire. Using the model SOGI questionnaire, we conducted a representative survey, titled the "Survey on Diversity of Work and Life, and Coexistence among the Residents of Osaka City" (Osaka City Residents' Survey, OCRS), which is one of the first representative surveys to ask about SOGI in Japan. In the subsections below, we describe the details of the preparatory studies and the main survey.

#### 2. The Focus Groups and the Pilot Survey

Between October and December 2017, the research project members conducted preparatory studies for the Osaka City Residents' Survey, including focus groups and a pilot survey. Focus group discussants were recruited at a bisexual group meeting and a pride parade "Kansai Rainbow Festa!" for sexual and gender minorities as well as through a recruiting organization for non-LGBTQ respondents. In the focus groups, we created a few different versions of SOGI questions and sought feedback. A total of 9 items regarding the SOGI questions were asked. In addition, 8 questions about the survey mode, the placement of SOGI questions in the survey, and other survey administrative questions were asked. In the focus groups, we also asked several

questions on other parts of the questionnaire drafted for the Osaka City Residents' Survey such as the experience of seeing someone being bullied and/or being bullied themselves based on SOGI in school.

In conjunction with the focus groups, a pilot survey was sent via email using a snowball sampling method. The pilot survey included the sample questions used and the discussion questions asked in the focus groups. The respondents for the pilot survey were asked to write in their comments in the multiple versions of SOGI questions they answered. A total of 9 focus group discussions were conducted, each had about 4-5 participants, and 20 pilot survey responses were returned. We used these qualitative data to design the SOGI questions in the Osaka City Residents' Survey.

### 3. The Osaka City Residents' Survey

The Osaka City Residents' Survey was mailed on January 16, 2019, with January 28 as the response deadline. The deadline was extended to February 4 via reminder postcard, and responses were considered valid if they arrived by March 7. With the cooperation of the Osaka City, the questionnaire was sent by postal mail to 15,000 people aged 18 to 59 who resided in Osaka City at the time of survey (randomly sampled from the Basic Resident Register as of October 1, 2018), and 4,294 were returned by mail or responded online. The number of valid responses was 4,285, and the valid response rate was 28.6%<sup>6)</sup>. Among the respondents, 58.7% were assigned females at birth, 40.9% were assigned males at birth, and 0.3% did not indicate their sex at birth. A total of 15.8% of the respondents were in their 20s or younger, 23.8% were in their 30s, 28.7% were in their 40s, 29.7% were in their 50s, and 1.9% did not indicate their age. In addition to SOGI, questions about work, health, family, education, nationality, gender and sexuality attitudes, and attitudes toward public policies on SOGI were also asked in the survey. Detailed descriptions of the data and the questionnaire in Japanese are available in the report of the Osaka City Residents' Survey (Kamano et al. 2019).

## IV. Results

### 1. Findings from the Focus Groups and the Pilot Survey

Based on the focus groups and the pilot survey, we obtained the following nine findings. The

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6) The response rate of 28.6% is actually higher than the 24.5% response rate of the City of Osaka Survey on the Reasons for Mobility, which was conducted also in 2019 by the City (City Planning Bureau of Osaka 2020), despite that in general, response rates are higher for surveys undertaken by the local government rather than that by a group of researchers, like the Osaka City Residents' Survey. Also, it has been established that the response rates of mail surveys tend to be lower compared to surveys delivered and collected in person or face-to-face interviews (see for example, Hagiwara, Ota and Fujii 2006). The survey report compares percentage distributions of the respondents and the population of Osaka City calculated from the Basic Resident Register as of October 1, 2018 by assigned sex at birth and age group. Assigned females at birth and people aged 55-59 are the most overrepresented categories: they are overrepresented by 8.7 percentage points and 5.1 percentage points, respectively (Kamano et al. 2019).



first to the sixth findings are on sexual orientation questions, and the seventh to the ninth, on gender identity questions.

First, the definitions for each sexual orientation identities were deemed necessary by our respondents, although it is discouraged by SMART (2009) based on research in the United States. In our study, regardless of the respondents' sexual orientation, most indicated that there should be some explanation of the terms used in the sexual orientation identity question. As mentioned above, there is no expression in Japanese that is equivalent to "straight" in English to indicate heterosexuality. As a result, we cannot use "straight" in the question on sexual orientation identity to guide heterosexual people who do not understand the terminology of sexual orientation to the heterosexual category. Therefore, it is necessary to include the definition of each sexual orientation category so that heterosexual respondents can correctly select "heterosexual" on the question even if they do not know the term "heterosexual." The inclusion of the definition of each category is also important in that Japan does not necessarily follow a Western-based model of an unambiguous "sexual identity." Example responses include:

- I think some people won't understand, so there should be explanations of the terms. [Bisexual respondent]
- I personally understand the meaning of the terms used in the question, but I think it's better to include explanations. [Non-heterosexual respondent]
- Particularly for the heterosexual category, there should be an explanation of the term. [Heterosexual respondent]

Second, if the category "other" is included as one of the options, there are both heterosexual and non-heterosexual people who would choose this category, suggesting that it would be better to use two separate options for the "other" category for heterosexual and non-heterosexual respondents rather than employing a single "other" option. At the same time, however, the majority of heterosexual respondents indicated that they would not choose "other." Example responses include:

- There are already "don't want to decide, haven't decided" and "I do not understand the question," so I don't think the "other" category is necessary. [Heterosexual]
- It depends on what the other categories are, but I don't think I would choose "other." [Heterosexual respondent]
- If I were to circle "other," I would write in "I have never thought about it." [Heterosexual respondent]
- Yes, I would select "other" and write "don't know." ["Don't want to decide, haven't decided"/"None of the above" respondent]

Third, when it is not possible to alter the questionnaire on sexual attraction and sexual behavior based on the respondent's gender, placing options such as "I have not had sex" as the first response category did not elicit any objections. Example responses include:

- I don't care much about the order. I think the current order is fine. Unless you explicitly ask about the order of the options, I don't think I would realize how the options are arranged. [Heterosexual respondent]
- I think putting it as the first choice is a good idea to attract respondents' attention. [Heterosexual respondent]
- I think it's better to put it first. [Bisexual respondent]
- I don't think putting it first causes any difficulty in understanding the question. [Non-heterosexual respondent]

Fourth, adding the phrase "not gay or lesbian" to the heterosexual option was found to be effective among heterosexual respondents in subtly guiding them to choose the option. This may be considered as an empirical support for the argument in queer theory that "heterosexuality defines itself implicitly by constituting itself as the negation of homosexuality [... and] heterosexuality, then, *depends* on homosexuality to lend it substance—and to enable it to acquire *by* default its status as a default, as a *lack of difference* or an *absence of abnormality*" (Halperin 1995:44). In addition, while there are multiple cases in which heterosexual respondents expressed concerns over the possible negative feelings that non-heterosexual people may experience by the use of the phrase "not gay or lesbian," such concerns were rarely raised by non-heterosexual respondents themselves.

Example responses include:

- I'm not familiar with the terms in this question as a whole, so the expression "not" is helpful in selecting the heterosexual category. [Heterosexual respondent]
- As a heterosexual person, I don't see any issues. But I thought non-heterosexual people may feel uncomfortable. The term "heterosexual" is not common, so it is desirable to include an expression that the term "heterosexual" means that you are not sexually interested in people of the same sex. [Heterosexual respondent]
- I feel non-heterosexual people might take this phrase as discriminatory, although it was helpful for me, personally. [Heterosexual respondent]
- I found the expression "not gay or lesbian" the easiest to understand. [Heterosexual respondent]
- I see that the phrase "not gay or lesbian" may have a negative connotation, but I don't think I would strongly oppose using that expression. If this phrase is included in the survey, "bisexual" should also be included along with gay and lesbian. But I also understand that the list can become easily longer if you do so. [Bisexual respondent]

Fifth, the "heterosexual" option was revealed to be best listed first, although some previous studies recommended that the "heterosexual" option should come after the "gay" category if the heterosexual option includes the phrase "not gay" (Miller and Ryan 2011). Example responses include:

- If the study target is the general population, the option "heterosexual" should come first. If

"gay and lesbian" is the first option, I might think that the survey is only for sexual minorities. [Heterosexual respondent]

- Heterosexual people are the majority, so "heterosexual" should come first. Otherwise, I'd skip this question. [Heterosexual respondent]

Sixth, the phrase "the gender of people you like," which is often used in community-based and marketing surveys in Japan, was found to be undesirable in measuring sexual orientation. Our alternative term "sexual/romantic feelings" (*seiai kanjo*; *sei* means sex, gender, sexuality, and *ai* means love) used in the definition of each sexual orientation identity category was not considered to be a difficult term to understand. Most respondents regarded this term as indicative of something sexual rather than romantic. Example responses include:

- I don't think it's difficult to understand the term "sexual/romantic feelings." I mostly think of sex. Not so much about romantic love. I feel that the word "like" is a bit too vague. [Heterosexual respondent]
- Not difficult. I think "like" can include something that doesn't necessarily involve sexual/romantic feelings. [Heterosexual respondent]
- I don't think that term is difficult. I assume "sexual/romantic feelings" to be something related to sex. I guess "like" can include a rather wide range of relationships. [Bisexual respondent]

The last three findings are related to the questions on gender identity.

Seventh, the majority of the respondents found the two-step questions to be more difficult to answer than a three-step method which includes an additional question on the feelings of gender dysphoria. In particular, for the former, respondents wondered why the "same" questions (assigned sex at birth and current gender identity) were being asked twice. Because the word *seibetsu*—the Japanese term used to measure both sex assigned at birth (*shusshoji no seibetsu*) and current gender identity (*genzai ninshiki shiteiru seibetsu*)—does not distinguish between sex and gender, non-minority participants in our study might be even more likely to feel that they were asked about the exact same thing twice, compared to those in the studies conducted in English-speaking countries. Example responses include:

- I like the three-step method better. Actually, I might have answered differently if the two-step method is used. [Cisgender respondent]
- I feel the two-step method is simple and the three-step method is more polite. I can answer either one. [Transgender respondent]
- The three-step method is more concrete, so I don't have to take time and think too much to answer the three questions. [Cisgender respondent]
- I think it's easier for me to understand the intention of asking these questions when I answer the questions using the three-step method. I had to spend some time reading the questions carefully when the two-step method was used. [Cisgender respondent]

- I wasn't sure about the meaning of some of the terms used in the question about the feelings of gender dysphoria. [Cisgender respondent]

Eighth, using a multiple-answer question that lists sex/gender-related categories such as transgender, FtM (female-to-male, but only the term "FtM" is included as an option), MtF (male-to-female, but only the term "MtF" is included as an option), none of the above, was found to be ineffective. Most of the respondents found this question confusing. Example responses include:

- I think cisgender people would find it extremely difficult to answer. [Transgender respondent]
- I wasn't sure if this was a question about gender identity or sexual orientation. I'm bisexual, and I chose "bigender." [Cisgender respondent]
- I thought the category "neutrois" meant heterosexual. [Cisgender respondent]
- I don't know many of the terms listed here, especially those using Roman letters such as "DSDs" (differences in sex development). [Cisgender respondent]
- It might be better to add "man" and "woman" for cisgender men and women. [Cisgender respondent]
- Under the current question, cisgender men and women would choose "none of the above," so this might be a good opportunity for those people to experience the feeling of being marginalized, but not recommended as a survey question. [Cisgender respondent]
- There were just too many terms that I don't know. [Cisgender respondent]

Ninth, most of the respondents found it confusing to place the category of women first and the category of men second for questions related to gender and sexuality. Example responses include:

- I think "man" should come first. It's just an issue of custom. [Cisgender respondent]
- There is a high possibility that I might make mistakes. [Cisgender respondent]
- Putting the female category first might make me think that the survey only targets women, like a survey you see in a job change website for women. [Cisgender respondent]
- I think it is common sense to put the male category first. [Cisgender respondent]
- If I see a survey in which the questions list the female category first, I'd probably think the survey is made by "that kind of people." [Cisgender respondent]

In the focus groups and a pilot survey, we also asked whether they would be willing to respond to the survey if it includes the questions asking their SOGI and whether their willingness to respond to the survey differs by the survey modes (face-to-face surveys, drop-off surveys, mail surveys, and web surveys). We found that neither non-LGBTQ people nor LGBTQ people seemed to make meaningful distinctions between surveys with questions about SOGI and the ones without such questions. Most of the reactions in the discussions were related to whether or not to respond to the survey itself, regardless of its content.

2. Findings from the Osaka City Residents' Survey

Below are the SOGI questions used in the Osaka City Residents' Survey, developed from the preparatory study discussed in the previous section.

- Questions for gender identity (a three-step method)

Q44 Circle your sex. [sex on the family register at birth or birth certificate] (Circle one)

1. Male
2. Female

\*"At birth" refers to the closest point of time to when you were born.

Q45 Do you consider that your current gender is the same as your sex at birth (the one you circled above)? If you circle 2 and/or 3, please answer your current recognition.

(Circle all that apply)

1. Same as sex at birth
2. Different gender
3. Have a sense of discomfort

The gender that is closest to your current recognition (Circle one)

1. Man
2. Woman
3. Other (please specify: )

- Question for sexual orientation identity

Q46 Please circle the number that you think is closest to you. (Circle one)

1. Heterosexual [those who have sexual/romantic feelings only for different-sex people], that is, **not** gay, lesbian, etc.
2. Gay, lesbian, homosexual [those who have sexual/romantic feelings only for same-sex people]
3. Bisexual [those who have sexual/romantic feelings for both men and women]
4. Asexual [those who do not have sexual/romantic feelings for anyone]
5. Don't want to decide, haven't decided
6. I do not understand the question

- Questions for romantic attraction, sexual attraction, and sexual behavior

Q47 For each of the following from (1) to (3), please circle the numbers closest to you from 1 to 6, concerning your experience (A) up until now and (B) in the last five years. (Circle one for each)

(1) People you have romantic feeling for	
(A) Up until now (Circle one)	(B) In the last five years (Circle one)
1. I have never had romantic feelings for either men or women	1. I have never had romantic feelings for either men or women
2. Exclusively men	2. Exclusively men
3. Mostly men	3. Mostly men
4. Men and women, equally	4. Men and women, equally
5. Mostly women	5. Mostly women
6. Exclusively women	6. Exclusively women
(2) People you are sexually attracted to	
(A) Up until now (Circle one)	(B) In the last five years (Circle one)
1. I have never been sexually attracted to either men or women	1. I have never been sexually attracted to either men or women
2. Exclusively men	2. Exclusively men
3. Mostly men	3. Mostly men
4. Men and women, equally	4. Men and women, equally
5. Mostly women	5. Mostly women
6. Exclusively women	6. Exclusively women
(3) People you have sex with	
(A) Up until now (Circle one)	(B) In the last five years (Circle one)
1. I have never had sex	1. I have never had sex
2. Exclusively men	2. Exclusively men
3. Mostly men	3. Mostly men
4. Men and women, equally	4. Men and women, equally
5. Mostly women	5. Mostly women
6. Exclusively women	6. Exclusively women

Next, we report the responses to the questions on sexual orientation identity and gender identity by assigned sex at birth and age group.<sup>7)</sup>

Table 1 shows the distribution of sexual orientation identity by assigned sex at birth. Among the survey respondents, 1.4% identified as bisexual. The proportion of those who identified as

7) The results of romantic attraction, sexual attraction, and sexual behavior by assigned sex at birth are available in the survey report (Kamano et al. 2019). In addition, complex relationships among the four sexual orientation measures are discussed in Hiramori and Kamano (2020).

gay/lesbian and that of those who identified as asexual were similar: 0.7% indicated "gay/lesbian" and 0.8% indicated "asexual." Also, 5.2% of the respondents chose "don't want to decide, haven't decided." Regarding item non-response rates, 1.1% of the respondents did not indicate their sexual orientation identity. Since the non-response rate for their annual individual earnings was 5.6% (Kamano et al. 2019), one can infer that the respondents may consider sexual orientation identity to be less sensitive than earnings. This result poses a challenge to scholars who claim that SOGI questions are extremely sensitive in nature and are therefore against including them in social surveys.

Table 1 also shows that assigned males at birth are more likely to identify as heterosexual or gay/lesbian, or to indicate that they do not understand the question, than assigned females at birth. On the contrary, assigned females at birth are more likely to identify as bisexual, asexual, or "don't want to decide, haven't decided" than assigned males at birth.

**Table 1. Distribution of Sexual Orientation Identity by Assigned Sex at Birth, OCRS 2019**

(%)	Assigned Males at Birth	Assigned Females at Birth	Total
Heterosexual	84.5	82.7	83.2
Gay/lesbian	1.3	0.3	0.7
Bisexual	1.1	1.7	1.4
Asexual	0.3	1.1	0.8
Don't want to decide, haven't decided	3.2	6.5	5.2
I do not understand the question	8.6	6.8	7.5
NA	0.9	1.0	1.1
n	1,754	2,517	4,285

$\chi^2$ : 560.799 ( $p < .001$ ), Cramer's V: 0.256 ( $p < .001$ )

Note: The results for those who did not indicate their assigned sex at birth (n=14) are not reported but included in the "Total" column.

Tables 2a and 2b show the distribution of gender identity by assigned sex at birth. The proportion of people whose gender identity differs from assigned sex at birth was 0.7%, whom we classify as "transgender" in this paper (also see Table 4). The number of people whose sex at birth is "male" and current gender identity is "woman" (6 persons) or "other" (6 persons) was 12 (0.7%), and the number of people whose sex at birth is "female" and current gender identity is "man" (4 persons) or "other" (16 persons) was 20 (0.8%). While the number of people who chose "woman" and "other" as their current recognition was same among assigned males at birth, more people chose "other" over "man" among assigned females at birth. Other community-based surveys in Japan also found a similar pattern (Hiramori 2018).

**Table 2a. Distribution of Gender Identity among Assigned Males at Birth, OCRS 2019**

Same as sex at birth		1,730	98.7%	
Different gender; Have a sense of discomfort	Current recognition	Man	1	←Transgender
		Woman	6	
		Other	6	
		NA	0	
NA		11	0.6%	
Total		1,754	100.0%	

**Table 2b. Distribution of Gender Identity among Assigned Females at Birth, OCRS 2019**

Same as sex at birth		2,483	98.7%	
Different gender; Have a sense of discomfort	Current recognition	Woman	2	←Transgender
		Man	4	
		Other	16	
		NA	1	
NA		11	0.5%	
Total		2,517	100.0%	

Based on these analyses, we found that the proportion of people who fall into the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender was 2.7%, or 3.3% when those who chose asexual were included. Note that those who are both sexual and gender minorities (e.g. bisexual and transgender) are counted only once in these percentages.

Table 3 shows the distribution of sexual orientation identity by age group. It indicates that the proportion of those who identify as heterosexual increases by each age group from 18-29, through 30-39 and 40-49, but it drops in the 50-60 age group. However, the proportion of those who choose "I do not understand the question" is highest among the 50-60 age group, suggesting that the noted decline in heterosexual identification may have resulted from difficulty in understanding this question among supposedly heterosexual respondents in this age group. On the other hand, younger people are more likely to identify as bisexual, asexual, or choose "don't want to decide, haven't decided."



**Table 3. Distribution of Sexual Orientation Identity by Age Group, OCRS 2019**

(%)	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	Total
Heterosexual	78.2	85.7	87.0	80.9	83.2
Gay/lesbian	1.0	1.6	0.2	0.4	0.7
Bisexual	3.8	1.6	0.7	0.9	1.4
Asexual	1.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8
Don't want to decide, haven't decided	8.7	4.8	4.3	4.2	5.2
I do not understand the question	5.9	5.3	6.8	10.8	7.5
NA	0.7	0.5	0.5	2.1	1.1
n	678	1,021	1,229	1,274	4,285

$\chi^2$ : 158.080 ( $p < .001$ ), Cramer's V: 0.096 ( $p < .001$ )

Note: The results for those who did not indicate their age (n=83) are not reported but included in the "Total" column.

Table 4 shows the distribution of transgender status by age group. In this table, the category "cannot classify" indicates those who cannot be classified into either cisgender or transgender due to missing responses. It indicates that younger people are more likely to be classified as transgender. In particular, the noticeable difference across age groups seems to be between the 30-39 and the 40-49 age groups, with a higher proportion in the two younger age groups and a lower one in the two older age groups. Among those aged 18-29, 2.1% are classified as transgender.

**Table 4. Distribution of Transgender Status by Age Group, OCRS 2019**

(%)	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	Total
Cisgender	97.8	98.7	99.6	99.5	98.9
Transgender	2.1	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.7
Cannot classify	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.3
n	678	1,021	1,229	1,274	4,285

$\chi^2$ : 198.775 ( $p < .001$ ), Cramer's V: 0.152 ( $p < .001$ )

Note: The results for those who did not indicate their age (n=83) are not reported but included in the "Total" column.

## V. Discussion

In Japan, the first nationally representative survey asking about sexual orientation and gender identity was conducted in 2015 (Kamano et al. 2016). Since 2016, a small group of sociologists and demographers in Japan have been working on how to measure SOGI in social surveys under the research project "Demography of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Building a Foundation for Research in Japan." Looking outside of Japan, while there is an increasing number of methodological studies examining the measurement of SOGI in representative surveys, most of the

studies are conducted in Western countries, limiting the generalizability of their findings outside of the Western contexts. To demonstrate the need to attend to the socio-cultural contexts in the measurement of SOGI, we focused on Japan as an illustrative case. We summarized the findings from focus groups and a pilot survey conducted in order to develop SOGI questions that take the Japanese context into account. We also reported SOGI distributions by assigned sex at birth and age group from the Osaka City Residents' Survey, one of the first population-based surveys that include SOGI questions in Japan, conducted after methodological consideration of how to ask about SOGI.

Some of our findings differ from those reported in prior research conducted in Western societies, while others are similar. From the preparatory studies, we derived nine recommendations for population-based surveys in Japan: (1) The definitions for sexual orientation identities should be included; (2) Two separate options of the "other" category for heterosexual and non-heterosexual respondents should be used; (3) When it is not possible to alter the survey questions about sexual attraction and sexual behavior based on respondents' gender, the options such as "I have not had sex" should be listed as the first response category; (4) The heterosexual category should include the phrase "not gay, lesbian, etc."; (5) The "heterosexual" option should be listed first; (6) The phrase "the gender of people you like" should not be used to measure sexual orientation; (7) A three-step method that includes an additional question on the feelings of gender dysphoria should be employed; (8) A multiple-answer question that lists sex/gender-related categories should not be used to measure gender identity; (9) The category of men should be listed first in questions related to gender and sexuality.

Based on these recommendations, we designed the SOGI questions that included a six-category question with a definition for each category to measure sexual orientation identity and a three-step method to measure transgender status for the Osaka City Residents' Survey. One interesting result of the distribution of SOGI was the unexpectedly high proportion of those who selected "don't want to decide, haven't decided" (5.2%). We originally created this category to capture those who are questioning their sexual orientation identity or rejecting identity labels, but it turned out that this category was larger than any other sexual minority categories included in the question. We also showed that the item non-response rate for sexual orientation identity as well as gender identity was not considerably higher than those of other items in the survey, and individual earnings were revealed to be a more sensitive item than SOGI among the respondents. We also found that assigned females at birth are more likely to be non-binary than assigned males at birth among those who are classified as transgender. In addition, the results indicate that younger people are more likely to identify as bisexual, asexual, or choose "don't want to decide, haven't decided," and also more likely to be classified as transgender.

This study is not without limitations. Due to budget constraints, we were not able to conduct large-scale cognitive interviewing, which would allow us to probe thought processes associated

with answering survey questions through the think-aloud and verbal probing techniques used to design survey questionnaire (Willis 2005). We conducted more cost-efficient focus group research, another standard method in survey research often used to adapt survey instruments to new populations (Fuller et al. 1993). However, the method has a few drawbacks. For example, it is difficult to gather minority opinions and there is a possibility that a few participants dominate the discussion in focus groups, particularly in the Japanese context due to its group dynamics (Chitose and Abe 2000). To better understand the detailed cognitive processes of survey respondents and to gather information, cognitive testing should be conducted to further improve the questions on SOGI.

Also, the survey was conducted in Osaka City, the third largest city in Japan, and the target population was those aged 18-59. In order to conduct a nationally representative survey in Japan with methodologically validated SOGI questions, exploratory studies should be undertaken to investigate whether the current SOGI questions can be understood by those living outside of large cities and those aged younger than 18 or older than 60, and if not, how to modify them. Similarly, assigned females at birth and older people were overrepresented in the survey (see Footnote 4). This means that the estimates shown in this article might have overcounted sexual and gender minority people because of the survey's sex distribution but undercounted them because of its age distribution. There is an ongoing analysis on the impact of using a weighting method on the estimates of the size of sexual and gender minority populations, conducted by a co-investigator of the "Demography of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" project.

In addition, a number of other issues need further investigations. We pointed out that there was an unexpectedly high proportion of those who chose "don't want to decide/haven't decided" (5.2%) in the question on sexual orientation identity. In order to explore the reasons behind the selection of this category, we have conducted a web survey and are currently in the process of analyzing the data (Kamano et al. 2020).

There are also several issues to be explored in relation to gender/transgender identity. First, one of our findings is that it is not feasible to ask about gender identity using a multiple-answer format listing sex/gender-related categories, mostly due to lack of knowledge among potential respondents. We also acknowledge that using a cross-classification of assigned sex at birth and gender identity to classify transgender status is different from asking directly about transgender identity. Future research should seek ways to directly ask about transgender identity.

Second, our recommended questions for transgender status ask the assigned sex at birth first, followed by their gender identity. There is, however, a possibility that asking assigned sex at birth first may make some respondents uncomfortable, because this gives the impression that their gender identity is less important than their assigned sex at birth. While the current standard practice, which has been tested in exploratory studies and employed in population-based surveys, is to ask assigned sex at birth first (Williams Institute 2020), it would be desirable to conduct

research to explore the impact of changing the question order on the classification of transgender status, in order to design questions that both transgender and cisgender respondents can comfortably and accurately answer.

Third, our focus group research indicated that for accurate measurement, women's categories should come after men's categories in survey questions related to gender and sexuality, which is the standard practice in most surveys. However, there are some population-based surveys in Japan in which "female" is listed first and "male" is listed second in the question about sex (Shizuoka Prefecture 2017).

The fourth area to further explore lies in the gender categories used in the questions for romantic attraction, sexual attraction, and sexual behavior. Our current questions do not indicate whether these categories refer to assigned sex at birth or gender identity. In the English language, when "male" or "female" rather than "men" or "women" are used, the respondents can interpret them to be biological categories rather than gender identity categories. However, in Japanese, the terms "male" (*osu*) and "female" (*mesu*), which have biological connotations, are used for animals but not human beings. Also, the binary categories of male/men and female/women in the current questions might limit the experiences that can be captured by the responses (Iwamoto et al. 2019). Therefore, more studies should be conducted to explore how to capture the diversity of people whom respondents are romantically/sexually attracted to or have sex with.

In any event, we believe that public opinion and knowledge of SOGI are in flux in Japan, and hence, the best practices today might not be the best for tomorrow. The opinions about these questions depend largely on the state of public knowledge of SOGI terms. For this reason, the findings shown in this study may change in the near future as public opinions and knowledge on SOGI change. Therefore, repeating the process of testing the questions and undertaking population-based surveys is necessary, just as it is done in countries that have been asking SOGI in representative surveys.

This paper reported on the first demographic study on measuring SOGI in Japan, which offers many findings and possibilities for future inquiry. The findings from our study challenge the heteronormative and cisgender-normative assumptions made in major social surveys in Japan designed by sociologists in Japan, who "can [...] assist LGBTQ identities in Japan by including LGBTQ issues explicitly in their research and teaching agendas" (Au 2020:19). We argue that social surveys in Japan should include SOGI as routine demographic questions. Given the global scarcity of research on the measurement of SOGI, we consider our findings to be useful not only in Japan but also in other countries where various ways of asking about SOGI are currently being tested. For example, the General Social Survey (GSS), a nationally representative survey in the United States, introduced a two-step gender identity question in 2018, but the GSS is currently considering adding a follow-up confirmation question in the 2020 GSS for those whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth (Smith and Son 2019). We argue that our three-step

method that does not require every respondent to indicate both their sex assigned at birth and their current gender identity can be one promising way to address the issue of misclassification of transgender status. Importantly, while most existing studies on the measurement of SOGI rely on data from Western countries, we hope to decenter the findings produced in the studies undertaken in the particular socio-cultural contexts of Western societies and to offer an alternative understanding of the measurement of SOGI based on a non-Western perspective. (Accepted 27 October, 2020)

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# 性的指向と性自認のあり方を日本の量的調査でいかにとらえるか —大阪市民調査に向けた準備調査における項目の検討と本調査の結果—

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これまで、個人の性的指向・性自認のあり方（SOGI）を、代表性を担保した量的調査でとらえる研究は欧米諸国を中心として行われてきた。そのため、これらの研究に基づく知見が法的、宗教的、文化的背景の異なる社会で適用するののかについては検討の余地がある。そこで本稿では、日本の文脈で SOGI をたずねる調査項目の検討に向けて実施したフォーカス・グループ・ディスカッションとパイロット調査の分析を行った。その結果、1) 性的指向アイデンティティ（本人の性的指向の認識）の各選択肢に説明をつけること、2) 異性愛者向けおよび非異性愛者向けに2種類の「その他」を含めること、3) 性的に惹かれる相手や性行為の相手の性別等の設問では、回答者の性別によって選択肢の男女順を並び替えられない場合、「セックスをしたことがない」等を最初の選択肢とすること、4) 異性愛者の選択肢には「すなわちゲイ・レズビアン等ではない」という文言を入れること、5) 「異性愛者」を最初の選択肢とすること、6) 「好きになる性別」という文言を性的指向をとらえる際に使用しないこと、7) 出生時に割り当てられた性別、性自認に加えて違和感の有無についてたずねる3ステップ方式を採用すること、8) 性別に関するさまざまなカテゴリーからあてはまる選択肢を複数選ぶ形の設問は使用しないこと、9) ジェンダー・セクシュアリティに関する設問において、男性カテゴリーを女性カテゴリーよりも先に位置するように表示することが、日本における無作為抽出調査で SOGI をとらえる上で重要であることがわかった。これらを踏まえ、性的指向アイデンティティについては6つの選択肢（定義付き）からなる問い、トランスジェンダーか否かについては、出生時の性別、違和感の有無、自認する性別の3問でたずねる3ステップ方式が提案された。次に、これらの項目を含む無作為抽出調査である大阪市民調査から、出生時の性別および年齢階級別に性的指向アイデンティティとトランスジェンダーか否かの分布を検討した。その結果、「決めたくない・決めていない」と答えた回答者が全体の5.2%と予想外に高いこと、性的指向アイデンティティや性自認のあり方に関する設問の項目無回答率は他の設問における項目無回答率より高くならず、むしろ回答者にとっては「仕事で得た個人収入」の方がよりセンシティブであると考えられている可能性が示された。また、トランスジェンダーのうち出生時女性の方が出生時男性に比べ男女以外の性別を自認している傾向にあること、若年層の方が両性愛者、無性愛者または「決めたくない・決めていない」を選択し、トランスジェンダーと分類される傾向にあることがわかった。SOGI 項目を含む無作為抽出調査の国内の先例は、無に等しい。欧米諸国以外において SOGI 測定法の研究を進めることの重要性が確認された。

キーワード：調査 SOGI 設問の提案、測定、無作為抽出調査、LGBT、フォーカス・グループ・ディスカッション