

**Asking about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Social Surveys
: Case Report on the Osaka City Residents' Survey and Related Preparatory
Studies**

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Abstract:

To probe sexual orientation and gender identity, it is necessary to devise appropriate SOGI questions that are comprehensible to the general population in a general survey conducted by random sampling. This presentation introduces the Osaka City Residents' Survey which probed the relative proportion of population by sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) and presents the preliminary results of the relevant items.

The SOGI questions in the survey were constructed based on a critical consideration of overseas surveys and guidelines and feedback from focus group discussions and pilot surveys conducted in Japan.

The response categories for the question on sexual orientation included: (1) heterosexual, that is, not gay, lesbian, etc. [those who have sexual/romantic feelings only for different-sex people]; (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. With respect to gender identity, a three-step method was used, beginning with (1) a question on sex at birth [sex on the family register or birth certificate at birth], and followed by two additional questions: (2) "Do you consider that your current gender is the same as your sex at birth?", with the response categories of (a) same as sex at birth; (b) different gender; and (c) have a sense of discomfort; (3) "The gender that is closest to your current recognition," with the response categories of (a) man, (b) woman, and (c) other (please specify).

Targeting Osaka City residents between ages 18 and 59, a random sample of 15,000 was drawn using the Basic Resident Register. The survey was sent by postal mail in January 2019. There were 4,285 valid responses (response rate 28.6%), and among them, 31 (0.7%) identified themselves as "gay, lesbian, homosexual", 62 (1.4%) as

“bisexual”, 33 (0.8) as “asexual”, 222 (5.2%) as “don’t want to decide; haven’t decided”. Further, 32 (0.7%) identified their gender as different from sex at birth.

The preparatory studies found that SOGI questions were the easiest to respond when the response category “heterosexual” was placed at the top and a brief explanation of each identity category for sexual orientation was included, and three-step approach was used to probe gender identity. Indeed, the rate of answering these questions in the Osaka residents’ survey was similar to that of the other questions in the survey.

Keywords: SOGI, LGBT, sexual minorities, population-based study, statistics

*The research was supported by JSPS Kakenhi Grant Number 16H03709 “Demography of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Building a Foundation for Research in Japan.”