

The History of the Longitudinal “Survey on Japanese Value Orientations” - Efforts Made to Equalize the Conditions and Secure Continuity of the Survey -

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(Summary)

The NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute has been conducting a time-series survey “Survey on Japanese Value Orientations” every five years since 1973 and has accumulated highly accurate longitudinal data by equalizing questionnaire and all other conditions of each survey as much as possible. To mark the 40th anniversary of the survey authors summarize those efforts and approaches.

The main purpose of the equalization in the survey implementation phase is to acquire accurate data. For sampling, more and more effective stratification has been sought out over the years, and the timing of sampling has been moved closer to the fielding days for avoiding nonresponse due to change of residence or death. We have also introduced an extra day besides the fielding days to reduce noncontacts and changed the design of advance post cards to match the times in order to secure response rates. Those efforts were introduced not only for the “Survey on Japanese Value Orientations” but also as a common approach for all face-to-face surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Research division of the Institute.

In terms of question sentences and answer choices, despite having a principle that “no change should be made,” possible revisions of the wording and choices were discussed before every survey. Consequently, the third survey conducted on the tenth year changed questions about communication based on a decision that different wording would help collect more valuable information and removed questions regarding knowledge on political situation. The fifth survey (twentieth year) added questions on marriage and having children as well as questions on international relations. The seventh survey (thirtieth year) changed questions on international relations in response to the change in society, and the eighth survey changed answer choices regarding relationships with friends.

Before conducting the latest ninth survey (fortieth year) not only question sentences and answer choices but also almost all survey conditions were reviewed, and the Institute finally decided to keep the same content as in the eighth survey in order to accurately grasp the influence of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake on the Japanese value orientation.