Editorial

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The current number is a special issue centering on longitudinal and cross-national surveys on national character by some members and collaborators of the Institute of Statistical Mathematics. Among others, we focus on the most recent cross-national survey, the Asia-Pacific Values Survey (2010–2014). This special issue is closely related to the preceding special issues published in *Behaviormetrika* in 2002–2003 (Vol. 29, No. 2 and Vol. 30, No. 1) and in 2009–2010 (Vol. 36, No. 2 and Vol. 37, No. 1), and the *Japanese Journal of Behaviormetrics* in 2005–2006 (Vol. 32, No. 2 and Vol. 33, No. 1). All these constitute a series of special issues on the surveys carried out under the paradigm termed Cultural Link Analysis (CLA) or Cultural Manifold Analysis (CULMAN). The authors are members of interdisciplinary and international conjoint research at the Institute of Statistical Mathematics.

A brief background explanation of this research is as follows. The Institute of Statistical Mathematics (ISM) has been conducting a longitudinal nationwide social survey on the Japanese national character every five years since 1953 (Mizuno et al., 1992). Here the term “national character” means the characteristics shown in people’s response patterns to the survey questionnaire. The question items cover people’s opinions about various aspects of their daily life, including culture, economy, education, environment, interpersonal relationships, politics, religion, safety, etc. This research began after World War II to establish a public opinion survey system based on a statistical sampling theory as well as to clarify the Japanese national character. This statistical and sociological survey was important at that time when Japan was expected to change from a military regime to a democratic country. Stimulated by this survey, many countries have currently been carrying out similar time-series surveys: GSS, Eurobarometer, ALLBUS, CREDOC, etc.

Since 1971, this survey research has been extended to foreign countries to arrive at a more advanced understanding of the Japanese national character in the context of a cross-national comparative study. A cross-national comparative survey, however, involves many methodological problems concerning language and sampling. In our search for conditions which can guarantee meaningful cross-national comparability of social survey data, we decided that beginning our study by a comparison of two nations (or races) which have some similarity and dissimilarity, e.g. in their racial origin or language, would have more meaning than attempting to begin from a comparison of two totally different countries. Therefore, our task is to investigate in what aspects and to what degree the peoples of the countries involved are similar or dissimilar to each other.

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Our cross-national survey began with the comparison of the Japanese in Japan and Americans of Japanese ancestry in Hawaii in 1971, and has since covered many countries and regions (Table 1, Yoshino, Shibai, Nikaido & Fujita in this issue). Some of these nations or regions share certain common features such as race or language, both of which are meaningful links for comparison. Extending the chain of links, eventually we may obtain a global chain of cross-national comparisons. Therefore, we call our research methodology Cultural Linkage Analysis for cross-national comparison (Hayashi, 1992; Hayashi et al., 1998). Furthermore, the paradigm has been developed as Cultural Manifold Analysis by introducing hierarchical structures into a set of cultural links (Yoshino, 2005a, 2007). We intend to develop our theory on data science under the principles of complementarity in social science toward certain practical world problems. Here the meaning of the “complementarity approach” includes aspects of complementarity in methodology, in ranges of aspects to investigate, in regions or countries to compare, and in statistical scaling.

Our final goal is to develop a behaviormetric study of civilizations through the social survey. The past main surveys have been published as a series of ISM Research Reports and survey data are shown on our homepages (see References). These will provide substantive information for both academic research and evidence-based policy making. And they will be useful for the mutual understanding of peoples all over the world, for the prediction of mass behavior of a certain nation in response to a particular event, for prediction of the attitude or political determination of a particular nation in international relations, for the scientific understanding of the rise and fall of civilizations, as well as the investigation of ideal conditions in Japan and in the world for the development and maintenance of world peace.

In this special issue, first, the introductory paper by Yoshino, Shibai, Nikaido and Fujita presents a brief explanation of the history of our survey research and the research paradigm called “Cultural Manifold Analysis” (CULMAN). This paper should be considered an update of the preceding papers in the special issue of *Behaviormetrika*, Vol. 36, No.2. Some data analyses on this paradigm are exemplified by the succeeding four papers.

Second, Yoshino develops the study of peoples’ sense of trust published in the preceding special issue of *Behaviormetrika* (Vol. 36, No.2), updating data and integrating related data analyses, and suggesting that social values may be represented as a sort of hierarchy and that there may be universal social values, such as the importance of family and life, beyond time and differences between the East and the West, although family styles may differ from time to time and from country to country. He also suggests the idea of using CULMAN to develop a peaceful and prosperous world by controlling it with a set of soft rules suitable to each region, rather than by a single strict regulation.

Third, Shibai analyzes data from Vietnam. Among others, he focuses on the characteristics of the Vietnamese with respect to three aspects: 1) Vietnamese characteristics at the national level in comparison with other nations, 2) differences between peoples of the North and South areas, and 3) differences between the generation that

experienced the Vietnam War and the younger generation born after the War. Vietnam is a socialist country, but it is also developing international cooperation with capitalist countries. Our 2013 Vietnam survey presents various important aspects of this rapidly changing country and its people.

Fourth, Park studies people's sense of "ikigai" and social capital. There may be no unanimously accepted English term for the Japanese term "ikigai"; it is occasionally translated as "the reason to live," "the reason for living," or "the reason for existence" ("raison de vivre," "raison d'existence" in French). This topic has long been investigated in studies of senior people's life satisfaction, but it must be closely related to everyone, regardless of age, gender or country. Although her work needs further elaboration, her article deals with a challenging topic and gives some evidence to consider cross-national differences or differences among cultural spheres.

Finally, Yamaoka and Yoshino investigate the relation of social capital to adult health and well-being. A logistic regression analysis on the relationships between factors of health and well-being (self-reported somatic symptoms, subjective satisfaction of health, family life, or life in general) and social factors (socioeconomic status) shows some evidence that social capital dimensions are positively associated with self-reported somatic symptoms and overall well-being in the Asia-Pacific countries.

Although not included in this special issue, the other colleagues of our survey team intend to publish papers on this topic in the near future. See also Sasaki (ed.) (2014) for a study on cross-national studies of the sense of trust.

We hope that these papers will provide some fundamental information which may prove useful toward the development of world peace and trust among people on earth in the 21st century.

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The following web pages provide related information:

- 1) http://www.ism.ac.jp/~yoshino/index_e.html (for our past surveys)
- 2) http://www.ism.ac.jp/~yoshino/corrigenda_e.html (for Corrigenda)
- 3) <http://www.ism.ac.jp/editsec/kenripo/index.html> (The ISM Survey Research Report in Japanese).
- 4) http://www.ism.ac.jp/editsec/kenripo/index_e.html (The ISM Survey Research Report in English)
- 5) http://www.ism.ac.jp/ism_info_j/kokuminsei.html (The webpage of ISM survey in Japanese)
- 6) http://www.ism.ac.jp/ism_info_e/kokuminsei_e.html (The webpage of ISM survey in English)