

동아시아 가족정책 국제비교연구 방법론 및 적용방안 : OECD Family Data를 중심으로

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Cross-National Comparative Studies on Family Policy in East
Asia: Methodological Recommendations with a Focus on the
OECD Family Database

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Problem

- Importance of Cross-National Comparative Studies
 - Sample- or data-specificity and the consequent 'limited generalizability' of the research findings
 - Eminent methodologists' continued emphasis on the 'comparative method'
 - Max Weber (1949): "historical/comparative methods"
 - Charles Ragin (1987): Combination of "case-oriented" & "variable-oriented" methods in cross-national comparisons
 - "No matter how grandiose the results could be, the 'stand-alone' datasets, are destined to fail to demonstrate the cross-cultural comparative aspects of a phenomenon"

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- The Area of 'Fertility and Aging' in East Asia
 - Need for cross-national comparison is particularly salient in the research area of fertility & aging
 - This is primarily because different countries tend to exhibit both homogeneities and heterogeneities
 - East Asia, in particular, is noteworthy due mostly to two reasons: (1) EA is constantly on the rise worldwide nowadays; (2) the 'fertility/aging' issue that has been plaguing the West for a long period of time is becoming even more serious in the East lately in its speed and ramifications

☞ Unlike the mundane expectation or ordinary belief that most EA countries, with the strong familism and the Confucius legacy, would probably be similar in 'fertility/aging' and the related aspects (facts, societal responses and/or policies), they are indeed pretty much different due mostly to differential levels of socio-economic development, political and/or welfare regimes, rank-and-file populace's attitudes and behaviors, etc.

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- What Aspects of the 'Fertility/Aging' in EA?

- (1) Family Structure
- (2) Family Position in the Labor Market
- (3) Family and Childhood Policies
- (4) Child Outcomes
- These are, in fact, streamlined standard indicators or aspects adopted in the OECD Family Database
- Each indicator, of course, contains a plethora of minute or sub-indicators in it

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- OECD Family Database

(<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>)

- Since 2006
- Rich reservoir of all sorts of information on families and children in the West
- Hierarchically structured with a set of standardized measurement indicators
- 4 dimensions (SF, LMF, PF, CO); 13 sub-dimensions; 70 indicators; 263 measurements (Table 1)

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- OECD_FD: Pros & Cons

- Handy standardization and harmonization
- Outstanding achievements and contributions (academic & policy-implementations) w/ diverse data on families and children in the West
- No equivalent data available, however, in the East
 - Korea and Japan are the only OECD members in the East, w/ other countries (e.g., China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, etc.) failing to be represented
 - No cross-national or cross-continental comparison is readily available between the East and West at the same time
- Euro-centric → Failing to reflect EA uniqueness (e.g., intergenerational support relations, gender preference, etc.)
- Tends to be pretty much diverse and diffuse (looks pretty descriptive, rather than truly explanatory) sorts of indicators
 - Comprehensive frame of reference or theoretical underpinnings, if any?

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- OECD_FD in EA: Recent Developments

- OECD Korea Social Policy Centre and the KIHASA (한국보건사회연구원) have been working together for the last few years to initiate the construction (and possibly dissemination, as well, in the near future) of equivalent d-base, called the EA_FD
 - 1st Round (2012): Identification of some of the most significant indicators only for Korea
 - 2nd Round (2013): 3 more countries (Japan, China, Singapore)
 - 3rd Round (2014): 3 more countries (H.K., Thailand, Vietnam)
 - 4th Round (2015): Preliminary check-ups and some validations of the accumulated datasets

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- EA d-base: Current States

- (1) Identification and Retrieval of Unavailable Indicators

- No. of missing indicators: Korea = 156; Japan = 163; China = 177; Singapore = 170; H.K. = 173; Thailand = 200; Vietnam = 203 (Tables 2-1 thru 2-4)
 - Retrieval rates (w/ excluding CO): Korea = 53.0% (106/200); Japan = 49.5% (99/200); China = 42.5% (85/200); Singapore = 46.0% (92/200); H.K. = 44.5% (89/200); Thailand = 31.0% (62/200); Vietnam = 29.5% (59/200) (Table 3)

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- (2) Cross-Validation of Available Indicators

- Discrepancies observed, w/ respect to Korea and Japan, between OECD_FD and EA d-base
 - Which one is valid, then?
 - It depends on the data collection protocols and procedures
 - Apparently OECD_FD does not have any official agencies or protocols in the local level that is in charge of data collection and forwarding
 - OECD headquarters in Paris tends to collect data (1) by going thru a whole batch of internationally renowned websites or published booklets OR (2) by getting touch w/ local personnel or agencies on an intermittent basis

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[(2) Cross-Validation of Available Indicators] (*Continued*)

- Apparently, no known or reported central coordination function is working out there for the OECD_FD to strictly impose its measurement guidelines or promote personal commitment
- Therefore, unlike the ordinary expectation, OECD_FD is not necessarily likely to be inherently valid or reliable
- EA d-base, however, has different protocols and procedures: (1) direct contacts w/ local personnel on- & off-line at both domestic and int'l levels; (2) stricter guidelines for data collection and forwarding
- The issue of relative validity between OECD_FD and EA d-base remains to be seen

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[(2) Cross-Validation of Available Indicators] (*Continued*)

– **Standardized measurement guidelines have not been properly abided by in EA d-base**

- A significant amount of deviance from OECD_FD's streamlined conceptual definitions and scrupulous measurement guidelines is observed in non-OECD, as well as OECD, countries in the East
- This leaves much room for improvement to come up w/ a better and more appropriate measurement on the part of each country involved in EA d-base

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[(2) Cross-Validation of Available Indicators] (Continued)

– A non-negligible amount of data in EA d-base (OECD_FD, as well) turns out to be outdated, and fails to have a clear-cut time frame (referencing year) and data sources

- This was particularly the case for the non-OECD countries in the East
- With outdated, unclear or unknown, and varying time points to which the data is referring, a smooth harmonization and comparison across the countries can hardly be expected

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[(2) Cross-Validation of Available Indicators] (Continued)

– Figures or numbers in EA d-base often turn out to be fluctuating too much across the countries

- Extraordinarily high or low numbers for some countries—e.g., SF1.3 (household by number of children) for a few countries
- Reason of doubt that some sort of mistakes or errors might have been there in the process of data collection, forwarding or processing
- Should be closely checked into and rectified later on

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[(2) Cross-Validation of Available Indicators] (Continued)

- Some data in EA d-base turn out to be relying too heavily on some small-scale, or regionally confined and less creditworthy, survey data
 - Needs to be replaced by more creditworthy and truly 'national sampled' survey data
- Survey data, albeit a national level, turn out to be used too much in the absence of some official governmental statistics
 - Whenever macro-level governmental statistics are readily available, they need to be used instead of some micro-level survey data

☞ A rule of thumb indicates that public (not private) sources, macro (not micro) ranges, international (not local) levels, up-to- (not out-) dates are usually preferred

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Tasks / Huddles from this point on ...

- Driving Force of the Current Research Team
 - The 4-year (2012~15) rounds of breathlessly conducted ongoing research project is now required to take a pause to ruminate over any sort of problems or limitations underlying the EA d-base
- Suggestion and/or Recommendations
 - (1) Try to fill up the void, or missing info, in EA d-base as much as possible
 - (2) Try to check more closely into the validity of a variety of available indicators in EA d-base (as well as OECD_FD)
 - (3) Try to come up w/ a streamlined construction of precise measurement indicators in EA d-base

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[Suggestion and/or Recommendations] (*Continued*)

- (4) Try to find out more up-to-date and clear-cut info
- (5) Try to avoid some extremely fluctuating, if any, data across the countries
- (6) Try to have data from some truly national sample survey, instead of locally confined one
- (7) Try to have some official governmental macro-statistics, instead of some micro or perceptual survey data
- (8) Try to refer statistics from some world-renowned institutions (e.g., WHO, EU, ILO, World Bank, IMF, etc.), instead of some local agencies or institutions

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[Suggestion and/or Recommendations] (*Continued*)

- (9) Try to make use of internationally coordinated survey datasets (e.g., ISSP, EASS, CNES, WVS, ELFS, etc.) as much as possible
 - They indeed keep producing and disseminating lots of data relevant to EA d-base, such as ideal no. of children, family-work balance, life satisfaction, gender preference, household division of labor, intergenerational support exchanges, attitudes towards childbearing and marriage, and the like
 - These data are, in fact, already made readily available via several prominent data archives (e.g., ICPSR, GESIS, Roper Center, CESSDA, ASEP, SSJDA, EASSDA, etc.)

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- Our further efforts need to focus more seriously on
- “Full-fledged” validation study from the next year on that pays closer attention to the truly ‘cross-validation’ of available indicators by means of employing all different kind of vehicles (e.g., more intimate contacts w/ local personnel in charge of data forwarding; online surfing and navigation of a whole batch of websites in domestic and international levels, books, journal articles, data archives, etc.)
- Better networking of the data construction infrastructure by means of launching a more formal and sustainable network of coordination among the local representatives in the East involved in the EA d-base

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Thanks a lot!

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