Social Norms Reflected in Japanese *Kenashi* (Blaming)

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aims and Study Design: The study aims to contribute to the construction of a society which accepts diversity. In an attempt to clarify "social norms," this study specifies factors which influence the tendency to use *kenashi* (blaming). This study employed survey design where undergraduate students were asked to complete a 20-item questionnaire consisting of *kenashi* made to close friends.
Place and Duration of Study: The investigation was conducted at universities in the greater Tokyo metropolitan area. The duration of the survey period was from January to May 2012.
Methodology: The effective sample of this research is 190: 103 males and 87 females. The data were examined by explanatory factor analysis, and its construct validity was confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis.
Results and Conclusion: Three factors, named "uniqueness and environment of evaluatee from an external cause," "lack of sense," and "lack of social accommodation," were extracted through EFA, and verified as having acceptable construct validity through CFA. The author discusses the "lack of social accommodation" as being seen as a deviation from the norm. This factor had the highest mean among three factors, and its validity is also indicated by previous studies. It is also discussed that faults resulting from irresistible force or lack of sense are not likely to invoke *kenashi*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Up to the current time, many studies in the fields of linguistics, especially sociolinguistics and pragmatics have focused on compliments. This might be because compliments convey a positive evaluation directly and contribute to the construction and maintenance of a harmonious interpersonal relationship. In contrast, few studies have been done on *kenashi* (blaming), especially among Japanese scholars. However, much can be found out from an examination of *kenashi*. Because it is often deployed to blame for failures which resulted from carelessness or neglect, triggers of *kenashi* must reflect norms in the society.

Norms are invisible and essentially implicit in that those members of a community who follow them will not be evaluated positively based only on that they follow the norm; this is because members are expected to follow norms. Rather, it is when the members take deviant actions that the norms become observable. Moreover, norms differ from culture to culture. Therefore, when people from different cultures interact with each other, they might unintentionally deviate from norms of each other's societies. Consequently, it is important to shed light on norms since intercultural communication continues to increase due to globalization and the acceptance of social diversity.

This study analyzes tendencies of *kenashi*, especially with respect to actions or properties of the objects which deviate from the norm, and attempts to clarify some of the norms in Japanese society.

In the following sections, the definition of *Kenashi* is provided. Next, previous studies about the relationship between norms and deviations from them are reviewed, since Japanese *kenashi* involves certain deviations from norms of the community. In addition, the author reviews the relationship among *kenashi*, norms, and behavioral style in Japan. Moreover, the author explains the process of *kenashi*, and introduces my research questions.

1.1 The Definition of *Kenashi* (blaming)

To begin with, the author provides a definition of the Japanese word *kenashi* (blaming) and discuss how it differs from other behaviors. The verb kenasu, which corresponds to the noun *kenashi*, is defined as follows:

Kenasu: to identify a particularly bad point, and apportion a charge against it.(Gendai kokugo reikai jiten 3rd ed p.392, translation by the present author)

In the same dictionary, *hinan* (to charge) is defined as to blame for shortcomings or failure (p. 1089), and *ayamachi* (failure) is explained as something caused by negligence or carelessness (p. 219). To sum up, *kenashi* can be defined as follows:

Kenashi: to identify particular failures caused by negligence or carelessness, and apportion blame for these.

There are many synonyms of the Japanese *kenashi*. For instance, *nonoshiru* is an action which is taken to blame somebody in a loud voice, or to say extremely derogatory things about somebody. *Warukuchi*, which indicates an action of saying bad things about somebody, largely overlaps in meaning the English swear and abuse. Similar to verbal abuse, *chusho* means harming other people's honor by telling falsehoods about them. In contrast to the terms noted so far, *kenashi* is not necessarily accompanied by a loud voice or intensity. Moreover, it is also different from simply saying bad things about others or telling falsehoods about them, in that it is oriented to indicating and criticizing negligence or carelessness which really occurred. Another synonym is *akutai*, which is classically translated as abuse (see Hoshino [1]). Although *akutai* indicates a manner of speaking which may cause others unpleasant or disgusted feelings, *kenashi* is not aimed at causing such feelings. The final synonym dealt with here is *bujoku*, which indicates actions treating others as inferior and causing them embarrassment. Unlike *bujoku*, however, *kenashi* does not necessarily treat others as being inferior, and does not include any intention of embarrassing others. Thus, *kenashi* is not an action aimed at embarrassing those whom the actor considers to be inferior to him or herself or to cause unpleasant or disgusted feelings. It is oriented to failures by negligence or carelessness which really occurred. In these

senses, *kenashi* is used as a sanction for deviations from societal norms.

Among academic studies, blaming has been studied from various perspectives, including its antecedents, and the consequences of norm violation (van Kleef, Wanders, Stamkou, & Homan [2]). As a consequence of norm violation by a member in the society, if the deviant behaviors are those of a member who has the power to change group norms, the other members often select to leave the society (Ditrich, Schol, & Sassenberg [3]). Regardless of this leaving response, violation of norms often results in causing such negative affective reactions as anger and blame (Kam & Bond [4]; Ohbuchi, Tamura, Quigley, Tedeschi, Madi, Bond, et al. [5]). In this sense, blaming can be said as a reaction which strongly tied to deviation from the norms.

Besides blaming, various kinds of actions, which are synonymous with blaming, have been studied. However, few studies point out the relationship between the action and deviations from norms. For instance, in the case of swearing, a literal synonym of *kenashi*, the focus of the studies is on usage (Jay & Janschewitz [6]; Pinker [7]; Vingerhoets, Bylsma, & De Vlam [8]), and influencing factors (Jay & Janschewitz [6]), as well as function (Dynel [9]). Although Johnson and Lewis [10] mention negative evaluation invoked by a violation of the norms of the context, their focus is on the swearer. They demonstrate that individuals who swear are judged negatively in contexts where swearing is not anticipated. Consequently, both what kinds of social actions or behaviors are seen as being a deviation from the norm, and thus worthy of treatment through swearing, and the underlying norms on which expectations are established in a given context are not yet apparent.

Insult is also a synonym of blaming. Though insult is an offensive behavior (Culpeper [11, 12]; Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann [13]), its ritual or playful aspect (Eder [14]; Labov [15]) and jocular and ironical usage (Pexman & Olineck [16]) have been pointed out. Because of this dual nature, studies have been conducted with regard to such topics as the cues which imply playfulness (Arginton [17]), and the relationship between speakers and listeners as a factor which influence its interpretation (Slugoski & Turnbull [18]).

Related behaviors include sarcasm, teasing, and banter. However, as scholars have been interested in the ambiguous nature of these behaviors, namely the discrepancy between their literal and intended meanings, most studies have been conducted from the perspective of the function which relates to group solidarity (Eder [19]; Hay [20]; Straehle [21]), (relational) identity display (Boxer & Cortes-Conde [22]), cues which imply the meaning (Alberts [23]), and factors which influence interpretation of these behaviors (Alberts, Kellar-Guenther & Corman [24]; Ivanco, Pexman & Olineck [25]; Pexman & Olineck [16]). As a result, few studies have focused on the relationship between the behaviors and social norms. Although Pawluk [26] refers to social norms, as she also pays attention to the ambiguous characteristic of teasing, she sees social norms as contributing to the determination of appropriate topics for teasing.

In sum, *kenashi*, as a kind of blaming, is strongly tied to deviation from norms. In particular, Japanese *kenashi* is oriented to failures by negligence or carelessness which actually occurred.

1.2 Social Norms and Deviation from Them

1.2.1 Social norms and the consequence of deviations from them

It is common that certain deviations from norms in a society are seen as problematic, because people in the community are expected to follow the norms. For instance, Stokes and Hewitt [27] discuss social alignment and misalignment as cited below:

> "Problematic situations often involve misalignment between the actual or intended acts of participants and cultural ideals, expectations, beliefs, knowledge, and the like. "Alignment" in this sense has to do with perceived discrepancies between what is actually taking place in a given situation and what is thought to be typical, normatively expected, probable, desirable or, in other respects, more in accord with what is culturally normal.

> To speak of misalignment between culture and ongoing action is thus to say that people recognize that their own acts and those of others often do not accord with established "ways" of thinking, feeling and acting. People classify acts as wrong, strange, imperfect, immoral, unusual, unsuccessful,atypical, meaningless, unexpected, and so forth." (p.843)

According to Stokes and Hewitt [27], varieties of concepts, including cultural ideals, typical behaviors, and norms can be a social standard. However, since some of these concepts may serve differently, the author believes that it is useful to distinguish them from each other. For example, it is quite possible that deviation from what is thought to be an ideal will not be classified as problematic. The reason is that ideals may be ideals precisely because most people cannot reach or accomplish them. Accordingly, that particular things or actions are evaluated as not attaining the level of an ideal does not mean that they necessarily instantiate a deviation. Rather, this is seen as ordinary. Nonetheless, social norms can be a standard on which some expectations are built as to what sorts of actions are seen as being normal, probable, or desirable within a given society.

Similar assumptions are made in Expectation Violation Theory. Burgoon [28] insists that expectations in communication denote an enduring pattern of anticipated behavior. These expectancies may pertain in general to all members of a given language community or subgroup and are grounded in societal norms regarding what constitutes typical and appropriate behavior. If some actions are taken in different way or manner from the expectation, they will be evaluated negatively.

Japanese scholars have also pointed out that deviation from what is thought to be average or standard invokes negative evaluations. Muroyama [29] analyzes *hogen seiko goi* (Japanese dialect vocabulary indicating propensity) in regard to labor, and shows that such vocabulary items do not distribute in binary way, that is, 50% positive and 50% negative, but rather incline extremely toward a negative direction. Based on this finding, he maintains that any attitudes or actions which suit group (or social) norms are interpreted as natural and become unmarked. Consequently, any propensities which deviate from social norms become the object of focus and are treated as being marked. Quite interestingly, Muroyama's data demonstrates that negative evaluations not only orient to a lack of a will or ability to work, but also to more work than required to satisfy the average or standard level. Founded on these orientations, he insists that there are three sorts of values: values oriented to labor of average or standard levels, values oriented to excesses, and values oriented to labor deviating from the average level.

What Muroyama calls social norms seems to correspond to "injunctive social norms," which is a term used in the field of psychology. According to Anderson and Dunning [30], who review concepts of behavioral norms in the field of psychology, the most common distinction seems to be between descriptive and injunctive social norms (see, e.g., Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren [31]). The former refers to how people tend to act in reality — their average or typical behavior. On the other hand, the latter serves as a standard or guide for correct or appropriate behavior. Additional distinctions are introduced in injunctive norms, namely social and moral. The core feature of social norms is that people are responding to external social pressure and the threat of punishment. In contrast, moral norms are inherently tied to beliefs about what one thinks one should do, independent of preference, and there are commonalities in the intrapersonal pressures to which people respond. In sum, three distinctive social norms have been identified in the literature, that is, descriptive, injunctive social, and injunctive moral norms. Of these three, the most relevant to this study is injunctive social norms, as these deal with what people think others believe is correct or appropriate, and how people think what others believe is what they should do (Anderson & Dunning [30] p.726). A subsequent task for the present study will be to identify some of the injunctive social norms in contemporary Japan. It is said that one crucial aspect of an injunctive social norm is that people believe they may be sanctioned or punished if other people catch them violating the norm. Hence, *kenashi* among Japanese undergraduate students is analyzed as functioning to sanction violations of injunctive social norms.

As mentioned above, deviations from what is seen to be normal can be treated as problematic and often sanctioned, and *kenashi* can function to sanction in Japanese. However, at least two additional points must be noted. The first one is the relationship between deviations and sanctions to them — not all deviations immediately result in sanctions or punishment. Rather, it depends on the degree. For instance, Floyd and Voloudakis [32] consider the extent of the discrepancy between expected and observed behaviors (p.344). They state that if the observed behavior deviates only slightly from what was expected, it may simply be forgiven or overlooked, or it may be subsumed as part of the range of expected behaviors. Similarly, Burgoon [33] maintains that expectancy violations refer to

actions sufficiently discrepant from the expectancy to be noticeable and classified as being outside the expectancy range (p.154). In some cases, violations may even invoke legal sanctions or other social means of enforcement, but more often they are "legislated" tacitly. Cultures vary in how deviant a behavior must become before it is recognized as a violation.

The degree of deviation is also related to the second point. It should be taken into account that deviations from the typical or standard level do not necessarily lead to negative evaluations. In order to illustrate this point, consider the following instance. When "to work" is shared as a norm among society members, working at a standard level will not result in any evaluations other than "ordinary," because every member is expected to work. In such societies, it is quite natural that members who do not work will be recognized as deviant and be evaluated negatively since they do not reach the standard level. In addition, members working at a level which exceeds the standard will also be evaluated negatively, as Muroyama [29] points out. However, it is worth noting that there are cases in which members deviate from the average level but are evaluated positively at the same time. For example, a member performing a level of work that goes slightly beyond the average or standard level is said to "work well."

Based on this assumption, this study aims to clarify injunctive social norms as an average level among Japanese undergraduate students. In other words, an attempt is made to differentiate what is negatively evaluated from what is not, and to specify what is thought to be deviant in Japan. Additionally, although the norms themselves should be distinguished from the actions people evaluate positively as fitting the norms, it is useful to recognize what Japanese people think to be desirable because both concepts are adjacent in such cases as "work well," and the norms will be better described through distinguishing them.

1.2.2 Social norms in Japan

The author has thus far noted how a particular action or property may be seen as a deviation from the norm. The problem is that the contents of the norms are not well described in previous studies. As introduced above, Muroyama [29] analyzes *hogen seiko goi* (dialect vocabulary indicating propensity) regarding labor. He collected data from Shikoku and Chugoku, in western Japan. It should be possible to obtain new insights from different focal objects, areas, or methods. However, the author is not aware of any studies considering the contents of norms in Japan. For instance, Inoue [34], a sociological study, maintains that Japanese people have adopted a behavior style in which they evaluate themselves by committing to the value standards of the out-group. It seems that what he calls "value standards of the out-group" corresponds to social norms, but no explanation is offered as to the contents. Kitaori [35] shows that, in the field of social psychology, social norms are treated as externalized standards; yet what kinds of concepts constitute the standard is not explicated. Consequently, the contents of social norms in Japan have yet to be uncovered.

Turning to studies about linguistic behavior in Japan, there are fewer studies concerning *kenashi* or negative evaluation than those about positive evaluation, including *keigo* (honorific) and compliments. Hoshino [1], one of the pioneering researchers in Japan looking abuse/swearing, introduces functions, vocabulary, styles, and situations of abuse/swearing in detail. As a function of abuse/swearing at social level, he points out an assimilation or repulsion effect to different cultures, which implies a certain relevance of swearing to society and culture, as early as the 1970s. However, since no detailed explanation is provided, it is not clear how abuse/swearing assimilates to or repels from different cultures, and of what kinds of concepts the culture consists. Yamaji [36] tries to re-consider relationships between *kenashi* and other adjacent linguistic behaviors. However, because the analysis was done from the perspective of intention, communicated content, and uttered content/form, objects and underlying norms were not referred to. On the other hand, in the field of pragmatics or sociolinguistics, Sekizaki [37] and Nishio [38] mention cultural norms in Japan, even though their focus is not *kenashi* per se. Sekizaki [37] empirically demonstrates that utterances which only describe a given situation or action may serve as a negative evaluation in spontaneous conversation. Based on his data, Sekizaki points out the importance of knowledge about social norms in order to understand negative evaluation utterances. Nishio [38], who analyzes *mainasu taigu hyogen kodo* (negative treatment expressions), states that negative evaluation can be invoked and its degree is decided based on values in the given society, which a speaker holds or which underlie the

utterance. However, the construct of social norms is still not completely clear, nor is their objective.

On the other hand, a number of studies have been conducted regarding what people think is desirable. A series of studies about compliments has been conducted in the Anglosphere, and a discussion about the functions, objects, and replies to compliments has continued mainly from the perspective of politeness theory (e.g., Holmes [39]; Wolfson [40]; see also Brown & Levinson [41] on politeness theory). The objects or actions complimented must be ones which *any* member of the speech community will recognize as positive (Mines [42]; italics in original). Sekizaki, Kim, & Zhao [43] empirically examine values underlying Japanese compliments, together with those of Korean and Chinese. In their study, three factors commonly underlying compliments in the three countries were extracted through Exploratory Factor Analysis and verified as having acceptable construct validity through Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Sekizaki, Kim, & Zhao named these the "uniqueness of evaluatee factor," the "personal relationship factor," and the "possessive property factor" respectively. The mean rates of each of the factors were reported as being M=5.85 (SD=1.27) on factor1, M=5.31 (SD=1.46) on factor2, and M=4.88 (SD=1.62) on factor3. Based on this result, they argue that things or actions relating to the first factor are more likely to be the object of compliments and that those related to the third factor are not.

The social norms which the present study aims to reveal do not necessarily have the same structure as things or actions thought to be desirable. Rather, the author attempts to bring to light the features of social norms through comparison to what people think is desirable.

1.3 The Process of *Kenashi*

In this section, the author will explain the process of *kenashi*, namely how *kenashi* is invoked and expressed, in order to make the position of this research clear. As stated above, *kenashi* is conducted based on negative evaluations toward a deviation from the norms. Thus, (a) at the psychological level, a negative evaluation results from a deviation from the norm, (b) considerations are made as to whether the negative evaluation at the psychological level should be or can be expressed, or should be withheld, and (c) when a decision is made to

express it, linguistic expressions by which the negative evaluation might be communicated are considered based on various factors, including the strength of negative evaluation, the situation, and condition of the object. This assumption heavily relies on traditional Japanese linguistic models of *Keigo* (Honorific) and *Taigu Hyogen* (Treatment expressions) (Minami [44]; Sugito [45]; Nishio [38]).

For example, Minami [44] points out three common features of honorific elements: (1) there is a consideration by subject about a particular object, (2) there is a particular evaluative attitude toward objects of the consideration or the expressions about them, and (3) as a result, treatment of the contents of the expression or the expression itself by the subject will differ. Sugito [45] states that two stages will be processed before *Taigu hyogen* (treatment expression) or *Taigu hyogen kodo* (treatment behavior) is realized by selecting a particular linguistic expression or behavior. At the *Minashi no dankai* (stage of regarding), a subject regards the condition of an object such as "He / She is in a more difficult situation." Then, at the *Atsukai no dankai* (stage of treatment), a decision is made as to how to treat the object, such as "Let him / her leave." Nishio [38] also proposes a model regarding *Mainasu no taigu hyogen kodo* (negative treatment expression). Nishio [38] assumes four stages: (1) a stage of negatively evaluating the situation, (2) a stage of deciding the degree to which the evaluation should be expressed, (3) a stage of deciding on an expressive attitude, including abusive and implicit, or to forsake the object, and (4) a stage of selecting treatment expressions based on the decisions at each stage. The literature reviewed thus far commonly points out a close connection between evaluative attitudes or the evaluation itself regarding a referent, and linguistic behavior based on it. Grounded on these models, processes of *kenashi* are also well formulated, since *kenashi* also implicates a negative evaluation.

Following my model outlined above, the objects of *kenashi* in this study are: objects which are negatively evaluated (*a* above), and also receive an overtly expressed negative evaluation (*b* above). On the other hand, if the objects are not to be a target of *kenashi*, it is either because the objects are not given any negative evaluation, or expression of the negative evaluation is withheld for some reason in spite of the objects being negatively evaluated at the

psychological level. This point has to be taken into consideration in the analysis.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Overview of the Survey

Although the subjects of this paper are undergraduate students in Japan, the data come from a survey which was part of a series of studies conducted also in Korea and China. A questionnaire was adopted as the method based on the following three reasons: (1) we needed participants from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, (2) a large amount of data were needed, (3) we aimed at clarifying tendencies of certain linguistic behaviors by people from different cultures under the same condition. Undergraduate students were selected as participants because of efficiency in data collection. In the following sections, overviews of the survey, construction of the questionnaire, and methods of this study are explained.

The participants of this study consist of 202 of undergraduate students: 112 males and 90 females respectively, whose average age was 19.5. Although the investigation was conducted at universities in the greater Tokyo metropolitan area, known as the Kanto area, the participants actually came from many different areas of Japan. Hence, their linguistic and cultural backgrounds were not restricted to that of the Kanto area. The duration of the survey period was from January to May 2012.

2.2 Instruments

In the series of studies from which the data come, an attempt is made to clarify compliments and *kenashi* in Japan, Korea and China, especially from the perspective of consciousness as well as language expressions. Although only the results about consciousness in regard to *kenashi* at a close friend are reported in this paper, the design of the entire questionnaire is introduced in order to make the position of this paper clear.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part, the participants were asked to assess to what degree they make compliments or *kenashi* on a 7 response option Likert scale. Labels were attached on numbers 7, 4, 1, as

follows. In the case of compliments, 7: definitely make a compliment, 4: not sure, 1: never make a compliment. In the case of *kenashi*, 7: definitely blame, 4: not sure, 1: never blame. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of a DCT (Discourse Completion Test) which required participants to provide the linguistic expressions they would use in the situations shown.

Twenty items were initially selected for the first part of the survey. The 20 items included things related to appearance, belongings, accomplishments, character, and talents, all of which tend to be the targets of compliments (see Kim [46]) or negative evaluation (see Sekizaki [47]) in real conversations. Moreover, after both brain-storming by the researchers and an inquiring survey of undergraduate students, three additional items were included related to family, interpersonal relations, and hobbies. These additional items have not been referred to in prior research. From the 23 items, we made a selection considering following three points: (1) lightening the burden on the participants, (2) the balance of the number of items from each category, (3) selection of items which were expected to be common objects of compliments or *kenashi* in the three countries, and items which were expected to exhibit a differential response pattern depending on the culture. As the result, 20 items were selected (see Table 1).

Two to 4 items were selected from each category. However, there were cases where an item corresponded to more than two categories. For instance, "clothing" can be interpreted as an item which refers either to the appearance of the referent per se or to his/her personality as one who does or does not care about the appearance of his/her clothing. Moreover, a new interpretation, such as the anti-sociality of a referent who is not concerned with reputation, may be found as a result of analysis. The analysis elucidates the meaning or interpretation of each item in the respective cultures. Therefore, at the stage of item selection, attention was paid mainly to avoiding excessive differences in the number of items from each category.

Descriptions of items were paired corresponding to positive/negative situations. For instance, "figure" is described as "(the referent) has very good figure" for the compliment survey, and "(the

Table 1. The categories and items of the questionnaire

Categories	Items
Appearance	figure, hairdo, looks (facial),clothes
Belongings	mobile phone, homescreen of mobile phone, bag
Accomplishment	foreign language ability, has a job
Character	punctual, caring
Talents	studies, sports, cooking
Family, interpersonal relationships	affluence, relationship with family/boyfriend/girlfriend
Hobby	has hobbies, reads novels, has movie DVDs

referent) has a very bad figure" for the *kenashi* survey. It has to be taken into account that interpersonal relationships influence tendencies to compliment and *kenashi*. Furthermore, each subject may imagine different types of persons from the descriptor "close friend." In order to control these problems, both "close friend" and "acquaintance" were operationally defined as follows (these definitions were displayed before the item assessing part).

Close friend: A person with whom you often have meals or go to the café. You can confide in him/her about anything, including personal things such as troubles, when you felt happy, each other's strengths and weaknesses, and private things such as family.

Acquaintance: You know his/her name and face. You greet or make small talk when you meet on campus, but you have no communication in private.

On the questionnaire, 40 items (20 items each for close friend and acquaintance) about complimenting or *kenashi*, respectively, were listed randomly. Of these, the 20 items about *kenashi* at a close friend are the object of this study.

2.3 The Data and Methodology

From the 202 responses, items with missing values were deleted through list-wise case deletion. Consequently, 190 answers (103 from males, 87 from females, average age 19.6) constitute the data of this study. With this data, an attempt is made to determine the tendencies of *kenashi*, and the norms which form the underlying factors of the tendencies. To confirm the factor structure, a cross-validation test was adopted. The author distributed the data into two equally sized groups by random selection: Group1 for exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and Group 2 for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of each item are shown in Table 2. In the following sections, "CF" in each item stands for "close friend."

Since the words attached to the scale were "7: definitely blame, 4: not sure, 1: never blame," the items, whose average score was above 4 are seen as having a stronger tendency of invoking *kenashi*. In Table 2, only the score of "CF is completely unpunctual" (M=4.58) is above 4. The other items seem to have a weaker tendency to invoke *kenashi*, since their scores are below 4, even though they have a range of average scores.

It is quite natural that a floor effect is operating in respect to some items, considering that *kenashi* has a negative effect on interpersonal relationships. Recognizing this point, however, this study seeks to uncover not only the underlying norms of *kenashi*, but also those of not *kenashi* as well. It is for this reason that the research makes no deletions of any items at this stage.

3.2 Results of EFA

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on the 20 items with unweighted least squares method and promax rotation. The researcher dropped the following 5 items with criterion of loadings lower than 0.4 and interpretability of factors: "CF is uncaring," "Home screen of CF's mobile phone is lame," "CF is not good at foreign languages such as English, Japanese, and Russian," "CF is unfamiliar with movies," and "CF doesn't read novels at all." IBM SPSS STATISTICS 24 was used to conduct EFA.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of 20 items

	M	SD
CF is completely unpunctual.	4.58	1.746
CF has lame hairdo.	3.57	1.803
CF always wears dirty clothes.	3.55	1.827
CF has a tattered bag.	3.16	1.823
CF doesn't cook at all.	3.15	1.739
CF is uncaring.	3.14	1.594
Home screen of CF's mobile phone is lame.	2.97	1.812
CF has no hobby.	2.95	1.738
CF is unfamiliar with movies.	2.79	1.490
CF is not intelligent.	2.71	1.546
CF is on bad terms with family.	2.63	1.631
CF has an old mobile phone.	2.60	1.658
CF is completely bad at sports.	2.53	1.589
CF doesn't read novels at all.	2.51	1.511
CF has no boy/girlfriend.	2.46	1.528
CF has a bad figure.	2.39	1.493
CF is not good at foreign languages, such as English, Japanese, and Russian.	2.36	1.469
CF can't find a job.	2.34	1.527
CF has bad looks (facial).	2.12	1.360
CF is poor.	1.75	1.150

N=190

Table 3. Result of EFA

	EFA			Statistical description	
	F1	F2	F3	M	SD
F1: uniqueness and environment of evaluatee from external cause (α=.836)					
CF has bad looks (facial).	**.933**	-.104	-.062	2.20	1.477
CF has a bad figure.	**.863**	-.175	.067	2.43	1.541
CF is poor.	**.697**	.119	-.174	1.66	1.117
CF is on bad terms with family.	**.657**	-.006	.012	2.67	1.710
CF can't find a job.	**.533**	.072	.117	2.22	1.524
CF is not intelligent.	**.514**	.221	.045	2.73	1.627
CF has no boy/girlfriend.	**.467**	.393	-.165	2.44	1.457
CF has no hobby.	**.449**	.210	.240	2.96	1.713
F2: Lack of sense (α=.796)					
CF is completely bad at sports.	-.012	**.826**	.063	2.66	1.705
CF doesn't cook at all.	-.065	**.808**	.010	3.21	1.756
CF has an old mobile phone.	.059	**.669**	-.002	2.74	1.733
F3: lack of social accommodation (α=.772)					
CF always wears dirty clothes.	-.081	-.132	**.936**	3.57	1.944
CF has a tattered bag.	.164	.004	**.712**	3.11	1.910
CF is completely unpunctual.	-.202	.290	**.496**	4.65	1.687
CF has lame hairdo.	.291	.036	**.421**	3.58	1.894
KMO	0.843				
Eigenvalue	6.348	1.705	1.372		
explained covariations	39.353	8.778	6.358		
Factor correlations					
F1	1.00				
F2	.617	1.00			
F3	.473	.363	1.00		

N=95
Factor loadings over 0.40 appear in bold

As the result, three factors were extracted (Table 3). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO=0.843 ("Meritorious" according to Field [48] p.797). Three factors with eigenvalues above 1 accounted for 54.49% of the variance.

F1 was named "uniqueness and environment of evaluatee from external cause" factor since the cause of uniqueness and environment found in items of F1 are beyond the control of the close friend. For instance, although "CF has very bad looks (facial)" and "CF has a bad figure" can be improved or maintained to some extent by effort, their bases are genetic. Additionally, "CF is not intelligent" and "CF has no hobby at all" not only have genetic features but also depend on the circumstance. It is hard to imagine that "CF is poor" is directly due to the actions of the close friend per se, considering that the close friend is an undergraduate student. Rather, it is natural to assume that the cause of the poorness is related to the persons who are supposed to support the family (i.e., the father or mother, etc.). In general, "CF is on bad terms with family," "CF can't find a job," and "CF has no boy/girlfriend," cannot be altered by the efforts of the close friend alone. Hence, F1 was named "uniqueness and environment of evaluatee from the external cause".

F2 was named "lack of sense" because items in F2 commonly express lack of sense. "CF is completely bad at sports" is a typical example. From "CF has an old mobile phone," lack of sense for capturing something new or popular can be assumed. It is possible that "CF doesn't cook at all," even though he/she actually can cook in terms of ability. However, other possible understandings about not cooking are related to lack of sense or ability. Furthermore, it may also happen that the participant found some lack of sense in CF always being satisfied with the pre-packaged food.

The label for F3 is "lack of social accommodation", since "CF has a lame hairdo", "CF always wears dirty clothes," and "CF has a tattered bag" all contain inability or indifference properties regarding accommodation to social circumstances, including fashion, relationships, situation, and so forth, especially regarding appearance. Being punctual is essential in Japan, because being late for an appointment disturbs the schedule of the other person. Therefore, being punctual can be seen as something socially accommodational. It is in this sense that "CF is completely unpunctual" implies inability or indifference in regard to accommodation.

These three factors have high reliabilities, with Cronbach's α for F1 (α=0.836), F2 (α=0.796), and F3 (α=0.772). Each Mean of three factors are F1: M=2.09 (SD=1.334), F2: M=2.88 (SD=1.71), F3: M=3.51(SD=1.694). Assuming that the evaluation words in the questionnaire were "not sure" for 4 and "never blame" for 1, all of these factors have tendencies of not invoking *kenashi*. However, of these three, F3 has the strongest tendency to invoke *kenashi*, considering that it has the highest mean among the three.

Factor correlation between F1 and F2 is relatively high. This is because F2 contains a property in common with F1, namely external cause, in that lack of sense is brought by genetic properties or the circumstances under which the person grew up.

3.3 Results of CFA

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation was conducted based on three factors structure which was extracted through EFA. IBM SPSS AMOS 22.0.0 was used to conduct CFA.

The default model consists of indicators (observed variance) with paths from latent factors to which each indicator showed the highest loading. Correlations between each of three latent factors are also assumed. Moreover, some covariations were added to the default model, referring to modification index, which is calculated for every path and indicate degrees of improvement as to the fitness of the model to the data. However, needless to say, because substantial meaning is more important to construct models, the researcher did not set any covariation which is not interpretable. Covariations added here are between error variances of (1) "CF has bad looks (facial)" and "CF is poor" both in F1, (2) "CF has a bad figure" in F1 and "CF has a lame hairdo" in F3, and (3) "CF has no hobby" in F1 and "CF always wears dirty clothes" in F3.

CMIN (χ2), CFI, RMSEA, SRMR and AIC were selected as indicators of goodness-of-fit. Since CMIN (χ2) is a classical index, it is recommended to report it at least (see Kline [49] p.269). On the other hand, it is also well known

that χ2 contains such properties as following: in the case of small N, its underlying distribution is not χ2 distributed, or it is inflated by sample size (e.g., if N were equal to 100), and thus large-N solutions are routinely rejected on the basis of χ2, and so forth (Brown [50] pp.69-70). As the sample size of this study, that is, 95, is approximately equal to 100, it might happen that the model in this study is rejected. Therefore, the researcher reports CMIN as a reference only.

According to Brown [50], other goodness-of-fit indices are threefold, and it is recommended to adopt at least one index from each category (p.70). In this study, SRMR as absolute fit indices, RMSEA as parsimony correction indices, and CFI as comparative fit indices are adopted. Adding to them, AIC is also adopted, because this index is useful when it is required to compare alternative models based on the same variables and fitted to the same data matrix that are not hierarchically related (Kline [49] p.286).

Although various cut-off criteria were proposed so far, it is commonly believed that CFI larger than 0.90, and RMSEA and SRMR less than 0.080, are considered as an acceptable fit (Browne & Cudeck [51]; Hu & Bentler [52]; Kline [49]). As for AIC, the model with the smallest value is chosen as the one most likely to replicate (Kline [49] p.287).

The results of goodness-of-fit are summarized in Table 4; the result of "independence model" is shown as well. This method is based on comparative fit indices (Hu & Bentler [53] p.426), which evaluate the fit of a user-specified solution in relation to a more restricted, nested baseline model. "Independence model" (or "null model") is a typical baseline in which the covariances among all input indicators are fixed to zero (Brown [50] p.72).

Results demonstrated that CMIN of the default model was 147.62 (df=87, $P=0 < .01$), and that of the default model with covariations between error variances was CMIN=122.789 (df=84, $P=.004 < .01$)

respectively. This indicates that both models are rejected, namely don't fit the data. This is because of the sample size of this study, as stated above. Besides CMIN, all other goodness-of-fit indices of the default model with covariations between error variances indicate acceptable fitness (SMRM=0.723, RMSEA=0.070, CFI=0.939, AIC=194.789), which are better than the default model. Accordingly, the default model with covariations between error variances is adopted in this study.

The adopted model and standardized estimates were shown in Fig. 1. All the R^2 are seen as fair with the value above 0.48. Correlation between F1 and F2 is quite high (0.95). This is because F2 share common property to F1, as stated with regard to the EFA result.

Covariations between "CF has bad looks (facial)" and "CF is poor," both in F1, is 0.34. Both indicators contain in common a property which is hard to improve by effort. Between "CF has a bad figure" in F1 and "CF has a lame hairdo" in F3, value of the covariation was 0.31. Both of them are a feature of body, and possible to be improved by effort. The last covariation is the one between "CF has no hobby" in F1 and "CF always wears dirty clothes" in F3, whose value is 0.34. It is quite natural that we have several hobbies and articles of clothing, compared to mobile phones or bags. These two indicators contain the common property of not working at creating more options. Attention must be paid to covariation between errors of indicators (observed variables) from different factors because the correlations imply the existence of another concept which cannot be explained by the extracted factors. This is one of the tasks for future research.

3.4 Discussion

3.4.1 Validity of factors

The default model with covariations between error variances, which consists of three factors extracted through EFA, showed acceptable fitness to the data. Therefore, it is appropriate to assume three factors structure to the data. As

Table 4. Result of goodness-of-fit

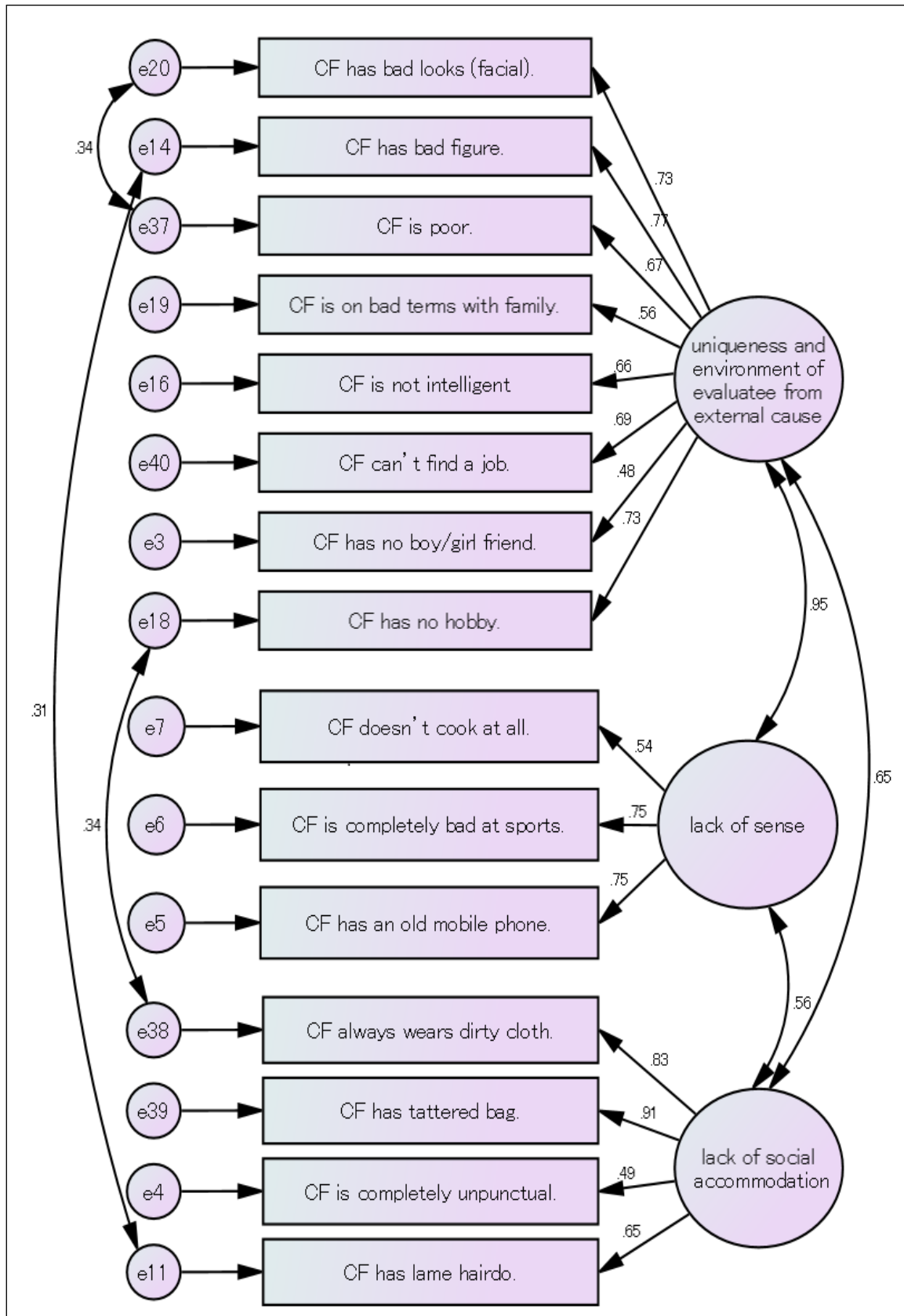|	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	AIC
Default model	0.775	0.086	0.905	213.620
Default model with covariations between error variances	0.723	0.070	0.939	194.789
Independence model		0.254	0	770.589

Fig. 1. The result of CFA and standardized estimates

shown in 3.3, however, goodness-of-fit indices were improved with covariations between error variance of indicators (observed variables) that constitute different factors. This implies the possible existence of covariance which is not explained by any of the factors in this study, and the possible existence of other factors if items, which share the covariance, would be prepared. Therefore, this point should be further investigated.

3.4.2 Social norms reflected in Japanese *Kenashi*

The mean score of each item in F1, whose label is uniqueness and environment of evaluatee from an external cause, varies from the level of 1 to 2. These quite low values of mean demonstrate that F1 is not likely seen as a deviation. Rather, it is easier to understand it as a factor of not being the objects of *kenashi*. Namely, when negative properties of or situation around CF are caused by external matters, irresistible force can be found there and *kenashi* at CF tends to be avoided.

F2 also has quite a low mean value of the level of 2. Based on this result, F2 also can be said to be an unlikely object of *kenashi*, and therefore not to be seen as a deviation from the norm. This result is based on a strong relation to external causes, which is a crucial concept of F1. For instance, "lack of sense" is not necessarily because of CF. Rather it is brought by external causes, including family and circumstances where the CF grew up. This interpretation is supported by a quite high correlation between F2 and F1 as the result of CFA.

Finally, F3, whose name is "lack of social accommodation", is discussed. The mean rate of F3 (M=3.52) indicates the weaker tendency of invoking *kenashi* with respect to evaluation words in the questionnaire. Notwithstanding, the rate was highest among the three factors. Hence, F3 is most likely to invoke *kenashi*, and therefore has the largest discrepancy from the norm among the three factors. F3 consists of items concerning appearance and punctuality. Based on these results, it can be seen as a norm, especially among Japanese undergraduate students, to have an attitude of accommodating to one's circumstances through such behaviors as avoiding making others uncomfortable with adjusting appearance according to the situation, or avoiding disturbing schedules of others by being punctual.

This assumption coexists with what Inoue [34] points out. According to him, Japanese people have come to adopt a behavioral style in which they evaluate themselves by committing to the value standards of out-group. Thus, it is quite natural to think that they had to arrange their behavior style according to the values of those around them; to not do so would result in disadvantages. Consequently, accommodation became more and more important, resulting in a norm of having an attitude of accommodating to those around. Additionally, this study revealed that arrangements with regard to their own appearance and schedule with friends are thought to be important in the contemporary society of Japanese undergraduate students.

Moreover, the previous study about compliments also supports this result. Sekizaki, Kim, & Zhao [43] revealed that "personal relationship factor," which refers to positive aspects of close friend, including "CF is punctual," "CF is caring," "CF always wears clean clothes," "CF is on good terms with family," and "CF has good looks (facial)," tends to be complimented comparatively (M=5.31，SD=1.46). In consideration of its mean value, it can be said that to be concerned about associations is regarded as something good to do. However, with a higher mean than F2, F1 is more like an ideal, i.e., what is recommended to do, or what not all people can easily accomplish M=5.85 (SD=1.27). In this sense, because F2 is not so strongly tied to compliments, it is quite natural to insist that the factor stands for what they ought to do. Consequently, it is strongly implied that to orient to social accommodation is a norm in Japan.

4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated tendencies of Japanese *kenashi* (blaming) using data obtained from a survey administered to Japanese undergraduate students. As the result of exploratory factor analysis, "uniqueness and environment of evaluatee from an external cause," "lack of sense," and "lack of social accommodation" were extracted. Three factors structure was verified through confirmatory factor analysis as having acceptable fitness. F3 was seen as a deviation from the norm, with the highest mean among three factors, and its validity was supported by previous studies. It was also discussed that faults by irresistible force or lack of sense are not likely to invoke *kenashi*.

Prior to this study, invariance between Japan, Korea and China turned out to be rejected. This strongly suggests that the norms of undergraduate students in these three countries differ from each other. In order to contribute to the construction of a society which accepts diversities, the exact contents of norms in those areas and their relationships need to be revealed.

Limitations of this study are threefold. The results of this paper depend on 15 items (5 items were deleted from 20 items). Therefore, other factors might be extracted if different items were prepared. Furthermore, the results might be influenced by the characteristics of the participants, including their age, gender, social status, and so on. Hence, it is difficult to generalize the norms found in this study, as all participants were undergraduate students. Additionally, limitations are also found in the interpretation of the questionnaire answers. For instance, an answer of "7: definitely blame" stands for both negative evaluation at a psychological level and intention to express it at a behavioral level. On the other hand, answers under "4: not sure" might either be negatively evaluating or withholding to express negative evaluation considering moral issues or the privacy of those made targets of the *kenashi.* These limitations must be improved in future studies.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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