Editorial for Volume 17

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The Japan Academic Society of Mathematics Education (JASME) has published a book, *Trajectories and Prospects of Research in Mathematics Education*, to commemorate its 30th anniversary. Focusing on the *Journal of JASME Research in Mathematics Education* (in Japanese), the book reviews domestic and international research by area and provides future research directions. I would like to make a few remarks. Although there are many excellent Japanese research, most of them are written in Japanese, so they have not had much opportunity to be known by overseas researchers. This journal also plays a role in disseminating this work abroad. Therefore, we invite not only members of JASME but also researchers to submit contributions (everyone is eligible to contribute to this journal).

On the contrary, it can be pointed out, with a note of caution, that most Japanese research is not necessarily driven by the construction of original theories, but by the use of foreign theories as case studies. Theories come in different sizes (Shinno & Mizoguchi, 2023) and although theories at different levels may be framed, the question to be asked is how much the conclusions of the research could contribute to the further development of such theoretical frameworks.

It is not strictly a field of academic research but may be largely related to innovations in traditional Japanese educational practices. In Japanese schools, there is a culture of lesson study, which has become internationally well-known, and through which so-called 'practical study' (jissen kenkyu) has been conducted by groups of teachers. Many practical studies have been conducted in the form of proposals on the educational tasks faced (often specific challenges in improving teaching), how to solve these tasks in the form of actual teaching proposals, and the results at the classroom level. In other words, teachers intend to improve the educational issues facing their classrooms and schools; therefore, the results will certainly be focused on these issues. Thus, there is no theoretical framework for an academic or research question. Teachers or school-specific frameworks and tasks are substituted for it. Such practical studies are necessary for school institutions and play an important role in maintaining and improving educational standards. However, from an academic perspective, practical studies are, therefore, didactic or pedagogical practices and not research practices. This is nothing more than a teaching or school setting *proposal*.

However, this does not deny a practical study. Rather, it is highly encouraged and perhaps a unique Japanese cultural feature that the active involvement of many researchers in the process should continue to be valued. However, one must be concerned about treating academic research as practical study. Academic research should not end with proposals. Therefore, it is necessary to contribute to the development of this theory. This is precisely what is required of the Japanese mathematics education research community. Therefore, international research communication is indispensable. This is because there are few contributions from Japanese researchers, including JASME members, to this journal. The editorial board would like to invite authors to submit their contributions.

Volume 17 contains one paper. Pia Beck Tonnesen, through a comparison of Japanese and Danish textbooks,

focuses on how distributive laws are treated as a central and specific element of algebraic theory. Textbooks and their organisation vary widely between countries and institutions, which is an actual dimension of the curriculum; therefore, international comparisons will be increasingly important in the future.

Finally, as I reiterate, please note that HJME is published annually. Accepted papers are published online before publication in the subsequent volume. Submissions are accepted at any time. We look forward to your contributions.

References

Shinno, Y. & Mizoguchi, T. (2023). Networking praxeology and theoretical grain sizes in mathematics education: Cultural issues illustrated by three examples from the Japanese research context. *Hiroshima Journal of Mathematics Education*, *16*, 77–94. https://doi.org/10.24529/hjme.1606