

Data Dictionary

This document presents the questions that form the survey of isekai manga and describes how the answers to the questions are captured and stored in two databases. The two databases are contained on two pages of an Excel workbook (Survey_Results.xlsx) and in two .csv files (Isekai_Stories.csv and Portal_Quest_Stories.csv). The initial database includes limited data on 1010 manga and the second larger amounts of data on 427 portal-quest manga. These two databases are the basis for the publication “A Survey of the Story Elements of Isekai Manga”.

Note the two databases are presented as two flat files. This was done for ease of communication of the results. In fact, many of the entries are dependent on other entries. For example, certain questions are only relevant if the gender is male or if a particular method of entering the isekai occurs. As a result, the survey results are better viewed as a series of contingent tables that described information that exists in multiple tiers.

Database in workbook page: “All isekai stories” and in Isekai_Stories.csv

This database presents the unique manga series identified as isekai manga in one of the following four internet sites Baka-Updates – Manga Division (<https://www.mangaupdates.com/index.html>), Anime-Planet (<https://www.anime-planet.com/>), Anime News Network -Encyclopedia (<https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/>), and Manga Rock (<https://mangarock.com/>). These sites were investigated in June 2020. Data from the sites were used to determine if a manga series should be included in the detailed analyses of portal-quest manga.

Column A – Identification number

This is a unique identification number assigned to each of the 1010 manga included in the survey.

Column B – Title of the story

This column presents the title as given by the site where the series was listed. When multiple names are used by the sites for the same manga, preference was given to the most frequently used name.

Column C – National origin of work

All series originated in either Japan, Korea, or China.

Column D – Category of story as defined by Mendlesohn's categories of fantasy stories

When data are sufficient, the category of the story is determined based in the criteria provided in *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Wesleyan University Press, 2014). If no English translation of the manga is available, then the determination is made based on the translated abstract. The categories are immersive, intrusion, liminal, and portal-quest.

Column E - Are sufficient chapters translated to allow inclusion in the survey?

This yes or no finding is based on a case-by-case review of the manga series. In some manga, a single chapter is sufficient to complete most or all of the survey questions. In other cases, the necessary data do not appear even when multiple chapters are available.

Database in workbook page: “Stories used in paper” and in Portal_Quest_Stories.csv

This database presents the survey questions used to generate the data set of the 427 manga series. These are manga created in Japan that fall in the category of portal-quest and have sufficient chapters available to answer most or all of the survey questions. Codes are used to describe the answers for most questions. The use of codes facilitates the entering and the analysis of the data. The definitions for each of the codes are provided below along with the criteria used in answering the questions.

The codes are based on the nature of the answer to the survey question. If the answer is a single word the code is the first two or three letters of the word (Adult is Ad, Female is Fe) where the first letter is capitalized, and the remaining letters are lower case. If the answer is in the form of two or more words, then first letters of two or more words in the answer are used (No information is NI and End of life is EOL). Certain columns (professions and roles) are in free text to allow the capture of answers that cannot be easily categorized.

Column A – Identification number

This is the identification number for the manga listed in the first page of the workbook.

Column B – Title of manga

This column presents the title as given in the first page of the workbook.

Columns C-H present information on the protagonist prior to entering the isekai.

Protagonists in the stories are usually single individuals but there are group protagonists in a small number of manga. (Stories where more than one individual enters the isekai but there is a single protagonist are not considered to be a group protagonist stories). When there is a group protagonist, data in columns C-G and certain other columns are only collected when all protagonists have the same characteristic (e.g., all female or all adults). Where the characteristic varies across the group, the code GP (Group Protagonist) is used to indicate that there is no single answer to the question for a manga series.

Column C – Gender of the protagonist prior to entering the isekai.

Answers the question, “What is the gender of the protagonist in the real world?” Note: none of the protagonists in the stories are non-binary prior to entering the isekai.

Fe: Female protagonist.

GP: Group Protagonist. There is more than one protagonist and the genders are mixed.

Ma: Male protagonist.

NI: No Information on the gender of the protagonist is provided in the available chapters of the manga series.

Column D – Age of the protagonist prior to entering the isekai

Answers the question, “What is the age of the protagonist?” Age is captured by assigning the protagonist to one of six categories. Assignments are based on text and visual clues in the manga. None of the manga have protagonists under the age of 8. The categories in order of age are:

PH: Pre High school age (8-14 years).

HS: High School age (15-17 years).

CA: College Age (18-22 years).

Ad: Adult (23-60 years).

El: Elderly (>60 years).

EOL: End Of Life. A person of advanced age who is within a few days of dying.

GP: Group Protagonist. There is more than one protagonist, and the protagonists fall into different age categories.

NI: No Information on the age of the protagonist is provided in the available chapters of the manga series.

Column E – Personality of the protagonist prior to entering the isekai.

Answers the question, “What is the personality of the protagonist?” Personality is a property of the individual, and the assignment of personality is made based on the text and images in the manga. When the protagonist has multiple characteristics, the one that is most relevant to the story is cited.

GP: Group Protagonist. Multiple protagonists with different personalities.

Hi: Hikikomori. The protagonist has reclusive behaviors and is unwilling or unable to interact with family, friends, and normal society.

Lo: Loner. The protagonist participates in society but lives a life with no strong attachment to other individuals or groups.

NI: No Information. This is used when there is insufficient information on the protagonist prior to entering the isekai to make an assignment of personality.

Nor: Normal. This is assigned when the protagonist is identified in the text as being normal. It is also assigned to protagonists where there is information on the protagonist's life in the real world that supports a finding of normality and does not support the selection of any of the other categories.

Ota: Otaku. The protagonist has a strong interest in a specific topic such as manga, anime, games, trains, guns, or etc. This interest often interferes with the rest of their lives.

Pr: Problematic. This a catch-all category for protagonists with antisocial, self-destructive, or unethical personality traits.

Sh: Shy. The protagonist participates in groups and in normal life but is reluctant to express their views or personality.

Wa: Warrior. The protagonist forcefully seeks their own goals even when it places their social standing at risk.

WS: Wage Slave. The protagonist accepts long hours or other unreasonable demands from their employer.

Column F – Social status prior to entering the isekai.

Answers the question, “What is social status of the protagonist prior to entering the isekai?” Social status is a description of the role the individual holds in the real-world society.

FS: Failure in the eyes of Society. There is a consensus in the protagonist's community that the protagonist is of low value or has not met the standards of society.

GP: Group Protagonist. Multiple protagonists with different social statuses.

MF: Moral Failure. The protagonist regularly violates widely accepted moral values.

NI: No Information. There is insufficient information in the available chapters to determine social status.

Nor: Normal. The role the protagonist plays in society is normal for individuals of a similar age and gender.

Pe: Persecuted. Others in the real world wish the protagonist ill or fail to provide an appropriate level of care given their relationship to the protagonist (e.g., rejection by family, bullying at school, or abuse in the workplace).

SI: Sickly or Invalid. The protagonist has long-term medical problems that limit their ability to live a normal life and may result in an early death.

Suc: Successful. Successful is defined in terms of value in the eyes of society (e.g., associated with wealth, power, and elevated status). It does not include people who excel in humble careers (e.g., farming, child raising, or carpentry).

Column G – Skills brought to the isekai.

Answers the question, “What skills does the protagonist have?” These are skills that the protagonist brings to the isekai from their real-world life and are elements in the story. Where there is more than one skill, the codes are delineated by spaces.

At: Athletic.

BL: Book Lover.

Co: Cooking.

Ga: Gamer. Skilled in playing computer games.

GP: Group Protagonist. Multiple protagonists with different skills.

NI: No Information. There is insufficient information in the available chapters to determine what skills the protagonist had.

MA: Martial Arts.

Mag: Magic.

Ot: Other. See column H.

Pr: Computer programmer.

Column H

This column is free text. It presents the specific profession or skills not covered by the codes in column G.

Columns I through O describe the processes that bring the protagonist into the isekai.

Column I – Methods of entering the isekai.

Answers the question, “How did the protagonist enter the isekai?” The following are the six methods of entering the isekai used in the manga. They can occur in combination. When this occurs, the codes are separated by a single space.

DA: Divine Act. An act of a divine agent (god or god-like agent) brings the protagonist to the isekai. May be accidental or intentional.

NE: No Explanation. There is insufficient information in the available chapters to determine how the protagonist entered the isekai.

PI: Pulled Into game, story, or dream.

Re: Reincarnation. Reincarnation occurs when the soul of the protagonist is reborn in the isekai after their death in the real world. When this occurs, the protagonist is born as a normal member of isekai society and remembers a past life in modern Japan.

ST: Specific Tool. Tools are objects that include magic books, doorways, gates, or shrines. Tools also include computer programs. This category does not include tools that are used by a summoner or the divine agent to bring the protagonist to the isekai.

Su: Summoning. Summoning is the intentional act of bringing the protagonist into the isekai by a summoner.

Column J - Cause of death

In many stories the process of entering the isekai begins with the death of the protagonist. For example, a summoning, reincarnation, or divine act may begin with the death of the protagonist. This element answers the question, “What are the characteristics of the events that led to the protagonist’s death?”

Ac: Accidental. An accidental event ends the life of the protagonist.

DE: Divine Error. A god, or god-like agent, ends the protagonist’s life in the real world by error.

Na: Natural. Died at an advanced age from normal age-related illness.

NI: No Information. There is insufficient information in the available chapters to determine how the protagonist died.

No: Noble. Died during, or as a result, of performing a noble act such as saving or protecting someone else.

NR: Death was Not required. The protagonist enters the isekai without dying.

Suf: Suffering. The protagonist suffers greatly prior to dying.

Sui: Suicide.

Column K – Nature of the summoning

Answers the question, “If summoned, was the summoning positive, malicious, or unclear?”

MS: Malicious Summoning. Summonses are malicious if they 1) do not have a high level of justification; 2) are done for selfish or private gain; 3) the summoned are manipulated, controlled, or abused after their arrival; or 4) the welfare of the summoned is not an important consideration for the summoner.

NS: Not Summoned. The protagonist was not summoned.

PS: Positive Summoning. Summonses are positive if they are ethically justified. Because summoning is imposed on individuals, it requires a high level of justification (e.g., to prevent a holocaust or widespread destruction, or defend against a physical threat to the world or its ecological systems) and an exhaustion of other options. To the extent allowed by the threat, the rights and needs of the summoned are respected. All relevant information is shared with the summoned. The summoned at least in theory have the right to say no.

Un: Unclear. There are either no data on the summoner’s purpose or the data are ambiguous.

Column L – The summoner’s intentions toward the protagonist.

Answers the question, “If summoned, is the summoning intentional, unintentional, or is the intent of the summoner unknown?”

IS: Intentional Summoning. The protagonist is intentionally summoned.

IU: Intent Unclear. There are no data on the summoner’s intent.

NS: The protagonist was not summoned.

US: Unintentional Summoning. The protagonist is summoned by accident or after summoning is rejected by the summoner as a failure.

Column M – Traveling between worlds multiple times

Answers the question, “Is the protagonist the subject of multiple transferences between worlds (other than returning to the real world)?” This could involve being transported

from the real world to the isekai, back to the real world, and finally a second trip to the isekai. It also could include transport between different isekais.

No: No. No information in the available chapters of the series indicate multiple transfers.

Yes: Yes. The protagonist travels between isekai(s) multiple times.

Column N – Age at which a person understands that they are reincarnated

Answers the question, “At what point in their life do the memories of the prior life in Japan become available to the protagonist?” Categories given in order of age.

Bi: Birth. The protagonist is born in the isekai with their memories intact.

Ch: Child. The protagonist regains their memories of their prior life as a child.

Ad: Adult. The protagonist regains their memories of their prior life as an adult.

NR: Not Reincarnated. Protagonist was not reincarnated.

Column O - Entering the isekai alone or as part of a group

Answers the question, “Does the protagonist enter the isekai (by any mechanism) alone or with others?”

Al: Alone. Enters alone.

Cl: Class. Enters as part of their school class or with schoolmates.

Fam: Family. Enters as part of a family group.

GP: Group Protagonist. There are multiple protagonists who enter as a group.

Gr: Group. Enters as part of a group where the group is neither a family nor a school class.

Column P – Stay with the group

Answers the question, “Does the protagonist remain with the group that entered the isekai or do they separate from the group?”

GP: Group Protagonist. There are multiple protagonists.

NG: No Group. Protagonist enters the isekai alone.

Re: Remains with the group.

Se: Separates from the group.

Columns Q through S describe the characteristics of the isekai

Column Q – Relationship of Isekai to the shōnen and otome standard worlds

Answers the question, “What is the relationship of Isekai to the shōnen and otome standard worlds?”

Bo: Both. Isekai contains elements of both shōnen and otome standard worlds.

Otm: Otome. Isekai is a standard otome world.

NT: Neither Type. Isekai differs from both the shōnen and otome standard worlds.

Sho: Shōnen. Isekai is a standard shōnen world.

Column R – The isekai’s relationship to computer games, manga, or light novels

Answers the question, “What is the relationship between the isekai in the story and the isekais in computer games, manga, or light novels?”

El: Elements. Contains familiar elements from computer games.

KP: Known to the Protagonist. Isekai is based on a specific game, manga, or light novel known to the protagonist.

KR: Known to the Reader. Isekai is based on an actual real-world game, manga, or light novel known to the reader.

NR: No Relationship.

Column S – Role of food in the story

Answers the question, “Does food play a special role in the story?”

AF: Avoid Famine. The lack of food is a plot element in the story.

CS: Cooking as a Soft power. The protagonist’s knowledge of cooking is a positive element in the events in the isekai.

DG: Desire for Good food. The protagonist’s desire for good food, or for a specific type of food, is a plot element in the story.

LW: Losing Weight. Controlling eating for the purpose of losing weight is a plot element in the story.

MF: Magical Food. The act of eating, or eating certain foods, has implications for acquiring or using magic.

No: None. There is no significant reference to food in the story.

Columns T through AA describe the protagonist's life in the isekai

Column T – Characteristics of the protagonist's body in the isekai relative to their body in the real world

Answers the question, “Does the protagonist's body change when they enter the isekai and if so, how?”

Di: Different body.

DC: Different body with Curses.

DG: Different body with Gifts.

GP: Group Protagonist. Multiple protagonists with different types of bodies.

Sa: Same body.

SG: Same body with gifts.

Column U – Gender of new body

Answers the question, “What is the gender of the protagonist in the new world based on visual depiction and text?”

Fe: Female.

GP: Group Protagonist. The protagonists in the isekai are a mixed gender group.

Ma: Male.

NG: Non-Gendered. The protagonist has a body that is non-gendered.

NI: No Information. No information on the gender of the protagonist.

Column V – Protagonist body type in the isekai.

Answers the question, “What type of body does the protagonist have in the isekai?”

An: Animal that is not typically a pet (e.g., bear or cave spider).

Hu: Human.

Mo: Monster (e.g., dragon or slime).

Ob: Object (e.g., sword, wand, or onsen).

OH: Other Humanoid (e.g., elf or vampire).

Pe: Pet. Animal typically kept as a pet (e.g., cat or dog).

Sp: Spirit. No physical body.

Column W – Societal role the protagonist is asked to take (or is assigned) when entering in the isekai

Answers the question “What are the expectations for the protagonist in the isekai?” During the process of entering the isekai, or immediately upon arrival, the protagonist often receives a request to achieve a goal or follow a prescribed role in society.

HS: Hero/Savior. To accomplish a difficult task (quest) which the protagonist may be the only one capable of achieving, and that will result in a significant benefit to many individuals in the isekai.

Le: Leader. To lead a group inside the isekai.

NL: Noble Lady. A female member of the upper classes of society with a lifestyle categorized by wealth, luxury, and servants. The role does not have strong political power and excludes queens and princesses.

No: None. No request is made.

Pn: Pawn. To support in a small way the goals of isekai society.

Vi: Villain. To take a role in a specific game that was held by a nonplayer character who opposed the player-protagonist of the game.

Ot: Other roles. Listed by name in column X.

NI: No Information. No information on the role of the protagonist.

Column X

Free text listing other possible roles the protagonist may be asked to take.

Column Y – Protagonist’s motivation in the isekai

Answers the question, “What is the motivation of the protagonist in the isekai?” This is the motivation that determines the protagonist’s choices in the isekai and is the result of the characteristics of the isekai, any assigned role, and the protagonist’s personal desires. This is the initial motivation that is first held when the protagonist enters the isekai. The motivation could change over the course of the story.

Al: Altruism. To seek to do good and right wrongs.

EL: Easy Life. Live a life without stress or difficult work.

FR: Fulfill assigned Role. Fulfilling a non-quest assignment (be a lawyer, be an alchemist, run an orphanage, be a servant, etc.).

GB: Grow/Battle/level up. Grow/battle/level up is the desire to get stronger as an end in itself. This can be as a warrior or a mage.

NI: No Information.

PD: Personal Desires (other than live an easy life). These including hedonism, an interest in an area of study, or a desire to travel, to find a companion, or to create a harem.

Qu: Quests (including to return). A quest is a specific task (to kill the demon king, to save the world from a specific threat, save the kingdom, or to return to the real world) not a general goal of living an easy life, become wealthy, or practice altruism.

Re: Revenge. Achieving revenge against specific individuals who have abused or betrayed the protagonist or others.

SP: Sexual Predator. Use gifts/cheats to have sex with many other people without consideration for their consent or rights.

Su: Survive. No motivation other than survival.

Column Z – Actual societal role taken in the isekai

Answers the question, “What societal role did the protagonist actually take up in the isekai when the first arrived?” When multiple roles are taken, select the most important of the roles.

Av: Adventurer.

Ch: Chef.

He: Healer.

Le: Leader.

Ma: Magician.

NL: Noble Lady. A female member of the upper classes of society with a lifestyle categorized by wealth, luxury, and servants. The role does not have strong political power and excludes queens and princesses.

No: None. The individual takes no role in society. This occurs when the protagonist remains above or outside of society.

Ot: Other profession. See list in column AA.

NI: No Information.

Se: Servant.

St: Student.

Wa: Warrior.

Column AA

Free text listing other professions taken up by the protagonist.

Columns AB through AH capture gender-related behaviors of the protagonist in the isekai

Column AB – If protagonist is male in the isekai, how are females in the isekai considered?

Females include female humans, humanoids, and monsters.

CP: Co-Players. Co-players are characters where the relationship is defined by game-related roles (e.g., members of your team or members of other teams). Co-players also include characters in the story that are the equivalent of non-player characters from roleplaying games (e.g., employees at guilds, tavern waitresses, or clerks in stores).

GP: Group Protagonist.

NW: No Women appear in the story.

Ob: Objects (sexualized and objectified). While all characters are objectified to a greater or lesser degree in these stories, women are presented as having no other qualities besides an attractive appearance or as an opportunity for sex.

PNM: Protagonist is Not Male.

Re: Relationships. Does the character place emotional demands (other than protection or romance) on the protagonist? Relationships may include parental duties, kinship, a

king's duty to their subjects, a merchant's duty to customers, or employer-employee relationship.

Ro: Romance. The relationship focuses on love and the obtaining and maintaining of a romantic relationship.

Column AC – If protagonist is male in the isekai, is first female the reader encounters in the isekai sexually attractive?

Answers the question, “When summoned or first appearing in the isekai, is the first female seen by the reader portrayed as being sexually attractive?” In the case of memory restoration during reincarnation, “Is the first woman the protagonist interacts within the story after regaining their prior memories attractive?”

GP: Group Protagonist.

NI: No Information in the available chapters.

No: No.

NW: No Women. Protagonist does not meet women in the isekai.

PNM: Protagonist is Not Male.

Yes: Yes.

Column AD– If protagonist is male in the isekai, what is the age of first female encountered?

Categories listed in order of age.

In: Infant (0-2 years).

Ch: Child (3-7 years).

PH: Pre-High school age (8-14 years).

HS: High School age (15-17 years).

CA: College Age (18-22 years).

Ad: Adult (>22 years).

NI. No Information.

NW: No Women. Protagonist does not meet women in the isekai.

PNM: Protagonist is Not Male.

GP: Group Protagonist.

Column AE – If protagonist is male in the isekai, what is the first action taken with female?

Fe: Feed.

Fi: Fights.

GP: Group Protagonist.

He: Help in other ways.

IF: Is Fed.

IH: Is Helped in other ways.

IS: Is Saved.

IT: Is Taught.

Ot: Other (list). See column AF.

NI: No Interaction occurs.

NW: No Women. Protagonist does not meet women in the isekai.

PNM: Protagonist is Not Male.

Sa: Save from physical danger.

Te: Teach.

Column AF – Other interaction

Specific interactions not covered by the codes in Column AE. Free text.

Column AG – If protagonist is female in the isekai, how are men in the isekai considered?

Males include male humans, humanoids, and monsters.

CP: Co-Players (team members). Co-players are characters where the relationship is defined by game-related roles (e.g., members of your team or members of other teams). Co-players also includes characters in the story that are the equivalent of non-player characters from roleplaying games (e.g., guards, soldiers, or artisans).

GP: Group Protagonist.

NM: No Men appear in the story.

Ob: Objects (sexualized and objectified). While all characters are objectified to a greater or lesser degree in these stories, men are presented as having no other qualities besides an attractive appearance, as an opportunity for sex, or as a romantic target.

PNF: Protagonist is Not Female.

Re: Relationships. Does the character place emotional demands [other than protection or romance] on the protagonist? Relationships may include children to parent, king to commoner, customer to merchant, or employer to employee.

Ro: Romance. The relationship focuses on the obtaining and maintaining of a romantic relationship.

Column AH – If protagonist is female in the isekai, is first male the reader encounters in the isekai sexually attractive?

Answers the question, “When summoned or first appearing in the isekai, is the first male seen by the protagonist sexually attractive?” In the case of memory restoration during reincarnation, “Is the first man the protagonist interacts after regaining prior memories attractive?”

GP: Group Protagonist.

NM: No Men appear in the story.

No: No.

PNF: Protagonist is Not Female.

Yes: Yes.