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PSY 470- Psychology Capstone

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Title:

The psychological relationship between Japanese culture and the high suicide rate in Japan

Outline:

Japan has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, with about 30,000 people committing suicide in Japan each year. Looking back on the history of Japan, suicide seems to be one of Japanese culture. Even in modern society, "Seppuku" during the age of the samurai in Japan, "Kamikaze" (suicide attacks) during World War II, and "Shinju" (double suicide) between lovers tend to be beautiful in movies and novels. I wonder if the thinking due to the particular cultural influence of Japan is the reason for the high suicide rate in today's Japan.

According to a study in colleges in the US and Japan in 2013, Japanese students had higher levels of accepting suicide as a natural way to end their life than US students. (Cultural influences on suicide in Japan, 2016)

Even Japanese psychiatrists do not seem to challenge the cultural discourse that has traditionally glorified voluntary self-destruction as an acceptable expression of freedom. There is an ethical problem that psychiatrists cannot provide treatment to patients against their will. (Diagnosing suicides of resolve, 2008)

As a general phenomenon, there are many environments in Japan where it is difficult for general practitioners to consult with psychiatrists. (Association between the density of physicians and suicide rates in Japan, 2016)

Japanese suicide in modern society is not the influence of "Japanese culture" stereotyped by Westerners. Because in the 1970s and 1980s, Japan's suicide rate was only slightly higher than the European average. The famous public suicide of Yukio Mishima was a protest against the Westernization of Japan, directed at Western countries. (Suicide and the afterlife, 2012)

Japan judged low on happiness despite longevity. According to the World Happiness Report commissioned by the United Nations and based on the results of 156 countries, Japan was fifty-eight. ( Japan Data, 2019)

Suicide is not just a response to stress, it is a complex of mental illnesses in general. Although more than 90% of suicide victims or suicide attempts have a mental illness, most patients do not attempt suicide, indicating a predisposition to suicidal behavior unrelated to their primary mental illness. Excessive alcohol consumption is a strong risk factor for suicidal behavior. (Alcohol and aldehyde dehydrogenase polymorphisms and risk for suicide, 2010)

In Japan, there is no societal acknowledgment of alcoholism. The study finds that 60% of problematic drinking impacts Japanese businessmen who claim that getting drunk with clients or coworkers is part of their job and a mark of company loyalty and that if they were to refuse a

drink from their boss it could have damaging career repercussions. ( Japanese alcohol culture, 2019)

In Japan, there are many unnatural deaths in bathtubs. It is important to be aware of the possibility of alcohol-induced drowning or suicidal drowning after taking sleeping pills, and an autopsy should be performed whenever possible. (Death in bathtubs in Japan, 2022)

Child suicides in Japan are at a record high( CNN, 2021)

Japanese cultural attitudes towards suicide are generally tolerant. Most worrisome is the rising suicide rate among young people in Japan. Comparing the 1998 suicide surge year-on-year, suicides among women under the age of 19 increased most significantly, with an increase of nearly 70%, followed by men under the age of 19, with a 50% increase. there is Most notable in the recent increase in suicides in Japan is the rise in suicides among young Japanese and the emergence of Internet suicide pacts. ( Too lonely to die alone, 2008)

Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines have begun to develop public and private suicide prevention programs. Religious people other than Christianity tend to take suicide prevention seriously in today's Japan. (Suicide and the afterlife, 2012)