

Peningkatan Tren Bunuh Diri Kalangan Remaja Akibat Pandemi COVID-19 Pada Tahun 2020-2023

Increased Suicide Trends Among Teenagers Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020-2023

Shecillia Kriestyaning^{1*}

Putri Elsy² 

^{1,2} Department of Japanese Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities,
Universitas Airlangga

*Corresponding author: shecilia.kriestyaning-2021@fib.unair.ac.id

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peningkatan tren bunuh diri di kalangan remaja Jepang sejak pandemi COVID-19. Pandemi COVID-19 telah membawa dampak yang signifikan terhadap kesehatan mental masyarakat dunia, termasuk Jepang. Menurut data dari Badan Kepolisian Nasional Jepang, jumlah kasus bunuh diri remaja (usia 15-19 tahun) di Jepang masih berada pada rekor tertinggi dan menunjukkan tren yang mengkhawatirkan. Faktor-faktor penyebabnya meliputi masalah sekolah, masalah kesehatan dan masalah keluarga. Untuk menganalisis fenomena ini, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan teori bunuh diri dari Emile Durkheim, yang mengklasifikasikan bunuh diri ke dalam 4 tipe, yaitu egoistik, altruistik, fatalistik, dan anomik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif melalui pendekatan studi pustaka. Hasil penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa pandemi telah memperburuk faktor-faktor bunuh diri terutama tipe anomik dan fatalistik dari teori bunuh diri Durkheim. Tekanan akademik, ekspektasi keluarga, dan norma budaya Jepang di tengah isolasi sosial berinteraksi menciptakan kondisi remaja yang rentan terhadap tekanan dari kedua tipe bunuh diri ini. Peningkatan angka bunuh diri di kalangan remaja Jepang selama pandemi COVID-19 merupakan cerminan kompleksitas krisis sosial dan psikologis yang dihadapi generasi muda.

Kata kunci: bunuh diri, COVID-19, emile durkheim, remaja Jepang



Abstract

This study aims to examine the increasing trend of suicide among Japanese teenagers since the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of people around the world, including Japan. According to data from the National Police Agency of Japan, the number of youth suicides (aged 15-19) in Japan remains at a record high and is showing an alarming trend. Contributing factors include school problems, health problems, and family problems. To analyse this phenomenon, this study uses Emile Durkheim's suicide theory approach, which classifies suicide into four types, namely egoistic, altruistic, fatalistic, and anomic. This research uses a qualitative research method through a literature study approach. The results showed that the pandemic had exacerbated suicide factors, especially the anomic and fatalistic types of Durkheim's suicide theory. Academic pressure, family expectations, and Japanese cultural norms amid social isolation interact to create conditions for adolescents who are vulnerable to the pressures of these two types of suicide. The increase in suicide rates among Japanese adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic reflects the complexity of the social and psychological crisis facing the younger generation.

Keywords: suicide, COVID-19, emile durkheim, Japanese teenagers

INTRODUCTION

Every human being has problems in his life, both small problems and big problems. There are many different ways to survive and choose to try to overcome the problems that come in life. However, not a few also choose suicide to solve it (Nainggolan, 2021). Japan is still one of the countries with a high number of suicide rates compared to other countries. Although it does not reach the top 10 highest, this problem remains a serious concern. The government has sought intervention measures to reduce the risk of suicide (Statista Research Department, 2024). There are several factors that make the number of cases increase the most, namely economic problems, unemployment, violence and anxiety (Trahutami, 2017).

Suicide is one of the social phenomena that has become a form of culture in Japan. Suicide in children aged 10-19 has become a leading cause of death in recent years. Japanese schools in 2018 reported the highest number of suicides among children under the age of 18, with an increase of more than 33% in the suicide rate among junior high and high school students. In 2019, there was a 10% increase in the Japanese teen suicide rate compared to 2018 (Statista Research Department, 2024). Around 2020, there was a global disaster that entered the whole world. COVID-19 entered Japan, with the first case in Kanagawa Prefecture on January 16, 2020.

According to 2018-2020 data, before and after the COVID-19 pandemic there was a significant increase in the suicide rate and the peak was in October 2020. Individuals under the age of 30 are prone to suicide (Ruiz Sánchez, 2021). In Japan in the period 2020-2021, the number of deaths from suicide was higher than from COVID-19 (Okada et al., 2022). Based on data released in February 2021, Japanese people who died from suicide reached 20,919, while people who died from COVID-19 reached 3,460. One study of suicides revealed that the increase in suicide rates was striking. During the 2021 period, the number of suicides increased sharply, especially among students. With the policy of business restrictions and school closures, it is a challenge in itself that causes

social isolation, which increases anxiety, depression and contributes to suicidal behavior (Nomura et al., 2021).

The age of those who commit suicide is also getting younger, this condition can even become a trend and there is no hesitation in doing it. Drastic changes in social life also affect the increase in suicides in Japan (Eguchi et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced factors in the increasing trend of suicide among adolescents in Japan (2020-2023). Emile Durkheim in his book *Le Suicide* states that suicide consists of four categories, namely *egoistic* suicide, suicide that places personal interests higher than the interests of social groups; *altruism* suicide, feelings of interconnectedness or integration between individuals; *anomie* suicide focuses on the negative feelings experienced by individuals in their lives; *fatalistic* suicide, occurs when the moral state or values that exist in the community environment are excessive. Durkheim viewed that suicidal activity was not influenced by mental illness, but because of social factors (Arif, 2020).

Research on suicide during COVID-19 has been conducted by several researchers. Nomura (2021) in his article entitled *Trends in suicide in Japan by gender during the COVID-19 pandemic, up to September 2020* states that suicide trends are still high in the female gender. The results of the study generally indicate that the importance of suicide prevention related to COVID-19 especially for women and their needs related to access to mental health care, and social support. This study focuses on the female gender perspective during the pandemic.

Yoshioka et al. (2022) in an article entitled *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on suicide rates in Japan through December 2021: An interrupted time series analysis* generally examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on suicide rates in Japan with data from January 2020 to December 2021. The research instrument used is the monthly suicide rate by gender and age group. The results showed a slight increase in suicide rates. Suicide trends can vary depending on gender, age and race. Suicides in Japan are more prevalent among the younger generation and women. The research was conducted using quantitative descriptive methods.

Hirokazu et al. (2022) in their article entitled "*kodomo no jisatsu no kiso chisiki*" 『子どもの自殺の基礎知識』 which is a basic knowledge of child suicide, contains information on suicide data until the COVID-19 pandemic. In his research, he stated that there was an increase in the number of suicides among children under 20 years old, especially in 2020 due to COVID-19, reaching 777 cases. The motives found for child suicide often stem from family problems, mental disorders and career concerns. This study has proven that preventive interventions through cognitive behavioral therapy are effective in overcoming these problems, but with communication restrictions due to the pandemic it is estimated that it makes SOS messages from children difficult to detect early.

Nagamitsu et al. (2024) in an article entitled *Prevalence and associated factors of suicidality in Japanese adolescents: results from a population-based questionnaire survey* discussed the factors associated with the tendency of suicidal reasons in Japanese adolescents through the results of a population-based questionnaire survey. The study conducted multiple logistic regression analysis to identify factors of suicidal ideation. The results stated that bullying and stress related to family relationships had a strong

association with suicidal ideation. Even exposure to *cyberbullying* also has a high ratio in junior high school children.

From the four studies above, although there are studies that discuss suicide in adolescents, no one has discussed suicide with Emile Durkheim's suicide theory. Therefore, to analyze this phenomenon, Emile Durkheim's suicide theory approach is used, which classifies suicide into four types, namely egoistic, altruistic, fatalistic, and anomic.

METHODS

The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative literature study. In this method, data collection is empirical in nature involving documents or journal articles containing events and written records and visual images in the event of social phenomena (Djamba & Neuman, 2002). The primary data of this study are the Reports of the Japanese Ministry of Health and the National Police Agency of Japan (NPA), while the secondary data used are scientific articles and news from Japanese online newspapers that focus on the category of suicide trends in Japanese teenagers since the COVID-19 pandemic in the last 5 years, namely 2019-2023.

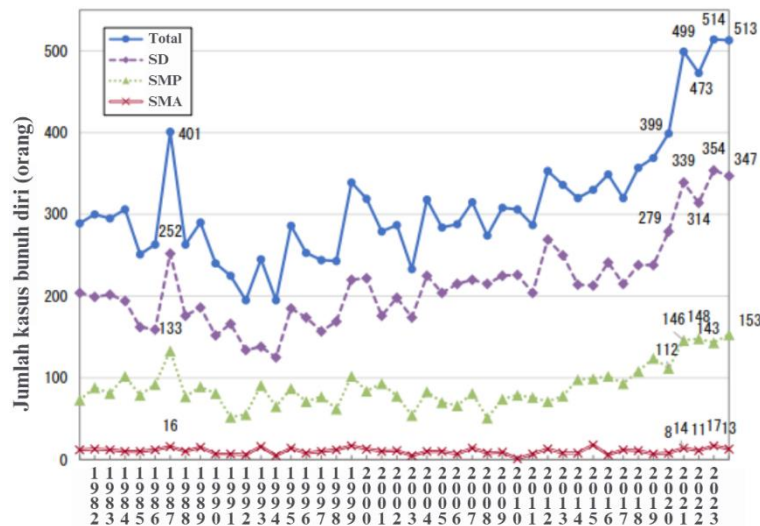
The data used in the research was analyzed through a literature study approach with Emile Durkheim's suicide theory. In the process of selecting and reducing articles, the author conducted three stages:

1. First, obtaining primary data from the Japanese Ministry of Health and the Japanese National Police Agency. Secondary data was obtained from trusted news portals as supporting material for analysis.
2. Second, the data classification process was carried out based on keywords, namely teenage suicides that occurred in the range of 2020-2023.
3. Third, the presentation of primary data that is included in the data classification criteria. Then attach secondary data as supporting material for the argument. The form of presentation is in the form of graphs and direct analysis using Emile Durkheim's suicide theory. The data validation process involves the validity of sources, namely accredited journals, valid news sources such as *Nippon.com*, *The Japan News*, *Japan Today*, *The Asahi Shimbun* and others. Then verify and validate through primary data.
4. Fourth, the last process is to draw conclusions based on the results of analysing the factors influencing the increasing trend of teen suicide with Emile Durkheim's theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

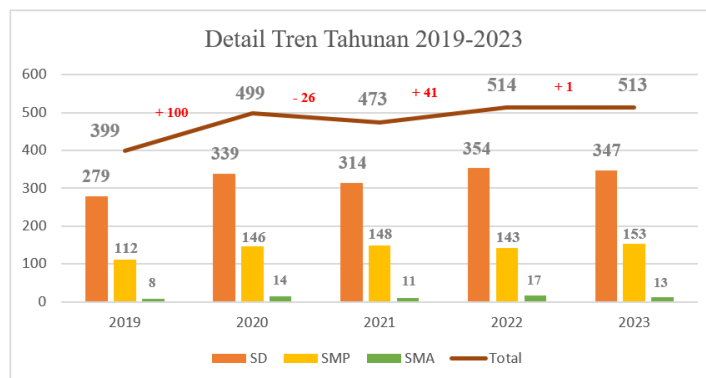
Before the pandemic, Japan experienced a gradual decline in the overall suicide rate, including among teenagers. For example, in 2019, the number of suicides among schoolchildren was significantly lower compared to previous years at 399 cases. After the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, this trend reversed to increase significantly. By the end of 2020, the suicide rate among teenagers increased sharply compared to the pre-pandemic level, reaching 499 cases. By 2023, the number of suicides among students from primary to secondary schools reached 513 cases, remaining alarmingly high compared to previous years. This figure reflects a continuing problem that has not been resolved despite the relaxation of pandemic restrictions.

Graphic 1 and graphic 2 below provide a more detailed picture of the distribution of cases among adolescents or elementary to high school students in Japan.



Graphic 1: Data from 1982-2023 annual trends in the number of suicides among elementary, junior high, and high school students (source:

<https://www.npa.go.jp/safetylife/seianki/jisatsu/R06/R5jisatsunojoukyou.pdf>)



Graphic 2: Data from 2019-2023 annual trend in the number of suicides among elementary, middle, and high school students (source:

<https://www.npa.go.jp/safetylife/seianki/jisatsu/R06/R5jisatsunojoukyou.pdf>)

Factors for the Increase in Suicide among Teenagers Since Japan's COVID-19 Pandemic

Suicide is a multicausal phenomenon in which various factors are interrelated. Factors specifically associated with it in adolescents include bullying, family relationships, failed love relationships, harassment, academic pressure, pressure to succeed, mental health problems, and financial problems (Wasserman et al., 2021). Based on data from the Japanese Ministry of Health, in general, the causal factors and motives for suicide based on the under-19 age group in 2020, entering the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, were mostly due to school problems (326 cases), followed by health problems (263 cases) and family problems (155 cases). The credibility of this factor assessment is determined 4 times per person for each suicidal individual, including cases where there is evidence of the person's words and actions before death such as suicide notes as well as cases based on the testimony of the surrounding community. Therefore, the number of people identifying causes and motives and the number of cases

of causes and motives are not necessarily the same. However, some experts believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant role in the increase of youth suicide rates in Japan (Nippon, 2022). Table 1 below provides a more detailed overview of the factors contributing to the high suicide rate in Japan.

Table 1.

Causes and motives by age group in 2020

Kelompok Umur												
Penyebab/Motif		<19 tahun	20-29 tahun	30-39 tahun	40-49 tahun	50-59 tahun	60-69 tahun	70-79 tahun	>80 tahun	Tidak dikenal	Total	
Masalah Keluarga	Jml	155	358	574	891	1.000	547	599	584	0	4.708	
	Lk	82	196	377	580	605	315	369	353	0	2.877	
	Pr	73	162	197	311	395	232	230	231	0	1.831	
Masalah Kesehatan	Jml	263	1.005	1.130	1.682	2.179	1.783	2.310	2.051	0	12.403	
	Lk	103	473	673	1.008	1.235	1.036	1.440	1.256	0	7.224	
	Pr	160	532	457	674	944	747	870	795	0	5.179	
Masalah Ekonomi	Jml	32	531	771	1.122	1.338	848	434	103	2	5.181	
	Lk	19	427	689	1.016	1.194	736	360	65	2	4.508	
	Pr	13	104	82	106	144	112	74	38	0	673	
Masalah Pekerjaan	Jml	29	491	547	765	735	229	69	10	0	2.875	
	Lk	23	380	460	666	649	200	64	9	0	2.451	
	Pr	6	111	87	99	86	29	5	1	0	424	
Masalah Hubungan	Jml	70	358	187	133	82	27	15	5	0	877	
	Lk	29	206	126	90	48	24	8	5	0	536	
	Pr	41	152	61	43	34	3	7	0	0	341	
Masalah Sekolah	Jml	326	195	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	524	
	Lk	201	137	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	340	
	Pr	125	58	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	184	
Lainnya	Jml	106	246	216	256	322	200	229	201	0	1.776	
	Lk	63	168	160	199	242	145	151	116	0	1.244	
	Pr	43	78	56	57	80	55	78	85	0	532	

(source: <https://www.npa.go.jp/safetylife/seianki/jisatsu/R06/R5jisatsunojoukyou.pdf>)

In detail, the causes or motives for suicide among adolescents or elementary, junior high, and high school students in 2020 were highest due to school problems (326 cases), followed by health problems (263 cases), and family problems (155 cases). This applies equally to the data in Table 2, which details the causes or motives for suicide committed by elementary and senior high school adolescents in 2023. According to the data, there are 8 types of causes and motives for suicide among adolescents including family problems, health, economy, part-time work, relationships and school, and other unknowns. The top 3 causes are school problems (261 cases), health problems (147 cases), and family problems (166 cases).

Table 2.

Detailed data on causes and motives of suicide among elementary, junior high, and high school students in 2023

							Masalah Sekolah										Lainnya	Tidak diketahui
		Masalah Keluarga	Masalah Kesehatan	Masalah Ekonomi	Masalah Pekerjaan	Masalah Hubungan	TOTAL	Pretest Akademik Buruk	Kekawatiran Ujian Masuk	Kekawatiran Jalur Karir	Perselisihan Antar Teman	Interaksi atau Perundungan	Hubungan dengan Guru	Diskriminasi Gender	Masalah sekolah lainnya			
2023	SD	Total	6	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	3
		LK	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
		PR	5	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1
	SMP	Total	46	26	1	0	4	92	28	12	12	1	20	2	0	17	19	24
		LK	23	10	1	0	3	43	15	7	7	0	5	0	0	9	9	8
		PR	23	16	0	0	1	49	13	5	5	1	15	2	0	8	10	16
	SMA	Total	64	120	4	4	29	166	36	24	41	0	27	4	1	33	36	61
		LK	37	53	2	2	7	109	22	18	29	0	16	3	0	21	21	26
		PR	27	67	2	2	22	57	14	6	12	0	11	1	1	12	15	35
	TOTAL	Total	116	147	5	4	33	261	65	36	53	1	48	6	1	51	59	88
		LK	61	63	3	2	10	154	38	25	36	0	21	3	0	31	32	36
		PR	55	84	2	2	23	107	27	11	17	1	27	3	1	20	27	52

(source: <https://www.npa.go.jp/safetylife/seianki/jisatsu/R06/R5jisatsunojoukyou.pdf>)

Compared to the previous 2020 data, the difference in suicide rates between 2020 and 2023 in the three causes and motives of suicide is still not much different. This data

shows that school, health and family issues are still the most serious problems contributing to the high suicide rate among Japanese teenagers.

1. School Problems

In terms of school-related problems, suicide occurs for a number of reasons including high academic pressure leading to poor performance (139 cases), anxiety related to career paths (106 cases), and bullying (95 cases) which can be triggering factors for committing suicide (Ministry of Health, 2023). Regarding problems in the school environment, it is difficult to say that schools are part of the cause of suicide. Suicide has complex reasons from a combination of factors such as internal relationships, academics and poor relationships with parents.

Bullying at school is the main reason that adolescent suicide is still high in Japan (Goto et al., 2022). With social restrictions in the form of social isolation due to lockdown policies, school distance learning during COVID-19 has increased *cyberbullying* cases. Students who have accumulated stress are likely to vent on something that is considered entertainment material, such as this *bullying*. *Bullying* in the form of complex and violent violence can cause serious mental health problems for all parties involved, both students who are *bullying*, students who *bully*, and surrounding people who see or know about the incident (Paracha, 2023). The worst impact of the most commonly reported incidents is *bullycide* or suicidal ideation due to the pressure of *bullying* that makes the victim feel unbearable and chooses to end his own life. Healthy social collaboration is essential in Japanese school environments and provides full protection for children who are vulnerable to being attacked or teased for looking different (Dhungal, 2022).

One case example of a factor causing an increase in suicide rates among adolescents is school problems. In addition to bullying, the trigger of school problems is stress that accumulates and reaches its limit so that the potential for suicide. The Japan News reported the suicide of 14-year-old junior high school girl Saaya Hirose in Asahikawa, Hokkaido, northern Japan in 2021. Hirose was found frozen to death in an Asahikawa park in March 2021, most likely due to longstanding *bullying* by her schoolmates. The school committee stated to reinvestigate based on the social media posts that were the main target of his bullying which got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic isolation period when it occurred. Hirose experienced long-term post-traumatic stress disorder with fear, self-blame, decreased self-esteem and isolation (The Japan News, 2024).

Saaya Hirose has been known to experience *bullying* from her classmates since 2019, through actions that include taking photos without permission and sharing them on social media. Despite attempts to address the issue through an internal investigation, the results stated that there was not strong enough evidence of *bullying*. However, recent reports indicate that *bullying* was a major factor in Hirose's suicide. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many teenagers experienced severe social isolation. Schools were closed and social interactions were restricted, which made the situation for teenagers like Hirose Saaya even more difficult. She developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to the bullying she experienced and felt isolated and lost her self-esteem.

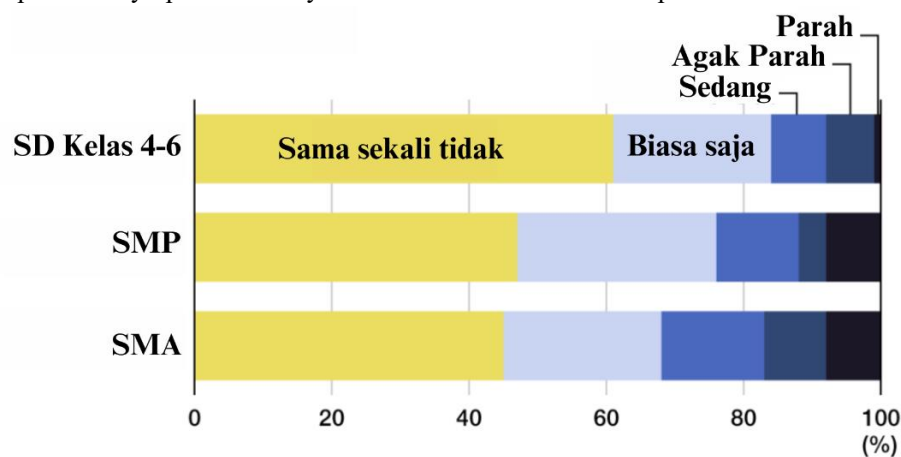
2. Health Issues

In Japan, psychological stress increased from the early stages of the outbreak in January 2020 to the transmission phase in April 2020. In addition, during the national

emergency (April-May 2020), the mental health of the Japanese population deteriorated compared to previous years, the most affected being healthcare workers, young people, and those with a history of treatment for mental illness. The deterioration of mental health is of particular concern amid the recent increase in the number of suicides among young Japanese (Kita, 2022). Mental health problems, exacerbated by social stigma and inadequate access to care, are common among those considering suicide. Japan's National Center for Child Health and Development conducted an *online* survey on children's mental health levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 924 children experienced stress from November to December 2020 with 15% of elementary school students, 24% of junior high school students, and 30% of high school students reporting moderate or higher levels of stress. The survey was conducted using the global depression symptom severity scale (Nippon.com, 2021).

Graphic 2.1

Global depression symptom severity scale of school children in Japan in 2021



(source: https://www.nippon.com/ja/japan-data/h00943/?cx_recs_click=true)

In this survey, children were asked to freely explain what they were worried about or something they wanted to say. Some consultation results from 5th grade students from Hokkaido and high school students from Aichi stated:

『子どもちに今気になることについて、自由記載で尋ねたところ
「みんなは一生コロナを怖がって暮らす気ですか。どんなに注意しても誰でも風邪はひくのに、ずっと外に出ないで何にもしないで過ごす気ですか僕は自分の人生は限りがあるから、行きたい場所に行き、会いたい人に会いたい」 (小 5 男子、北海道)、「学校の授業以外のイベントがなくなったり、友人との外出を控えるように学校から指導されたりしているのに、なぜ大人は好き勝手しているか理解不能」 (高 2 女子、愛知県) などの声が寄せられた。』 (Nippon.com, 2021)

"When we asked the children to write freely about what they are worried about right now, a 5th grade boy from Hokkaido replied, *"Is everyone planning to live in fear of COVID forever? Even if we are careful, anyone*

can get the flu. Are we going to continue to stay outside and do nothing? I want to go where I want and meet the people I want to meet, because my life is limited." "I want to go to school and meet the people I want to meet" (5th grader, Hokkaido), and a 2nd year high school girl from Aichi replied, *"I don't understand why adults can do whatever they want, while events outside of school lessons are eliminated and schools give instructions to limit going out with friends."* (2nd Grade High School Girl, Aichi Prefecture) (Nippon.com, 2021)

According to Durkheim, high levels of stress due to norm disruption can trigger feelings of hopelessness. The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased pressure on adolescents who are already vulnerable to emotional challenges. A high school student in Aichi expressed her confusion about social injustice: *"I don't understand why adults can do whatever they want, while events outside of school lessons are eliminated and schools give instructions to limit going out with friends."* This statement shows frustration and confusion that children must limit their social activities, while adults seem to be free to do whatever they want.

3. Family Matters

The causative factors of adolescent suicide appear to vary with age. From a suicide prevention perspective, it is important to identify risk factors that increase suicide risk and protective factors that increase suicide risk. Risk factors for suicide among children and young adults include female gender, mental illness, history of suicide attempts, history of self-harm, isolation, family background (family history of suicide, disharmonious family relationships, exposure to violence within the residence). According to the Japanese government, elementary and junior high school students are more likely to commit suicide due to problems at home, such as being severely punished or not getting along with parents (The Right Step, 2023). During the isolation period of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are in the situation of inevitably also facing harassment, stressful home life, and pressure from not doing homework. Domestic tension and increased domestic violence during the stay-at-home period also worsen the psychological state of adolescents. Morisaki says there is a large correlation between the anxiety of children and their parents. Some 5-year-olds make complaints at that time that they hurt themselves, experience stress, and then they cannot talk to their families because maybe they see that their mother or father cannot listen to them (Kita, 2022).

During the isolation period of the COVID-19 pandemic, all outside activities are completely stopped and all family members are required to be in the same residence for a long time, making some students uncomfortable. The condition of parents who have a strict upbringing or children not getting along with their parents is what makes students vulnerable to suicide due to not being able to withstand the pressure experienced while in their residence. Interpersonal relationships while building one's identity, especially within the family sphere, can increase the risk of suicide among adolescents, so psychologically it can be considered a high-risk group for suicide (Hirokazu, 2022).

Analysis of Suicide Factors among Adolescents with Emile Durkheim's Theory

1. Egoistic Suicide

When viewed from Durkheim's theory, *egoistic suicide* occurs when the individual wants to be separated from the group and there is excessive affirmation of his social ego. This is evidenced by news statements of teenage suicides whose causes are unknown, in other words, without any statements or traces to anyone, whether family, friends, or psychologist professionals, not even leaving any will (The Right Step, 2023). Egoistic suicide according to Durkheim describes a situation where the individual feels disconnected from society or their community, which is particularly relevant in the context of Japanese culture which often emphasizes individual achievement above all else. In some cases of *egoistic suicide*, the reason for suicide is unknown.

An example of an *egoistic suicide* case can be seen in JapanToday's report on an incident in Yokohama on Friday, October 23, 2020. A 17-year-old boy jumped from the roof of a 10th-floor shopping center around the Osaka district. He left behind only a bag containing identity cards and personal belongings. His actions left a 19-year-old student from Hyogo Prefecture in a coma and eventually died. The reason for his suicide is unknown.

The lack of a clear reason for the suicide suggests that he may have struggled with personal issues exacerbated by isolation from peers or family. In Japan, where societal expectations are strongly linked to academic performance and social conformity, such pressures can weigh heavily on teenagers who feel they don't fit in.

The case of this 17-year-old boy in Yokohama highlights another dimension of egoistic suicide. The decision to jump from a height not only ended his life but also tragically impacted another individual, a female college student, demonstrating the fatal effects of the suicidal act. The lack of a clear motive in this suicide emphasizes Durkheim's assertion that egoistic suicide often stems from an individual's helplessness to social norms and support systems. The tragic outcome of this suicide in Yokohama reflects a broader social trend of young individuals feeling alienated in their environment. The pandemic has likely worsened the situation of living in social alienation.

2. Altruism Suicide

Altruism suicide is a suicide that occurs due to close societal relationships with the individual. When this relationship between the individual and the rest of society is going well, psychological conflicts such as mistrust, shame and suspicion, guilt, low self-esteem, and identity diffusion slowly emerge at each stage of development. Thus, these conflicts cumulatively overlap at each stage which includes the risk of child suicide (Hirokazu, 2022).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teenagers in Japan entering their final year of school had to face the situation of school or college entrance exams. At that time, exams were conducted *online* and the pressure of studying was heightened by the ban on outdoor activities. The school environment in Japan is known to be highly competitive. The pressure to perform well in entrance exams can create an atmosphere of extreme stress among students. With *online* learning during the pandemic, many students have lost the opportunity to interact directly with peers and teachers, which can help reduce stress and anxiety. Instead, *online* learning often increases feelings of loneliness and isolation. From Durkheim's perspective, the competitive school environment can be seen as a motivating factor for altruistic suicide. Altruistic suicide is often triggered by the desire to avoid shame or dishonor to the family. In Japanese culture, family honor is held in high esteem, and individual failure may be perceived as a collective failure. Therefore, some teenagers

may feel that the only way to make up for such failures is to sacrifice themselves. According to a review of Emile Durkheim's theory, suicide occurs due to the distress experienced by the suicidal party.

3. Anomic Suicide

In today's digital age, access to information, including on how to commit suicide, is increasingly easy to obtain through the internet. This raises great concerns, especially for children and adolescents who are more vulnerable to negative influences. Weak regulations regarding media reporting on suicide is one factor that exacerbates the situation. As a result, the risk of copycat behavior or engaging in group suicide increases significantly among children and adolescents.

Although social media has benefits, such as providing a space to share emotional experiences and get psychological support (Slay et al., 2021), these platforms also carry great risks, especially for young age groups. Schoolchildren and young adults are often targets of destructive content that can worsen their mental state. Global concerns continue to rise regarding the impact of social media on mental health, especially in triggering anxiety, depression, or even suicidal behavior (Memon et al., 2018). On the other hand, some social media platforms are used to facilitate positive interactions, such as mental health support communities. However, these efforts are still not balanced with the risks of not fully understanding how to use social media wisely, they also need to realize that not all content on social media is constructive or builds positive support. It is important to filter the information received to avoid exposure to harmful content.

Based on this, suicides that occur in certain months, especially during the new school year, can be categorized as anomic suicide, which is a situation related to the ongoing inner conflict over social pressures and demands that create the urge to commit this type of suicide. During this period, many adolescents feel additional pressure from school and society to excel. Expectations to meet academic and social standards can create significant emotional strain. When adolescents feel unable to meet these expectations, they may begin to doubt their self-worth and feel alienated from their social environment.

Therefore, there is a need for stricter regulation of the dissemination of suicide-related information as well as increased education on the safe use of social media. In his theory of suicide, Emile Durkheim emphasized the importance of social integration and regulation in preventing suicidal behavior. One of them is the egoistic type, which occurs when individuals feel isolated and lack strong social ties. In the context of social media, exposure to damaging content can trigger emotional isolation, increasing the risk of suicide. Meanwhile, the anomic type arises when social norms and regulations are weakened, as is the case in digital environments with a lack of oversight of harmful information.

The absence of strict regulations on the dissemination of suicide-related information on social media creates conditions that allow the emergence of digital anomies. This exacerbates social disorientation and triggers feelings of hopelessness, especially for children and adolescents who are more emotionally vulnerable. Therefore, in Durkheim's theoretical approach, it is also important to strengthen the regulation of digital platforms to minimize anomy and increase social integration through supportive *online* communities. This not only reduces exposure to negative content but also builds a sense of social connectedness which is essential to prevent suicide.

4. Fatalistic Suicide

In contrast to egoistic and altruistic types, which relate to levels of social integration, and anomie, which relates to levels of overregulation, fatalistic suicide highlights the negative impact of overregulation. Individuals in this state feel their lives are completely controlled by external forces, be it the legal system, social norms, or institutional pressures, leaving them no room for personal freedom. Fatalistic suicide is characterized by restraints that can result in the loss of purpose in an individual's life, leading to a fear of failure and the perception of a dark future when their freedom is restricted by society's rules. These are suicides that stem from over-regulation, i.e. the suicides of people with futures mercilessly blocked and passions violently strangled by oppressive discipline.

One of the cases closely related to fatalistic suicide is the news from Kyodo News about the news of suicide on December 6, 2020, committed by idol 18-year-old teenager from AKB48, Tsukino Noe, who was known in some young circles of Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture as a result of *cyberbullying*. Her last social media post expressed her desire to end her life which had received toxic comments, including one that read, "You're just pretending". Tsukino committed suicide in downtown Nagoya on September 30 with a female friend. In his suicide note, he stated that he gave up on life due to excessive expectations and demands as an idol of his social life that could take away his freedom of expression in life.

The suicide of Tsukino Noe, a teen idol from AKB48, reflects the devastating impact of social pressure and *cyberbullying* on teenagers in Japan. As an idol, Tsukino faced high expectations from society, including fans and the entertainment industry, who demanded perfection in both personal and professional life. Negative and toxic comments received through social media, such as accusations of "faking it," worsened her psychological situation. Her suicide note highlights how these expectations deprived her of her freedom of expression and she felt she had no control over her life.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the social pressure felt by many individuals, including young celebrities like Tsukino. The pandemic has also driven a surge in *online* activity, including social media use, which indirectly increases the risk of *cyberbullying*. The pressure to meet certain standards can lead to a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. When these situations are combined with negative online experiences, such as insults or demeaning judgments, the impact can be devastating. *Cyberbullying*, in particular, has been shown to have serious consequences on adolescents' mental health, causing them to feel alienated and worthless. The combination of pressure from public expectations, *cyberbullying* and social deprivation amplified by the pandemic creates an ideal environment for this type of fatalistic suicide.

CONCLUSION

Japan has a high suicide rate, including among adolescents due to social pressure, academic expectations, and a cultural structure that emphasizes perfection. Other factors that contribute to suicide include health and family factors that influence the decision to end one's life by suicide. The social pressures experienced among Japanese adolescents contribute to the high rate of student suicide. This can be seen from the significant increase in teen suicides since the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase in suicide rates among adolescents is a reflection of the complexity of the social and psychological crisis

faced by the younger generation. A sociological approach using Durkheim's theory helps explain how structural changes in society can trigger psychological vulnerabilities that lead to suicide.

The pandemic has exacerbated suicide factors, especially the anomic and fatalistic types. In anomic suicide, the COVID-19 pandemic created great uncertainty in students' lives, such as drastic changes to study routines, exam cancellations, and uncertainty about the future. This exacerbates the sense of directionlessness and helplessness, which characterizes anomic suicide. Adolescents already facing the pressures of a competitive education system find it even more difficult to navigate these changes without adequate support, whereas in fatalistic suicide, pandemic control measures, such as social distancing and distance learning, leave students isolated at home with often unproductive family pressures. Under these conditions, many adolescents feel more constrained by family expectations or social rules, which creates an environment that is compatible with fatalistic suicide. This situation is exacerbated by increased family conflict due to excessive stress or tension during quarantine.

Based on the results of the research analysis, statistics show that the suicide rate among Japanese teenagers increased during and after the pandemic. Durkheim argued that suicide cannot be understood without looking at the social environment that affects individuals. In this context, academic pressures, family expectations, and Japanese cultural norms interact to create conditions where adolescents are vulnerable to the pressures of both types of suicide. It is hoped that this study will spark future researchers to develop similar ideas in a broader range, especially the exploration of social and cultural factors, including *bullying* at school, family dynamics that have the potential for adolescents to commit suicide by involving in-depth qualitative interview studies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

This study was approved by the institution.

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