

Research Summary

The Helping Seeking Attitude and Patterns of Japanese Male

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Underutilization of professional psychological and psychiatric cares has been an issue in Japan. In general, men are found to have lower tendency to seek help, especially from professionals. In view of these concerns, this study attempts to examine the perception of masculinity among Japanese men; their help-seeking and problem solving pattern; and the relationship between gender role and help-seeking attitudes and patterns. This study has 262 samples.

The major findings of this study are:

1. Gender role scores, using Gender Role Conflict Scale to measure, were power orientation ($M = 2.96$), restrictive emotionality ($M = 2.96$), work-leisure conflict ($M = 2.66$), and homophobia ($M = 2.47$). Their adherence to the traditional masculinity concept was not that extreme as people's common conception of a Japanese male.
2. The relationship between various socio-demographic factors with the four dimensions of gender role was not statistically significant, except the power orientation. It was found that the younger, those with higher education attainment, married and with no child are with stronger adherence with power orientation.
3. The respondents tend not to seek help from others, and instead, tackle the problems by themselves with the methods they prefer. Willingness to seek professional help and favoritism toward seeking professional help were rather low among the men ($M = 1.55$ & 1.74 , see previous tables). In contrast, self-reliance was rather strong ($M = 3.22$). Sources preferred for help seeking, in descending order, was oneself ($M = 3.73$), family members ($M = 3.10$), peers ($M = 3.12$), colleagues ($M = 2.40$), kinship members ($M = 1.98$), and neighbors ($M = 1.28$).
4. In all, favorable attitudes toward seeking help from professionals tended to arise from men who were older, under work-leisure conflict, not self-reliance, and not restrictive in emotionality.
5. Men who were more self-reliant less frequently sought help from kinship members and colleagues. In contrast, men with higher power orientation more frequently sought help from colleagues, peers, and family members.

This 'not-so-traditional' concept of masculinity might be the result of societal changes in the past decades, for four reasons. Firstly, the prolonged economic recession since early 1990s have weakened the old structure of work world, stripped of their 'three treasures' of life time employment, the seniority system of promotion and company unionism; and left them with the harsh realities of economic downturn, unemployment and uncertainty. The second reason is the rise of mass consumption culture which encourages the male to participate in the previously 'feminine sphere of conspicuous consumptions' in an urban culture which stress on individuality, particularly appealing to the younger generation. The third factor relates to the changing relationship between men and women, with greater power accord to the latter. Finally, the emerging men's movement, and the government sponsored campaigns for fatherhood have contributed to this shifting conception of masculinities.

Learning to take up an alternative concept of masculinity and male roles are not entirely new, particularly, to the new generations of Japanese male. Hence, seeking professional help might be more popular in the future across different generations. Certainly, more concern and encouragement should be paid to the male on their personal health.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)
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Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)