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The Coming of a ‘Death-Laden’ Society Implications for Higher Education in Japan and Beyond

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Japan is currently the world’s leading “hyper-aged” society and is transitioning into the first “death-laden” society. This demographic shift is marked by a significant rise in deaths, particularly among older people, amid a backdrop of ongoing population aging and steady depopulation. In the coming decades, Japan will confront a multitude of challenges arising from these trends. The emergence of a death-laden society has profound implications for higher education, both now and in the future, including general education at the undergraduate level. This article first reviews relevant literature and empirical data to highlight the characteristics of a death-laden society and the primary challenges it presents across social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Next, it discusses three pivotal implications for higher education curricula: (1) revitalizing ‘death education’ to foster a deeper understanding of social aspects of mortality; (2) developing innovative leadership programs that empower the next generation of leaders in this new socio-demographic landscape; and (3) internationally disseminating the leadership programs in death education. As other countries, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, are poised to follow Japan’s demographic trajectory, the effective development and implementation of those education initiatives will serve as a transformative model for these countries in the decades to come.

1. Introduction: The Next Stage of a Hyper-Aged Japan

Population aging is a global trend affecting every region, with an increasing share of older individuals within national demographics. Developed countries, including Japan, have arguably adapted their higher education to this demographic shift by incorporating various issues and consequences of aging societies into their curricula and research projects.¹ This evolution reflects a growing academic focus on aging-related issues that warrants in-depth exploration.

Japan needs to look ahead. Currently, this country stands at a pivotal juncture as the world’s foremost “hyper-aged” society, poised to enter a new socio-demographic phase ahead of other nations. This phase, often referred to as a “death-laden” society, is marked by a concerning rise in deaths among the elderly, a continuous decline in the overall population, and an ongoing progression of population aging.² A combination of these unique trends has sparked increased interest among researchers and policymakers, who are examining the intricate demographic processes and socio-demographic characteristics that define this new socio-demographic phase. However, discussions regarding the implications of this transition for the education sector—especially higher education and its general education curricula—have remained notably limited.³

The goals of this article are two-fold. First, it seeks to delineate the basic traits of a death-laden society, mapping its key socio-demographic characteristics and the driving forces propelling Japan toward this unprecedented stage. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to the expanding body of literature related to this topic

in the humanities, social sciences, and health sciences. Additionally, it synthesizes essential findings from existing studies that illuminate the overarching impacts of this socio-demographic shift on various facets of the country, including healthcare, the national economy, and crematorium shortages and their impact on funeral culture. Second, the article explores the significant implications of Japan's transition to a death-laden society for higher education, both in the immediate future and the coming decades. It outlines three pathways through which higher education institutions in Japan, alongside their general education curricula and associated practices, may play a crucial role in fostering the sustainability of a death-laden society. These pathways aim not only to address the challenges arising within Japan but also to serve as a model for other countries that may follow Japan's demographic trajectory in the decades to come.

2. Data and Methods

This article is based on three sets of sources. The first set includes a review of relevant academic literature from various disciplines and other documents from various sectors of society, including peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, business articles, and policy papers. The second set consists of findings from descriptive analyses of publicly available data collected by international governmental organizations and Japanese government agencies. These two sets of sources were primarily used to outline the basic characteristics and trends of Japan's aging and increasingly death-laden society.

The third set comprises findings obtained from original data through expert interviews, a qualitative method essential for gaining in-depth insights into emerging issues that may not yet be fully recognized in broader society.⁴ These interviews aimed to gather the most current information and specialized knowledge to assess and discuss the prospects for Japan as it moves toward becoming the world's first society significantly burdened by death.

The interviews were conducted between July 2023 and March 2025 in Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya. These regions were chosen for their status as some of the most populous regions in the country, and their geographical diversity was expected to provide insights into common national issues and concerns. A total of 34 experts participated in the interviews, including government officials, healthcare practitioners, representatives of medical institutions, and researchers affiliated with universities and think tanks. The interviews were designed to be semi-structured and in-depth, conducted in one-on-one sessions to facilitate thorough exploration of the topics discussed.

3. Death-Laden Society – Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Key Drivers

Since 2007, Japan has been at the forefront of population aging, experiencing an unprecedented speed of this demographic shift particularly during the 1970s and 1980s.⁵ By 2007, this shift had led to Japan becoming a “hyper-aged” society, with over 21 percent of its total population aged 65 or older, making it the first country in the world to reach this milestone.⁶ By April 2025, the figure had exceeded 30 percent, further emphasizing Japan's status as an exceptionally hyper-aged society, even compared to other hyper-aged countries globally.⁷

Japan is on the verge of entering a new phase in its socio-demographic transformation. Around the year 2030, researchers expect the country to transition into what is increasingly being referred to as a “death-laden” society.³ In recent years, this term has gained traction in academic discussions and media coverage, highlighting the urgency of addressing the implications of this new phase for various aspects of society.

3.1. Increased deaths among older individuals

A death-laden society is a society laden with persistently high death rates among the population. As will be explained below, this trend is due to the rising number of deaths among older individuals. In recent decades, Japan has witnessed a significant increase in the number of deaths, reaching levels that are unprecedented in its history. **Figure 1** illustrates the trend in the annual number of deaths in Japan’s total population, including both men and women, from 1955 to a projected level in 2065. The number is expected to rise substantially over the coming decades compared to the latter half of the twentieth century. From 1955 to 1990, an average of 0.8 million people died each year. In contrast, during the period from 2030 to 2065, an annual average of over 1.6 million deaths is projected.⁷ This increase between the two time periods is significant—approximately double the earlier average. An annual average of 1.6 million deaths is unprecedented in Japan’s recorded demographic history, and this multitude is expected to continue well into the late twenty-first century at least (**Figure 1**).

In the context of Japan, an annual death rate of 1.6 million is widely considered a key threshold—a benchmark that, while somewhat arbitrary, is increasingly recognized—indicating the transition to a death-laden society.³ According to this benchmark, Japan is likely to transition into this new socio-demographic landscape from 2030 onward, marking the transition from a hyper-aged society to a death-laden society. The period between 1990 and 2030, which includes the present time, can be seen as a transitional phase characterized by a rapid increase in the number of deaths. With approximately 1.3 million deaths recorded in 2025, Japan is on the verge of becoming a death-laden society⁷ (**Figure 1**).

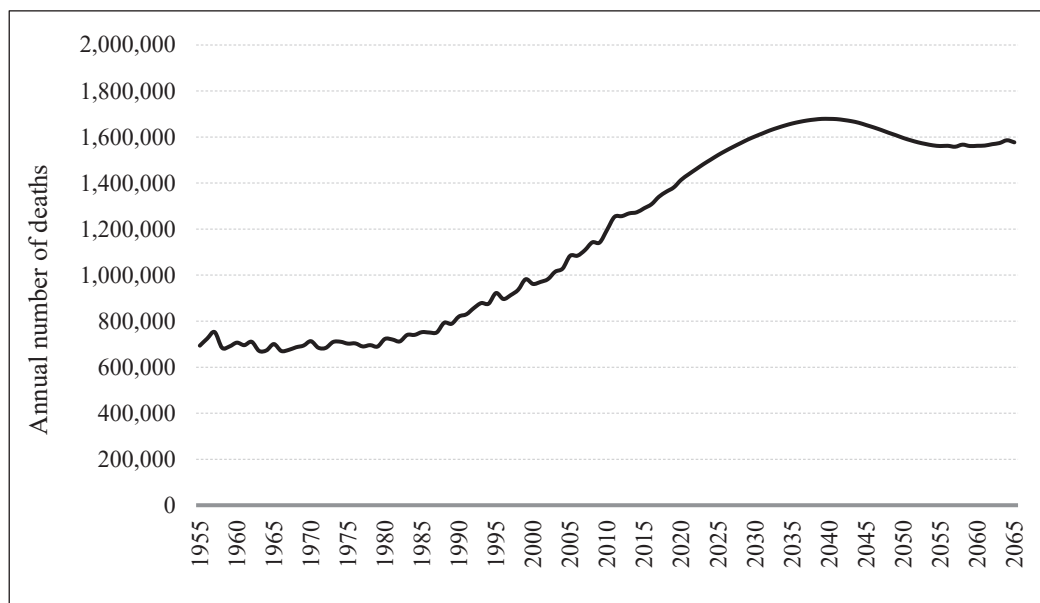


Figure 1. Annual number of deaths, Japan, total, 1955-2065⁷

It is important to clarify that the increase in deaths is primarily due to the rising number of deaths among older populations, not younger ones. For instance, in 1955, young children (ages 0-4) accounted for over 14.3 percent of the total 693,523 deaths in the country. A significant number of deaths also occurred among the working-age population, including those in their 20s to 50s. In contrast, by 2024, the deaths of young children accounted for only about 0.1 percent of the total. Instead, over 80 percent of deaths this year will occur among individuals aged 75 and older.⁷ The leading causes of death among older people include malignant neoplasms (cancers), cardiovascular diseases (heart attacks), and cerebrovascular diseases (strokes). These are primarily chronic non-communicable diseases, which are closely associated with aging.⁸ This trend is a result of increased life expectancy due to advancements in medical infrastructure, as well as the widespread availability of quality healthcare services and welfare programs.² Therefore, the country is currently witnessing more deaths because there are more older individuals, the majority of whom pass away due to age-related factors rather than newly emerging diseases that typically affect individuals in the middle stages of life.

This impending shift to a death-laden society sets Japan apart from global trends. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, data comparing crude death rates per 1,000 people for Japan, the European Union (comprising all 27 member countries), China, Thailand, and the world from 1965 to 2023 reveal notable differences. Globally, the frequency of deaths has decreased over the past half-century, dropping from about 13.2 deaths per 1,000 people in 1965 to some 7.4 in 2023. In Europe, the rates have remained relatively stable during this time, rising slightly from 10.1 in 1965 to 10.2 by 2023. In contrast, Japan's rate has steadily increased since the late 1970s, climbing from 6.0 per 1,000 in 1978 to 13.6 by 2023.⁹ This trend indicates that in Japan, deaths have become more frequent among the population in recent decades (**Figure 2**).

Additionally, **Figure 2** also depicts that since the mid-2000s, both China and Thailand, countries in East and Southeast Asia respectively, have started to mirror Japan's demographic trajectory. For China, for instance,

its crude death rate rose from 6.5 deaths per 1,000 people in 2005 to 6.8 in 2008, and it has continued to increase, reaching 8.9 by 2023.⁹ As mentioned earlier, Japan has led the world in population aging since becoming a hyper-aged society in 2007. The unique trends in Japan's crude death rates over the past few decades confirm that the country is likely to transition into a death-laden society before other nations. It is also suggested that other countries, such as China and Thailand, are following Japan's path, albeit with a delay of a few decades.

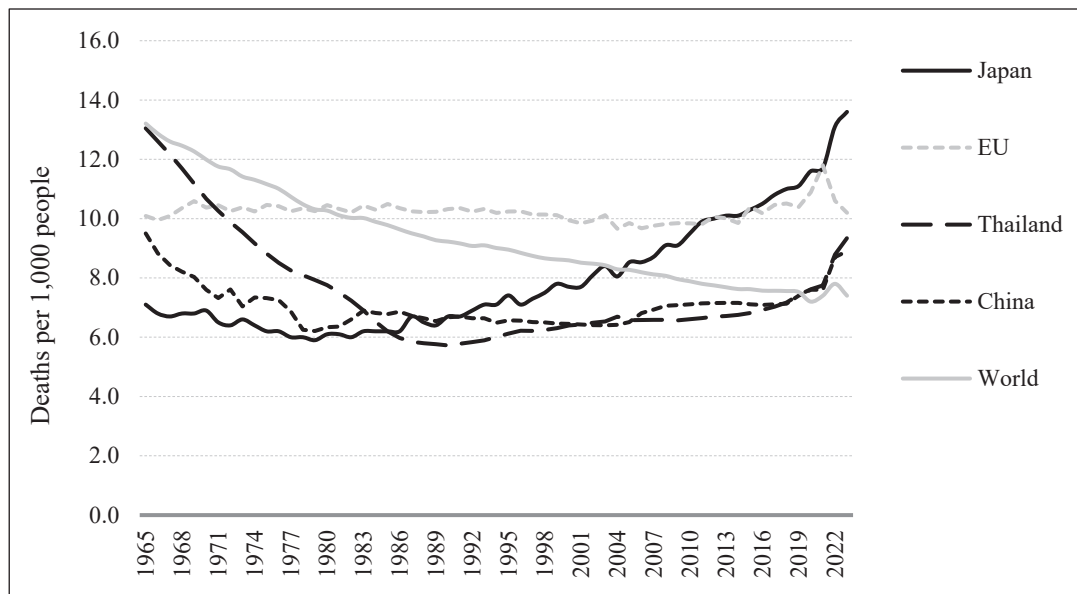


Figure 2. Crude death rates (per 1,000 people), by country and region, 1965-2023⁹

3.2. Main drivers for the increased deaths

Two significant demographic factors are contributing to Japan's transition into a society characterized by increased mortality among older individuals. The first factor is due to the presence of two major baby boom generations from the post-war era.² Their increased longevity, coupled with the inevitability of their deaths, is expected to significantly raise the death toll in the country over the next several years. These baby boom generations consist of two distinct cohorts: the older cohort, born between 1947 and 1949, and the younger one, born between 1971 and 1974. Each cohort comprises over eight million individuals.² The older baby boomers, currently in their mid-70s, represent the largest three-year age group in Japan's recorded history. Their aging has been a critical factor driving Japan toward becoming the world's leading hyper-aged society over the past few decades.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the younger baby boomers, now in their early to mid-50s, will continue to reinforce Japan's status as a pioneer in population aging in the coming decades. Their anticipated, eventual mortality within this group will also further burden the country with a high number of deaths.³

The second factor is the ongoing decline in birth rates, one of the key drivers of population aging. If the younger population were growing in number, the rising number of elderly deaths might not pose such a

significant burden on the country. However, the decreasing younger demographic exacerbates the situation; young individuals are crucial for both formal and informal caregiving of the elderly, and the increasing number of older individuals passing away creates challenges for society as a whole.³ The situation in Japan is concerning: over the past several decades, birth rates have steadily declined, with the total fertility rate dropping from 2.16 in 1970 to a projected 1.15 by 2024.⁷ Declining birth rates are a global trend, and more than 15 countries and regions are expected to report even lower rates than Japan's rate by 2024.⁸ However, Japan's rate has been consistently decreasing for several decades, and the 2024 figure is a record low, significantly below the total replacement rate of 2.07 for the country. In terms of numbers, during the year 2024, there were only 686,061 births across Japan, a drop of more than 40,000 from the previous year, marking the first time that births have fallen below a 700,000 benchmark in the country's recorded history. Projections indicate that this trend will persist unless significant changes are made to immigration policies or family support systems.⁷

3.3. Continuous aging and shrinking of the population

From a socio-demographic perspective, a death-laden society is not merely defined by an increasing number of deaths; it is also marked by the continuous aging of the population. This continuous aging is expected to accelerate due to increased longevity and persistently declining birth rates. These trends are projected to continue well into the future. In 2024, approximately 30.1 percent of the total population was aged 65 or older. According to medium-variant projections, this figure will rise to 35.5 percent by 2030, about 36.7 percent by 2040, and some 40.1 percent by 2050.¹¹

The coming of a death-laden society also brings a significant demographic consequence that has never been observed in Japan's modern history: continuously accelerated depopulation. In the country, population has been steadily declining for more than a decade. **Figure 3** is based on data of the total population of the country from 1950 to a projected 2100 (based on a medium variant). After reaching a peak population of around 128.5 million in 2008, Japan's population has been gradually decreasing. As of November 1, 2025, the population had fallen to about 123.2 million, reflecting a decrease of roughly 0.6 million from the same month the previous year.¹² The era of a death-laden society, expected to begin in the 2030s, is likely to further accelerate this trend. Public concern regarding this issue is mounting, with projections indicating that the total population could drop below 100 million by 2053 and continue to shrink to around 80 million by 2080—levels reminiscent of Japan's population size in 1950, at the beginning of its post-war recovery.¹¹ (**Figure 3**).

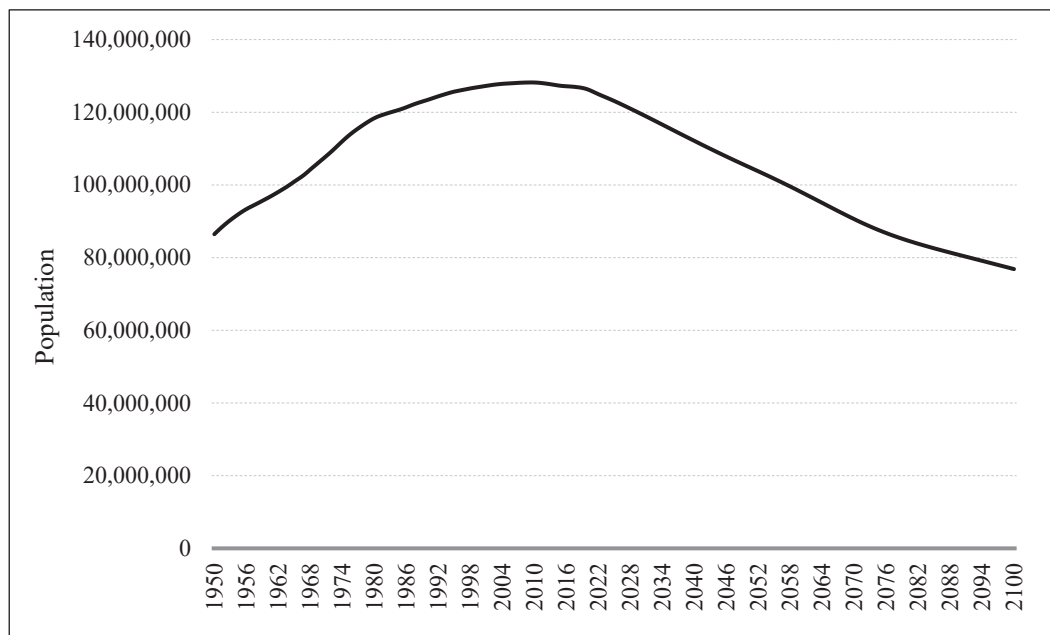


Figure 3. Total population, Japan, 1950-2100¹¹

4. Societal Impacts of a Death-Laden Society

Over the past decade, an increasing number of researchers have begun to discuss the emerging challenges and concerns posed by the coming of this new socio-demographic phase.³ To date, much of the discussion has centered around three key areas: (1) shortages in basic medical resources for those dying; (2) an escalating public burden of diseases; and (3) crematorium shortages and their cultural impacts.

The first area is the growing pressure from the chronic shortage of clinical doctors and hospital beds that Japan has experienced over the past several decades, which are essential medical resources particularly for those spending their final days in hospitals, as opposed to their homes.¹³ Particularly, specialists in terminal or palliative care have been in short supply in Japan since well before the country began facing its current demographic challenges.¹⁴ This issue has been publicly recognized since the mid-1950s, especially in rural areas and on remote islands. Hospitals have long been the dominant place of death for the people in Japan. If this trend continues, a death-laden Japan will inevitably face a significant shortage in the conventional place to die: hospital beds.³ According to estimates, by 2030, there will be an annual shortage of about 600,000 hospital beds, a figure that is expected to grow in the coming decades.¹⁵

The second area is the escalating ‘public burden of disease’ – the impact of health-related challenges on various aspects of society, including the financial costs of care for older populations.⁵ With continuous population aging and a steadily shrinking populace, a dying Japan will have to grapple with increasing public healthcare expenses for decades to come, leading to a projected risk of insolvency.¹⁶

The third area, while more practical, may profoundly impact the national culture surrounding death, dying, and grief. In the context of rising deaths in Japan, the growing shortage of crematoriums has become a significant public concern.¹⁷ While cremation is not legally mandated, it has been the predominantly available

method of handling corpses since the early twentieth century.¹⁸ Crematorium shortages are not just a public health issue; they threaten the cultural framework that supports grieving families. Funerals traditionally serve as family reunions, offering emotional support during times of loss. In contemporary Japan, cremation typically occurs in the late morning, shortly after the main funeral service, allowing attendees—immediate family, distant relatives, and friends—to participate and return home the same day.¹⁷ Due to the shortages, however, many families in Tokyo and Osaka are now forced to cremate their loved ones outside of these conventional hours while still holding funerals three days after death.¹⁹ Some families opt for rural funeral homes to maintain their schedules, but these changes often lead to reduced attendance as they disrupt daily routines.²⁰ Funerals play a crucial role in fostering intimacy and social bonding, helping attendees share their grief and lessen their sense of loss. As these crematorium shortages persist, the significance of these cultural practices may diminish, particularly for urban families nationwide.²¹

5. Implications for Higher Education Today and Beyond

As discussed above, to date, discussions about the impacts of a death-laden society have focused on limited sectors of society, such as the sustainability of healthcare infrastructure, the public burden of disease, and the decline of traditional funeral customs. However, there is a noticeable gap in research on how the shift toward a society burdened by death may impact higher education and the vital role that these institutions should play in ensuring sustainability in the coming decades.

The emergence of a death-laden society presents both significant opportunities and responsibilities for higher education institutions. These institutions must take a proactive approach to address the complex implications that arise from this transition. In what follows, this article discusses three key areas related to the implications for higher education: general education curricula, relevant educational activities, and learning practices. While the primary focus is on the context of Japan, the implications described are also relevant to other countries around the world.

5.1. Revitalizing ‘Death Education’

As society faces growing issues related to death and dying, it is crucial to integrate—or reintegrate in a more updated and accessible manner—what is often referred to as “death education” into higher education. Reintegrated death education, this time around, should be a core part of the general education curriculum, available to students across all levels and fields of study.

Death education involves a range of teaching and training practices designed to help individuals understand various aspects of death, dying, and grief. This field is important for academic, policy, and professional purposes and is approached from multiple disciplines, including medical, psychological, socio-cultural, economic, and legal perspectives.²² The primary goals of this field of education extend beyond helping students cope with the dying process of their loved ones and manage their grief after a loss. It also focuses on training them to provide professional support—on individual, organizational, or policy levels—to both those who are dying and those surrounding them. This includes alleviating pain and anxiety in their final days and preparing

for end-of-life planning and decision-making, such as creating advance directives for terminal care, for both.²²

Modern death education began to take shape in higher education in the United Kingdom during the mid-1960s.²² Since then, it has been included in the formal curricula of many higher education institutions across developed countries, including Japan.²³ However, due partly to historical taboos surrounding the topics of death and dying, formal death education courses—those that offer academic credits—are primarily found in limited fields such as medicine, nursing, and social work, which specifically prepare students for their future professional roles in settings such as hospitals and hospices.²⁴ As a result, death education has largely remained on the fringes of the curriculum and is not fully accessible to college students outside these specialized areas.²⁵

In a society like Japan, death education is more relevant and important than ever. With rising mortality rates, death and dying are becoming more prominent and concerning—not just in the family and community lives of individuals but also as a source of economic and demographic pressure on society as a whole. Due to the rising mortality rates among older individuals in the context of chronic shortages of doctors and hospital beds, more older individuals in Japan are expected to spend their final days at home or in their communities rather than in hospitals. Furthermore, increasing mortality rates will place additional burdens on the younger population, such as higher national expenditures on healthcare, long-term care, palliative care, and social security.²⁶

Death education should no longer be limited to students in healthcare fields; it needs to be extended to the broader public to better prepare society for its prospective impacts. Although this will be a time-consuming process, higher education institutions should take the initiative to systematically revitalize and expand death education due to their role as producers of knowledge in society. This effort could then pave the way for educational institutions at earlier levels, such as high schools, as well as related organizations, including the private education service agencies and the media. This would equip all students early in their higher education with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to understand and address the realities of life and death.

This education should promote a deeper understanding and encourage open discussions on long-lurking issues such as end-of-life decision-making including physician-assisted dying, lonely deaths among urban older men, and promotion of aging and dying in the community, among others. It should cover not only theoretical aspects but also practical applications from interdisciplinary perspectives. Fostering a holistic understanding of life that emphasizes safety, comfort, and dignity for individuals in their final days is essential for preparing future generations to navigate a society increasingly impacted by death and dying.

5.2. Developing Leadership Programs

The second implication is the necessity to create innovative leadership programs within higher education that are specifically designed to nurture the next generations of leaders in a society uniquely laden with death and dying. As previously discussed, a society with high mortality is characterized not only by persistently elevated death rates among the elderly but also by a continuously aging population and a steady decline in overall population numbers. Each of these socio-demographic trends presents unique consequences and challenges, and their simultaneous occurrence requires more than conventional academic research to analyze and distribute

findings within specialized academic circles.

A death-laden society demands leaders who are well-trained and experienced in ensuring individuals' quality of life, their later years, and the dying process. This necessitates effective collaboration among various sectors, including academia, public education, industry, and policymaking, among others.²⁵ Higher education institutions must develop robust educational and professional programs to prepare the next generation of leaders to take on these vital roles in the future. This is particularly important in Japan, the world's first society to phase into a death-laden society, from which many other countries may draw policy lessons in the coming decades.

Over the past two decades, what is often labeled as leadership education has experienced significant popularity and growth across various fields in higher education worldwide.²⁶ This is the case especially in the fields of environmental protection, international cooperation, and diversity promotions in society. To date, however, very few institutions have developed programs specifically designed to comprehensively address the issues arising from the emergence of a death-laden society.²⁷ Despite Japan being at the forefront of phasing into this new socio-demographic phase, its higher education system has yet to systematically prepare leaders equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, experience, and commitment to safeguard the health, wellness, safety, and overall well-being of individuals and communities, in the landscape of a death-laden society.

Creating a leadership program tailored to this new socio-demographic phase is particularly challenging, as there are no precedents from other countries; Japan is significantly ahead of the rest of the world in this demographic transition. Nonetheless, higher education institutions are well-positioned to innovate leadership education. This can involve developing a degree-conferring postgraduate program or a short-term intensive program with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary curricula to address urgent societal needs both now and in the future. Leaders trained through these educational programs will be invaluable not only in academic research but also in business, policymaking, and public administration at local, national, and international levels.

5.3. International Dissemination of Japan's Leadership Education

The third implication comes from the growing international demand for a hyper-aged Japan to share its educational efforts. In the coming years, many countries will likely expect Japanese higher education institutions to play a more active role in proving leadership programs specifically designed to address the challenges of a society that has already phased into a death-laden society. Initially, this demand will primarily come from East and Southeast Asian countries that have closely followed Japan's demographic trends over the past decade. In the long term, other regions beyond Asia may express similar needs. The common reason behind this demand is the desire to find ways to safeguard their aging populations through learning from Japan's experiences, both the successes and the challenges faced by the impacts of a death-laden society.²⁶

In the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in leading universities worldwide offering master's programs designed to train leaders for aging societies. However, these programs often focus primarily on issues specific to aging demographics and older individuals without addressing the unique challenges faced

by a death-laden society.²⁷ Such challenges include not only an aging population but also ongoing depopulation and rising mortality rates among the elderly. Additionally, most of these programs are developed in institutions located in North America and Europe, which are heavily influenced by the sociocultural contexts, political environments, and legal frameworks specific to those regions of the world.²⁷

Japan's ongoing and future experiences can provide valuable insights for academic research, policymaking, and, most importantly, international collaboration aimed at supporting other countries that are following Japan's socio-demographic path. In recent years, there have been growing international calls for Japan to share its expertise on these issues at the governmental level. A notable example is The Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN), an international program coordinated by the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of Japan since 2017. AHWIN was launched to promote regional cooperation in developing sustainable and self-reliant healthcare systems in rapidly aging Asian countries.²⁸ An increasing number of stakeholders—particularly from Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia—have formally requested Japan's assistance in training their students and young professionals to become leaders capable of coordinating various professional groups and socioeconomic resources, both domestically and internationally, to safeguard the wellbeing of their aging populations in the coming decades.²⁹

Japanese higher education institutions must prepare to meet the growing demand for international dissemination and engagement. They can begin to internationalize their curricula and leadership programs by adopting English as the primary language of instruction. Additionally, they should focus on improving learning outcomes by assembling a diverse team of international instructors. These efforts may ensure that international students not only access the same learning content but also have meaningful opportunities to learn alongside future Japanese leaders who share similar professional goals. It is essential to continuously improve these educational efforts to enhance students' learning experiences. This effort can include strengthening the interdisciplinary approach and incorporating knowledge and skills related to cutting-edge information and communication technology (ICT) and artificial intelligence (AI). The overarching goal of promoting Japan's leadership education in the field of death education is not only to contribute to other rapidly aging countries; it may also help establish Japanese universities as vital learning hubs for younger generations across aging Asia and beyond, both now and in the future.

6. Conclusion: Higher Education in a Death-Laden Japan and Beyond

Throughout history, the interplay between demographics and education has played a crucial role in shaping societies.³⁰ Japan, currently recognized as the world's foremost aging society, is on the cusp of transitioning into a death-laden society—an evolution that many other countries will face in the foreseeable future. Over recent decades, the global phenomenon of population aging has prompted higher education institutions to intensify their focus on teaching and researching the complex causes, processes, and consequences of aging societies. As a result, a substantial body of research and a variety of educational initiatives have emerged, equipping many developed countries to address the pressing questions and challenges raised by this significant

shift in socio-demographic dynamics.

As Japan nears this pivotal transition, it becomes imperative to develop and implement innovative educational practices tailored for younger generations who will directly confront an array of challenges stemming from a death-laden society. This emerging socio-demographic landscape grapples not only with increasing mortality rates among the elderly but also with ongoing population aging and steady depopulation. This convergence of trends necessitates the development of forward-thinking educational methodologies and practices designed to effectively navigate these evolving challenges. Such educational efforts aim to safeguard and even enhance the health, safety, and overall well-being of individuals across all age groups, particularly as the population of older adults expands and the younger workforce diminishes over the coming decades.

This article has discussed three critical implications of the transition to a death-laden society for higher education in Japan, both in the present and for the future. These include the need to: (1) revitalize death education for all students in higher education institutions to foster their profound understanding of mortality and its implications for individuals and society; (2) develop innovative leadership programs that empower the upcoming generation of leaders to navigate the complexities inherent in this new socio-demographic landscape; and (3) promote the international dissemination of Japan's leadership initiatives centered on death education, which can provide valuable insights and frameworks for other countries facing similar challenges. As countries in East and Southeast Asia prepare to embark on demographic trajectories akin to Japan's, the effective development of the higher education practices discussed in this article will serve as a transformative blueprint for these countries in the years to come, aiding them in addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with a death-laden society.

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