Comparison of Health Issues Faced by Business Leaders in Japan and Indonesia

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Introduction

Modern business leaders act as compasses for their companies, shouldering the responsibility to steer them. They are exposed daily to a multitude of pressures, including fierce market competition, constantly shifting economic landscapes, and increasing social responsibility. In such a demanding environment, the mental and physical health of leaders becomes an exceptionally critical resource that determines business sustainability. A leader's state of health directly affects their ability to make sound decisions, their capacity for leadership that boosts employee morale, and the overall productivity of the organization. Consequently, managing a leader's health is increasingly recognized not merely as a personal matter but also as a strategic imperative essential for corporate growth and stability.

This study addresses this critical theme by focusing specifically on business leaders in Okinawa, located at the southern tip of Japan, with a unique economic structure, and those in Indonesia, a major economic power in Southeast Asia. It will comparatively analyze the unique health challenges faced by leaders in these two regions and delve deeply into the causes rooted in their respective social and economic contexts. The analysis revealed a contrasting picture: in Okinawa, mental health issues stemming from the unique local business environment are a primary concern, whereas in Indonesia, lifestyle-related diseases linked to national health awareness present a growing challenge. Ultimately, this study aimed to examine concrete solutions to these challenges and contribute to the sustainable development of businesses in both regions.

Health Issues Faced by Japanese Business Leaders
1. Mental Health Problems

A survey conducted by a Tokyo-based information research company in October 2023 revealed that approximately half of Japanese business leaders had experienced mental health issues, with more than 60% suffering from insomnia due to mental distress. Additionally, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) reported that over 40% of respondents experienced feelings of loneliness, highlighting the severe psychological burden placed on business leaders (JETRO 2024).

2. Impact of Regional Business Environments

In particular, small- and medium-sized business owners in Okinawa Prefecture are highly dependent on tourism, making them vulnerable to external factors such as infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and changes in international affairs. Additionally, the Ministry of Economic, Trade, and Industry (METI) reported that low

wage levels and the outflow of young workers to other regions exacerbate labor shortages, concentrating operational burdens on business leaders and increasing their psychological stress (METI, 2023).

3. Lack of Mental Care Support
Over 70% of Japanese business leaders feel that they lack knowledge and skills in mental health care and only a minority actively engage in mental health practices. This is mainly because of time constraints and low mental health literacy. According to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare of Japan (MHLW), essential support measures include "counseling," "mental health care apps," and "workshops and seminars" workshops and seminars (MHLW, 2023).

Health Issues Faced by Indonesian Business Leaders
1. Low Awareness of Health
In Indonesia, many business leaders, along with the general population, have low awareness of health maintenance. The importance of health management is not well recognized as it increases the risk of lifestyle-related diseases (METI, 2023).

2. Increase in Lifestyle-Related Diseases
High smoking rates, lack of exercise, and unhealthy dietary habits contribute to the rise of lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes and obesity (WHO, 2025). A high-calorie diet and lack of physical activity exacerbate chronic health problems and increase the health risks for business leaders.

3. Lack of Regular Health Checkups
Although regulations mandate health checkups for businesses, many companies fail to conduct them properly and many business leaders do not undergo regular health examinations (METI, 2023).This increases the likelihood of undetected, severe health issues.

4. Shortage of Specialists
Indonesia has a limited number of occupational health specialists (SpOK), making it difficult to establish a proper occupational health and safety system within companies. As a result, business leaders have few opportunities to receive professional advice on health management (METI, 2023)

5. Need for Lifestyle Improvements
Improving habits, such as reducing smoking, engaging in regular exercise, and adopting a balanced diet, are essential for maintaining the health of business leaders (WHO, 2025).

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	Japanese Business Leaders	Indonesian Business Leaders
Main Health Issues	Mental health disorders (insomnia, loneliness)	Lifestyle-related diseases (diabetes, obesity)
Main Causes	Increased workload, labor shortages, unstable business conditions	Low health awareness, smoking, and lack of exercise
Key Challenges	Focus on mental health issues	Focus on physical health issues
Common Challenges	Need for business leaders to manage their own health, and lack of support systems	Need for business leaders to manage their own health, lack of support systems

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although the health challenges faced by business leaders in Japan and Indonesia differ, a common issue is their importance of business leaders in managing their own health. In Japan, it is crucial to address mental health concerns. Creating an environment in which business leaders can openly seek counseling and foster peer networks among executives is an essential measure. In Indonesia, promoting lifestyle improvements and ensuring the implementation of regular health checkups are vital. Thus, it is necessary to establish corporate health management systems and increase the availability of occupational health specialists. Business leaders' health management directly affects corporate growth and employee productivity. Raising awareness and implementing effective support measures will contribute to the sustainable development of businesses in both countries.

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