

Kylei Snyder
Mr. Wimmer
Citizenship
February 12, 2020
Suicide in South Korea VS Japan

South Korea and Japan are similar in many ways, but as well very different. From being close neighbors to serious issues like suicide, Japan and South Korea deal with many of the same issues.

Dating back for centuries, Japan has had issues with suicide in its economy, channeling back to the present day with being sixth out of all countries, which is sixty percent higher than the global average. According to statistics, and The Wall Street Journal, 22,000 Japanese citizens have taken their own life since 2016. Every life taken is one too many.

Taking a look into Japanese culture, it is not hard to tell what some possible factors could be. People living in Japan take their values very seriously, from education to elders, everything makes an impact on their daily lives. The prime age to commit suicide in Japan according to Japan Times is between five to thirty-five. As research shows Japanese values, people mostly struggle with education between intermediate and college. Although bullying has a huge impact on suicide, the biggest factor of the school relating to suicide is the pressure that comes with it. Going back to values, low grades are not tolerated by the Japanese guardians of students. People take pride in social class, how could you not when Japan has the highest IQ rate. Intense school work even causes young children to develop depression, and even commit suicide.

History plays a big role in suicide in Japan. Samurai/Bushido culture played and still plays a huge influence on Japan's mindset. Samurai would rather commit, Seppuku, (suicide) rather than surrender. Many believed and some still believe killing themselves is a way of taking responsibility for their actions. Although, the Samurai and Bushido culture do not play as big of a role as men and woman taking their lives due to losing their jobs, or failing college entrance exams. Many do not want to disappoint their families who will not accept their life choices.

As well as talking about suicide, it is important to mention "Hikikomori". Defined as acute social withdrawal, the mental disease takes place in many students. People often drift into states of Hikikomori when losing a job, failing exams, trouble making friends, and social anxiety. Many will start by spending a lot more time in their homes, making it simple to completely withdraw from society. People suffering become a lot more violent than others and often do not leave their homes for months, or even in extreme cases, years. According to NCDI, more than 1.1 million people are diagnosed. Most often, people end up taking their own lives.

You may be wondering, if Japan has such a high suicide rate, what are they doing to prevent it. The answer is organizations, hotlines, and much more. In 2005, the parliament started an organization called LIFELINK, which is organized as a forum on suicide. Many individuals and organizations raise awareness and proposed plans for suicide prevention. Aswell as LIFELINK, health care continues to support and cover for families whose loved ones have committed suicide. As well as this, there is a "Regional Comprehensive Suicide Prevention strengthening Fund" acquired. This supports suicide

programs and has helped almost 10,000 people since the late 1990s. One example of a suicide website people struggling can reach is Tellip.com, which is an organization, that you do not have to be suicidal to use, you can reach out before your mind takes the turn. It offers many of the same things the United States suicide hotline does, as people who are willing to listen, with online and telephone chat rooms.

Now moving on to South Korea, you may realize many of the same reasons for an individual to commit suicide. Out of the 50.6 million people, out of every 13 per 100,000, someone is suicidal.

Academic pressure, as well as Japan, is an important element to suicide. Academic pressure stems from their passion for excellence. Many South Korean mindsets believe that education is the primary factor in social status and happiness. Individuals turn to suicide when families become too strict and people lose grasp into grades.

Some other factors leading back to suicide in South Korea is unemployment. According to the Wallstreet Journal, out of the 50.6 million people living in South Korea, only 3% are unemployed. Many people view this as a failure and often goes back to not getting into a good college and the pressure of education. South Korea stems to have a status of one of the wealthiest countries.

The following factors are statistics. Over 20,000 people commit suicide in South Korea each year, and almost 1,000 people commit suicide each month. Leading back to one person every thirty-five minutes.

Over the past years, the government has been trying to educate South Koreans on their lives' importance. They have opened care programs for families in crisis and as well as creating a hotline, and even going as far as to have fake funeral programs for individuals to realize the importance of their lives. Aswell as hotlines and programs, more than 12,000 people have joined a counsel to voice their suffering. Some techniques facilities use to remind people of their worth is showing the beauty of growing old, they do this due to almost 50 elders ending their lives each day.

In conclusion, Bettering the education system in both South Korea and Japan could result in fewer lives being taken. The overly competitive society is the root that leads to suicide in both places. Rethinking the view on success can lead to a new view of happiness. For being two of the most powerful countries, people live in despair and even children are taking their lives. One life taken is too many when thousands are dying each year due to a depressive state, there is a major problem. In both South Korea and Japan, values are taken very seriously. While this is not a bad thing, it puts tons of pressure on youth and especially people who focus a lot on education. Although other factors such as loneliness, poverty, culture, chronic illness, losing jobs, marriage breakdowns, and despair, academic pressure in both countries stand out like a sore thumb. Money and social status are the roots of all evil, but for these countries, the only thing that matters.