

Perceptions and Usage of Social Networking: A Comparison of Japanese and American University Students

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Significance of the Study

- When I studied abroad at Oberlin University, many of my Japanese friends used social networking sites which I had no experience in using.
- As I used social networking more and more, I thought that the amount of time spent and the content's appropriateness in Japan differed from America.
- I want to explore the differences between Japanese and American students in regards to social networking, in terms of the ethics, frequency of use, etc.

Research Questions

1. What type of effect are social networks having on the way university students communicate?
2. What is considered appropriate to post on social networks and why?

Background Research

- Definition of Social Network
- Types of Social Networks
- Why do we use social networking?
 - Maintaining Relationships
 - Motivations
- Related Topics in Social Networking
 - Education
 - Cyberbullying

Definition of Social Network

- “Social Network” (SNS) as defined on Merriam-Webster:

An online service or site through which people create and maintain interpersonal relationships.

(Merriam-Webster)

Types of Social Networks

American



Japanese



Uses of SNS: Maintaining Relationships

- We use a variety of methods for maintaining relationships.
 - Methods include liking comments, posting comments onto status updates, etc.
- Research by Ellison showed the average number of people inside a network was 207, while the number of actual “friends” was 76.
- Cost of maintaining relationships via SNS is low.
 - To become friends, most of the time you only need to hit one button (Add friend, follow, etc.)
 - Should someone inside your network create a post, it is easy to communicate via commenting or private messaging.

(Ellison, 2014)

Why do we use SNS: Motivation

- Intrinsic Motivations such as “enjoyment”
 - We continue to use SNS because we achieve a certain level of perceived enjoyment.
 - Extrinsic Motivations such as the “number of friends”
 - When we have a large number of friends or expect an influx of new ones, we increase our usage of SNS.
 - Usefulness will also increase in proportion to the number of friends.
- (Lin, 2011)
- Motivation to use social media is not based on the number of members on SNS, but rather the number of friends within our networks (Ellison, Lin)

We are motivated to use SNS not only to maintain the relationships we have, but also wish to see our networks expand

SNS: Education

- Research was done in 2011 by Nagoya University about using SNS in an educational environment.
- For “Social Learning”, two programs were utilized:
 - Through Twitter, opinions could be exchanged and students were able to communicate with the professor.
 - An educational tool known as *Libra* allowed a textbook to be uploaded where students and professors could interact by making notes.
- As a result, 85% of students believed that the use of social learning through technology was helpful for education.

(Hasegawa, 2013)

In order to build relationships between students and teachers, we should learn how to use SNS correctly.

SNS: Cyberbullying

- Merriam-Webster defines “cyberbullying”:
 - “The electronic posting of mean-spirited messages about a person often done anonymously”.
- Research in Japan by Saegusa (2010) focused on comparing the frequency of traditional bullying with cyberbullying in Japan.
 - Saegusa found there was a possibility that the frequency of cyberbullying was increasing.
- Further research by Barlett (2014) compared Japanese and American college students and attitudes towards cyberbullying.
 - Both groups reinforced cyberbullying behaviors, but cultural factors related to Western society pointed to American students being more likely to cyberbully.

Despite the growing number of cases in both countries, it is difficult to combat cyberbullying because of anonymity.

Research Method

- Participants

- 63 University Students

- 33 American

- 14 females, 18 males, 1 declined-to-state

- 30 Japanese

- 22 females, 8 males

- Research Instruments

- Google Forms

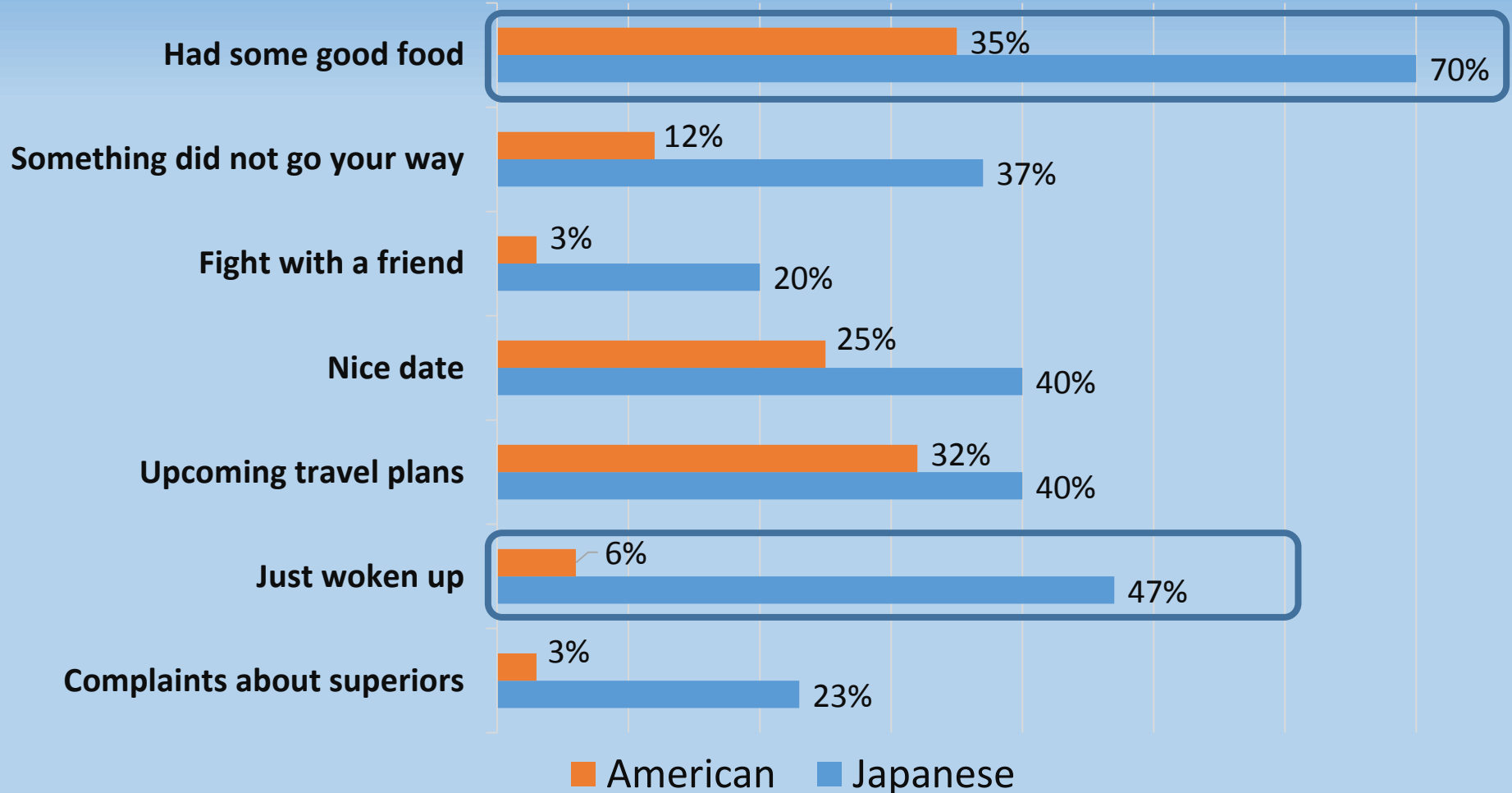
- [English](#)

- [Japanese](#)

Research Question 1

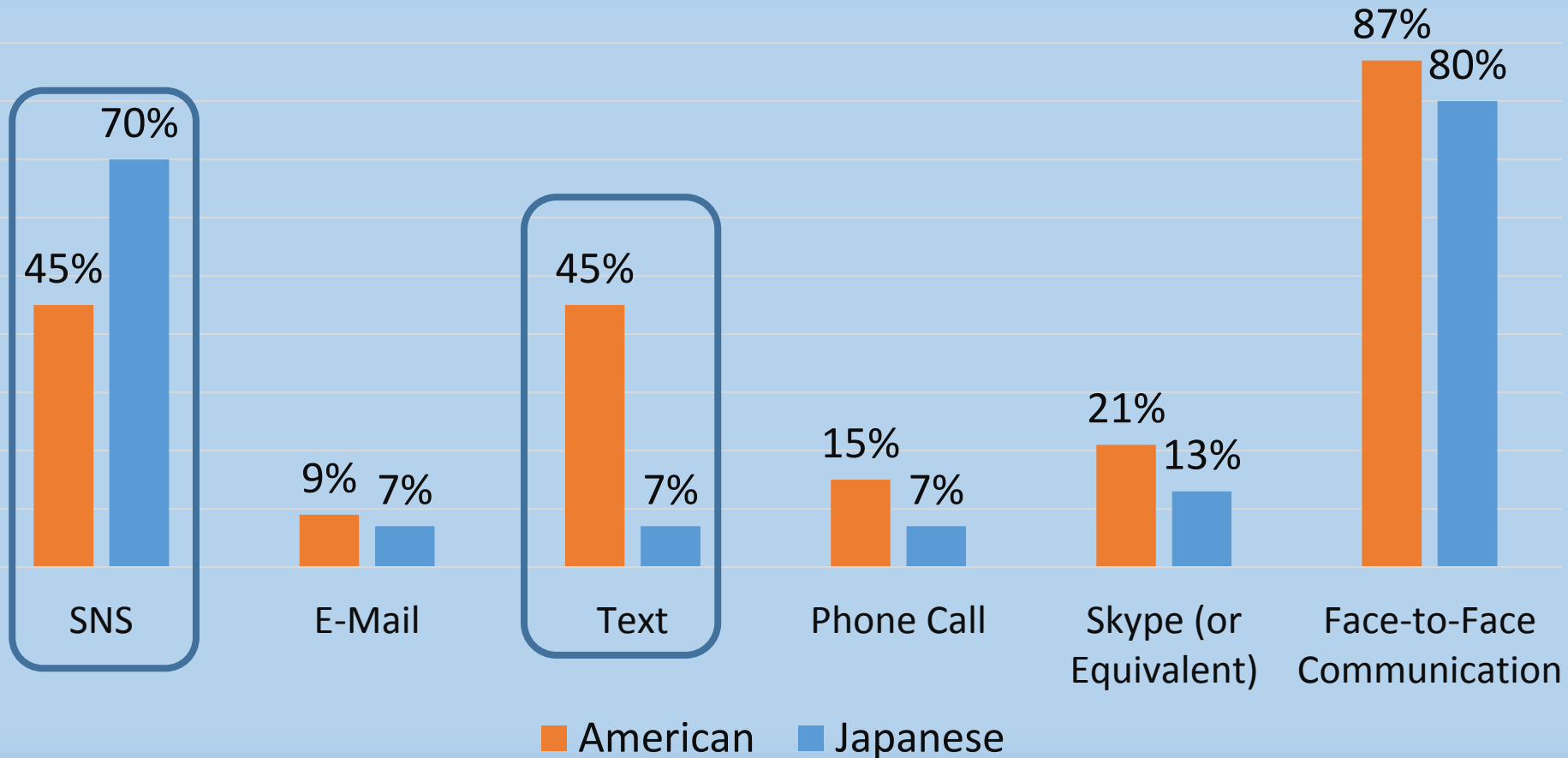
How Does Social Networking Affect the Ways University Students Communicate?

How would you prefer to communicate the following situations? (Through SNS)



“Had some good food” had double the amount of Japanese over American (70% vs 35%) students, and “Just woken up” had a difference of over 40% (47% vs 6%).

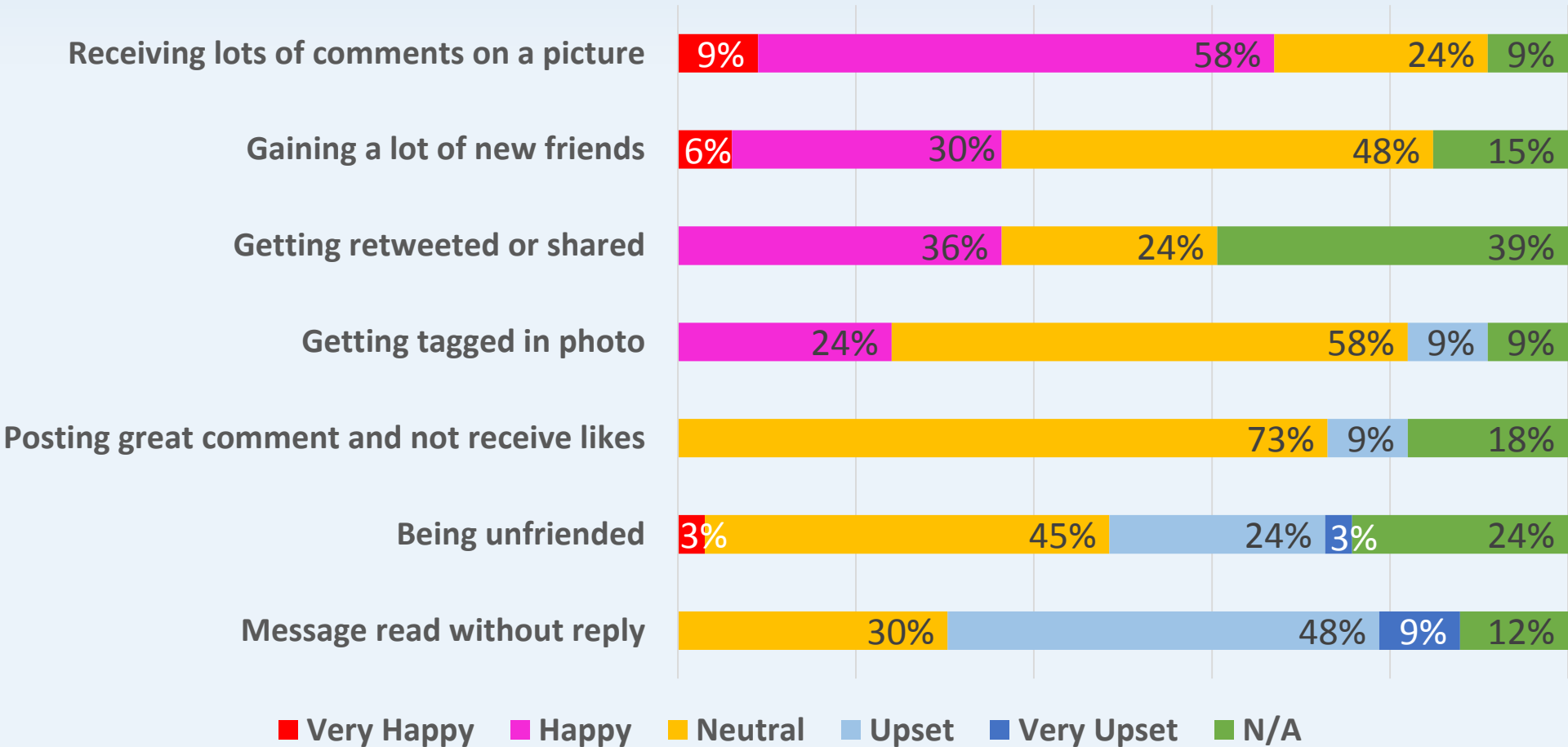
On average, how long do you spend communicating with people through the following mediums in one day?
(More than 30 minutes)



Japanese students tended to use SNS for longer periods of time while American students texted far more.

How happy or upset do you get in the following situations?

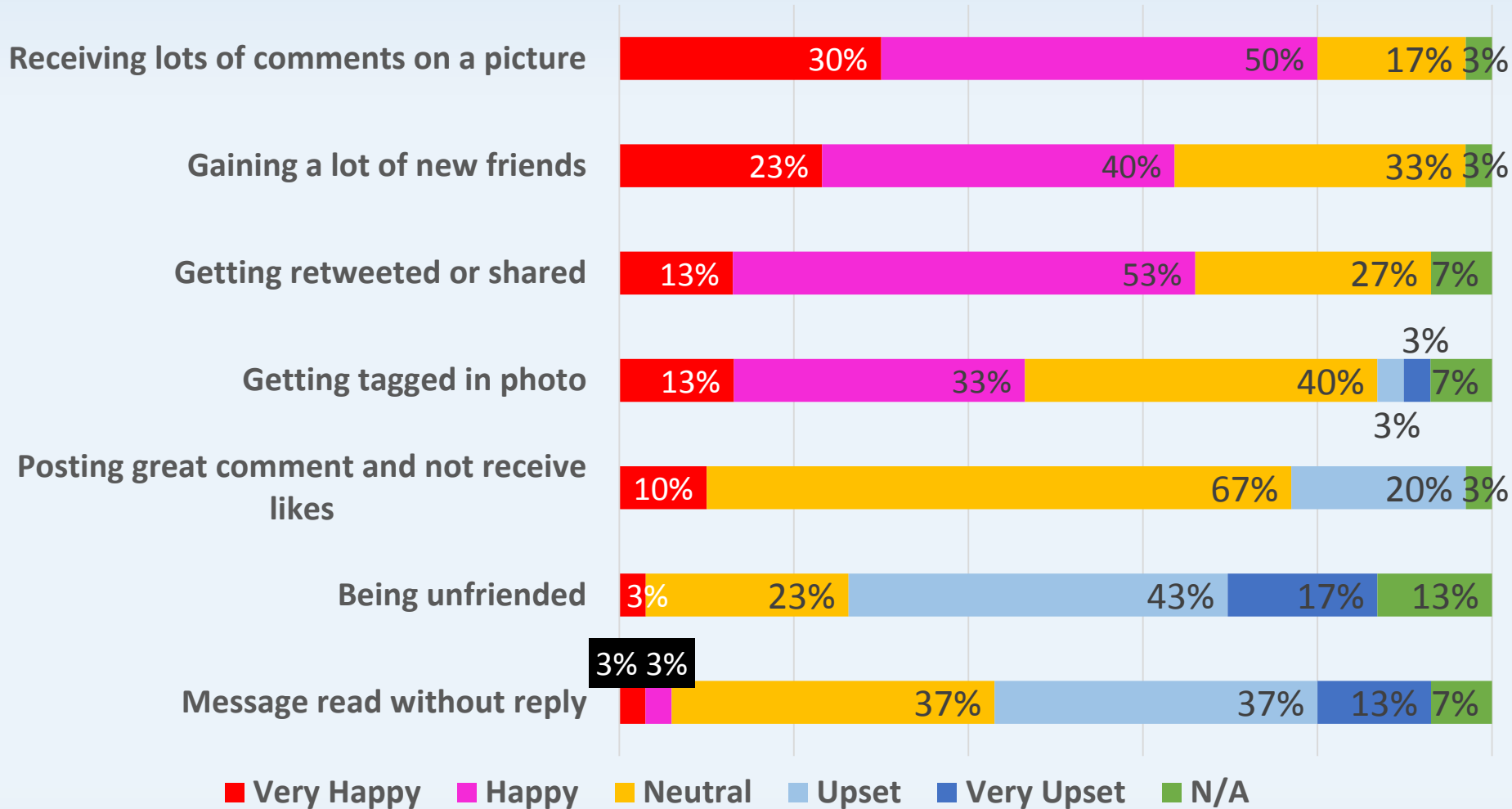
American Students



In relation to “Receiving lots of comments on a picture” and “Message read without reply”, there was some emotional reaction, but it was not a strong one.

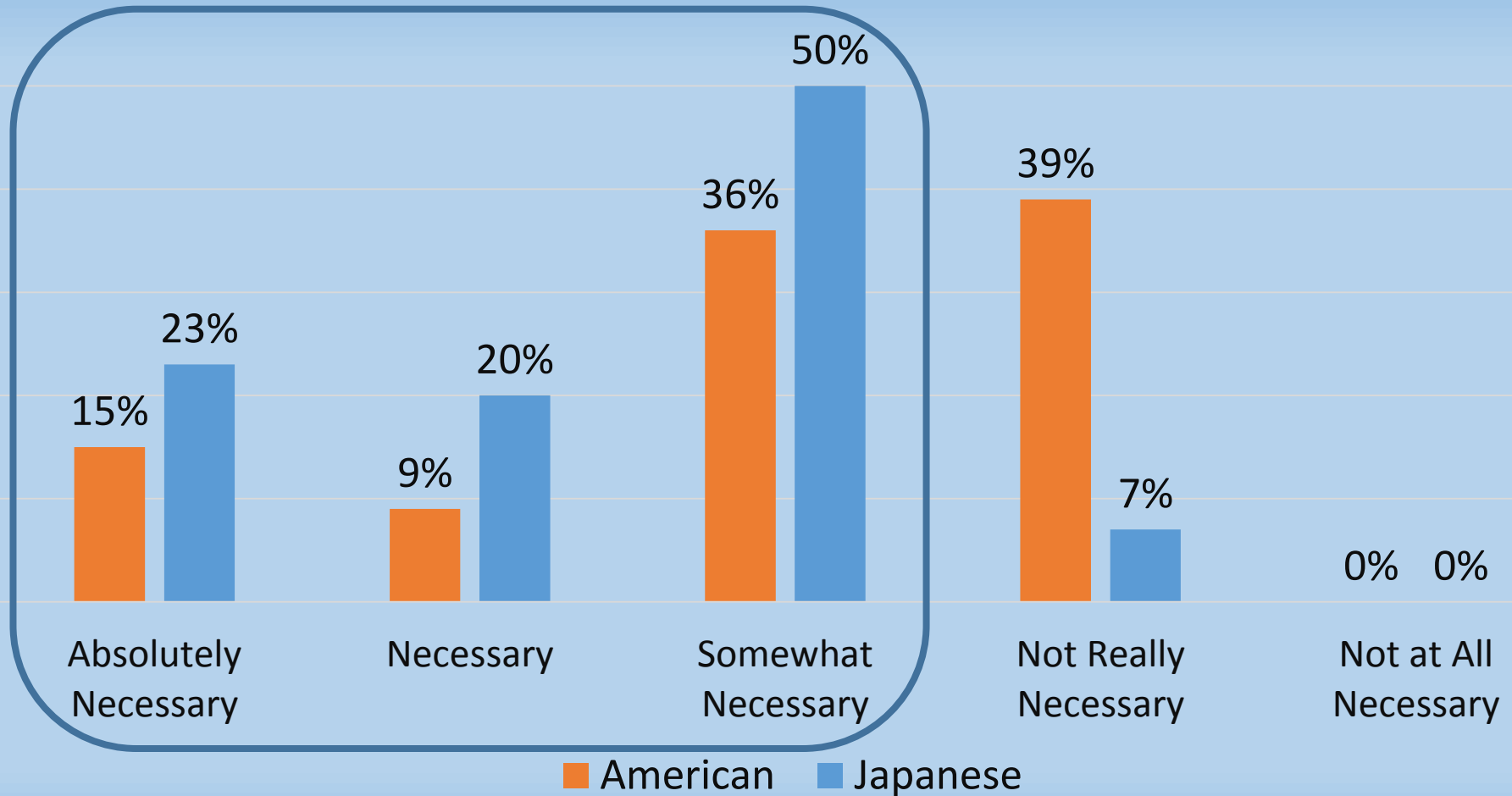
How happy or upset do you get in the following situations?

Japanese Students



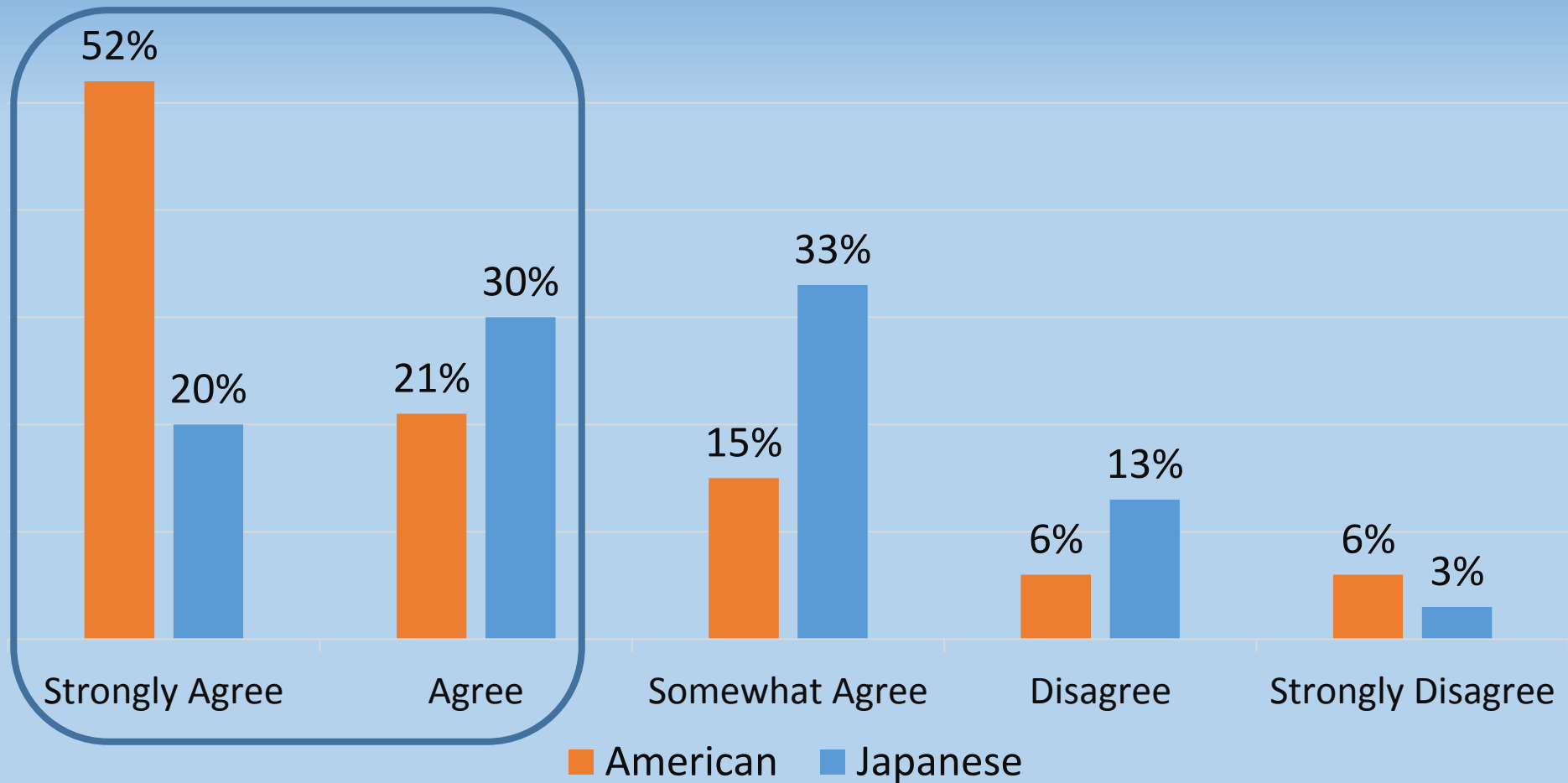
With exception to “Posting great comment and not receive likes”, in general Japanese students had more of a reaction towards the above situations over American students.

How necessary are social networks in your everyday life?



93% of Japanese university students thought there was at least some degree of necessity for SNS, while only 60% of Americans agreed.

"Our society, as a whole, has become far too reliant on SNS and we may have lost touch with interpersonal communication."



73% of American students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that our reliance on social media has caused us to lose our ability to connect interpersonally, while only 50% of Japanese students held the same sentiment.

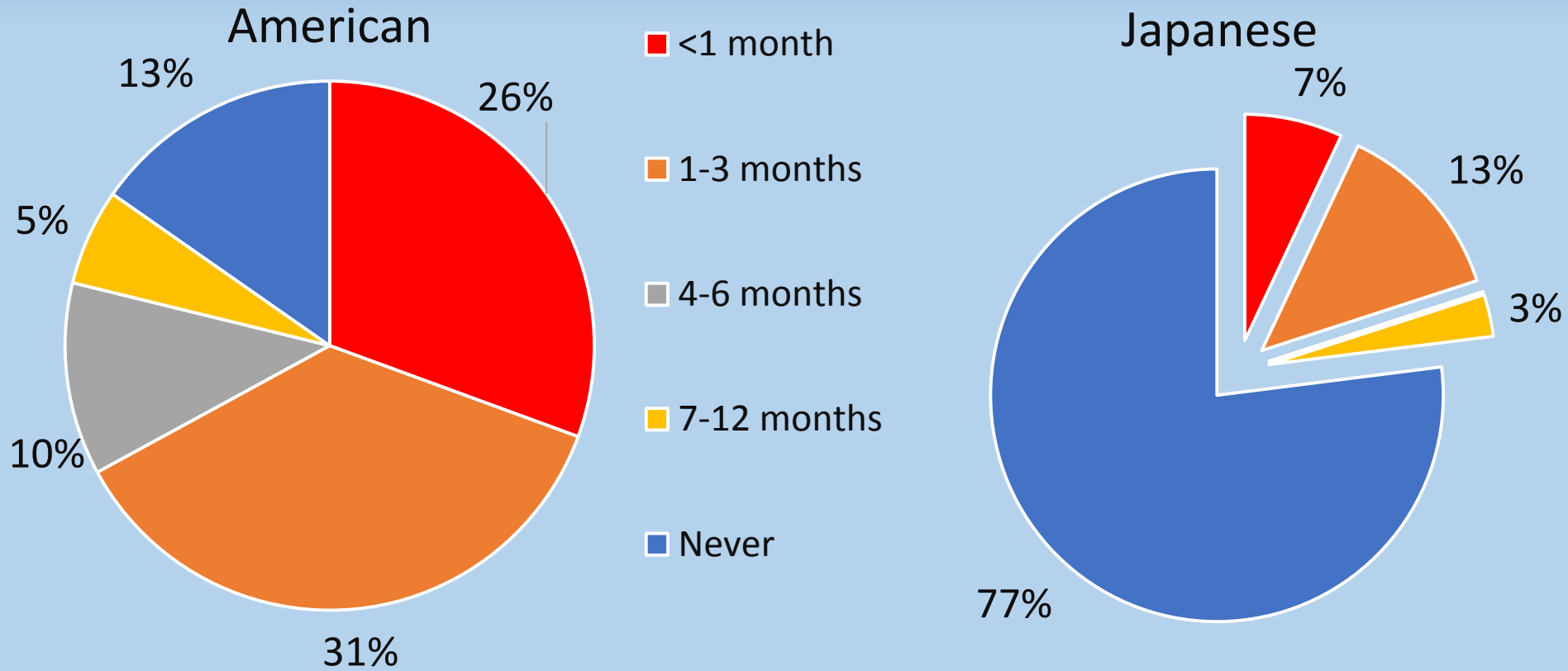
Summary of Research Question 1

- Japanese students use SNS for longer parts of the day and are more willing to post about a variety of topics.
- Japanese students seem to attach more emotion, whether negatively or positively, to what happens over social networks.
- Both groups agreed SNS has some degree of necessity for communication in our everyday lives, but American students are more willing to strongly agree that our reliance has sacrificed our ability to communicate interpersonally.

Research Question 2

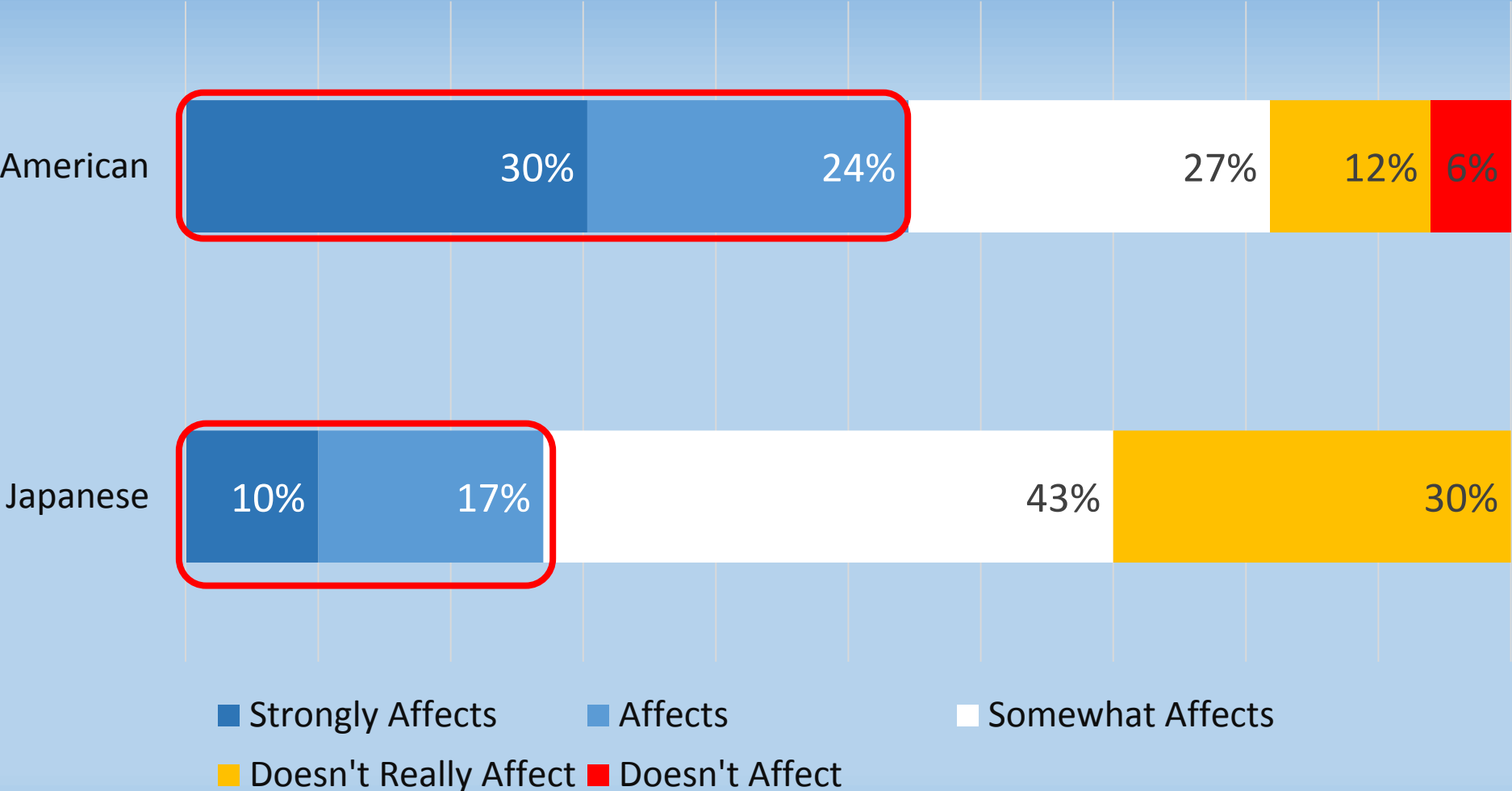
What is Considered Appropriate to Post onto Social Networks and Why?

When do you think it is appropriate to change your “relationship status” on SNS to indicate you have entered into a new relationship?



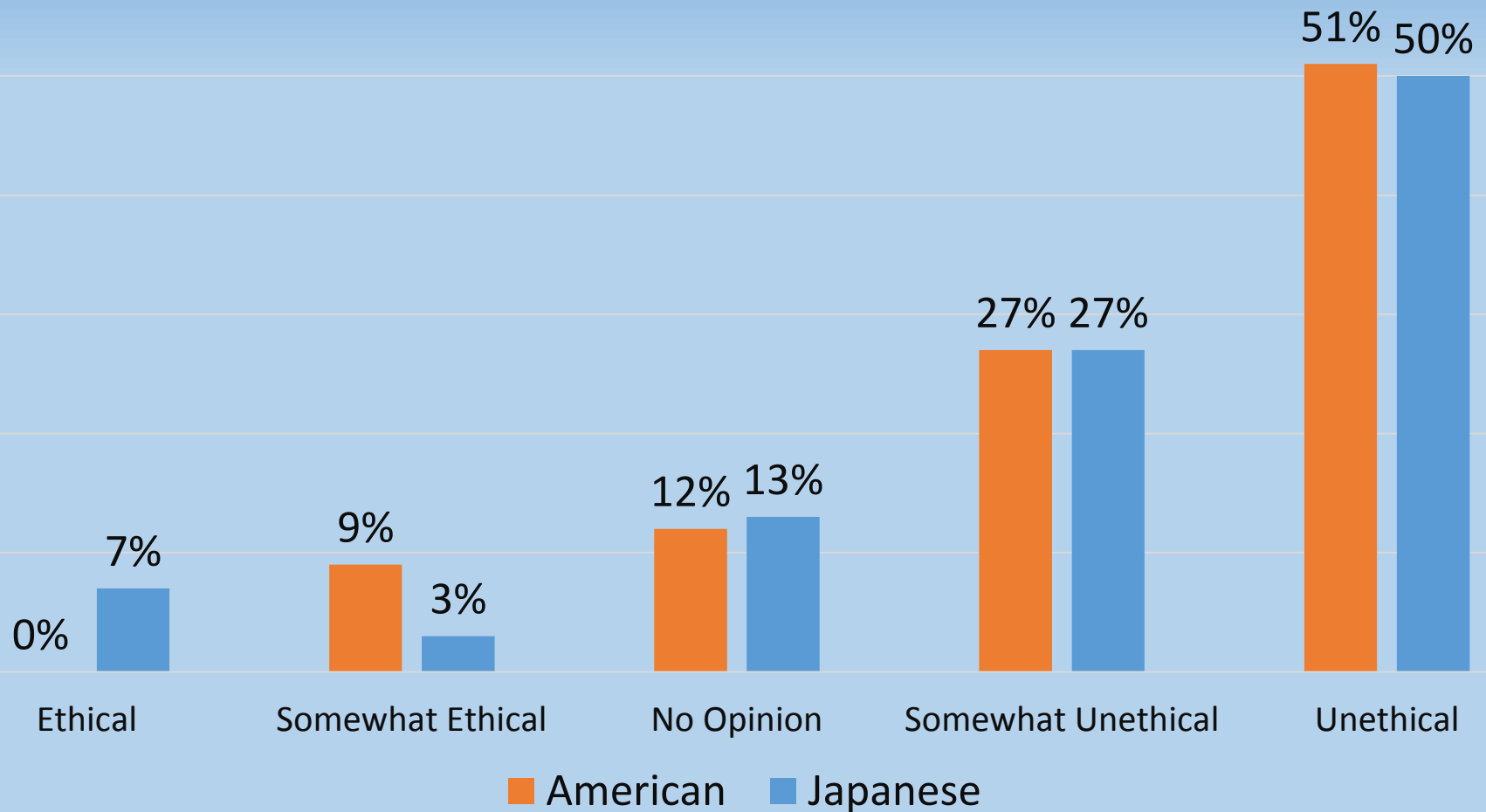
American students were varied in their answers with most students being willing to change their status within 3 months (57%), and a majority of Japanese students (77%) agreed it is not appropriate to “change your relationship status”.

How much do you think the content you post onto SNS will affect your chances of getting a job?



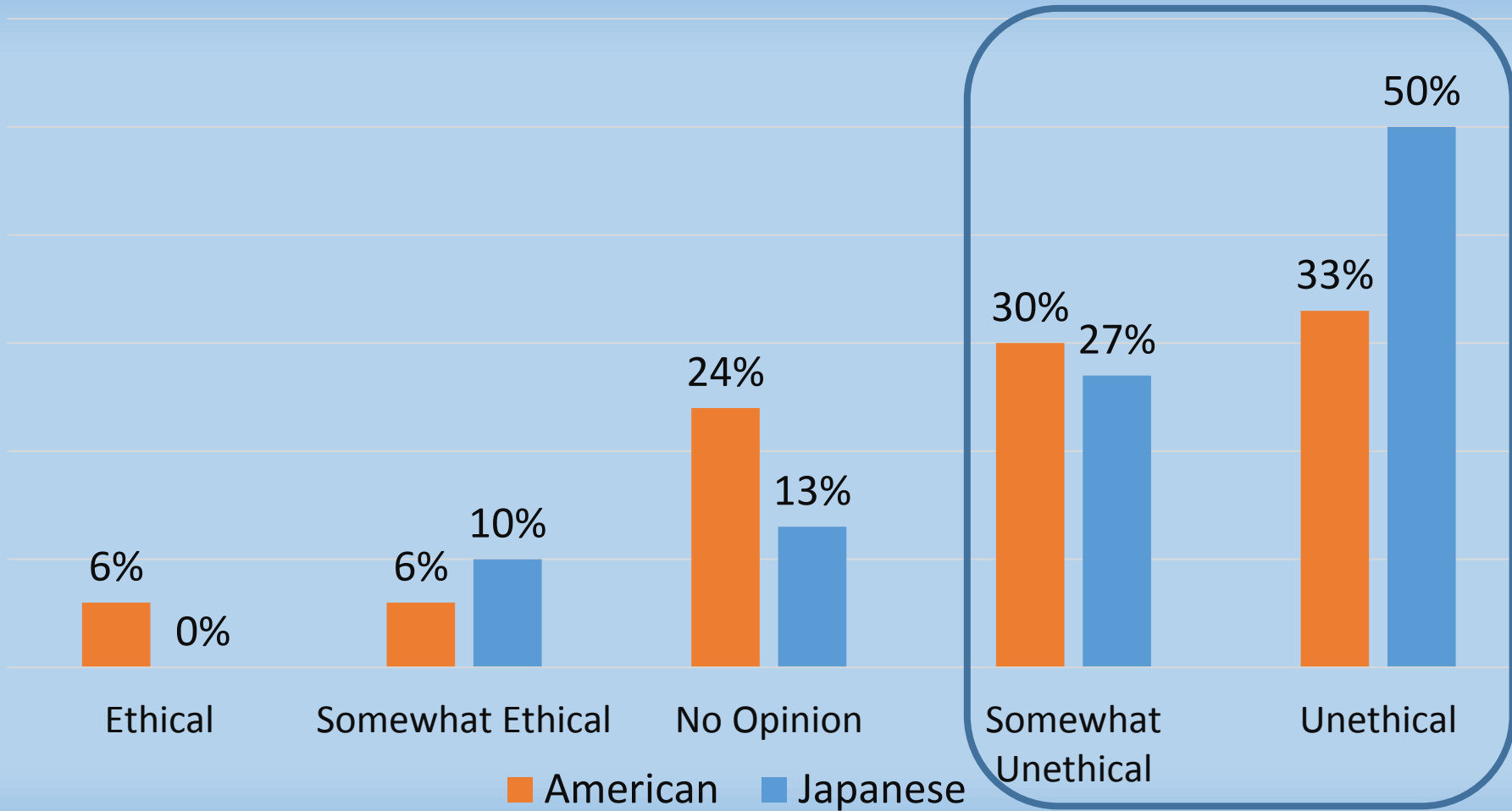
Only 27% percent of Japanese students think social media content has an affect on their job prospects. In comparison, two times as many (54%) Americans think so.

Someone posts a picture of you which may lead to personal or professional problems in your life without permission.



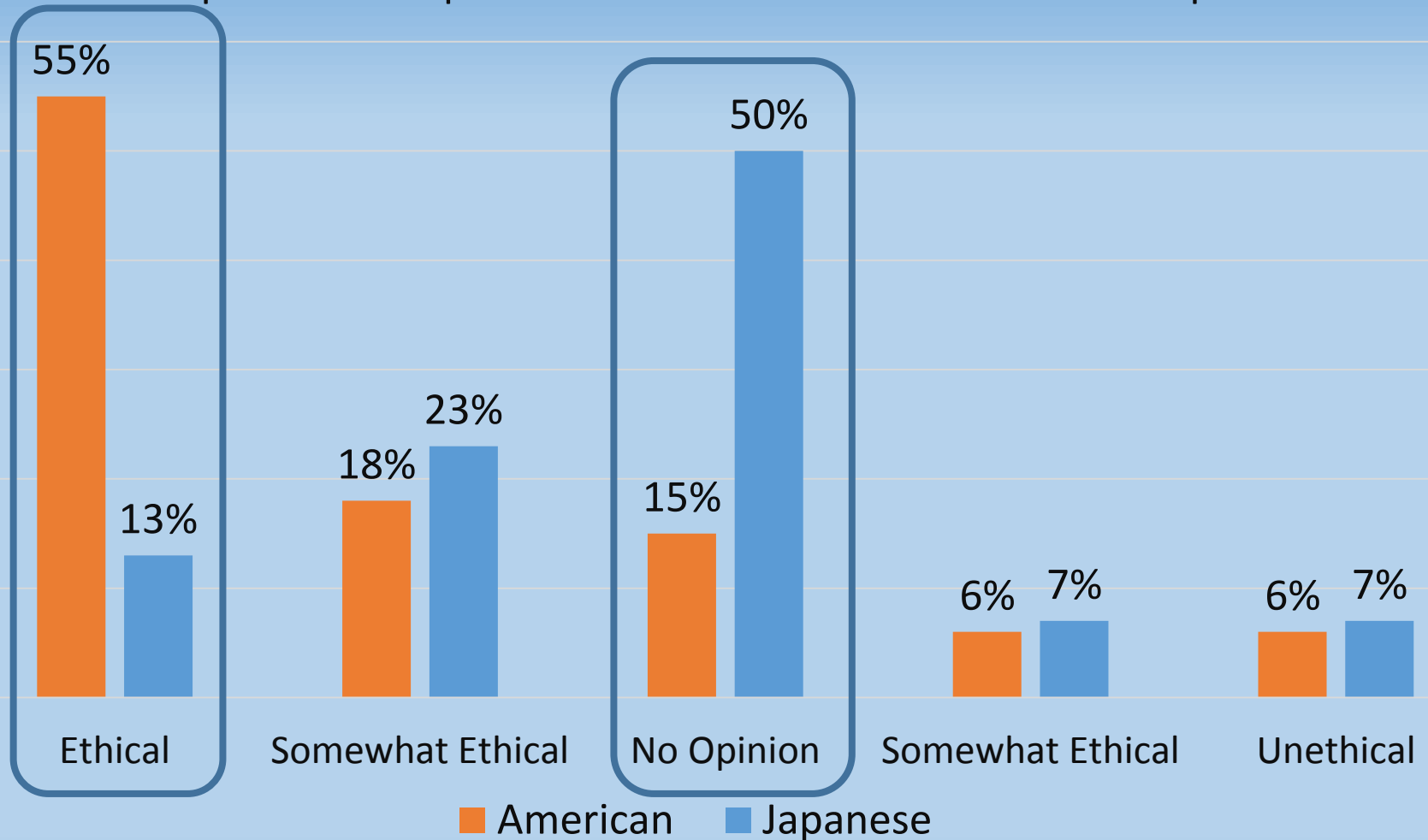
Both groups agreed for the most part that posting these types of pictures would be considered unethical.

Tom decides to write a negative post about his own family member or friend. Tom believes it is okay to do so because the person being criticized will not be able to see his post.



Japanese students said it was unethical more than American (77% vs 63%).

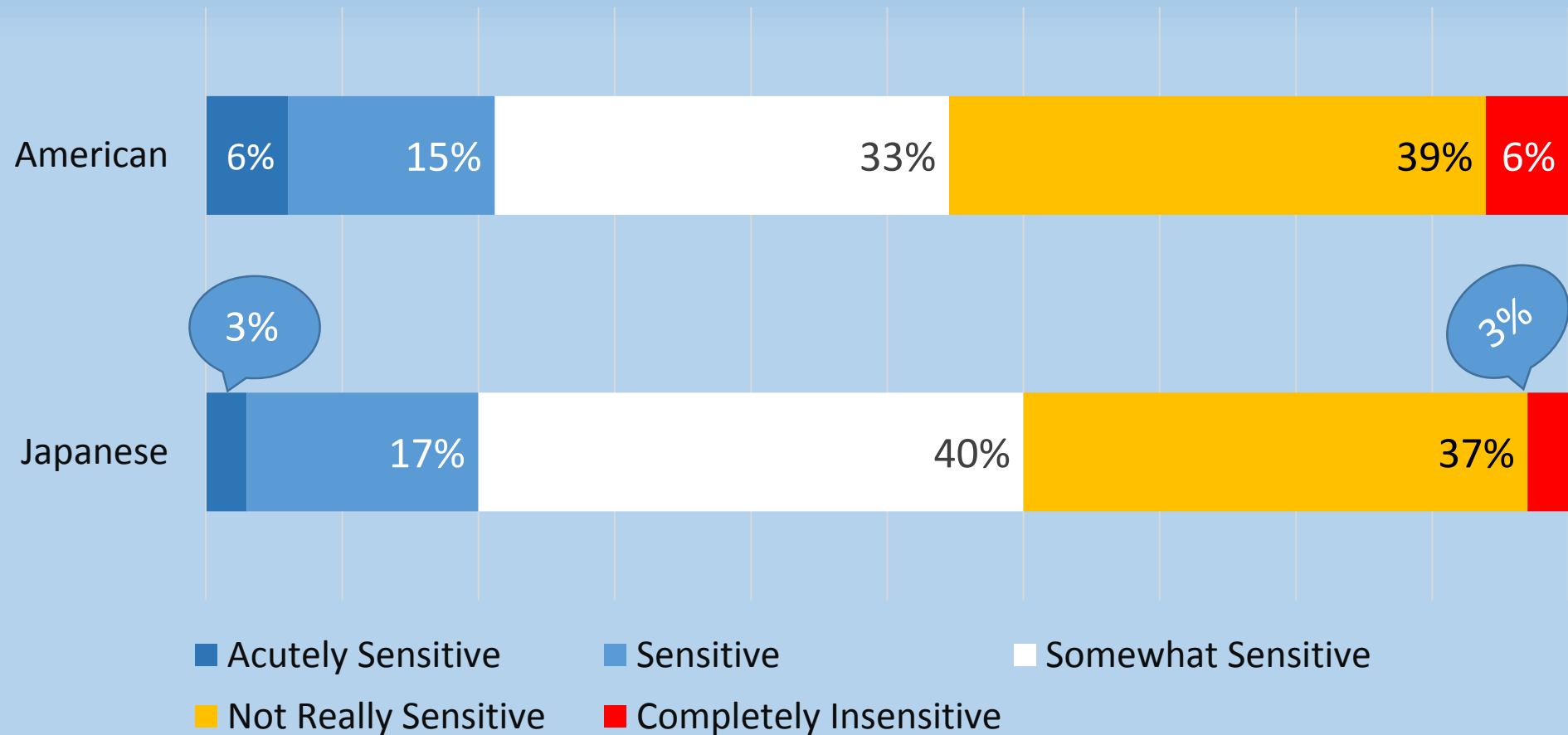
A person decides to take video of a politically charged protest which was stopped by the police. He then uploads the video to SNS adding his own political viewpoint which discusses the actions of the police.



Over half (55%) of American students believed it was ethical to post the video. On the other hand, exactly half of Japanese students had no opinion.

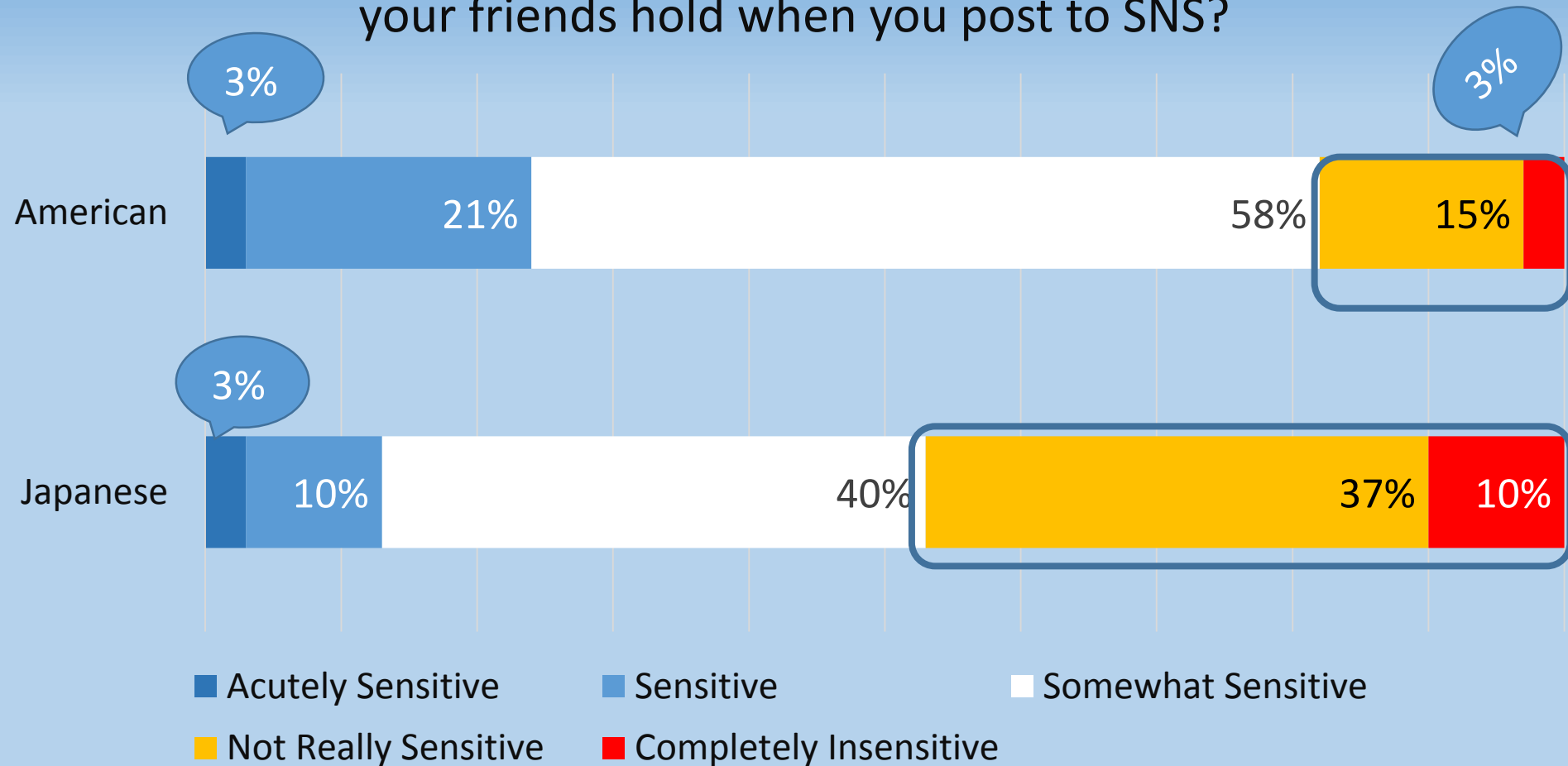
	Ethical 73% Americans 36% Japanese	No Opinion 15% Americans 50% Japanese	Unethical 12% Americans 14% Japanese
American	<p>Constitutional Right/"Free Speech" (10 Responses)</p>	<p>He has the freedom of speech and if he isn't causing a ruckus and is merely stating his opinions, that is fine. (4th Year)</p>	<p>If both sides are viewed properly then it would be ok. But just one's own usually is not valid without facts to support it. (4th Year)</p>
Japanese	<p>In this situation, the person posted as a citizen who thought the freedom of expression was enough, and from this post, it was difficult for this person to think of societal damage being caused. Therefore, in this situation you could say it was ethical. (3rd Year)</p>	<p>I don't know/I don't have any experience (8 responses)</p>	<p>It would release the information of those police. However, as both a police officer and public official, the reality is they must take responsibility for their actions. (4th Year)</p>

To what degree would you consider **YOUR PEERS** to be sensitive to the political, religious, and personal views their friends hold when they post to SNS?



Both groups thought their friends were aware to similar degrees.
(American 54% vs Japanese 60%)

To what degree would you consider **YOURSELF** to be sensitive to the political, religious, and personal views your friends hold when you post to SNS?



In comparison to how each group looked at their peers, American students thought of themselves as sensitive, with only 18% answering “Not Really” or “Completely Insensitive”. Almost half of Japanese respondents (47%) thought of themselves as insensitive.

Summary of Research Question 2

- American students overwhelmingly thought it was appropriate to post about their own change in relationship status, while Japanese students agreed to not post about it.
- American students are more willing to agree about the appropriateness of content on SNS having an effect on their chances of obtaining a job.
- Both American and Japanese students agreed on the ethics of picture posting and complaining via SNS. Political statements, however, was divisive. For Americans, the 1st Amendment was a common support for posting about politics. On the other hand, Japanese students for the most part did not really have an opinion.
- Japanese students considered themselves less sensitive to the views of their peers when they post onto SNS.

Conclusion

- Japanese students have had their communication affected to a greater degree than Americans by social networks
 - Spend more time using SNS
 - Will use SNS to communicate with peers and family more often
 - Allow for occurrences on SNS to have a greater emotional impact
- In an inverse proportion to the necessity of SNS, Japanese students also have a lesser degree of awareness to the potential damage the content they post can have, whether personally or professionally.
- Nonetheless, when presented with a hypothetical situation, both groups of students agree that ethically compromising statements and pictures which could damage reputation or cause potential harm should not be posted.

Limitations of Study/Future Studies

- Limitations of Study

- Only university students took my survey, so the results are limited.
- Also because there were only a few scenarios about ethics, it is hard to clearly understand how students feel about ethics on SNS.

- Future Studies

- To comprehend a societal viewpoint, I would like not only university students, but people from other generations to take my survey.

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Media Resources

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