

The Role of SNS in Society Today: Generations Y and Z's perspectives on Digital Communication

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Abstract

Social Networking Systems (SNS) have quickly grown into a popular method of communication and have directly impacted the way that people interact with each other. Generations Y (ages 27-40) and Z (ages 18-21) have been particularly influenced by the rapid evolution of technology in the past 20 years. Both generations have the most experience using SNS so the purpose of this research project was to discover how SNS affects Generations Y and Z's communication in both America and Japan. Through a survey administered to a broad age group, we investigated the question of what it is that defines the characteristics of both generations by how they use SNS. We found that in America, Generation Z is more dependent upon SNS in their daily life than Generation Y. In Japan, we found that Generation Y and Z use SNS less than we anticipated and use it for personal affairs as opposed to entertainment. In addition to that, when it comes to personal affairs, Generation Z is more comfortable with using SNS to do things such as form relationships and ask people out on dates. The data revealed that Generation Y and Z in America value SNS more than Generation Y and Z in Japan. The data further reveals that SNS has had a significant impact on communication, changing the way that people view communication in general and giving them other means of expressing themselves.

1. Significance of the Study

I realized the generation gap when I received a message from my younger siblings and had no clue what they were talking about. Also, SNS helps us communicate with a variety of people comfortably regardless of the social standing. Through this study, I as a generation Y, would like to find out what characteristics of SNS distinguish between generations.

2. Research Questions

1. How does SNS play a role in the communication skills of Generation Y and Z?
2. What values regarding SNS identify Generations Y and Z?

3. Research Background

3.1 Definition of Generation Y and Z

According to Dimmock, Gen Y or "Millennials" is the term used to describe those who were born between the years 1981-1996. Gen Z is the term that is used to describe those who were born between the years 1997-2012. Research has shown that the space between where Gen Y and

Z end is difficult to pinpoint.

3.2 Definition of SNS

“Social networking sites (systems, services, softwares) (SNSs) are virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends, and meet other people based on shared interests.”

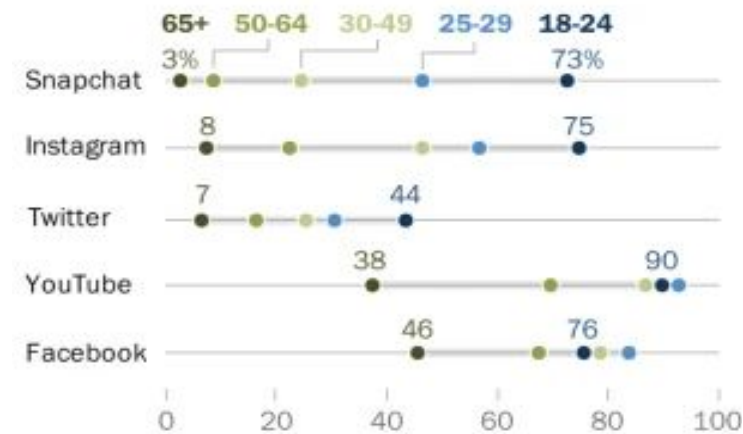
(Griffiths, et al., 2014)

3.3 SNS Usage

In America, texting and email were still a very strong outlet amongst all ages with a rate of 97% and 88% respectively, but SNS is becoming a major interest by the younger generation (18-29). The younger generation’s ability to take advantage of using SNS is what creates the gap past the 30 and over age range. While in Japan, Mobile mail was eventually replaced by SNS (particularly LINE) 52% of young Japanese in their 20s use LINE for small talk with friends, 23.5% use electronic mail, and 8.6% use other SNSs, such as Facebook and Twitter. Facebook was used more for close friends in a closed network compared to its use in the US. (Ishi, 2017)

Snapchat and Instagram are especially popular among 18- to 24-year-olds

% of U.S. adults in each age group who say they ever use ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8-Feb. 7, 2019.

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SNS developed within the last 10 years is more popular with Gen Z than Y. Gen Y is more

comfortable with older forms of SNS (Facebook, Youtube, etc) (Perrin and Anderson 2019).

In the United States, Gen Y reached adulthood during the computer revolution while Gen Z was born and had access to a variety of SNS (Dimmock, 2019). While in Japan, SNS creates a variety of communications to connect with people in a digital world, although it isn't real and it can negatively affect its users (Naruse, 2012).

4. Impact of SNS on Communication

According to Boase and Kobayashi, Young people in Japan use SNS to form new relationships whereas adults will use SNS to remain in contact with the people they see daily. In America, SNS is used to communicate with people they have no personal ties with. In addition, in America, companies found that young people are good at using technology. On the other hand, over 50% lacked critical thinking/problem solving and written communication skills. 36% lacked teamwork/collaboration skills and oral communication skills (Kick, et al., 2015). Masaki wrote that Japanese have positive views toward SNS because it is accessible everywhere and conversations can be shallow yet convenient. However, 69% have a hard time expressing their feelings and 63% worry about their personal information being abused.

5. Research Method

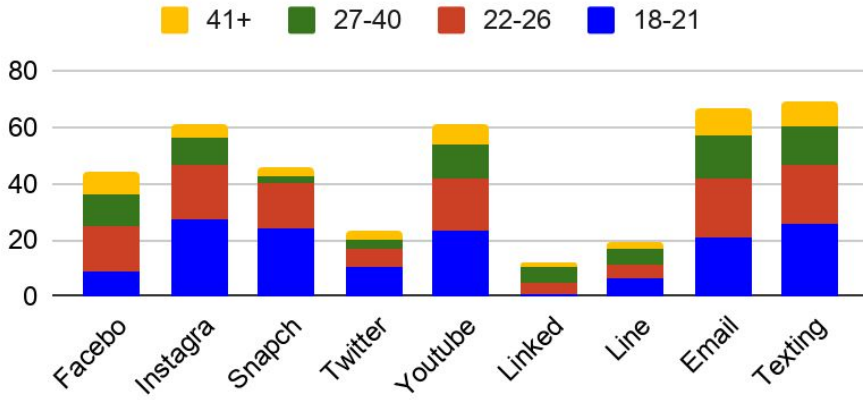
In this survey, we surveyed a total 164 people, 82 Japanese and 82 American. Of those, more than 50% of the respondents identified as female and were students pursuing their undergraduate degree. We administered our survey through google forms in both Japanese and English.

6. Research Findings

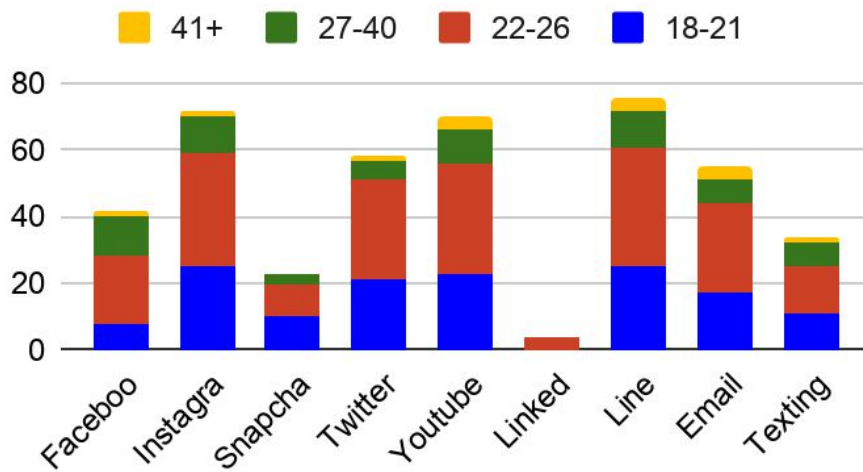
6.1 Research Question 1: How does SNS play a role in the communication skills of Generation Y and Z?

What Social Networking Systems (SNS) platforms do you regularly use?

America

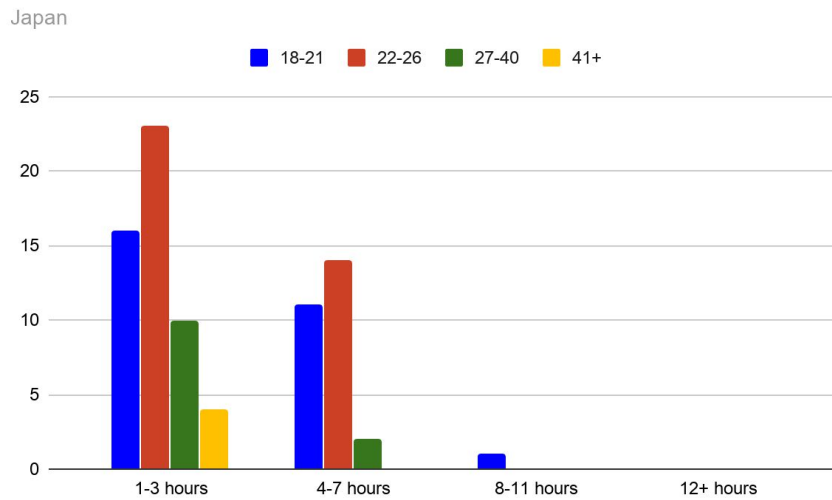
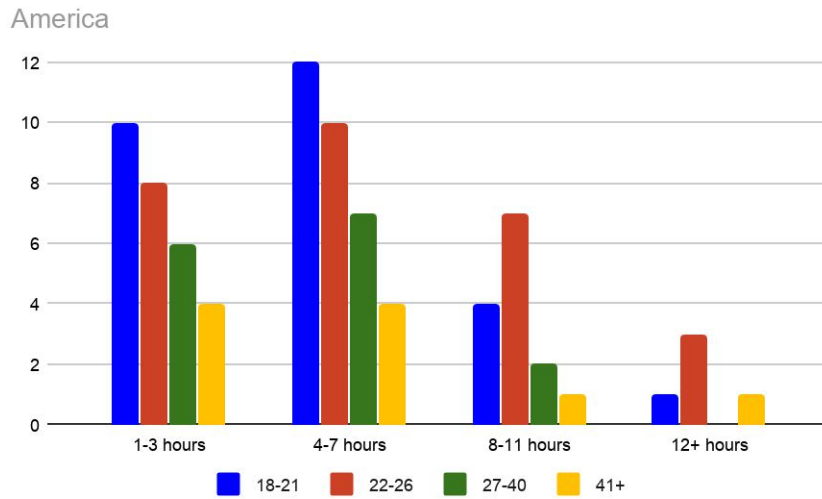


Japan



Texting and Email are the most regularly used forms of SNS with Americans while Japanese use Instagram and Line the most.

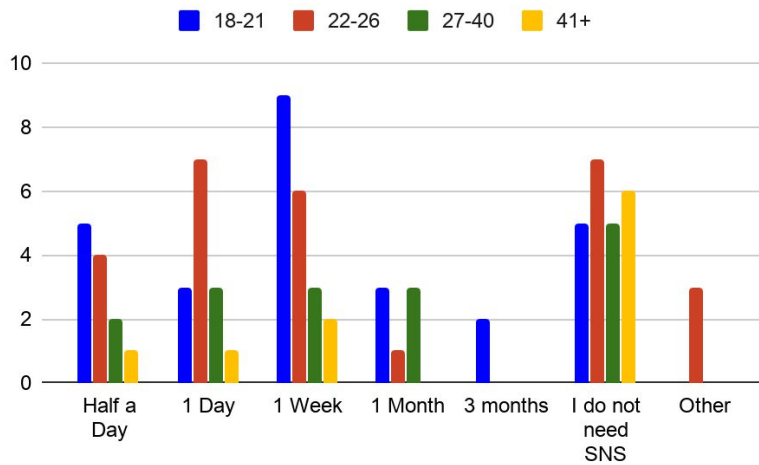
How frequently do you use SNS per day?



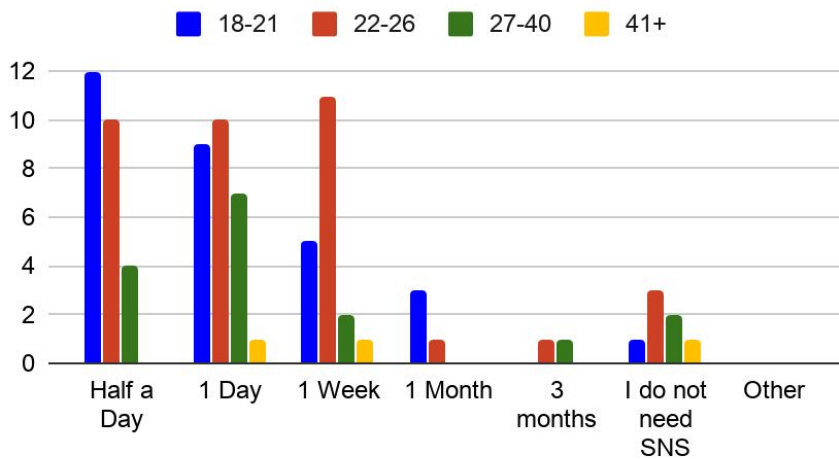
Mainly Gen Y and Z in America use SNS 4-7 hours while Gen Y and Z in Japan use SNS 1-3 hours.

How long could you live without it?

America

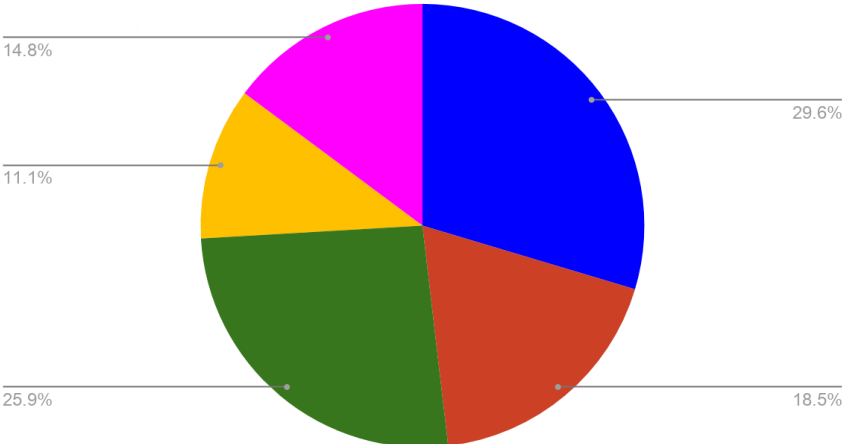
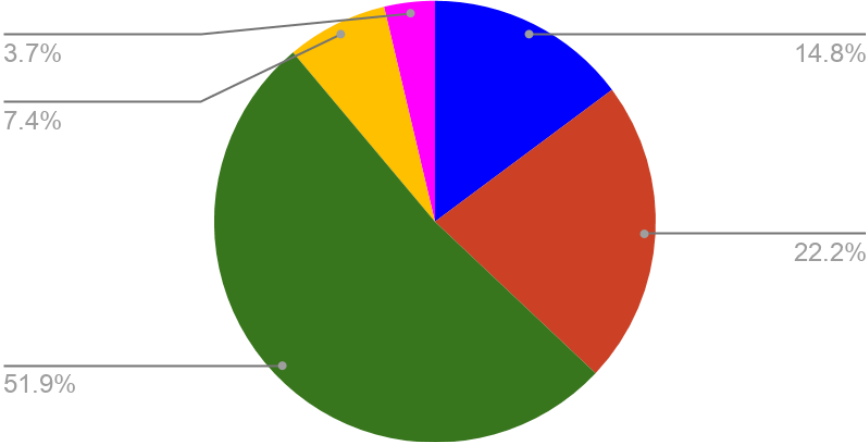


Japan



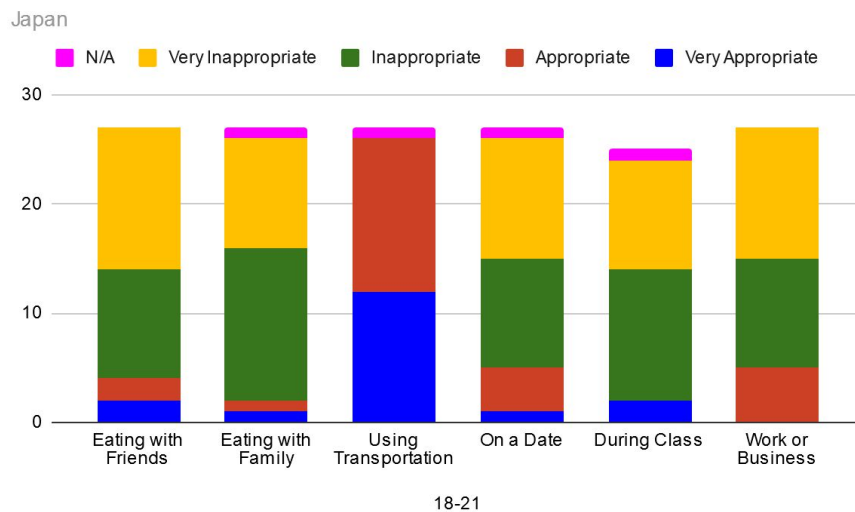
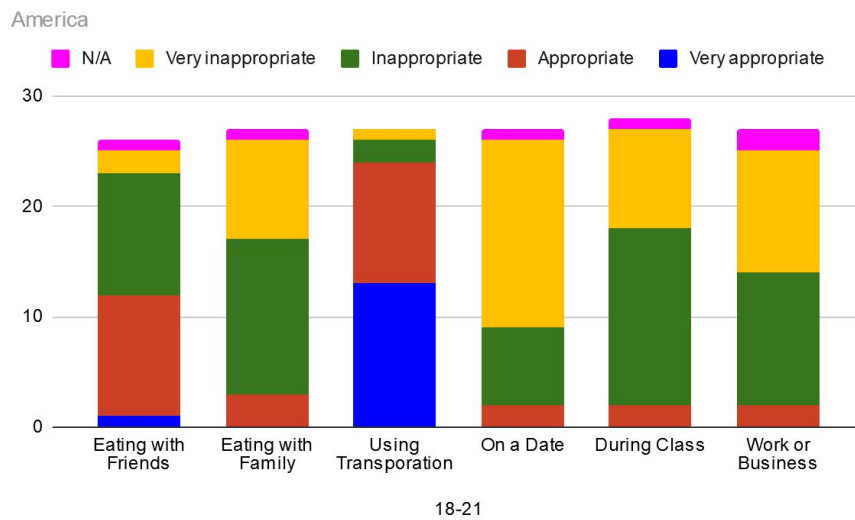
The majority of Gen Y and Z in America can live without SNS longer than a week while in Japan they cannot live without SNS for 1 Day.

One function of SNS is that messages and stories are deleted automatically after 24 hours. How appealing is this to you?



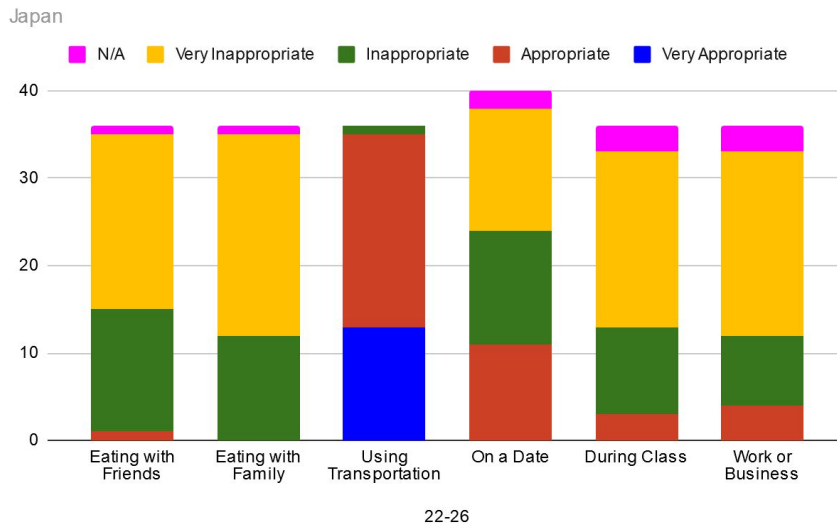
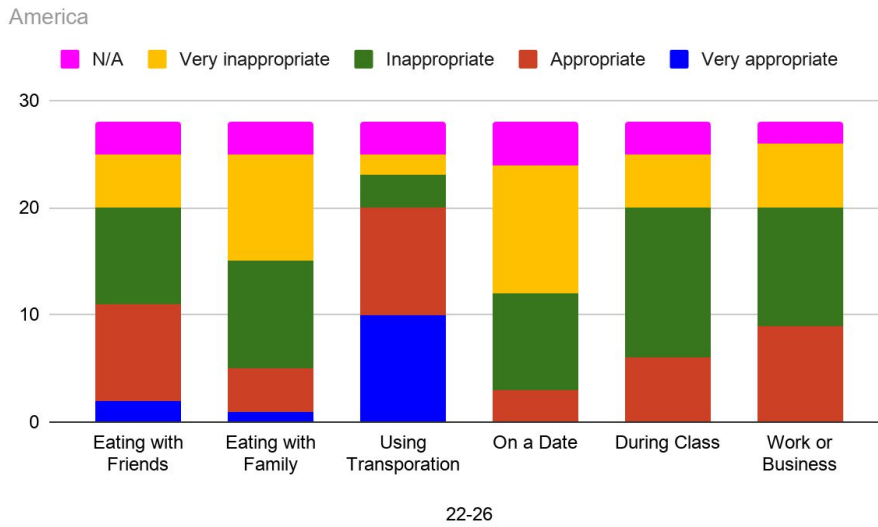
Majority of Americans have a neutral position while this function of SNS appeals to about 48% of Japanese.

In what situations do you believe it is appropriate to use SNS? Gen Z



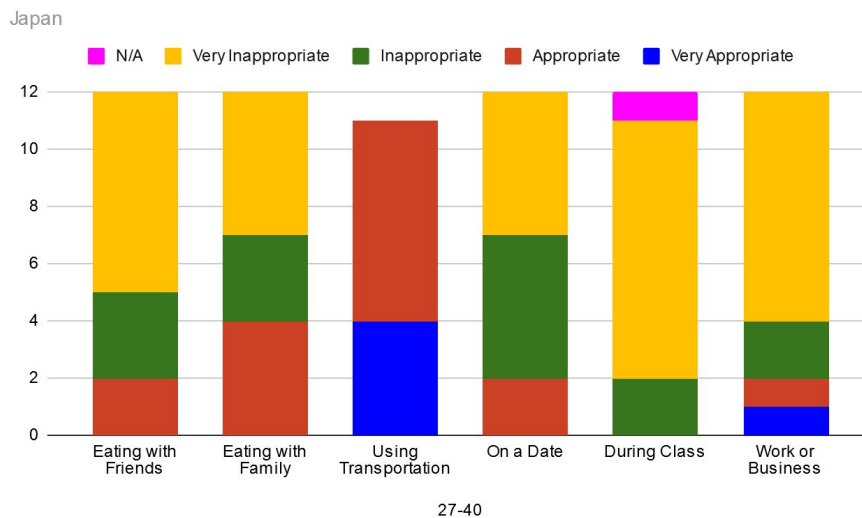
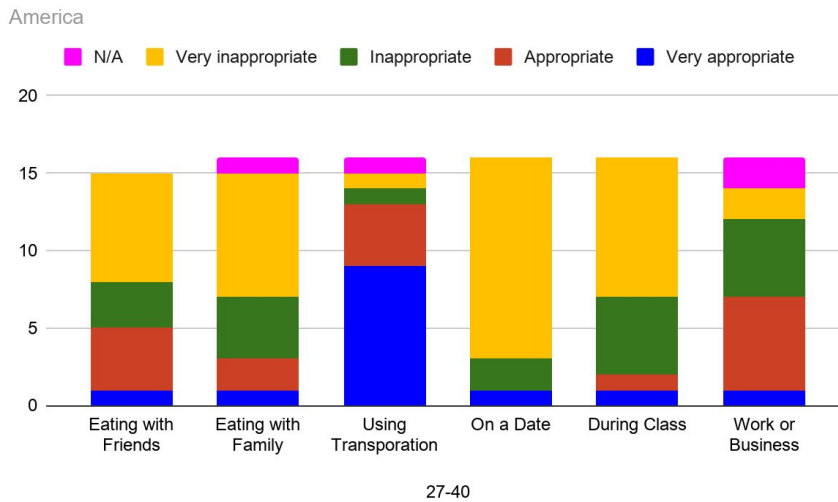
About 50% of Gen Z in America said it is appropriate to use SNS while eating with friends as opposed to less than 10% of those in Japan.

In what situations do you believe it is appropriate to use SNS:
22-26



The age group 22-26, about 50% in America said it is appropriate to use SNS while eating with friends and in Japan less than 5% said the same.

In what situations do you believe it is appropriate to use SNS: Gen Y



About 50% of Gen Y in America said it is appropriate to use SNS for work or business opposed to 17% in Japan.

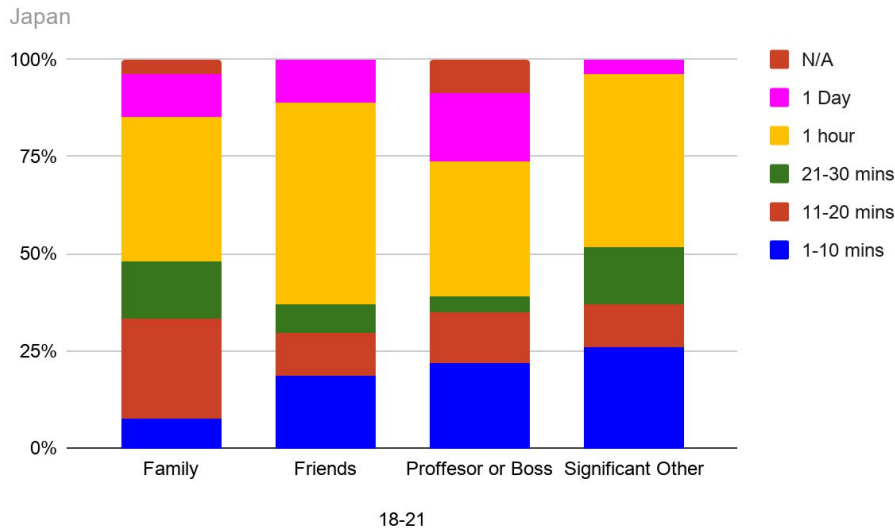
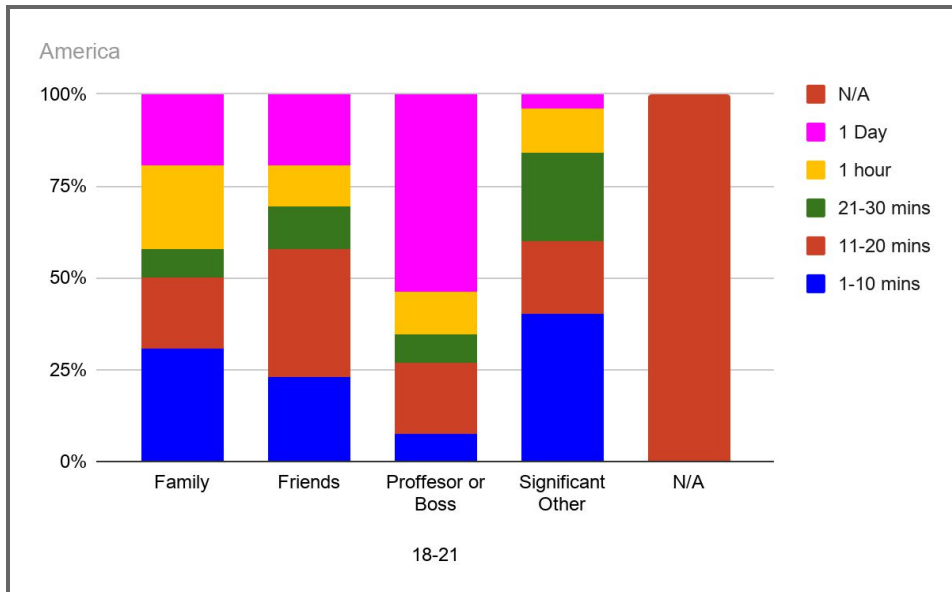
5.2 Summary of Research Findings for Research Question 1

Gen Z in America uses SNS more frequently than those in Japan, even though the function of stories disappearing appeals more to Japanese than it does Americans. SNS is not as important to daily life in America as it is in Japan. Gen Y and Z in America believe it is appropriate to use SNS while eating with friends while in Japan they do not. Gen Y in America thinks it appropriate to use SNS for work or business while in Japan they do not. The age group 22-26 displayed opinions mirroring Gen Z in regards to appropriateness of using SNS and frequency of SNS

usage.

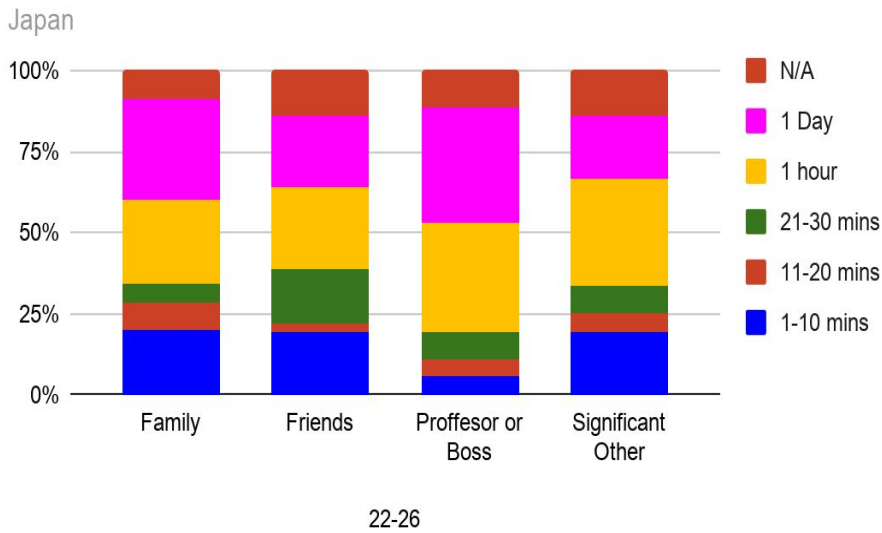
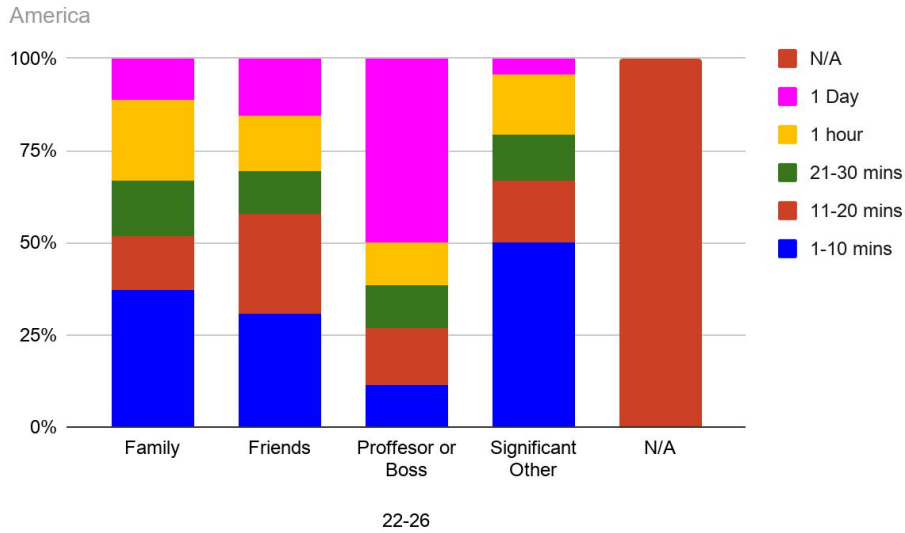
5.3 Research Question 2: What values regarding SNS identify Generations Y and Z?

How quickly do you expect someone to reply to a message you sent them through SNS? Gen Z



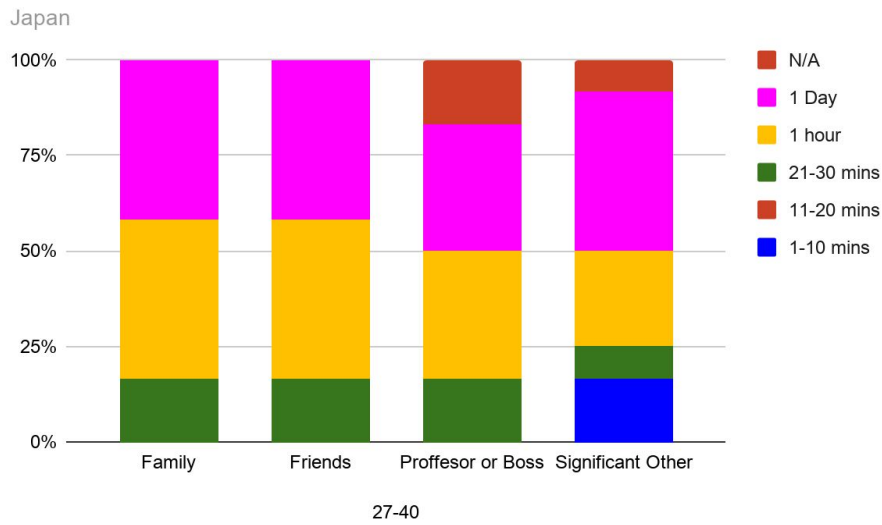
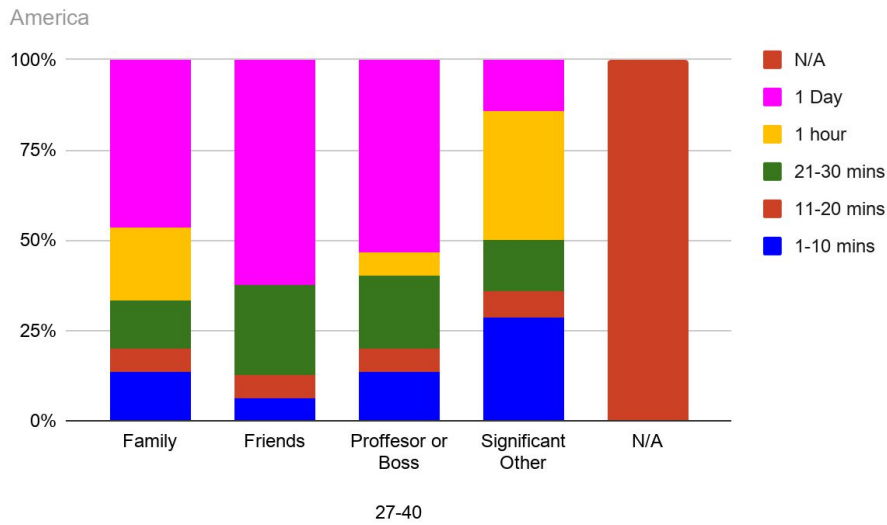
The majority of Gen Z in America expects an answer within 20 minutes while in Japan the majority expects an answer within 1 hour.

How quickly do you expect someone to reply to a message you sent them through SNS? 22-26



More than 50% in America expect an answer within 10 minutes while in Japan more than 50% expect an answer within 1 hour.

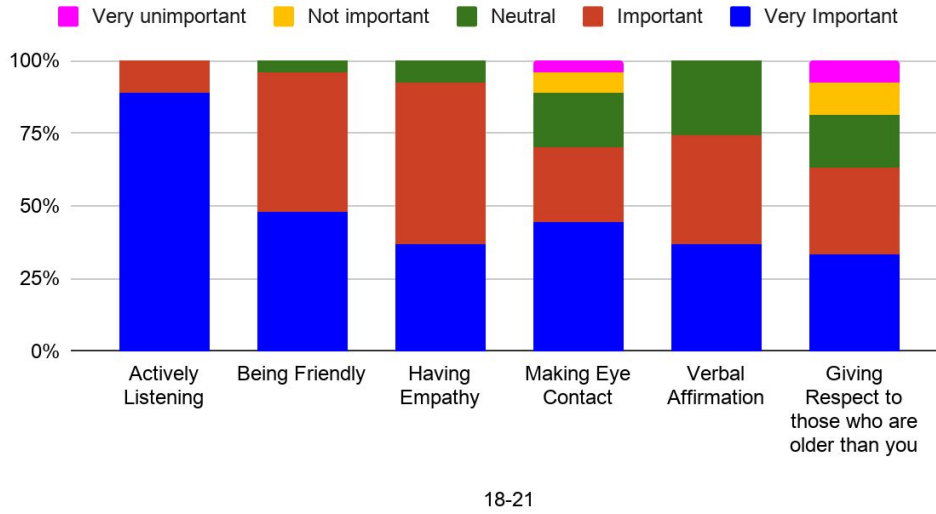
How quickly do you expect someone to reply to a message you sent them through SNS? Gen Y



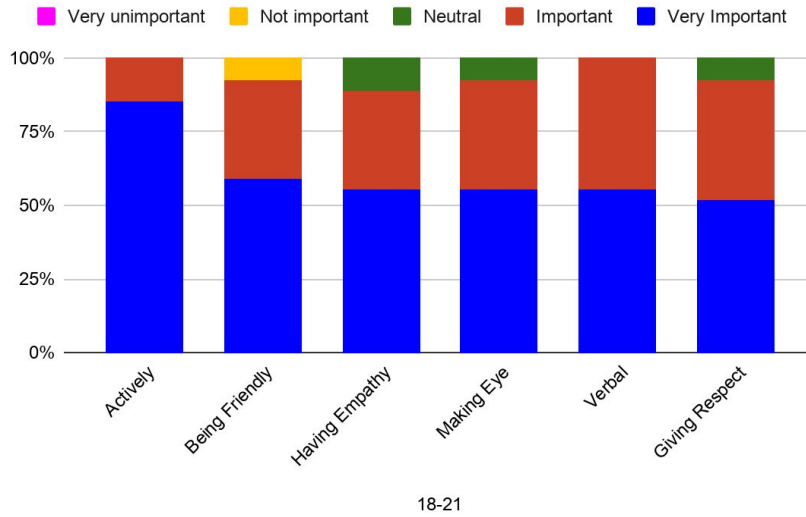
The majority of Gen Y in America and Japan expect a response within 1 day.

How important are the following basic communication skills when talking with people? Gen Z

America

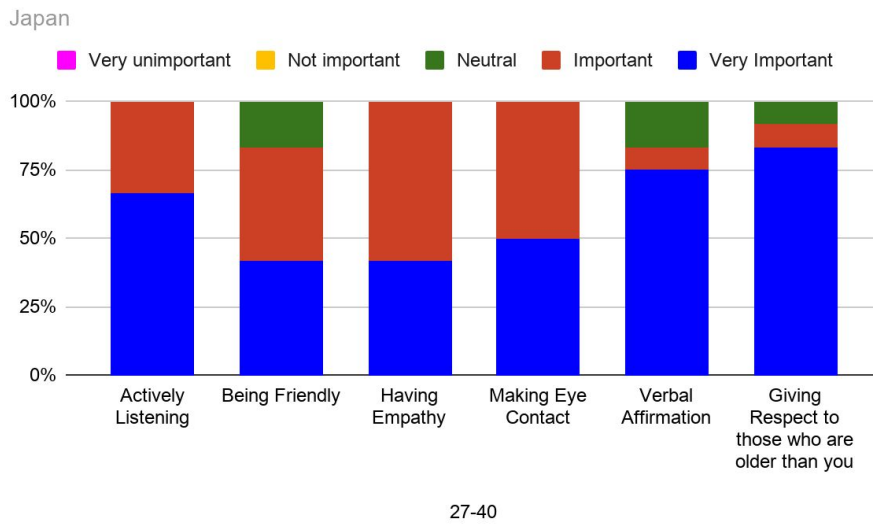
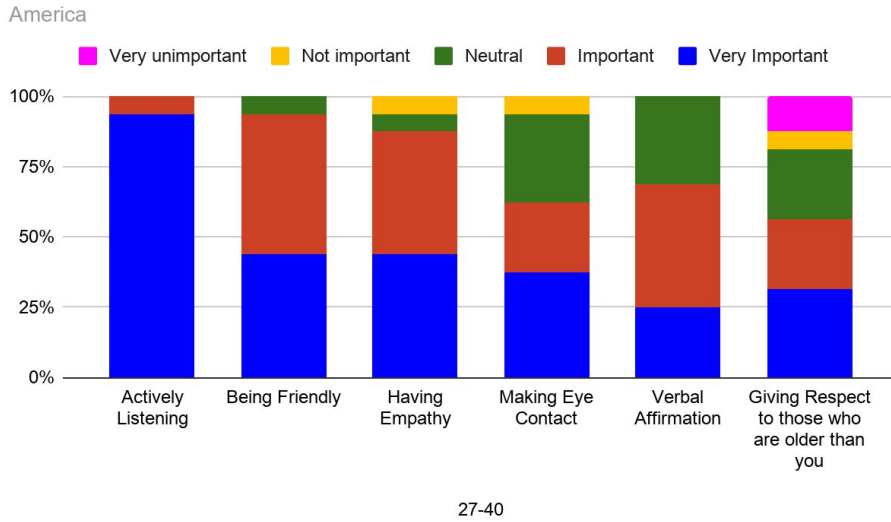


Japan



Over 50% of Gen Z in Japan said these skills are very important opposed to less than 50% in America except actively listening.

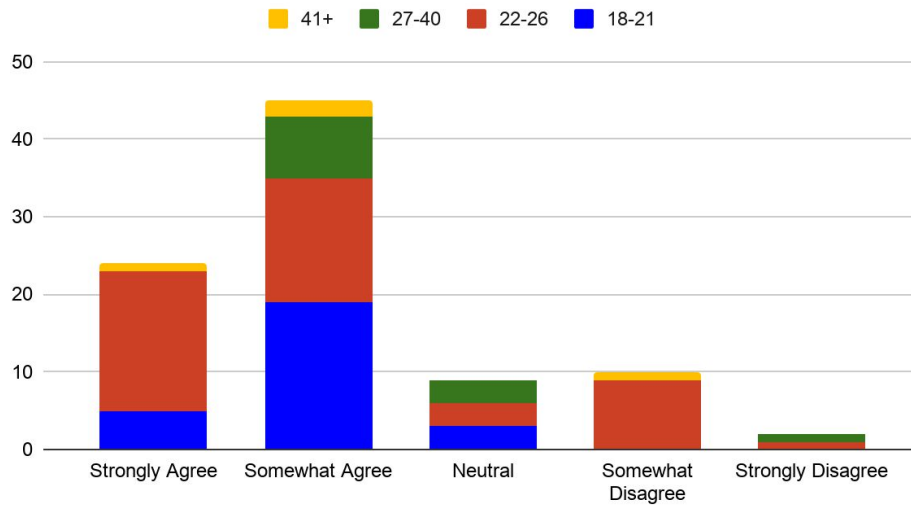
How important are the following basic communication skills when talking with people? Gen Y



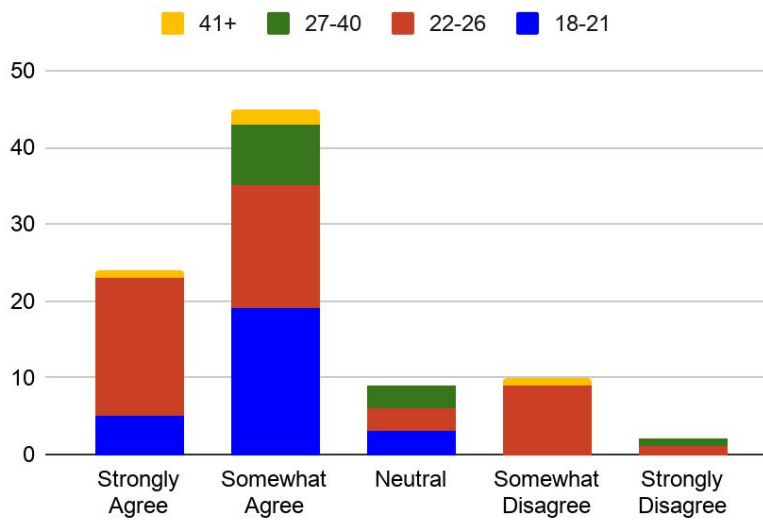
About 33% of Gen Y in America said giving respect to those older than you is very important opposed to 83% in Japan.

Do you agree that the basic communication skills are deteriorating because of SNS?

America

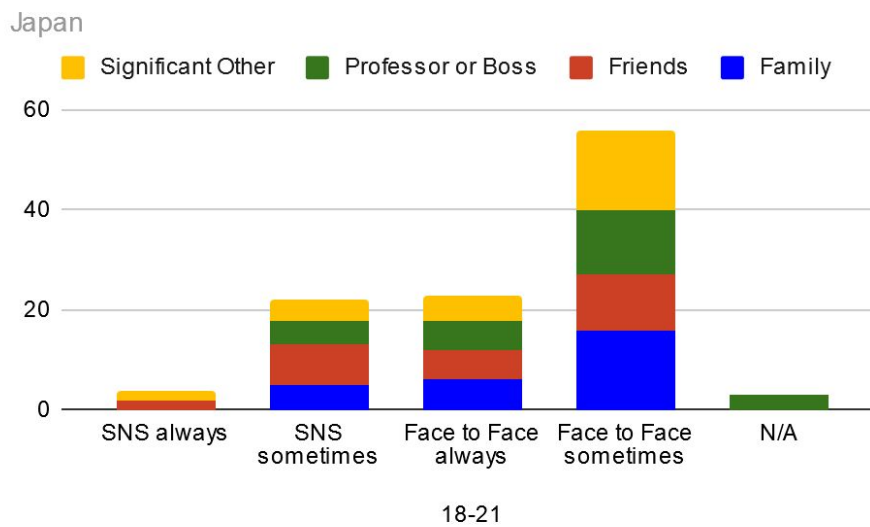
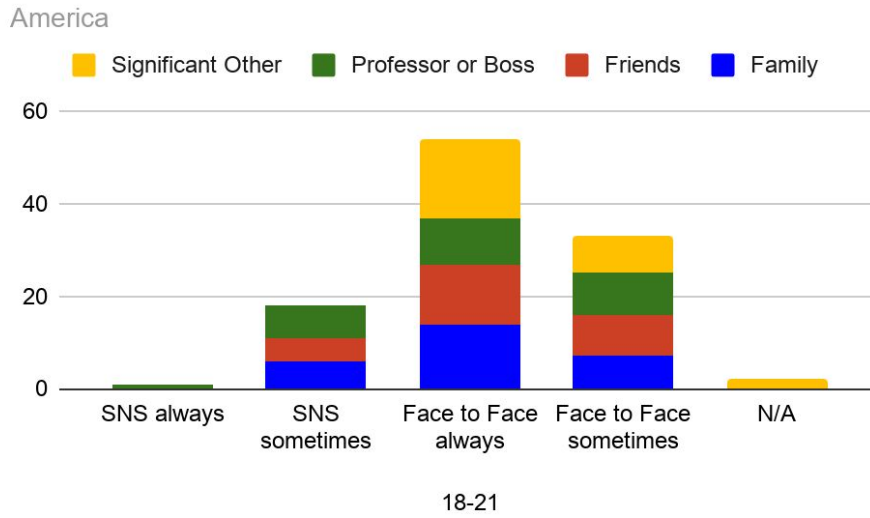


Japan



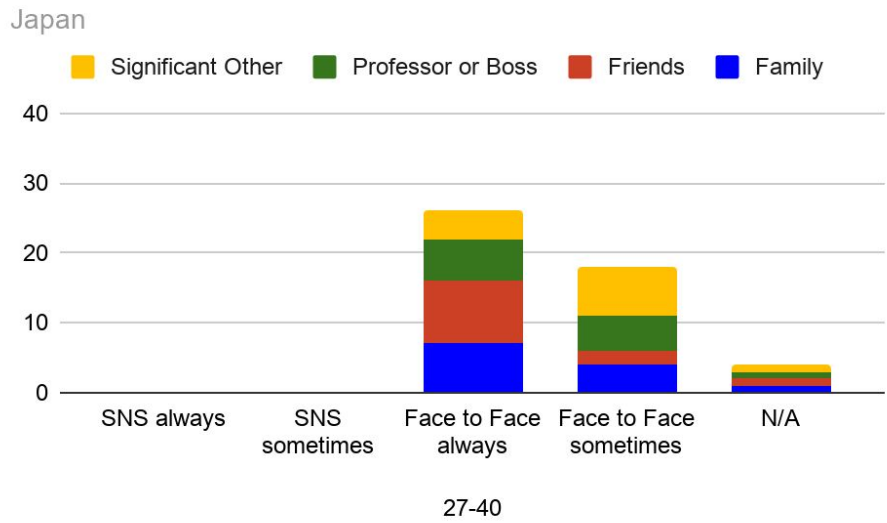
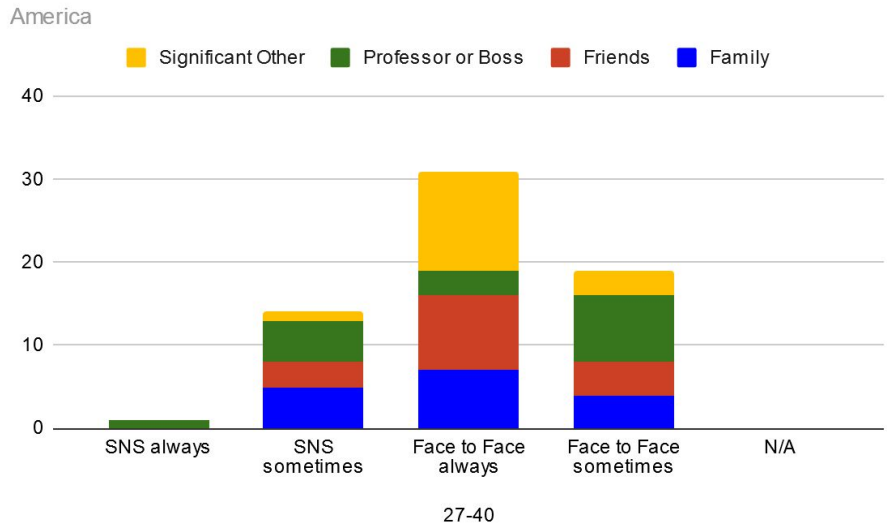
The majority of Gen Y and Z in America and Japan agree with this statement.

Would you prefer face to face or SNS contact with the following people: Gen Z



The majority of Gen Z in America always prefers to have Face to Face contact while less than 25% said the same in Japan.

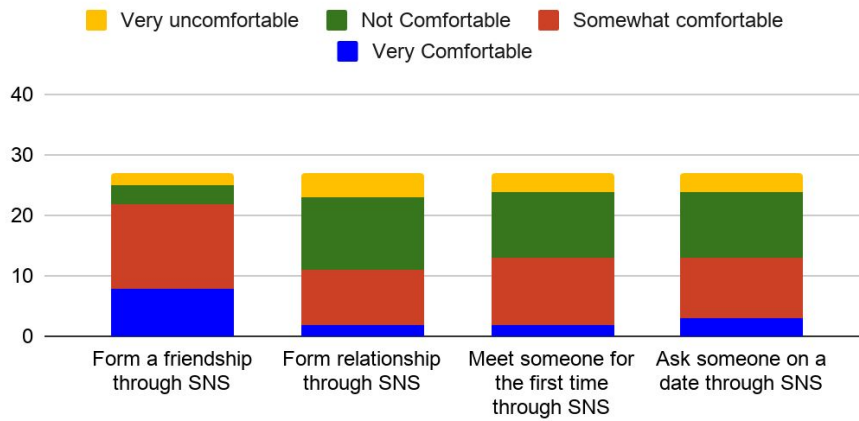
Would you prefer face to face or SNS contact with the following people: Gen Y



About 50% of Gen Y in America prefers SNS contact opposed to all of those in Japan who prefer face to face contact.

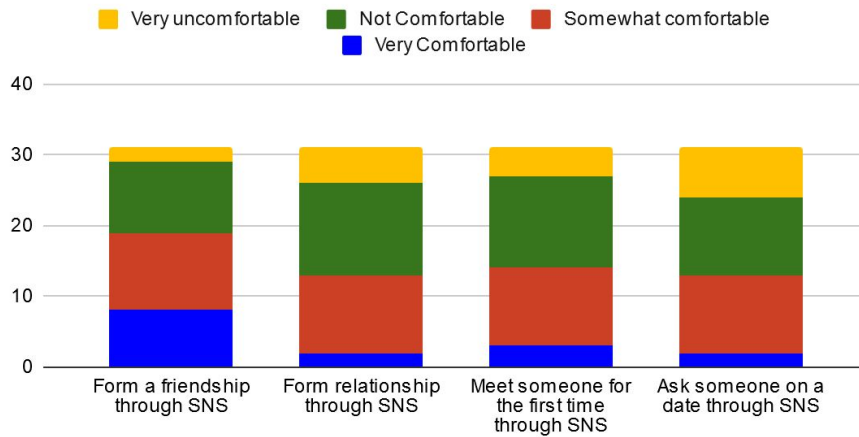
How comfortable are you with the following situations: Gen Z

America



18-21

Japan

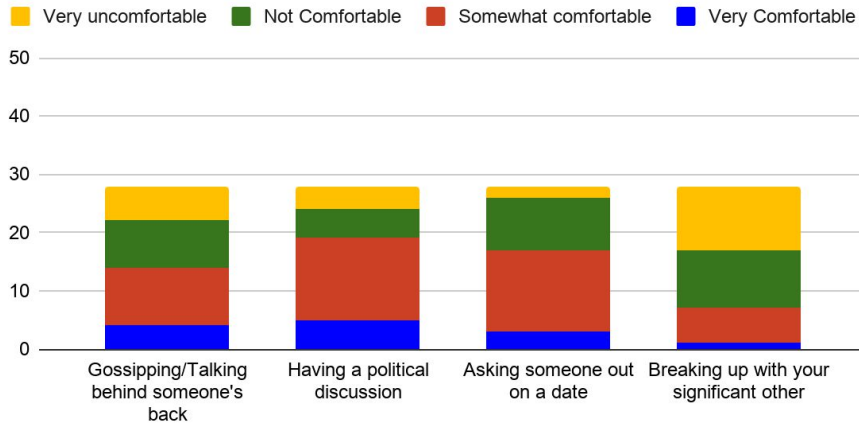


18-21

More than 80% of Gen Z in America is comfortable with forming friendship through SNS while a little more than 50% in Japan is comfortable doing the same.

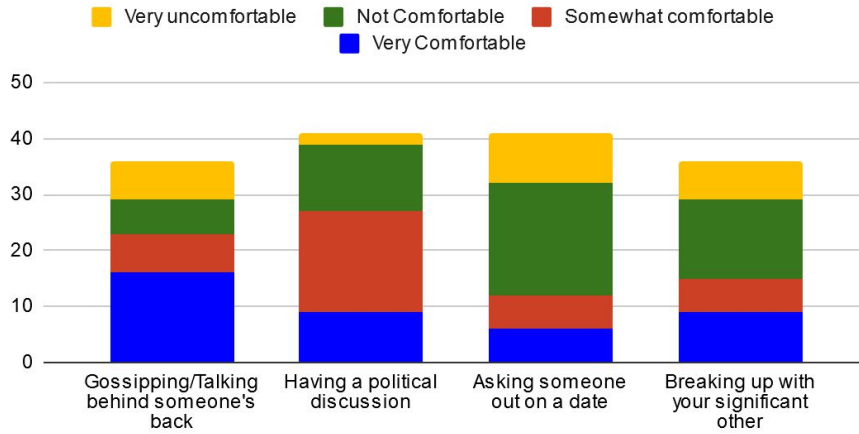
How comfortable are you with using SNS for the following situations: 22-26

America



22-26

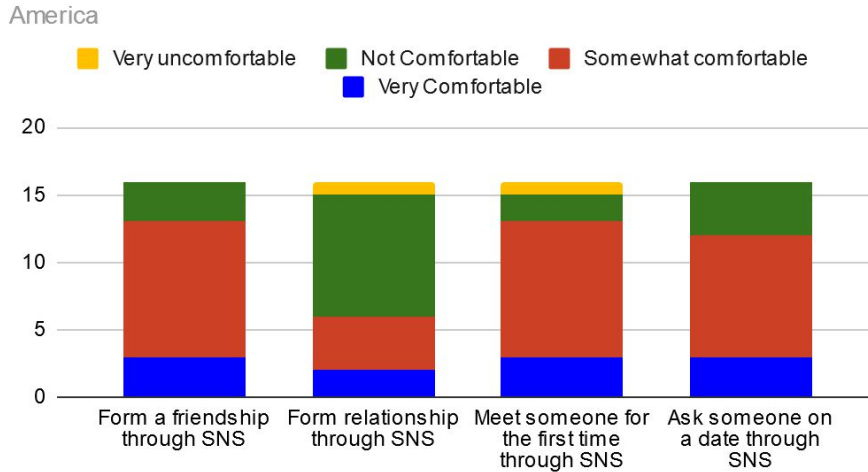
Japan



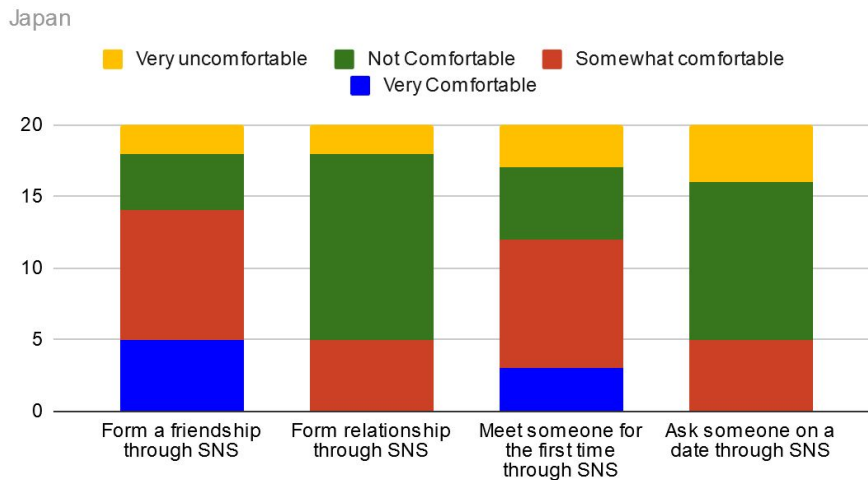
22-26

The majority of the age group 22-26 in America is comfortable using SNS to ask someone on a date while less than 20% in Japan are comfortable doing the same.

How comfortable are you with the following situations: Gen Y



27-40



27-40

The majority of Gen Y in America is comfortable asking someone on a date through SNS while only 25% in Japan are comfortable doing the same.

5.4 Summary of Research Findings for Research Question 2

Gen Z in America values quick responses to their messages while in Japan they can wait longer. Also Gen Y in both America and Japan are capable of waiting longer for a reply to their messages. The age group 22-26 in this regard was similar to Gen Z. Giving respect to those who are older is valued more in Japan than it is in America. Most respondents agreed that SNS is causing basic communication skills to deteriorate. The majority of Gen Z in America prefers to have face to face contact with other people. Gen Z and the age group 22-26 in America was more comfortable with using SNS for forming relationships than all other age groups in America and

Japan.

6. Conclusion

Our research showed that while Gen Z in America is more comfortable with using SNS for various situations, they also do not rely upon it everyday. In Japan, Gen Z is more dependent on SNS which conflicts with what we have studied. The age group 22-26 is a key factor in determining what characteristics define Gen Y and Z and displayed in their responses that they are more similar to Gen Z in the way they choose to communicate through SNS. In America, Gen Z uses SNS to entertain themselves and create new friendships while Gen Y uses it more to maintain communication with already made relations and family. While in Japan, Gen Y and Z use SNS to remain in contact with their already intact group of friends and family and do not use it as frequently and not for entertainment.

7. Limitations of the Study and Future Studies

The majority of respondents identified as female so the data may be skewed based on interests and usage. We did not have as many responses from Gen Y as we did Gen Z, so the ratio of the data is not even. The information about comfortability with certain situations was on a scale, we did not ask why they were comfortable which would have provided more insight to their responses. In the future we would like to explore how SNS has specifically impacted Gen Y and Z's ability to communicate within the workforce and if this affects employer's decisions to hire younger workers.

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