

**CULTURAL PROJECTIONS OF
CAREER AND SUCCESS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE
US AND JAPAN**

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OUTLINE

- Significance of the Study
- Research Questions
- Background Research
- Research Method
- Research Findings
- Conclusion
- Bibliography
- Acknowledgements

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- **Career**

- As I'm about to graduate , what is it that other college students view as success in their future endeavors?

- **Success**

- I want to find out what is most important between American and Japanese cultures, and through my case study I want to find out about cross cultural perceptions of success and successful people.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

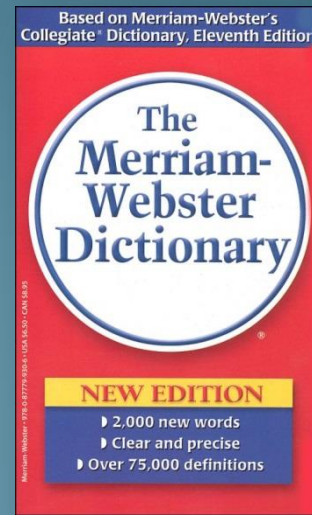
- What drives people to pick their career based on the factors around them? Is there a difference between the US and Japan? How different are the choices?
- Does success differ from a culture that has been labeled as individualistic versus one that is labeled as collectivist and how is it measured? How have surrounding factors influenced these concepts?
- What characteristics and aspects are most relevant to a successful person?
- Case Study: Cross Cultural Perceptions of Those Who Have Succeeded.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

- Defining “Success”
- Career
 - Employment and Unemployment Data
- USA and Success: An Evolution
 - Analysis of American Dream
 - Modern Success
- Japan and Success: Modern Concepts and Perceptions
 - Japan’s Economic Bubble
 - Winning-group and Losing-group (kachigumi and makegumi)
- USA and Individualism
 - Individualism
 - From “I” to “We”
- Japan and Collectivism
 - Fraction and Social Role
 - Amae: to spoil, indulge



DEFINING “SUCCESS”



Kojien 広辞苑

- Achieve a goal
- Get work done, do your job.
- From nothing, gain position and wealth

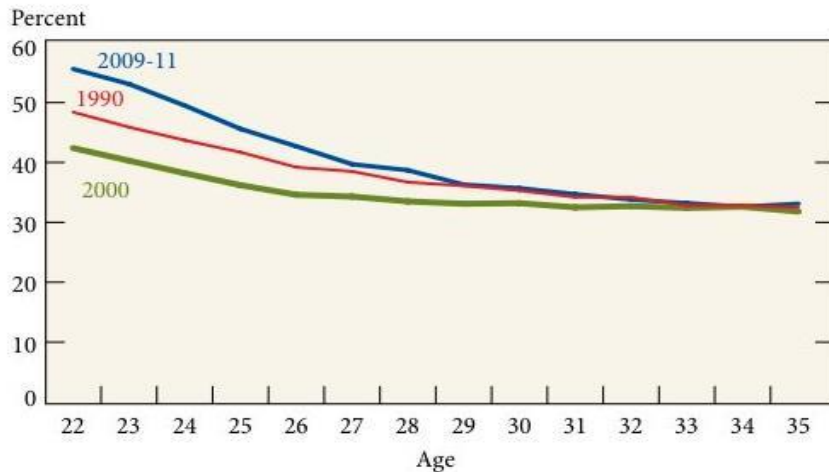
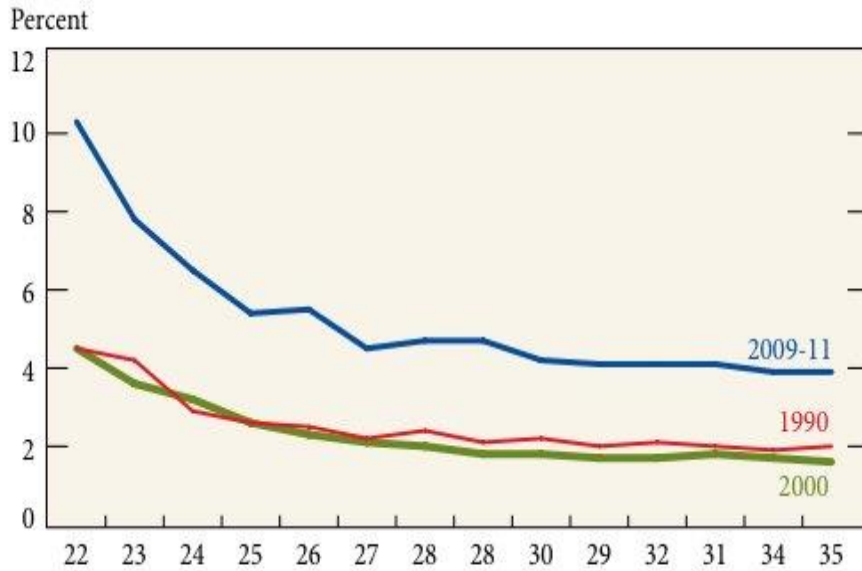
(Iwanami Shoten, 1991)

Merriam-Webster

- Favorable or desired outcome
- The gaining of Wealth or fame.

(Merriam-Webster, 2006)

CAREER: US

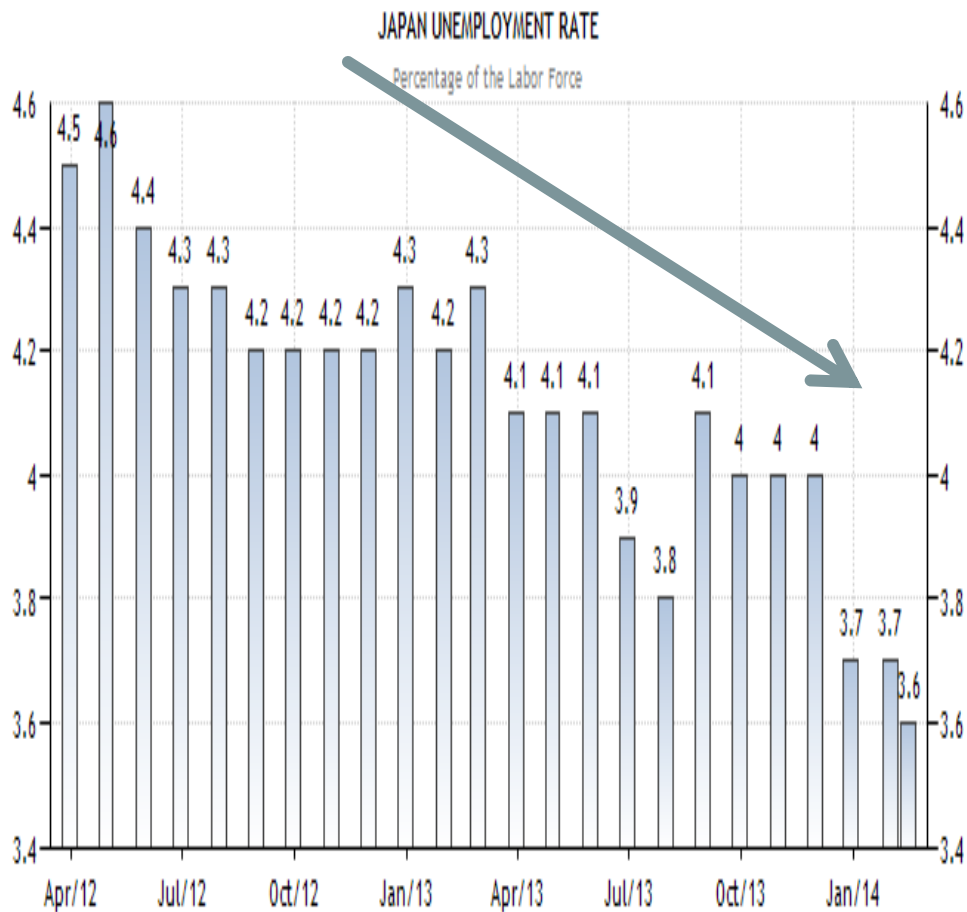


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, O*NET.

- The percent of unemployed recent college graduates in 2009 - 2011 was higher than it's been over the past two decades.
- Many recent college grads who do have jobs are working in fields that don't require their degree.

Accessed from:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/16/recent-college-grad_n_4602772.html

CAREER: JAPAN



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS

- Unemployment Rate in Japan decreased to 3.60 percent in February of 2014 from 3.70 percent in January of 2014.

Accessed from :

(http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/business/2013-05/17/c_132388808.htm)

- The rate is still 3 points below its peak in 2008, and around 24,000 graduates are believed to remain jobless.
(The Japan Times,)

Career - Occupation: US

- By Occupation, 47.9% of recent graduates in the US in 2011 found employment in Professional and related based jobs.
- By industry, about 2 in 5 recent graduates in the 2011 cohort found work in educational and health services.

Accessed from:

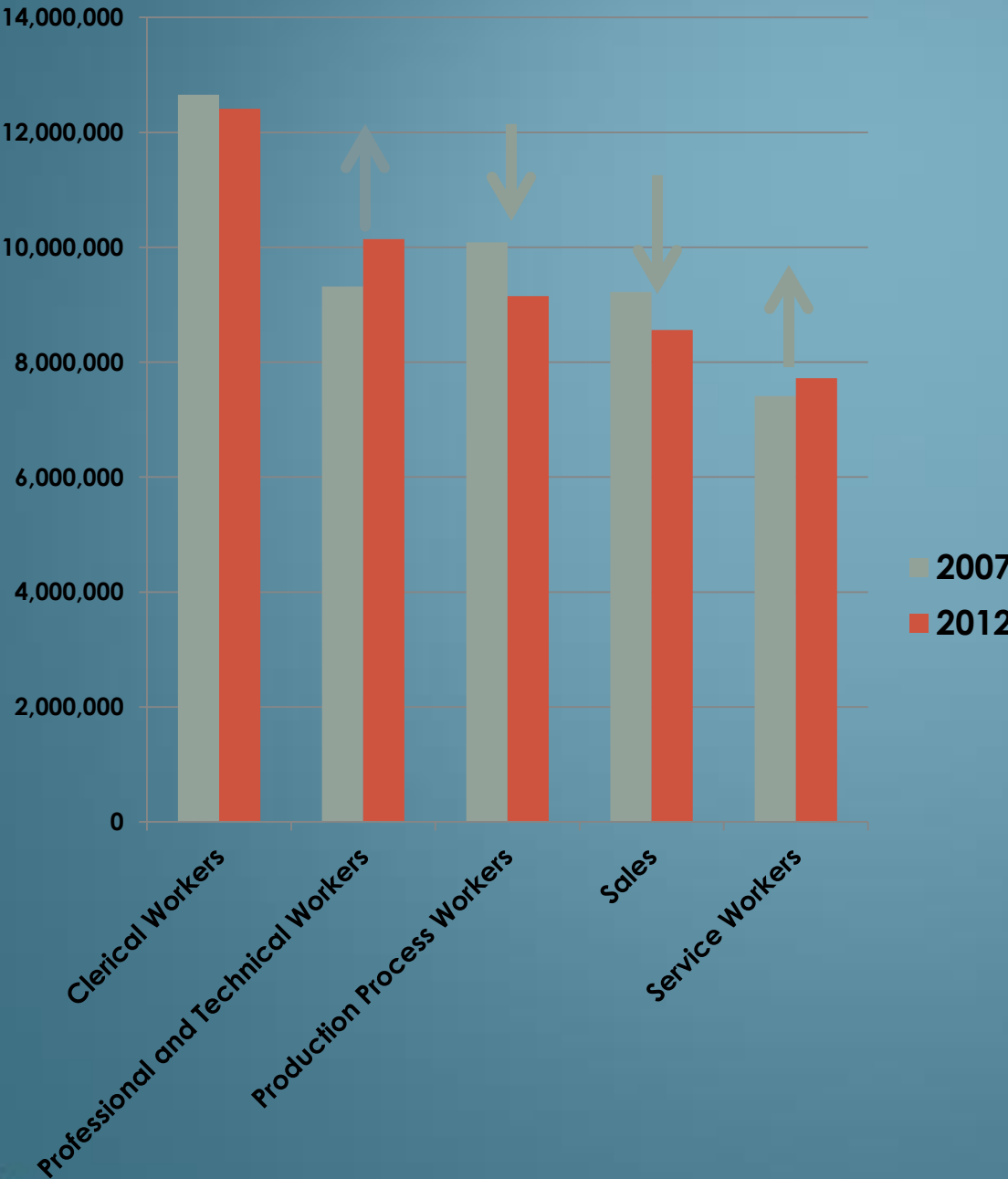
<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/02/art1full.pdf>

Table 4. Employed recent college graduates by degree, occupation, industry, and class of worker, October 2011

[Levels in thousands]

Characteristic	Total, recent college graduates	Bachelor's degree	Advanced degree
Total employed, ages 20 to 29	995	793	202
Percent distribution	100.0	100.0	100.0
Occupation¹			
Management, business, and financial operations	14.0	11.6	23.2
Professional and related	47.9	42.7	68.3
Service	12.7	15.3	2.3
Sales and office	19.1	23.1	3.7
All other	6.3	7.3	2.4
Industry²			
Goods-producing	6.4	7.8	1.1
Wholesale and retail trade	10.3	10.0	11.7
Financial activities	6.1	6.7	3.7
Professional and business services	16.0	14.1	23.7
Educational and health services	41.8	38.5	54.9
Educational services	22.2	20.2	30.4
Health care and social assistance	19.6	18.3	24.6
Leisure and hospitality	9.0	11.2	.3
Public administration	3.4	3.2	4.0
All other industries	6.9	8.5	.6
Class of worker³			
Government wage and salary workers	17.5	15.4	25.7
Federal	2.5	2.1	4.3
State	8.6	8.3	9.7
Local	6.4	5.0	11.8
Private wage and salary workers	81.7	84.0	72.9
All other	.8	.6	1.4

Persons Engaged in Work by Occupation and Year of the Survey



Career - Occupation: Japan

- Of 64 million surveyed, the most filled position is Clerical work.
- Production and Sales workers have decreased.
- Professional and Service workers have increased.

(Accessed from: <http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/ListE.do?bid=000001048178&cycode=0>)

This graph shows the recent trends in occupation in Japan between 2007 and 2012.

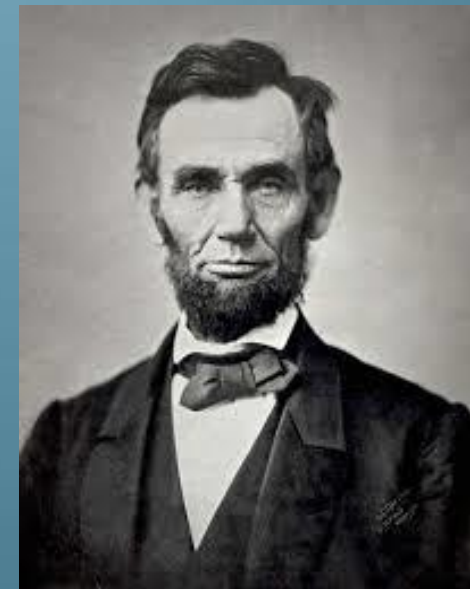
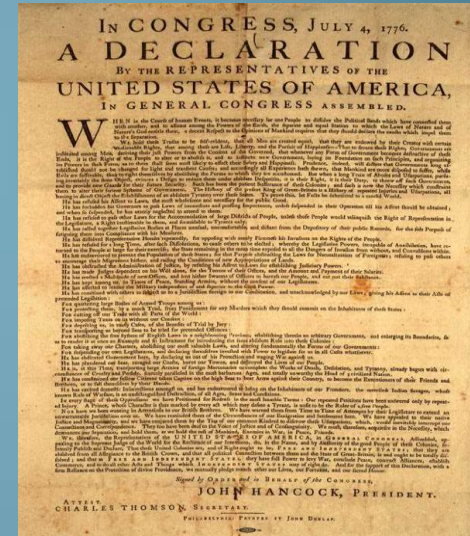
ANALYSIS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

- 18th Century

- Declaration of Independence: “Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness”.

- 19th Century

- Modest beginnings became an indispensable bedrock for distinction .
(President Lincoln 1860)



ANALYSIS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

- The “dreams” of the 17th through 20th Century American success can be seen through these four factors:
 - **Upward Mobility:** one could realize the fruits of one’s own aspirations through applied intelligence and effort
 - **Equality:** over coming racial and economic differences.
 - **Home Ownership:** working hard to save enough money to obtain ownership of the house and the land its on
 - **The Coast:** Rather than working hard, enjoy the quantity over quality of resulted effort (ex investing). This concept is more 20th and 21st century-based.
(Cullen, 2003)

USA AND MODERN SUCCESS

- “The term ‘American Dream’ was coined during 1931...”
(The American Dream: A Cultural History, Samuel, 2012)
- 1940s George Gallup: “every man can become a millionaire .”
(Samuel, 2012)
- *“The American dream used to be a chicken in every pot and car in every garage, then it was a swimming pool in every backyard, but now, apparently, it’s a golf course viewed through the picture window” – (Hartford Courant, 1963)*

This quote highlights the sharp increase in how Americans benchmarked material success of the 20th century.

USA AND MODERN SUCCESS

- *“Current trends suggest that overall happiness doesn’t include the need for the traditional family unit, but rather financial stability...”*

*Time Magazine, Issue August
12, 2013*



JAPAN AND SUCCESS

- Japan's Bubble Economy 1980s and 1990s
 - Period of high economic growth and prosperity
- Many middle-class young people became millionaires during the IT bubble age in late 1990s,
- 成り上がり Nari Aagari
 - people who had suddenly earned higher economic status, but not gained social acceptance of others in that class, mainly concerning age and experience.
 - Started to call themselves “winners” in society (kachigumi).

KACHIGUMI / MAKEGUMI

- Concept started during 1970s
- Started to spread from late 1990s to early 2000s
- Young people could not become rich and successful in Japanese age-based social structure.
- Certain business fields ignored socially stratified business structure in Japan.

KACHIGUMI

- Word that means “winning-group”
- Obtainment of something that’s of high social value, such as money, or a really attractive partner.
- White collar image.

MAKEGUMI

- Word that means “losing-group”
- Personal benchmarking
- Unfulfillment of goals compared to people in your circle (ie friends, coworkers).

(Yamada, 2007)



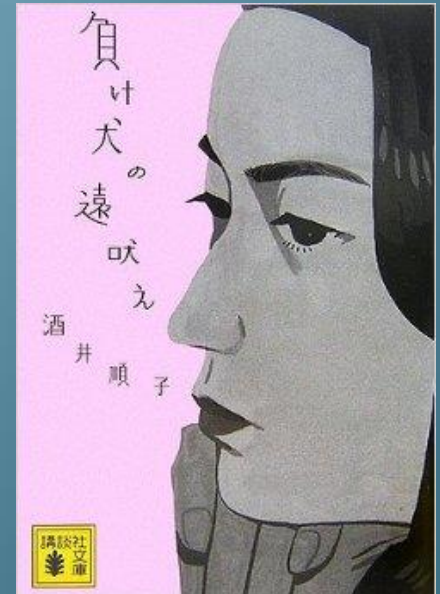
KACHIGUMI

- Modern benchmarking of kachigumi is life satisfaction and fiscal responsibility.

(Sakai, 2003)

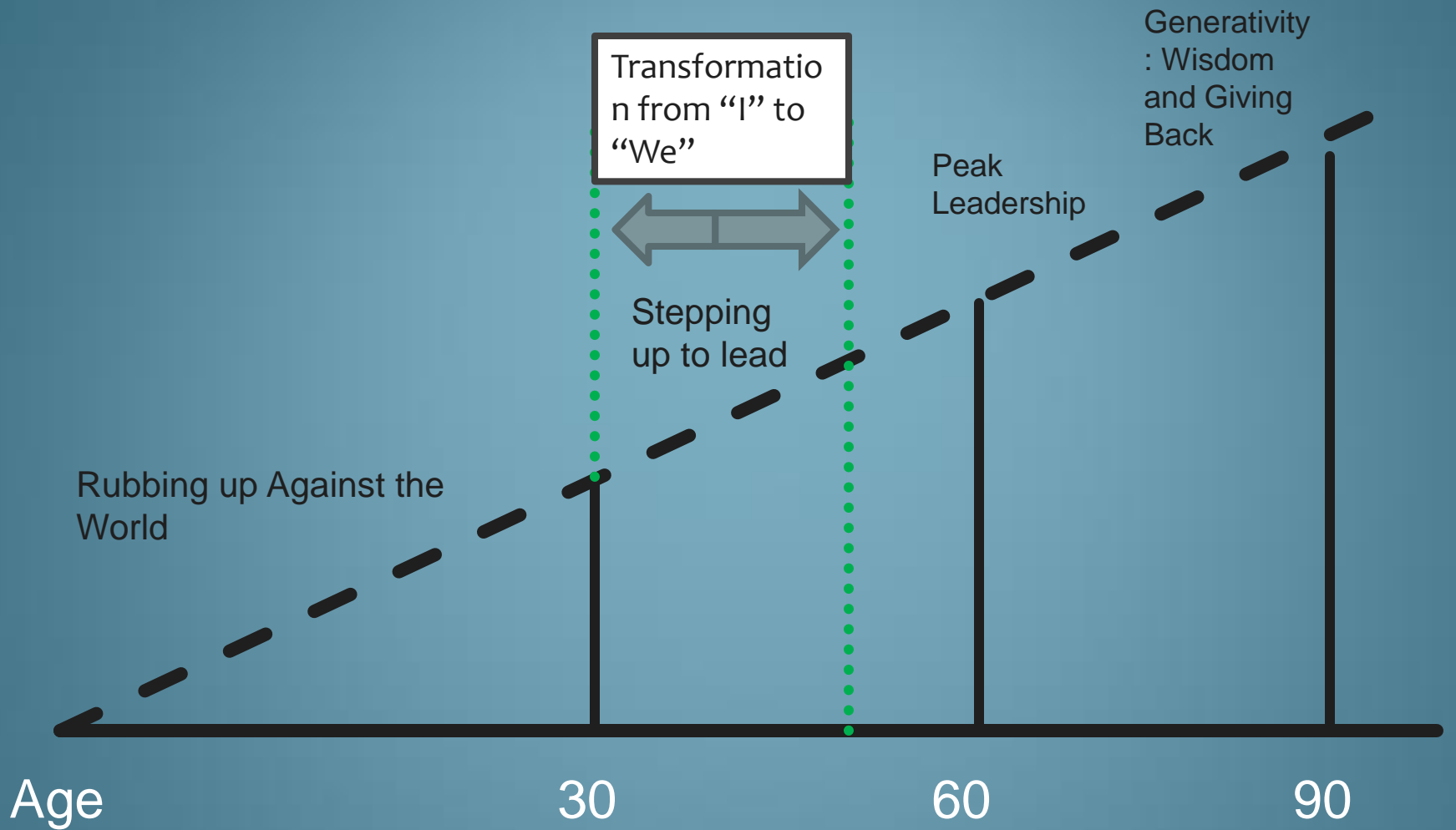
MAKEGUMI

- Highly impolite: never a spoken word.
- Often, comparisons are based off of age.



USA AND INDIVIDUALISM

- *"the good society is one in which individuals are left free to pursue their private satisfactions independently of others."*
(Bellah, 1991)
- Emphasizes individual achievement and self-fulfillment.
(Bellah, 1991)
- *"...so much of our early success in life depends upon individual efforts. "We spend our early years trying to be the best. To get into West Point or General Electric, you have to be the best. That is defined by what you can do on your own."*
(George, 2007)



The book *True North* talks about how one's success changes from individualistic-based to more collectivist. The graph shows the time frame in which this occurs.

JAPAN AND COLLECTIVISM

- How Japan views the individual in society
 - The individual is conceived as a fraction.
 - Fraction-holders are interdependent.
 - Every member of society is supposed to be a fraction holder.
- *“If everyone is a part of a fraction, then... everyone can claim their social significance.”*

(Japanese Patterns of Behavior,
Lebra)



JAPAN AND COLLECTIVISM

- The term “amae” means to spoil or indulge: it is from this concept that Japanese build vertical relationships.
- *“A relationship between two people becomes deeper the closer it approaches to the parent-child relationship... it is considered shallow unless so.”*

(Doi, 1973)

The anatomy of dependence

Takeo Doi



RESEARCH METHOD

○ Participants in the Study

○ Demographics

- 72 Participants

- 35 Japanese

 - 21 Male

 - 14 Female

- 37 American

 - 21 Male

 - 16 Female

○ Research Instrument – Phase one

○ Online Survey

- Google Docs – Japanese English

- Facebook

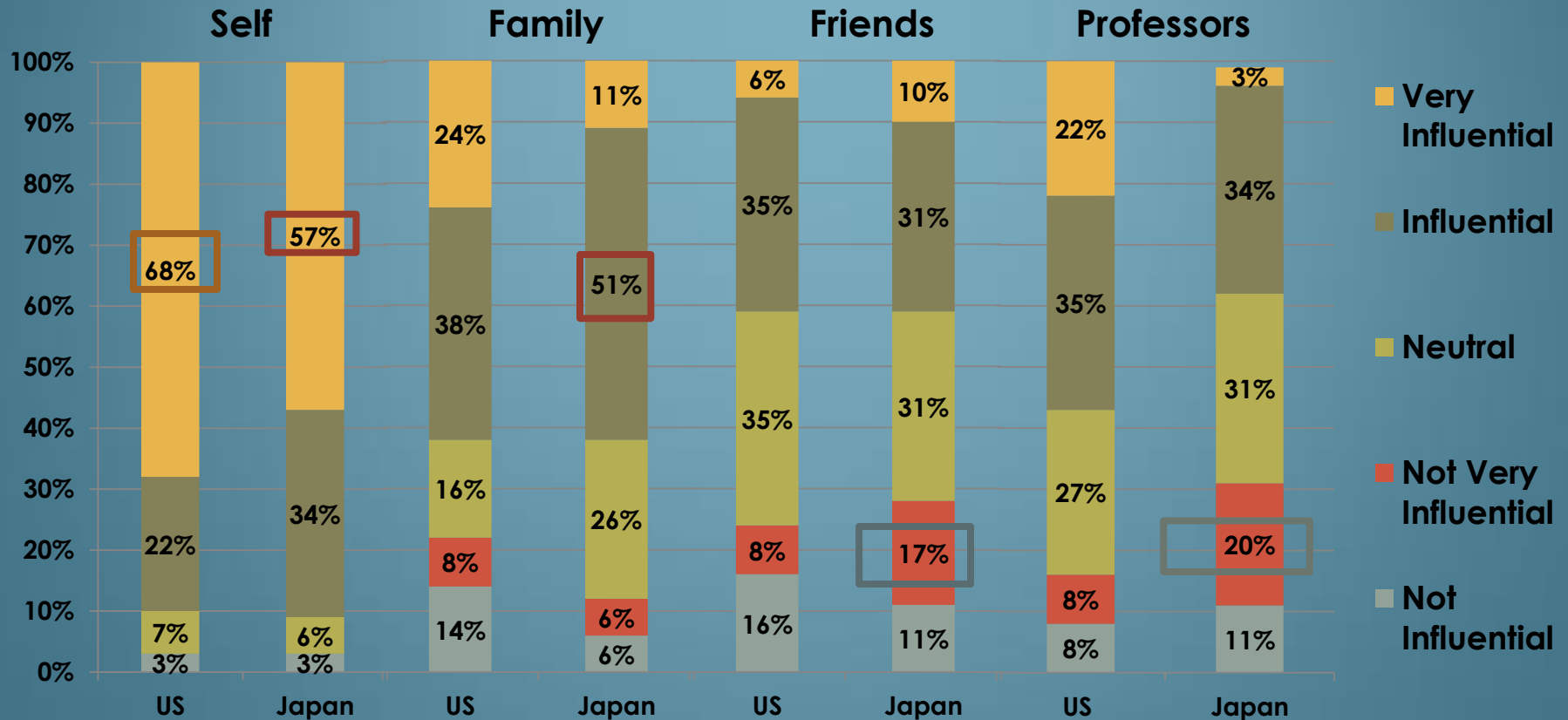
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. What drives people to pick their career based on the factors around them? Is there a difference between the US and Japan? How different are the choices?
- 2. Does success differ from a culture that has been labeled as individualistic versus one that's labeled as collectivist and how is it measured? How have surrounding factors influenced these concepts?
- 3. What characteristics and aspects are most relevant to a successful person? Case Study: Cross Cultural perceptions of those who have succeeded.

Research Question 1:

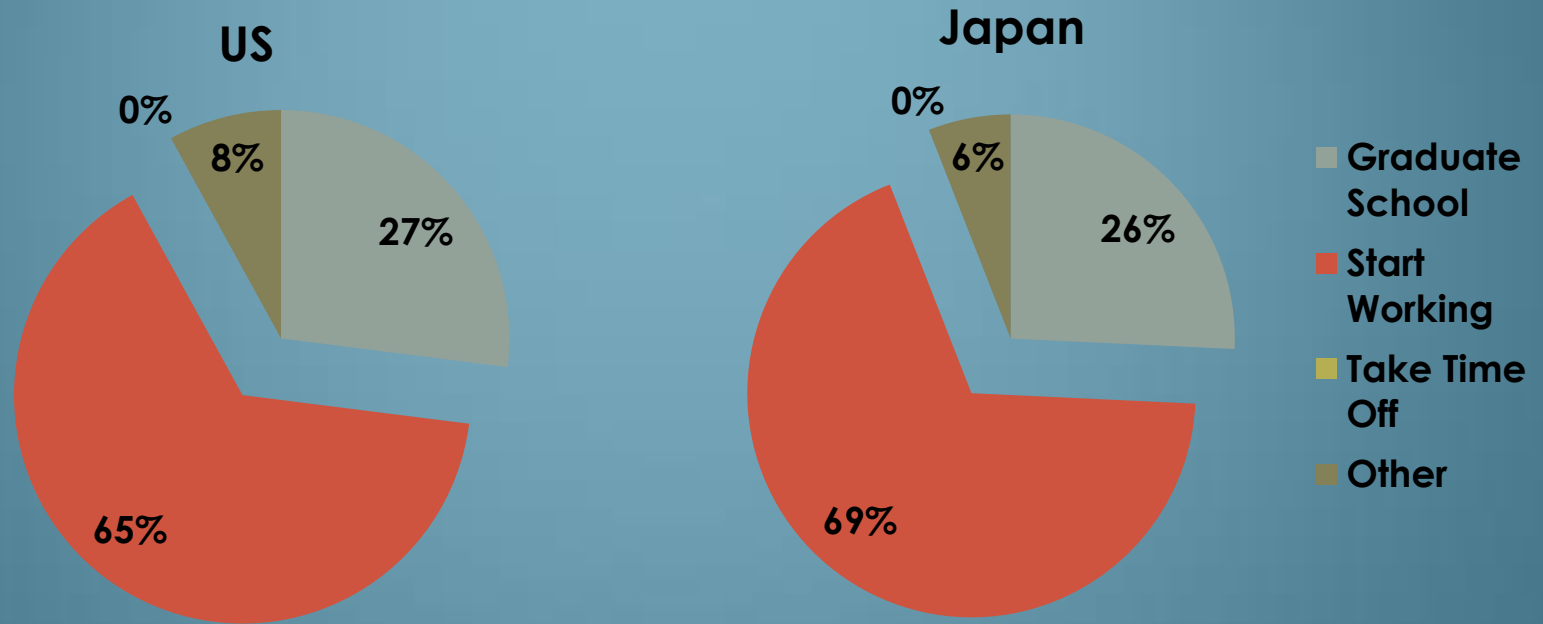
- What drives people to pick their career based on the factors around them and what are post-college plans? Is there a difference between the US and Japan?

WHAT DEGREE HAVE THE FOLLOWING FACTORS INFLUENCED YOUR CAREER PLANS?



American and Japanese students both have high influence in career from themselves, but Japanese students see more influence from their families. Friends and professors are rather equal in terms of least influence.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS AFTER LEAVING UNIVERSITY?

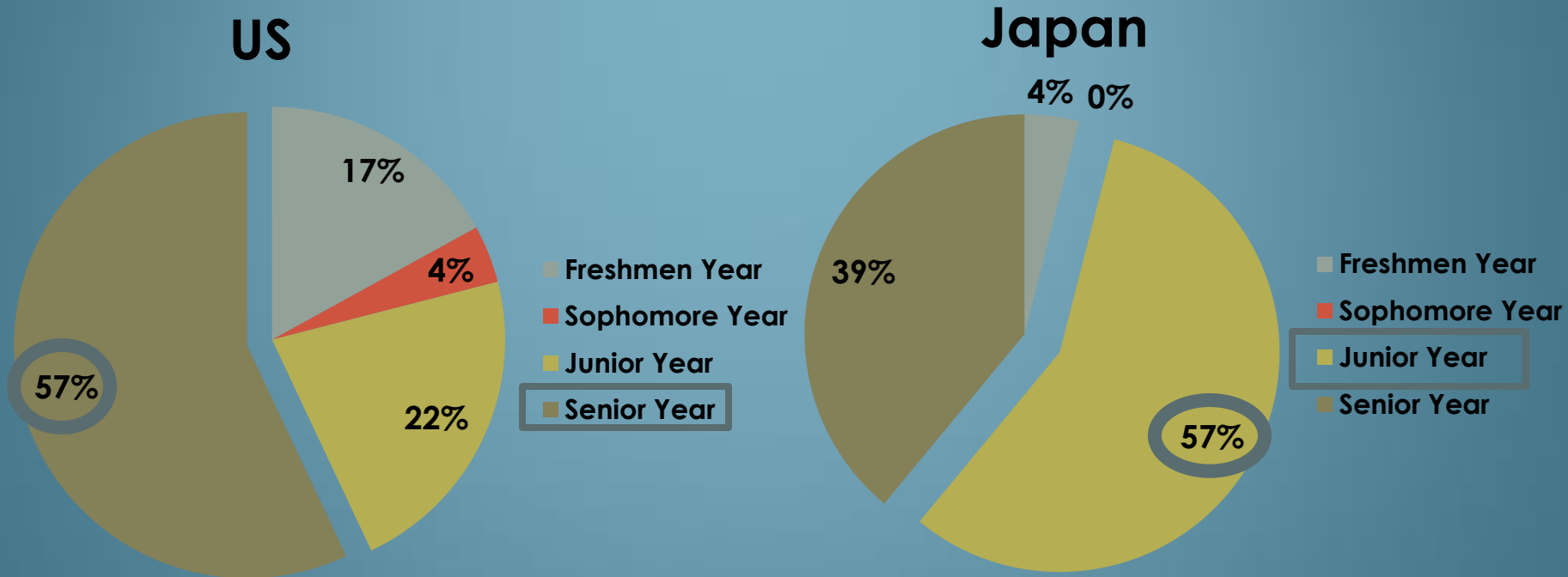


Both American and Japanese students equally show that their plan is to start working after graduation.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?

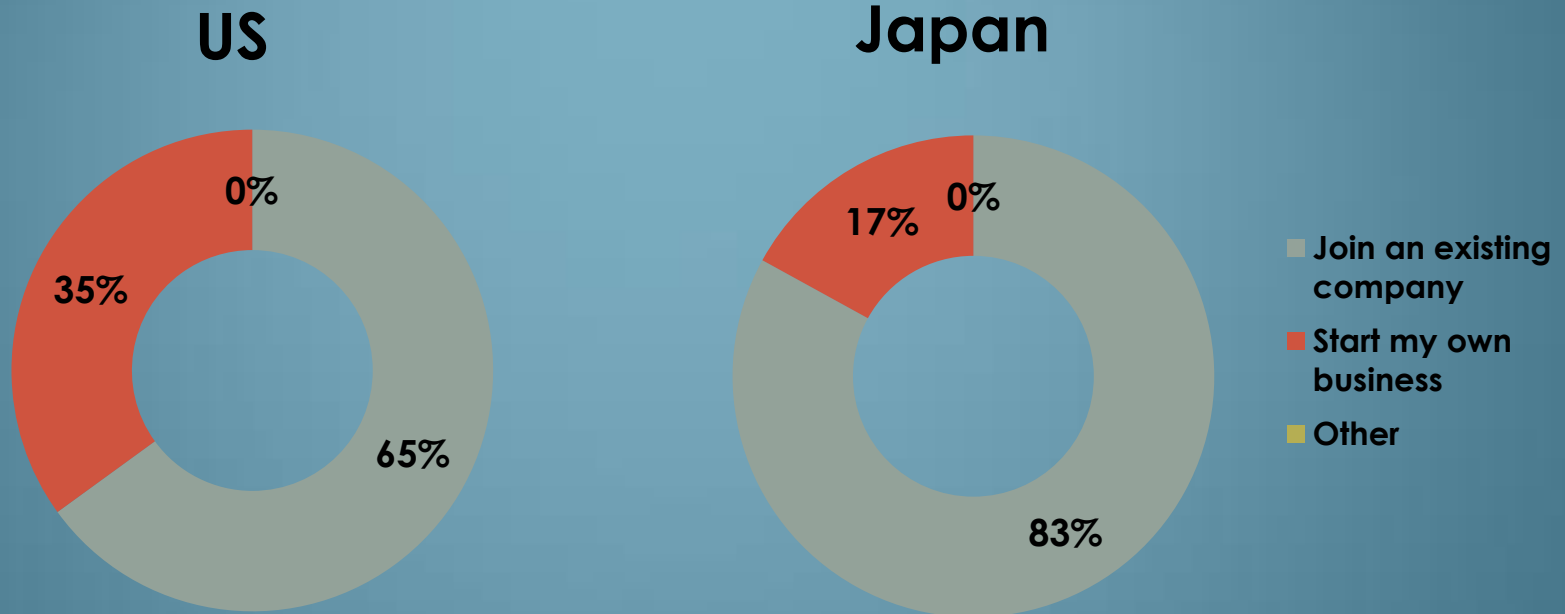
- 3 Americans surveyed chose the 'Other' option:
 - Military
 - Paramedic School
 - Teaching Credentials
- 1 Japanese surveyed chose the 'Other' option:
 - Undecided

FOR THOSE WHO ANSWERED “START WORKING”, AT WHAT POINT DID YOU START APPLYING?



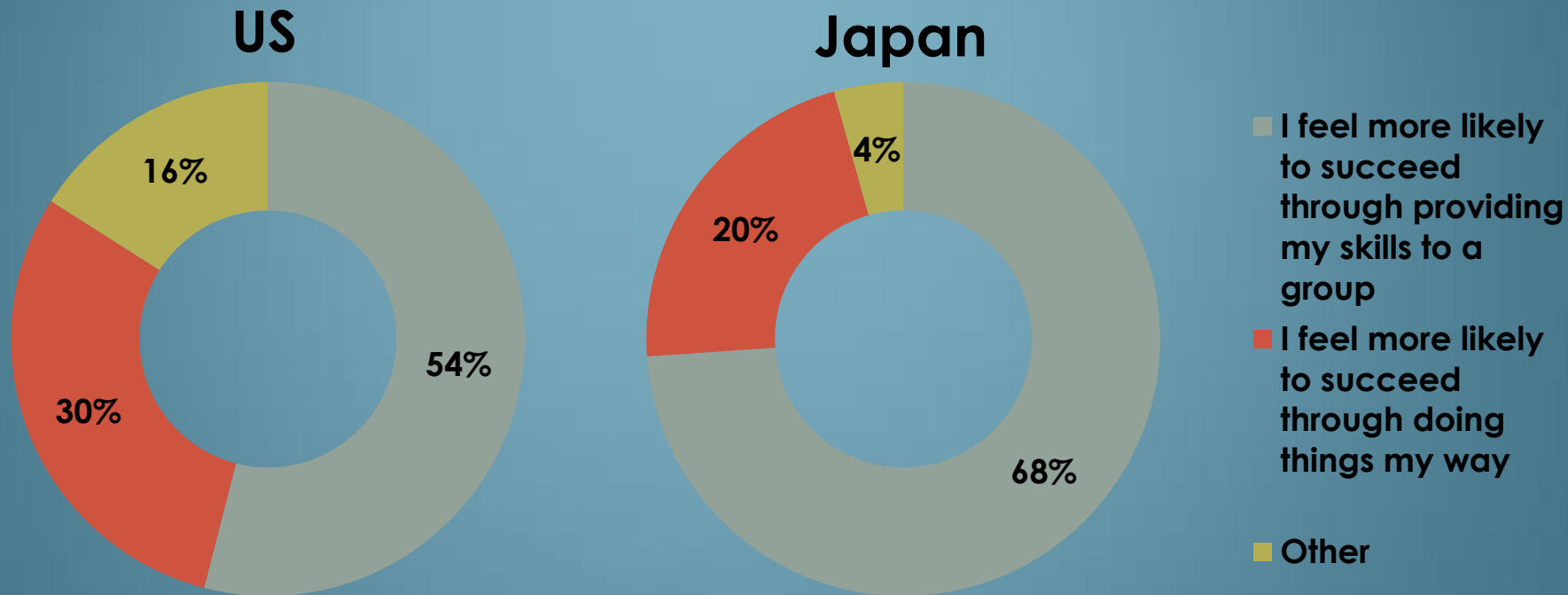
Of the 70% who did reply, “Start Working”, US students said that they began applying for employment during their fourth year while Japanese students majorly start during their third year.

IF YOU WERE TO HYPOTHETICALLY CHOOSE THE PATH OF A BUSINESS PERSON, WHAT WOULD YOU RATHER DO?



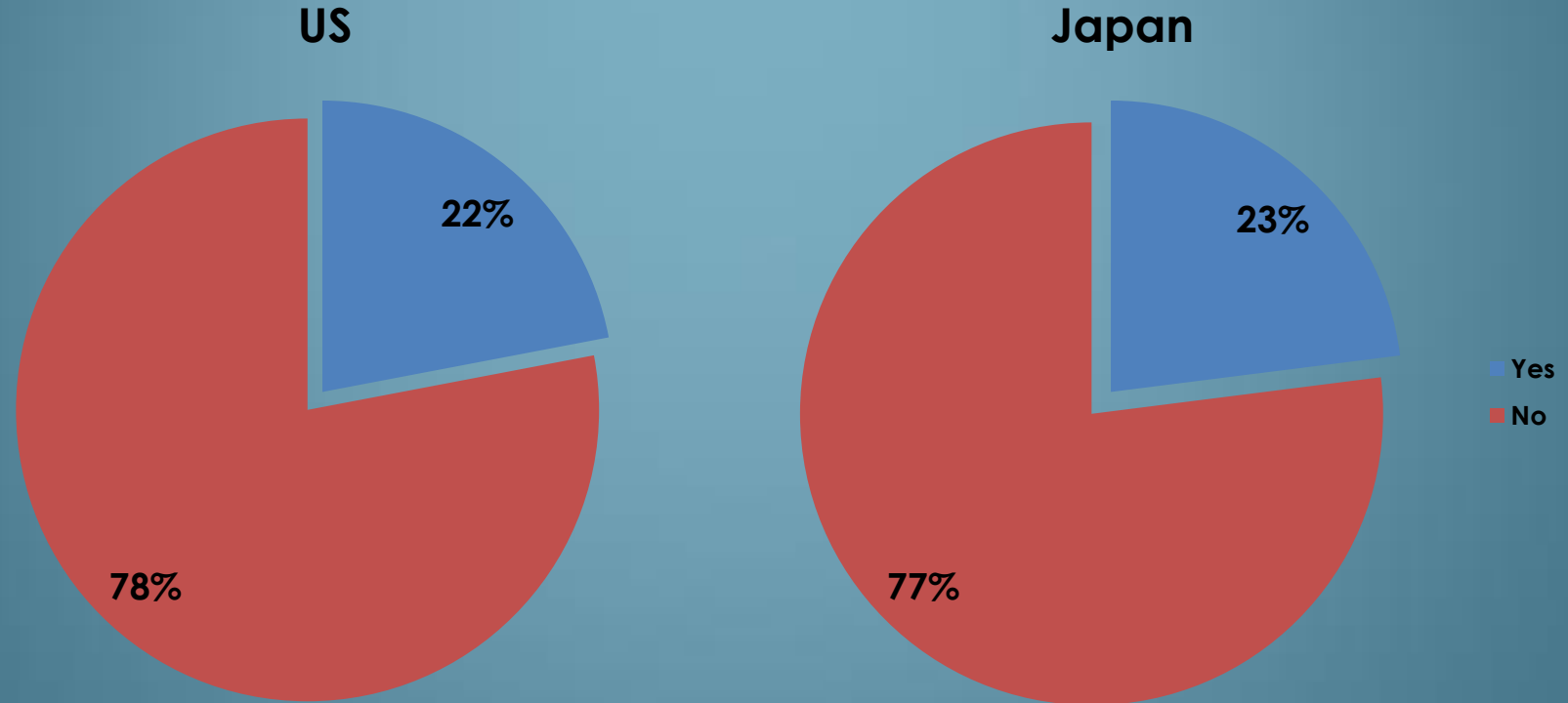
While both US and Japanese students said that they would rather 'join an existing company', US students showed a higher response of starting their own business.

WHAT FITS YOUR REASON TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION?



In relation to the previous question and success, both the US and Japanese students replied that they would 'feel more likely to succeed by providing their skills to a group' rather than by themselves.

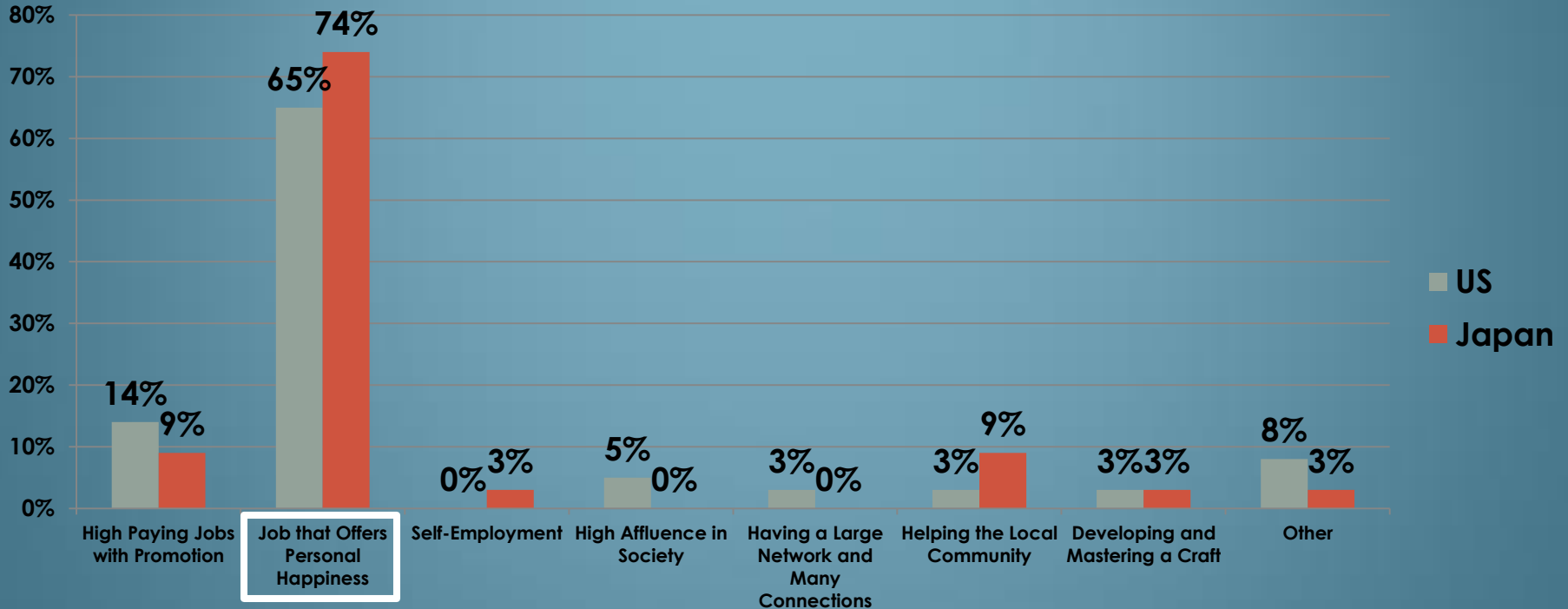
DO YOU REPRESENT YOUR SUCCESS THROUGH MATERIAL POSSESSIONS?



Interestingly, when asked about measuring success through material possessions, both cultures answered about 80% to “no”.

IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE OCCUPATION, WHAT WILL BE “SUCCESS” TO YOU?

Success: Employment and Occupation



Both Japanese and US students show high favor in careers that will give them ‘personal happiness’.

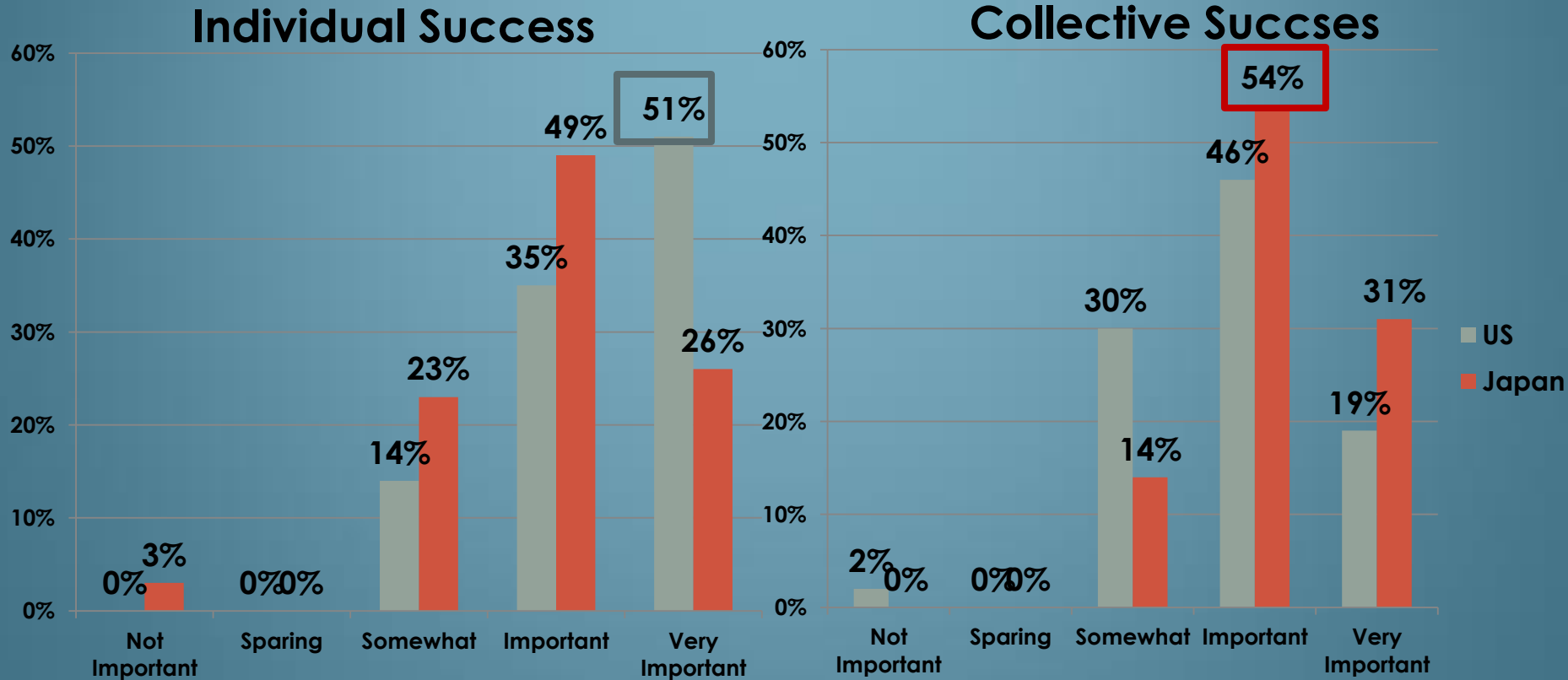
RQ1 SUMMARY FINDINGS

- In terms of career influence
 - US students find more influence from themselves
 - Japanese students find more influence from themselves and family
- In terms of joining a company
 - Both US and Japanese students would rather join an existing company and succeed by contributing their skills rather than doing things on their own.
- In terms of success from employment and occupation
 - Both value a job that will provide personal happiness.
 - US students are more in favor of a job with high pay
 - Japanese students are in favor of a job that helps the local community

Research Question 2

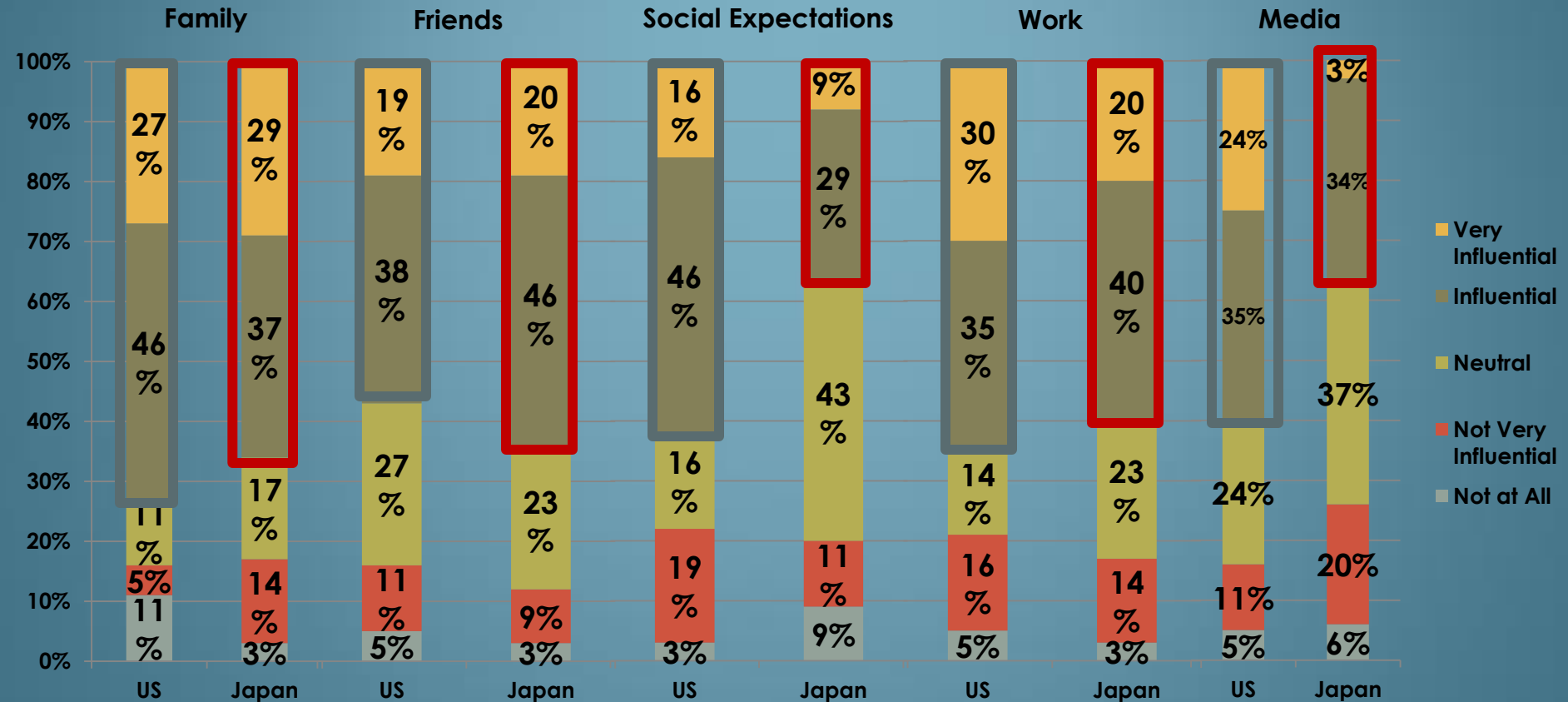
- Does success differ from a culture that has been labeled as individualistic versus one that's labeled as collectivist and how is it measured?

Based on the definitions above, how important is Individualism and Collectivism to you



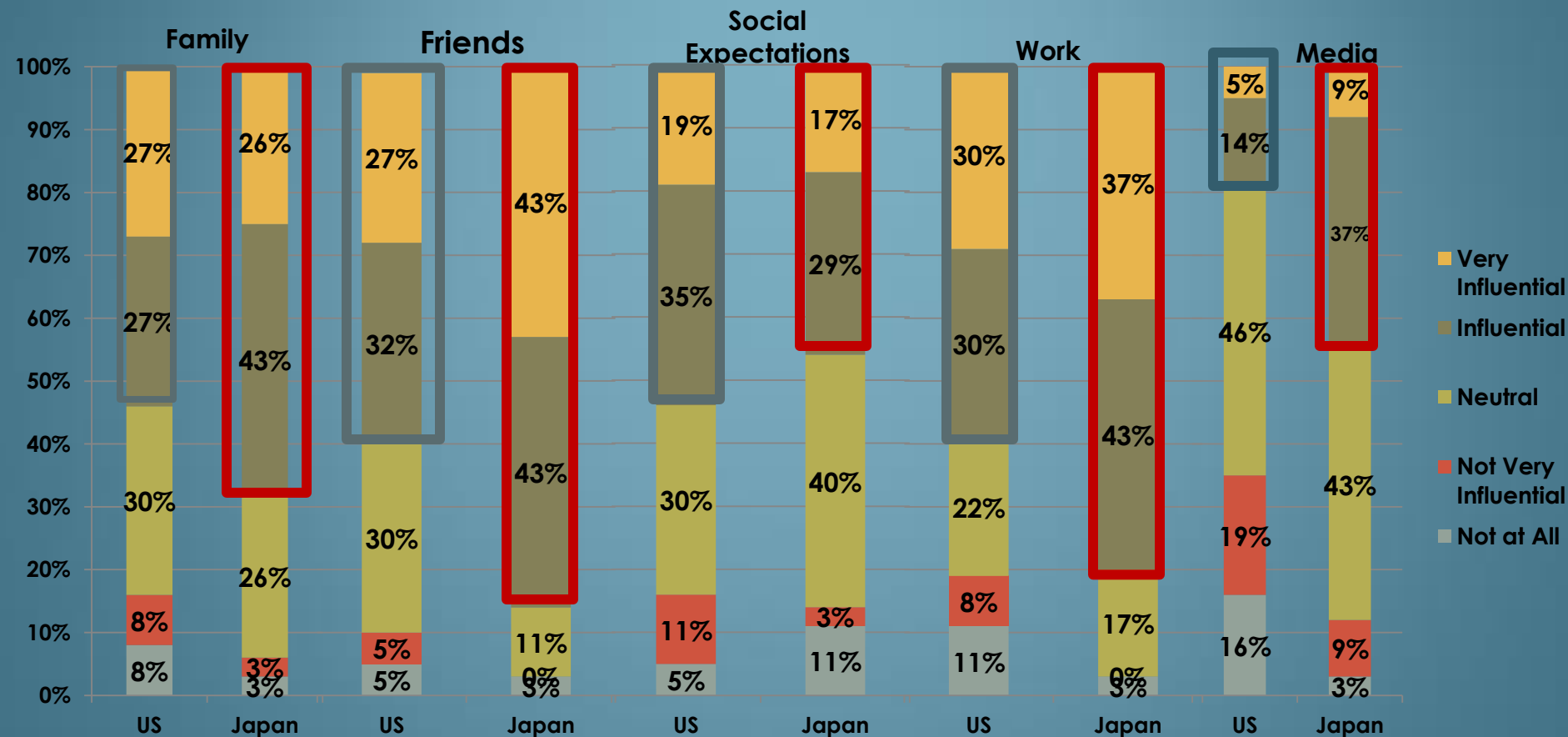
While US students find more importance on individual success, Japanese students find more importance on collective success.

TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE THE FOLLOWING SHAPED AND INFLUENCED YOUR OPINION OF INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS?



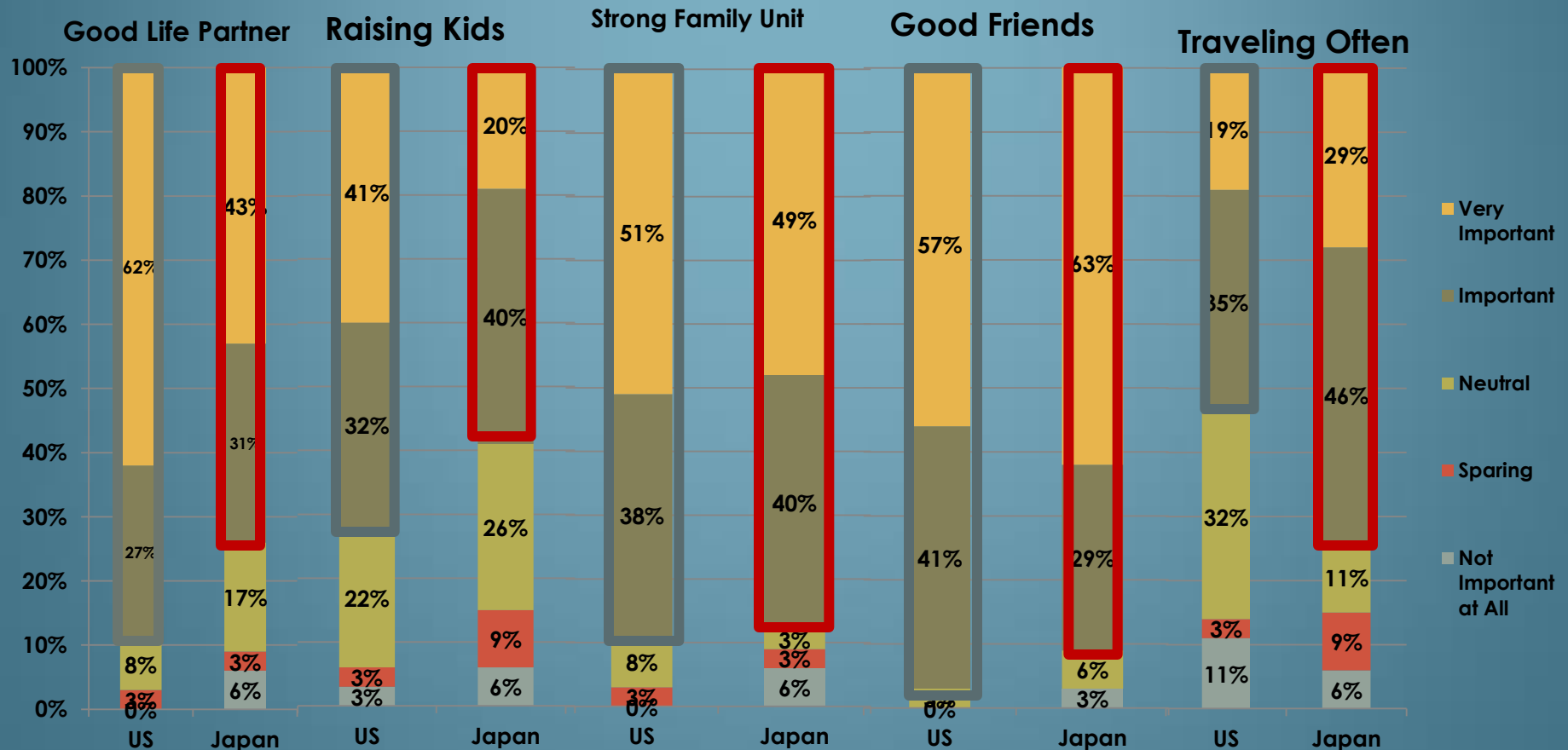
Both US and Japanese students find equal influence from family, friends, and work. US students replied that 'Social Expectations' and 'Media' have been influential.

TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE THE FOLLOWING SHAPED AND INFLUENCED YOUR OPINION OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS?



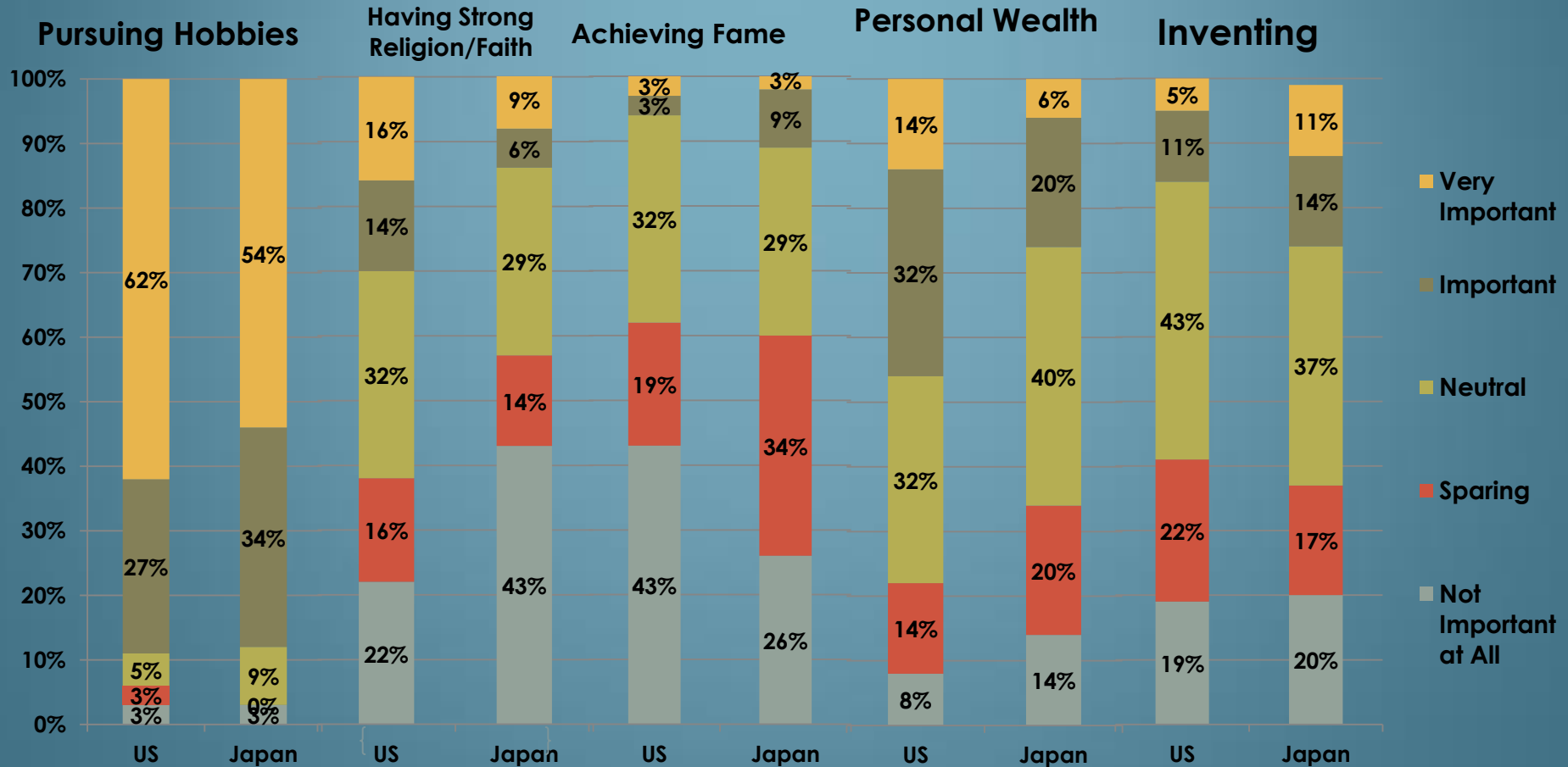
High influence for Japanese students' comes from 'Friends', 'Work', and 'Media' (collectivism). American influence comes from work (collectivism).

IN TERMS OF SUCCESS, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING LIFE GOALS TO YOU?



US students results show that 'Good Life Partner' and 'Raising Kids' are seen as important while Japanese students said that 'Good Friends' and 'Traveling Often' are more important. Both are equal on having a 'strong family unit.'

IN TERMS OF PERSONAL GOALS, HOW IMPORTANT DO THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTING “SUCCESS” TO YOU?



While both students show high importance on hobbies, both US and Japanese students regard religion, fame, and inventing of very low importance.

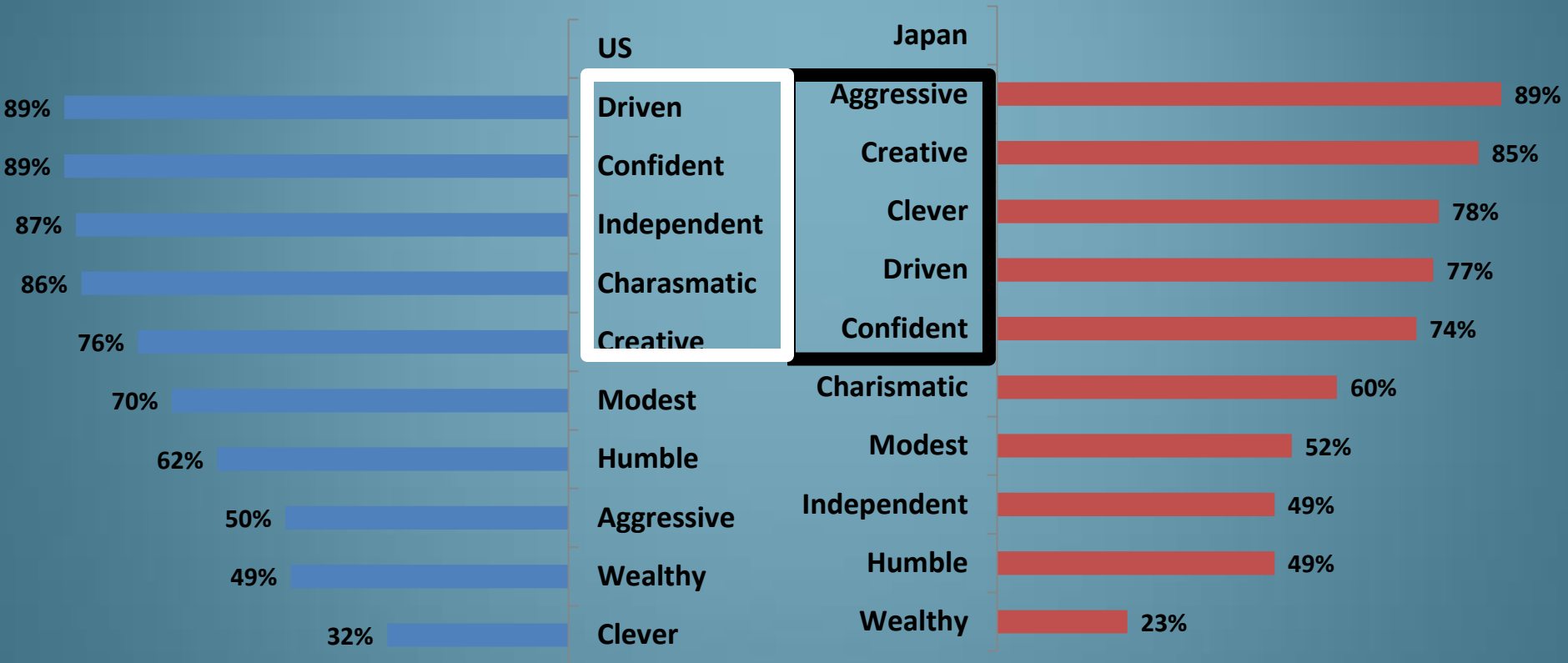
RQ2 SUMMARY FININGS

- Individual and collective success
 - US students find more importance on individual success
 - Japanese students find more importance on collective success
- Influences on individual success
 - US: Social Expectations and Media
 - Japan: Friends and Work
- Influences on collective success
 - US: Work
 - Japan: Family, Friends, and Work.
- Personal goals and success:
 - US: Good Life Partner, Raising Kids, Personal Wealth
 - Japan: Traveling Often and Good Friends
 - Both don't consider religion, fame, or inventing to be important

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

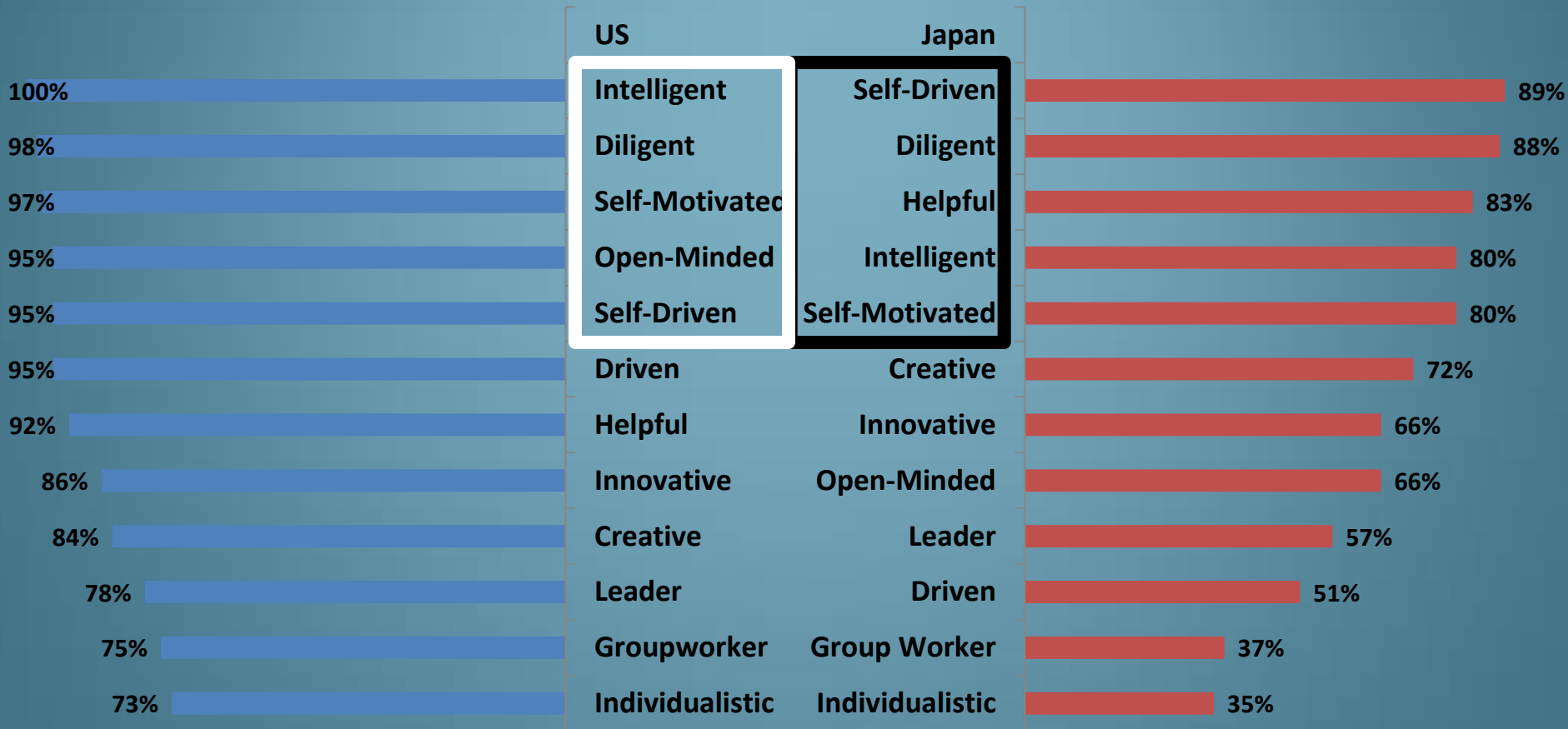
- What characteristics and aspects are most relevant to a successful person? Case Study: Cross Cultural perceptions of those who have succeeded.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ADJECTIVES REFLECTS YOUR DESCRIPTION OF A SUCCESSFUL PERSON?



Of the 10 nouns, the top five for Americans were Driven, Confident, Independent, Charismatic, and Creative. For Japanese, Aggressive, Creative, Clever, Driven, and Confident were the top five.

WHAT DEGREE DO THE FOLLOWING TRAITS FIT THE DESCRIPTION OF SOMEONE SUCCESSFUL?



Of the 12 traits, the top five for Americans were Intelligent, Diligent, Self-Motivated, Open-Minded, and Self-Driven. The top five for Japanese were Self-Driven, Diligent, Helpful, Intelligent, and Self-Motivated.

RQ3 SUMMARY FININGS

- Adjectives of a successful person:
 - US: wealthy, charismatic, confident, and motivated
 - Japan: aggressive, creative, confident, clever and motivated.
- Traits of a successful person:
 - Both agree: diligent worker, innovative, driven, self-driven.
 - US: Intelligent, visionary, open-minded
 - Japan: self-motivated, helpful.

CASE STUDY: CROSS-CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF THOSE WHO HAVE SUCCEEDED

Steve Jobs



Hiroshi Yamauchi



WHO IS STEVE JOBS?

Steve Jobs



Apple

- An American entrepreneur, marketer, and inventor
- Co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Apple Inc.
- Contributed to the personal computer revolution.
- Career was focused in computer and consumer electronics.

WHO IS HIROSHI YAMAUCHI?

Hiroshi Yamauchi

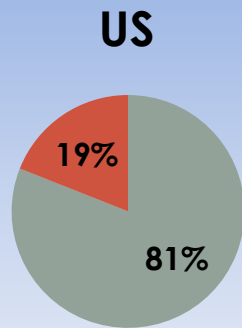


Nintendo

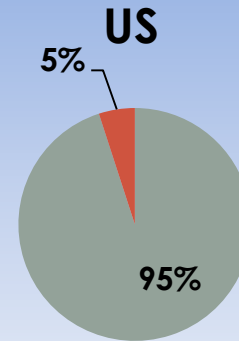
- *Third president of Nintendo.*
- *Transformed Nintendo into a multi-billion dollar video game company.*
- *Created the Famicom Age in and outside of Japan.*
- *April 2013, Forbes estimated Yamauchi's net worth at \$21 billion.*
- *13th richest person in Japan.*
- **Famicom = Family computer*

HAVE YOU EVER OWNED AN APPLE/NINTENDO PRODUCT?

Apple Product

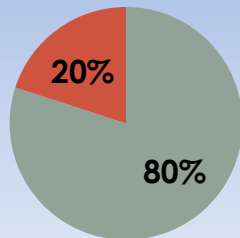


Nintendo Product

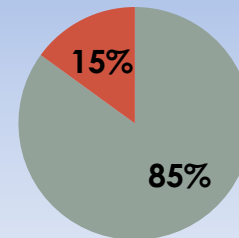


■ Yes
■ No

Japan



Japan

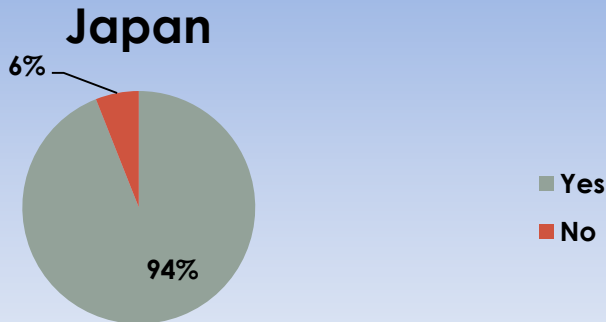
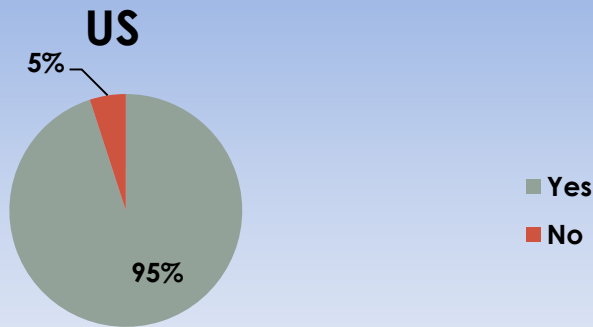


■ Yes
■ No

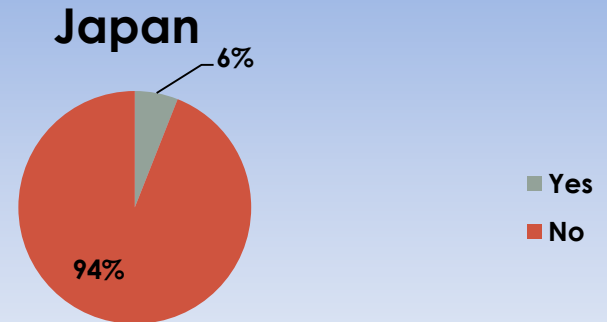
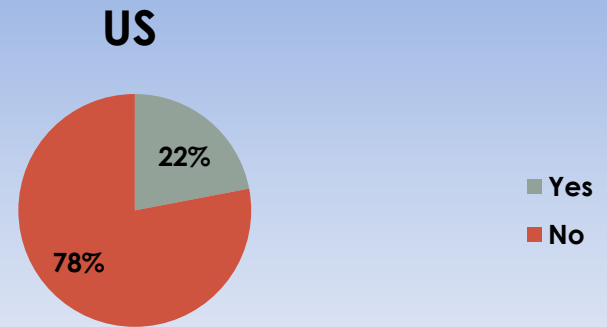
Both Apple and Nintendo products have been owned by a majority of the US and Japanese students.

DID YOU KNOW WHO THESE MEN WERE?

Steve Jobs



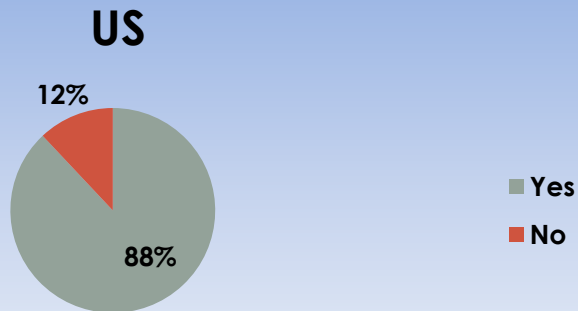
Hiroshi Yamauchi



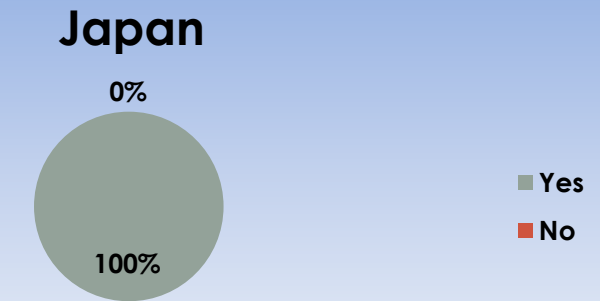
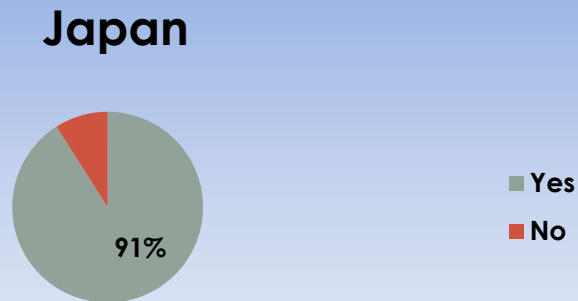
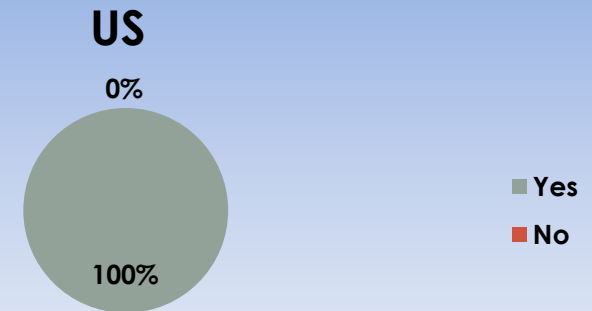
However, in both Japan and the US, Yamauchi is greatly unknown while Steve Jobs' name has high levels of familiarity in both the US and Japan.

DO YOU CONSIDER THESE MEN SUCCESSFUL?

Steve Jobs



Hiroshi Yamauchi



Interestingly, regardless of being the least known, when given a prompt in the survey about Hiroshi Yamauchi, both US and Japanese students regard Hiroshi Yamauchi as highly successful.

WHY DO YOU FIND STEVE JOBS SUCCESSFUL?

USA

- *“He invented something that revolutionized technology.”*
- *“Left his mark on the world while making a lot of money.”*
- *“Made a business from nothing to something.”*
- *“He melded technology with human interests.”*
- *“He was an inspirational leader.”*
- *“Charismatic and Intelligent.”*

Japan

- *“He revolutionized the way music is sold.”*
- *“He had a career doing what he wanted.”*
- *“Not only did he create an innovative product and service, but created the framework for a company that has made huge profits.”*
- *“Created a product that’s used by most people.”*
- *“His product has made people’s lives more convenient.”*

Both US and Japanese students described him and Apple products as ‘revolutionary’. What stood out was that US students focused on his ability to make money while Japanese students were impressed with his ability to do a job he wanted to do.

WHY DO YOU FIND HIROSHI YAMAUCHI SUCCESSFUL?

USA

- *“Like Steve Jobs, he made a flourishing company.”*
- *“Took a small company into a large corporation.”*
- *“Nintendo Products are original, creative, and fun.”*
- *“I became a gamer because of Nintendo products.”*
- *“The ability to transform an industry into a household name is almost impossible.”*

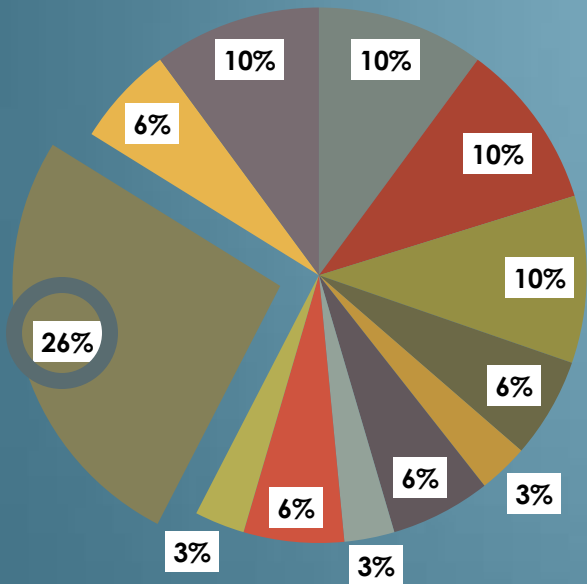
Japan

- *“Like Steve Jobs, he created something he wanted to make with confidence.”*
- *“Went from a small card company into a major business.”*
- *“He’s successful because he made a world-class company.”*
- *“He’s successful because he was able to expand Nintendo into the family computer marketplace.”*
- *Due to his ranking as 13th richest man in Japan.*

Both cultures consider Hiroshi just as successful as Jobs. US students seems to find his success more relevant from his creativity while Japanese students find his success more relevant to his business.

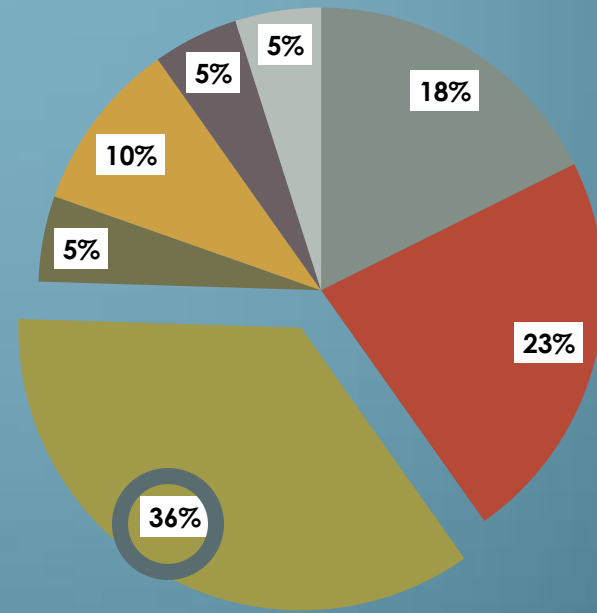
WHO REPRESENTS SUCCESS TO YOU?

US



- Actors/Entertainers
- Artists/Musicians
- Athletes
- Authors
- Business Person
- Doctors/Healers
- Fireman
- Historical Figure
- Human Activists
- Ordinary People
- Scientists
- Teachers

Japan



- Artists/Musicians
- Athletes
- Business Person
- Doctors
- Inventors
- Politicians
- Scientists

While US students find a variety of individuals to portray 'success', Japanese students had more similar figures. US students were more toward 'ordinary people' while Japanese students were more toward 'business people'.

DISCUSSION

- Both US students and Japanese students have similar plans post-college in terms of finding a career that offers personal happiness: the trend of the “Millennial Generation”.
- It’s rather interesting to see that both cultures surveyed don’t put high importance on material possessions and success.
- In terms of life goals, what Americans find to be successful, included raising children, contradicts the TIME Magazine’s article’s take on what is success in life. Japanese student’s perceptions were just as interesting, putting more emphasis on traveling and friends.

DISCUSSION 2

- The adjectives used to describe a successful person were most interesting from the Japanese perspective of being “aggressive” and “creative”. This would counter the stereotype that Japanese see being “humble” as the most important in their culture.
- As for the traits, regardless of what the goal is, the consensus is that “drive” and “motivation” are the most relevant in terms of a successful person.

DISCUSSION 3

- From my case study, I found it rather interesting that a person of such influence and success, Hiroshi Yamauchi, was known less in his own country.
- Regardless of recognition, his success has been viewed equally between both cultures while Steve Jobs was given less favor.
- Americans' perceptions of who represents success to them was interesting from the level of variation, but even more so from how “ordinary people” stood out among the rest.
- In comparison, Japanese perceptions seemed to find “business people” to have higher value of a successful person.

Limitations of The Study

- The number of surveyed was no more than 40.
 - Very minimal number in comparison to the total number of actual college students in US and Japan.
 - Results could've been different if a greater number was obtained
- “Personal Happiness” can be seen as too arbitrary:
 - More research can or should be done focused around what is each culture’s “standard of living” as to further the measure of success.
- While the look at American success was more historical, the Japanese look was strictly modern. Could the historical evolution of Japan’s success have been more pertinent?

Future Study

- What is “success” to the millennial generation? How will it change from being a college student into adult life?
- What is personal happiness in a career? Can it be measured through other factors such as standard of living?
- What other words or phrases are relevant to each culture’s perception of success?
- What is it that both cultures find to be the representation of success? If both cultures seem to want the same thing, when does one ‘reach the bottom’ and become a failure in their culture?

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<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=561>

<http://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2011/05/25/japanese-grads-left-in-jobless-lurch/>

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