

# **POP IDOLS IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JAPANESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS**

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# OUTLINE

1. Significance of the Study
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# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- We share an interest in pop music and related mediums
- We are especially interested in the surrounding culture and industry
- Taken classes at CSUMB and abroad:
  - Visual Arts, Japanese Art Theory, Cool Japan Today, and Japanese Pop Culture
- Through this research we want to explore the role and perception by Japanese and American college students of:
  - Pop Music Industry
  - Idols

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the perceptions of pop idols within social media and their usage thereof?
- What are the perceptions of the pop idol industry and its methods of promotions through social media?

# RESEARCH BACKGROUND

- Development of Pop Idols in America and Japan
- How the Pop Industry Functions
- Examples of Pop Idols (Japan & America)
- Current Role of Pop Idols in Social Media and Society
- Current Controversies and Endeavors of Pop Idols

# DEVELOPMENT OF POP IDOLS IN AMERICA

- The category known as “popular music”, which has in recent decades become heavily associated with idols, has no clear starting point in the American music industry, but became close to how we know it today as recently as the 80’s and 90’s.

(Glaser, 2017)

- Over time various flavors of pop music have come and gone, with the current trend leaning toward R&B and EDM sounds. On top of this, with the interconnectivity of the world through the internet and social media, Pop music has started to cross national borders and has become a major powerhouse in the entertainment industry.

# DEVELOPMENT OF POP IDOLS IN JAPAN

- While traces of Pop could be found in Jazz in the 20's-50's, the origins really were in kayoukyoku, or “lyrical singing music”. After WWII during the US occupation, there was a heavy influx of American Pop music, which over time started to be covered in Japanese, then sparking original songs. [\(Nagaoka, 2017\)](#)
- This eventually gave birth to female idols, which further developed into male and group idol industry. This genre has grown into a multi-billion yen industry, and has become an export and cultural phenomena of Japan. [\(Fukuya, 2013\)](#)

# HOW THE POP INDUSTRY FUNCTIONS

## America

- **Labels**
  - While many labels exist, many are actually under a small number of umbrella companies.
  - Warner Brothers Records, BGM, Sony Records
- **Contracts**
  - Generally focus on royalties and creative rights.
  - Can be legally binding for term length and exclusivity.
  - No personal life input (normally).
- **Public Image**
  - While many artists have publicists and managers to help, generally they shape their own image via social media, relationships, and independent interactions.
- **Fan Interaction**
  - Mostly interacts through concerts, merchandise, and social media.

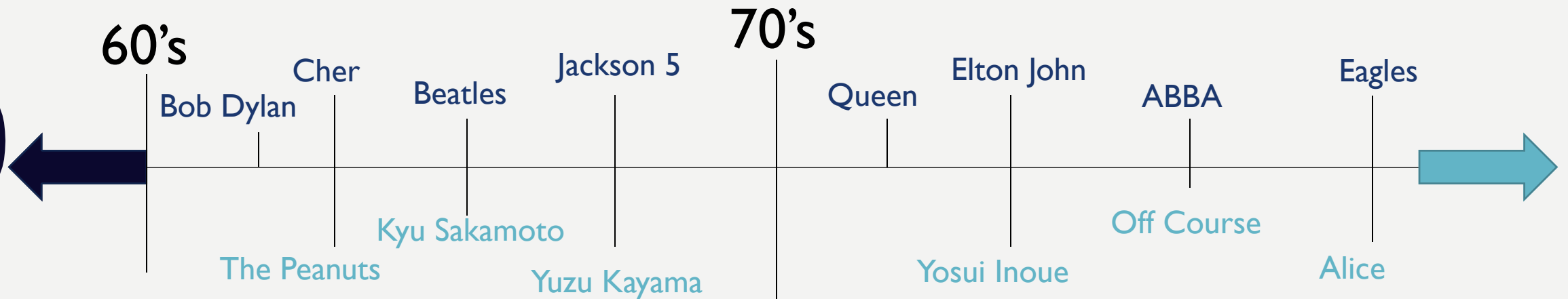


# HOW THE POP INDUSTRY FUNCTIONS

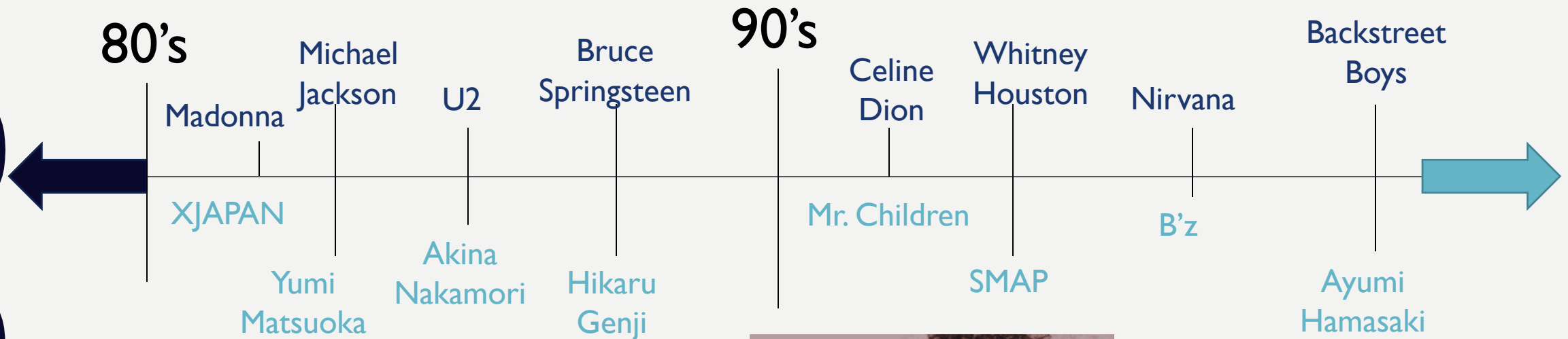
## Japan

- **Labels**
  - The large labels dominate the market, but some independent labels do exist.
  - Warner Music Japan Inc., Avex Entertainment Inc./Avex Marketing Inc., JVC Kenwood Victor Entertainment Corp., Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc., Johnny and Associates
- **Contracts**
  - Generally focus on royalties and creative rights.
  - Depending on the record label, can be legally binding for term length and exclusivity.
  - Personal life input.
- **Public Image**
  - Idols especially are expected to keep a clean image and avoid any form of scandal. They are assisted heavily by the labels, managers, and scheduled promotions.
- **Fan Interaction**
  - Fan interaction is a massive market in and of itself, with signing and meeting events, promotional campaigns, etc.

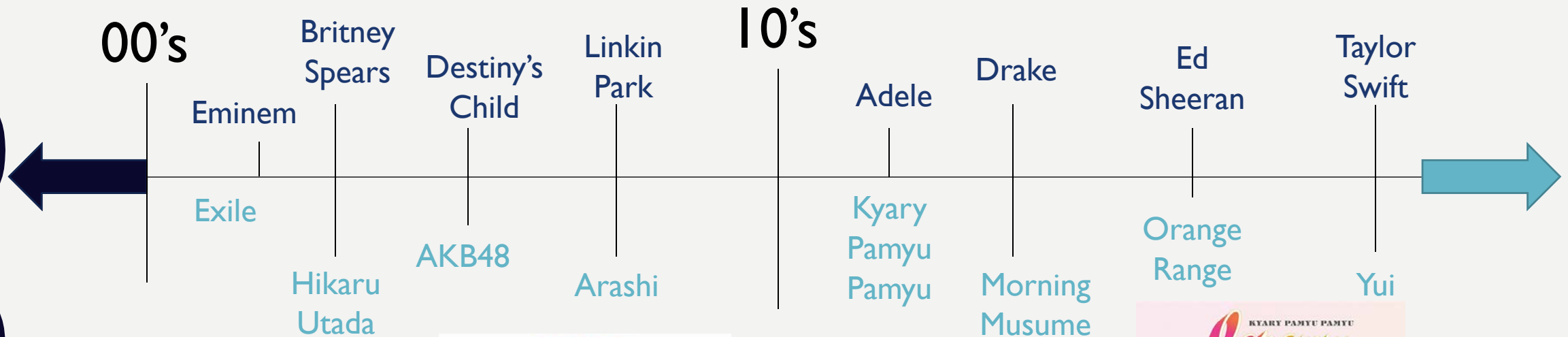
# TOP SELLING IDOLS (60'S-70'S)



# TOP SELLING IDOLS (80'S-90'S)



# TOP SELLING IDOLS (2000'S-2010'S)



# AMERICA'S FEMALE IDOLS



**Madonna**

Best Selling Female  
Soloist



**Destiny's Child**

Best Selling American Female Group



**Taylor Swift**

Most Awarded Female  
Artist



# JAPAN'S FEMALE IDOLS



**Momoio Clover Z**  
Ranked Most Popular Girl  
Group in Japan



**AKB48**  
Highest Selling Girl Group in  
Japan



**Utada Hikaru**  
Best Selling Solo Female  
in Japan

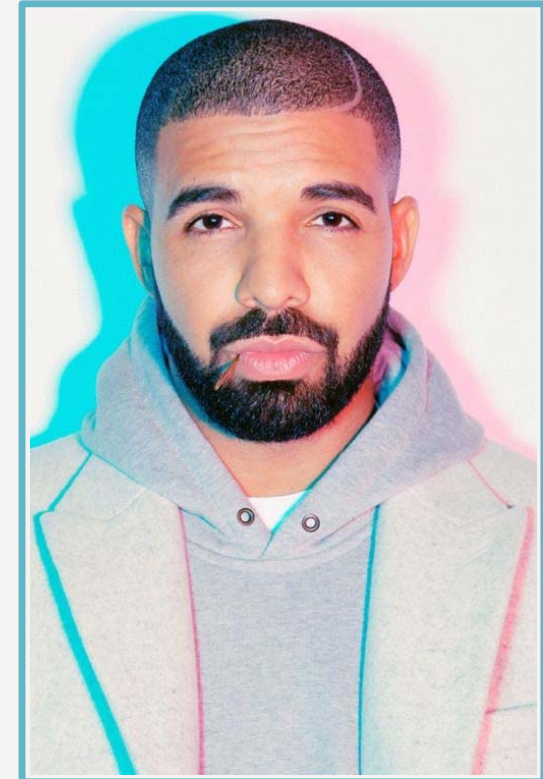
# AMERICA'S MALE IDOLS



**Backstreet Boys**  
Best Selling Pop Male  
Group



**Justin Bieber**  
Social Artist Award  
2011-16



**Drake**  
Highest Number of  
Hits by Male Solo



# JAPAN'S MALE IDOLS



← Arashi

Ranked Most Popular  
Male Group in Japan

SMAP →

Highest Selling Boy  
Band in Asia

← B'z

Highest Selling Male  
Duo in Japan





# CURRENT ROLE OF POP IDOLS IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIETY

- Study on people's reactions towards a certain Japanese pop group. (Izuma, 2017)
  - Shown AKB48 idols
  - Assessed the attitude towards each of the 10 members and their real world impact
  - There was a correlation in preconceived opinions towards the idols and the evidence from the fMRI\* scans. \*functional magnetic resonance imaging
- The changing power of a passionate fan base, on the fans and on society. (Dai, 2018)
  - “Fan tourism” has created a media and economic influence on par with major sporting events and teams.
  - These tourists can bring not only revenue, but also boost the locations' reputation.

# CURRENT CONTROVERSIES AND ENDEAVORS OF THE POP INDUSTRY (AMERICA)

- Taylor Swift's Political Statements (McDermott, 2018)
  - Recently came forward on Instagram to support a candidate and voice her views.
  - She also encouraged people to go vote during her AMA (American Music Awards) acceptance speech.
- Cardi B Emerging As A Political Powerhouse (Gontcharova, 2019)
  - Democratic senators publicly debated whether or not to retweet Cardi's recent political commentary.
  - Some people feel that her way of communicating through social media presents the issue in a more relatable manner.
- Fyre Festival: The Greatest Party That Never Happened (Smith, 2019)
  - Billed to be the hottest music festival of that summer on social media; tickets started at \$500.
  - This fell through and the festival goers were left, on the island, without accommodations and did not receive a refund.

# CURRENT CONTROVERSIES AND ENDEAVORS OF THE POP INDUSTRY (JAPAN)

- On Wide Show, Masahiro Nakai Boldly Objected To Legislature (Mizui, 2015)
  - Recently expressed his support on a national television show (Wide Show) of the protest held by 5,000 high school students in regard to recent legislation in concern to the categorization of various military weapons.
- AKB-48 Have Private Lives Tailored By The Recording Label (Kiuchi, 2017)
  - The recording label does this to maintain the idols' image and their schedules.
  - Often times hobbies and personal information are created for the purpose of sharing with fans and making the idol seem more relatable.
- An AKB-48 Member Shaved Her Head As An Apology (BBC News, 2013)
  - She offered a public apology video on social media in 2013 for breaking contract by being in a relationship.
- Boy Idol Group Releases Music Video with LGBT Themes (Pride Site, 2017)
  - Male idol group MeseMoa released a music video on April 13, 2017 that featured a multitude of male kisses, becoming a heavily discussed topic on social media in both Japan and America.

# RESEARCH METHOD

## Study Participants

- 62 University Students
  - 31 Japanese
    - 12 Male
    - 19 Female
  - 31 American
    - 13 Male
    - 17 Female
    - 1 Non-binary

## Research Instrument

- Online Survey (Google Forms)
  - [Japanese](#) Survey
  - [English](#) Survey

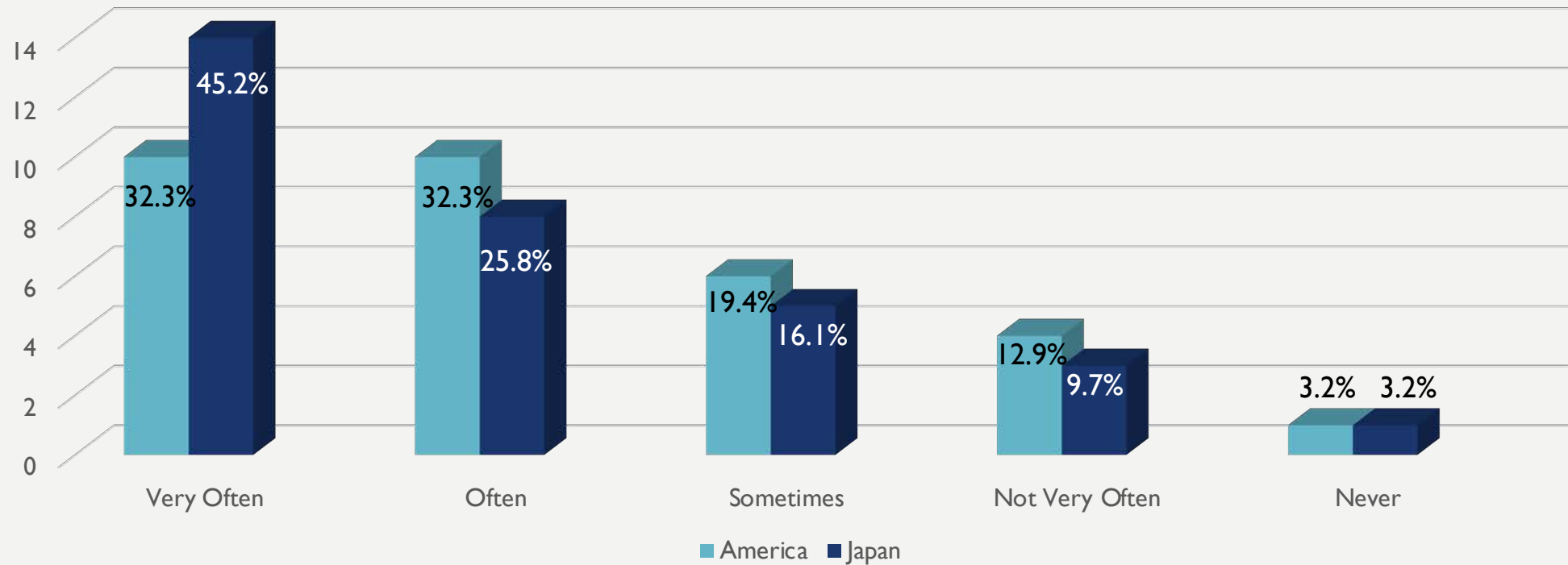


# **SURVEY RESULTS**

## RESEARCH QUESTION I:

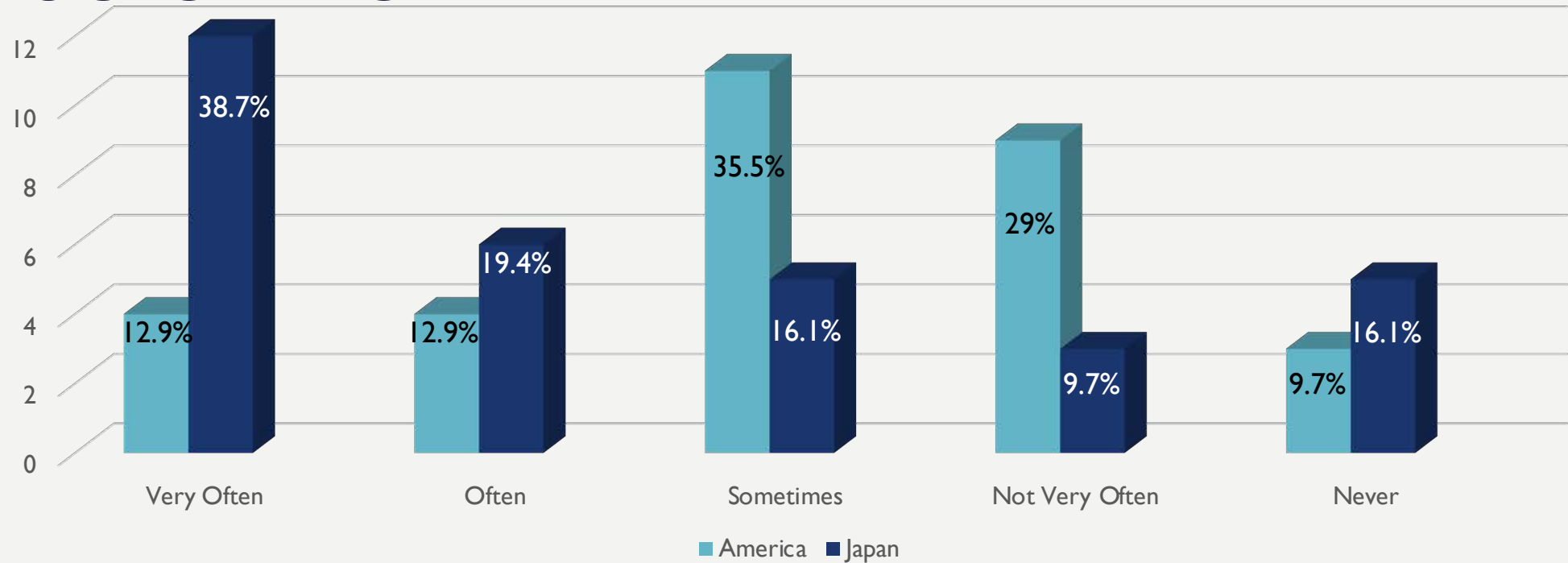
What are the perceptions of pop idols within social media and their usage thereof?

# HOW OFTEN DO YOU LISTEN TO POP MUSIC?



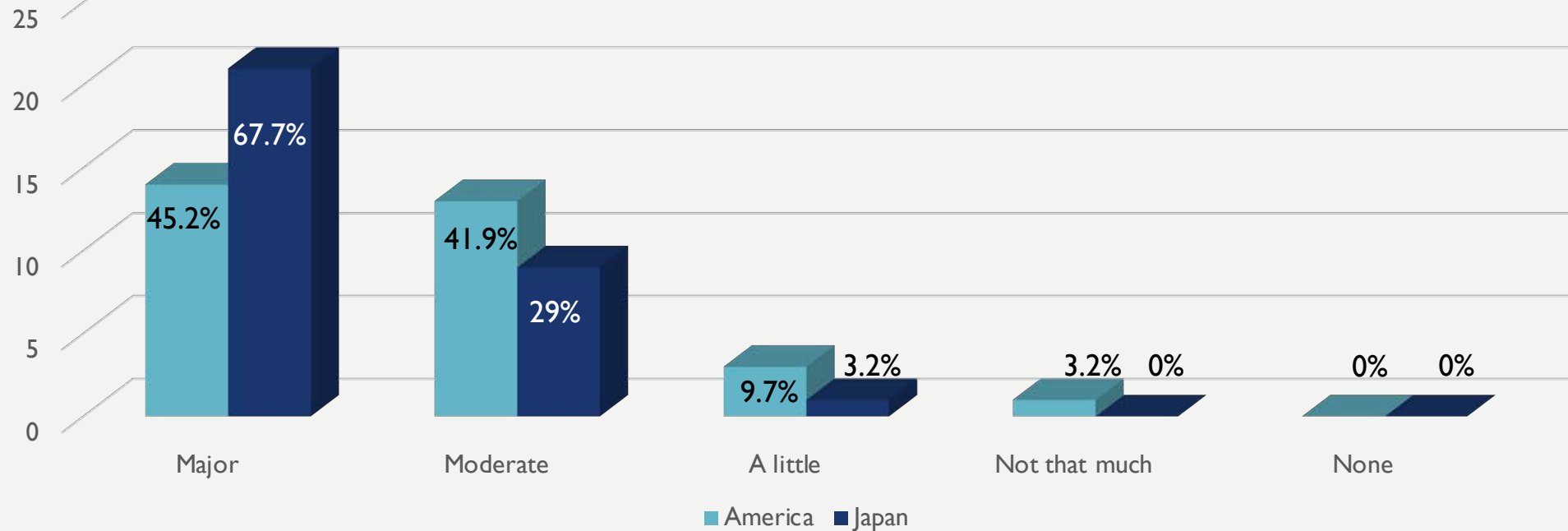
The majority of both groups listen to pop music.

# HOW OFTEN DO YOU VIEW/PAY ATTENTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY POPULAR MUSICIANS?



Within the American respondents, 25.8% said they often pay attention, whereas within the Japanese respondents 58.1% said they often pay attention.

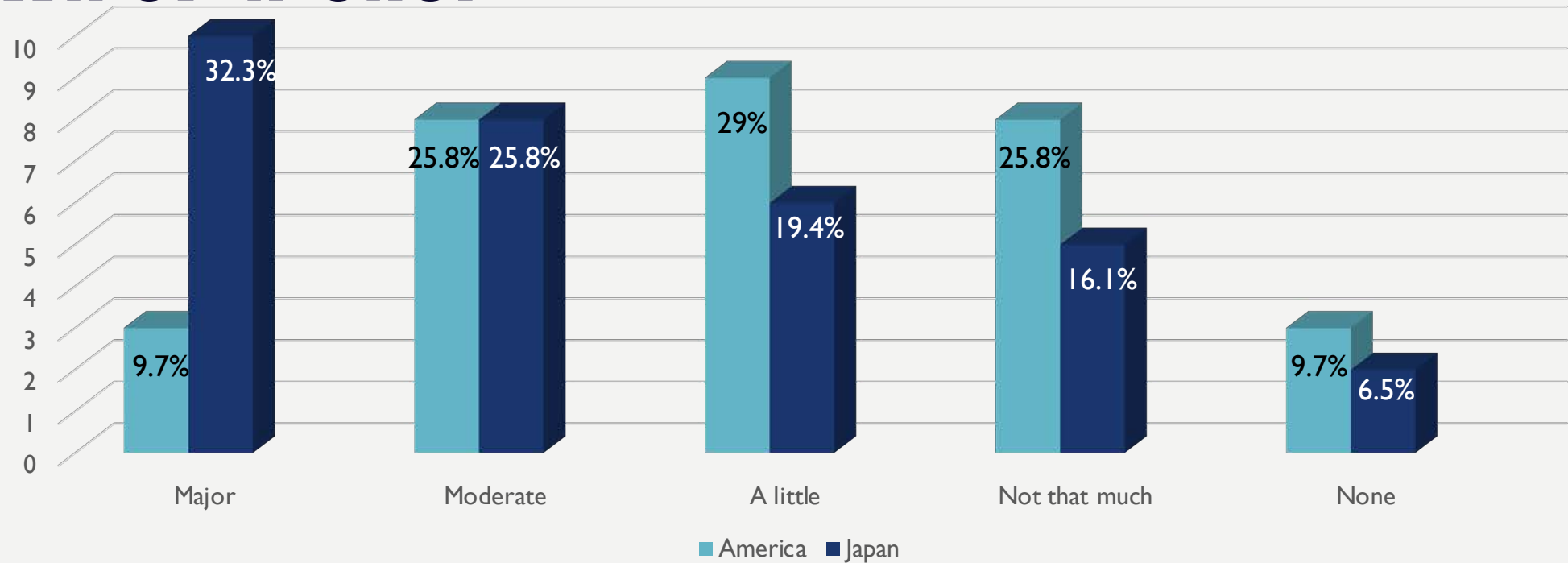
# HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO YOU FEEL POPULAR MUSICIANS HAVE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA?



The majority of both groups felt that artists have major influence through social media.

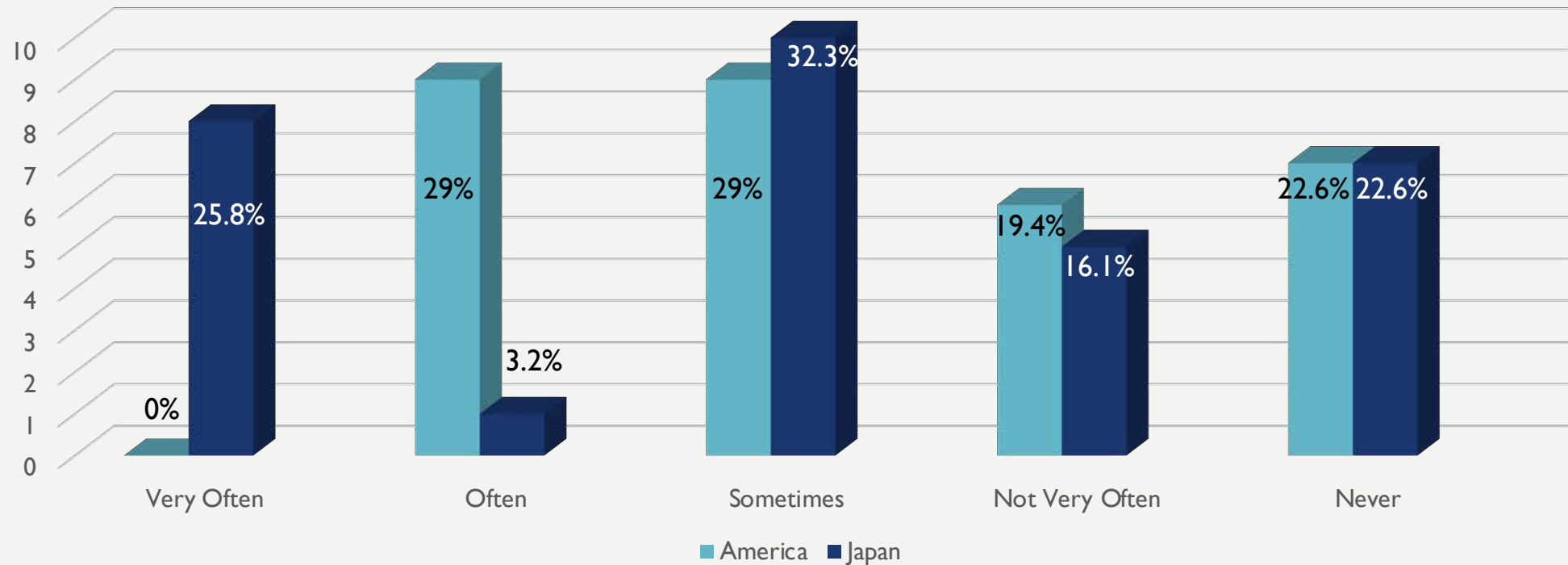


# HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT DO THE OPINIONS OF YOUR FAVORITE MUSICIANS, CONCERNING AN ISSUE SHARED ON SOCIAL MEDIA, HAVE ON YOUR OWN OPINIONS?



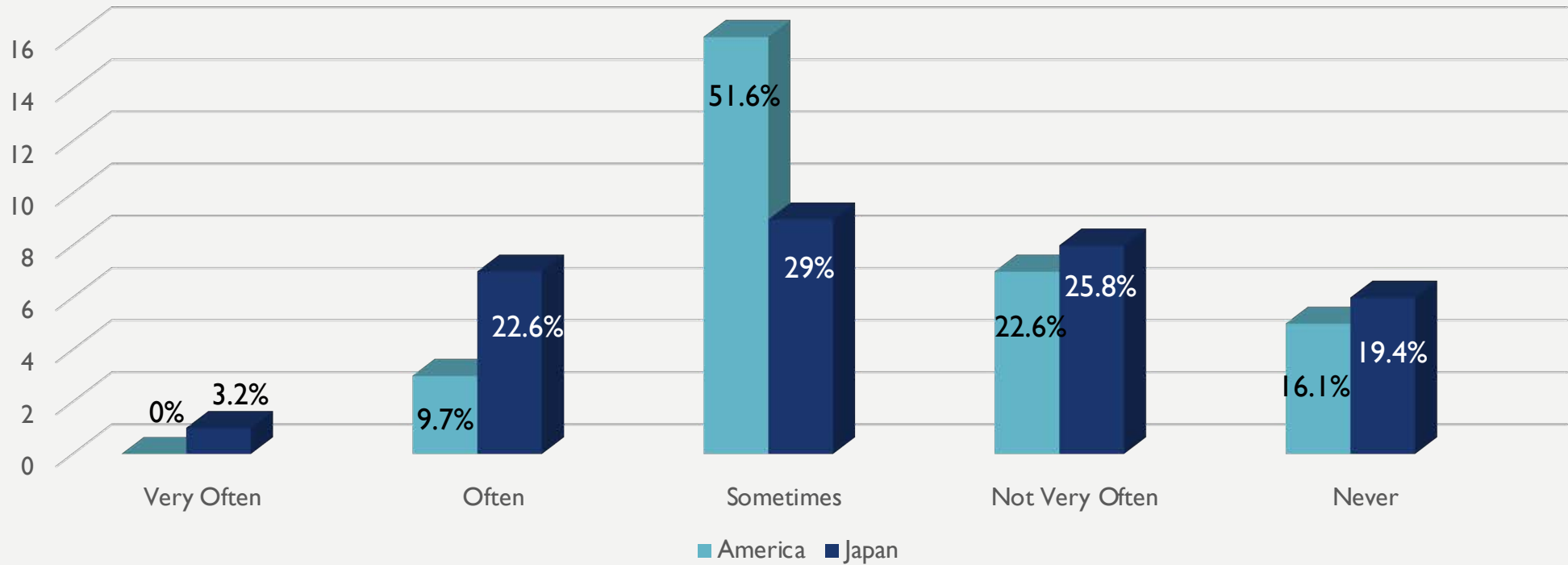
Among the American respondents 9.7% said there was a major impact on their own opinions, whereas in the Japanese respondents 32.3% said there was a major impact.

# HOW OFTEN DO YOU FOLLOW A MUSICIAN'S SOCIAL MEDIA, BASED ON EXISTING OPINIONS OR SHARED OPINIONS WITH YOUR OWN?



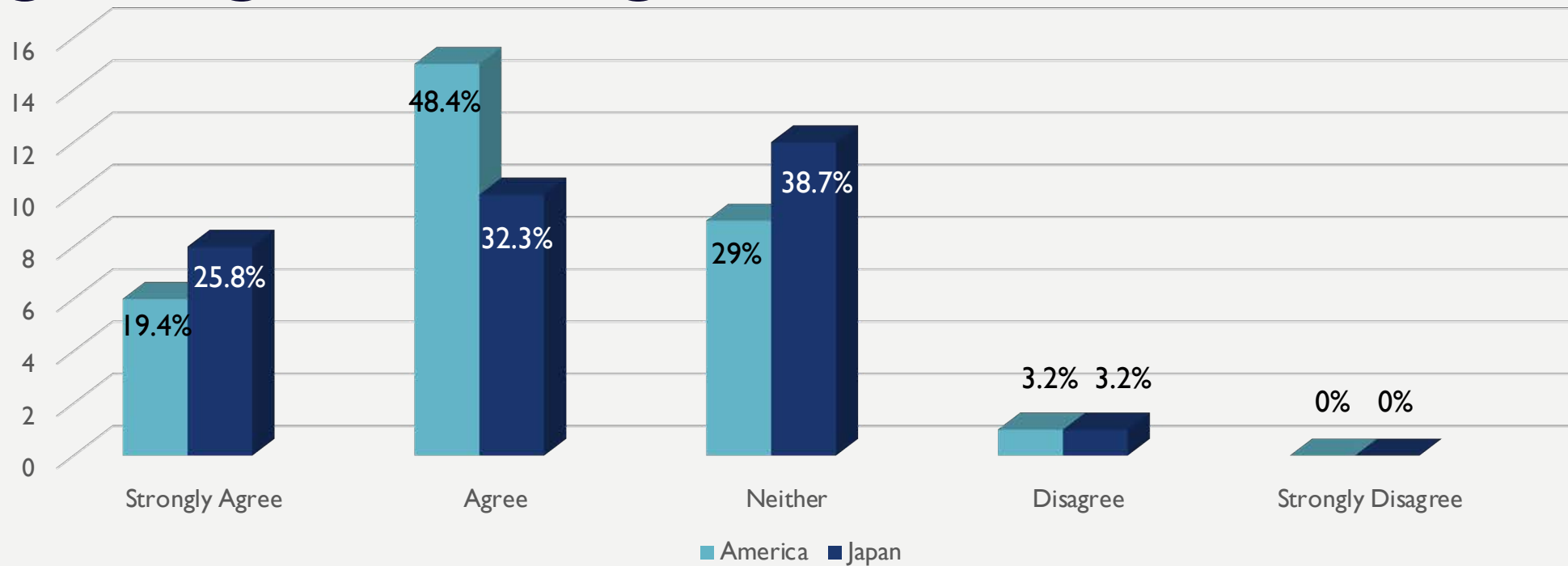
Though the majority of both groups said sometimes to never, within the American respondents 29% said often whereas in the Japanese respondents 25.8% said very often.

# HOW OFTEN DO YOU TAKE THE SIDE OF YOUR FAVORITE MUSICIAN OVER SOMEONE ELSE (POLITICIANS, OTHER ARTISTS, ETC.), IF AT ALL?



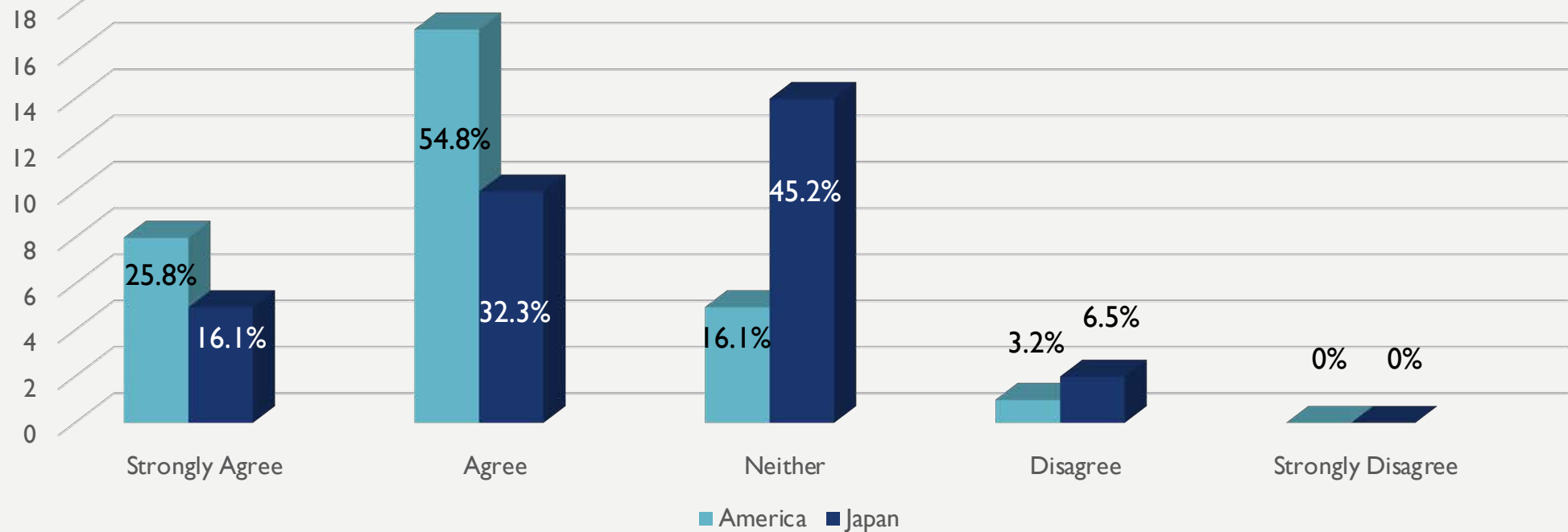
Within the American students only 9.7% often take the side of their favorite artists, whereas in the Japanese students 22.6% often take their side over others, and 3.2% said they very often take their side.

# DO YOU AGREE WITH THE WAY TAYLOR SWIFT CHOSE TO EXPRESS HER POLITICAL VIEWS?



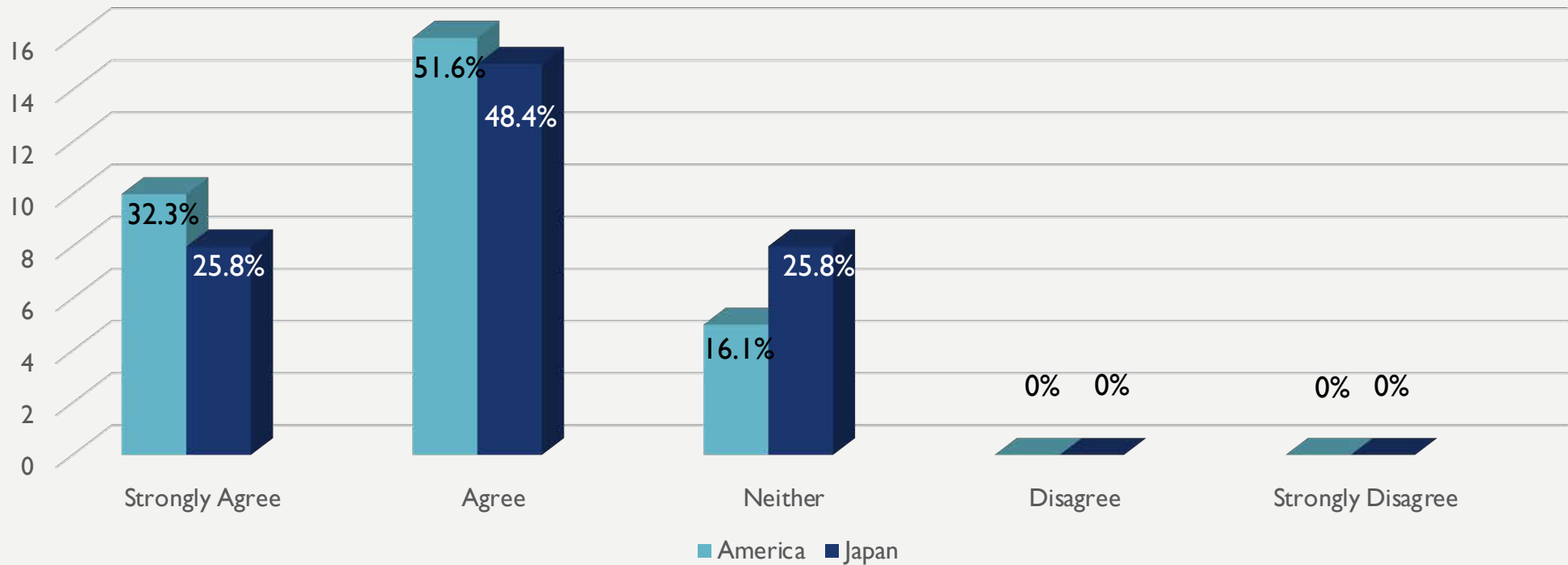
While both generally were in support, within the Japanese respondents they were much more ambivalent, with 38.7% more responding neither disagree nor agree.

# DO YOU AGREE WITH CARDI B EXPRESSING HER POLITICAL VIEWS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA?



Within the American respondents 80.6% either agreed or strongly agreed, with only 16.1% being ambivalent. However in the Japanese respondents only 48.4% were positive, with 45.2% being ambivalent.

# DO YOU AGREE WITH THE WAY MASAHIRO NAKAI CHOSE TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS PUBLICLY?



Both groups of respondents were relatively similar, with the majority being in agreement.

# CONCLUSION RESEARCH QUESTION: 1

- Both groups feel that artists have a high amount of impact using social media, but the Japanese were more easily influenced by it.
- The Americans held stronger opinions in terms of political comments, but the Japanese proved more ambivalent. However, the Japanese respondents were much more vocal about following artists on social media often.
- Both groups felt artists using social media was a generally positive thing.



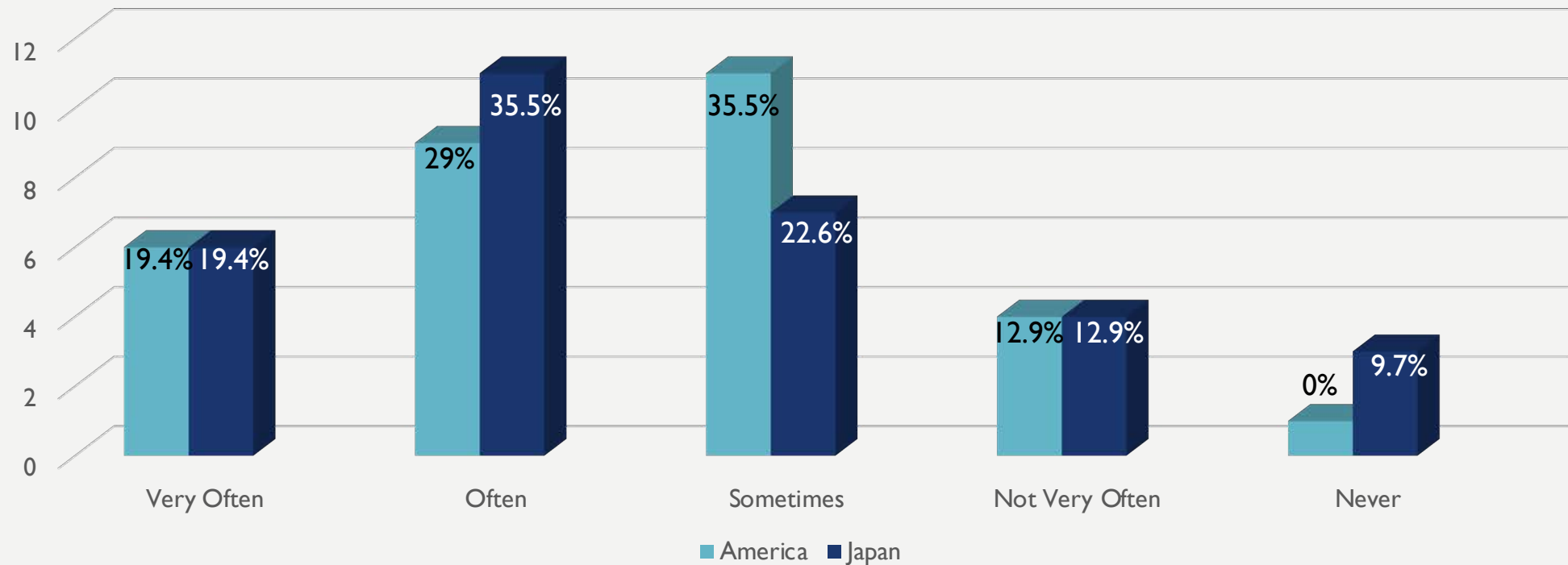
# **SURVEY RESULTS**

## RESEARCH QUESTION 2:

What are the perceptions of the pop idol industry and its methods of promotions through social media?

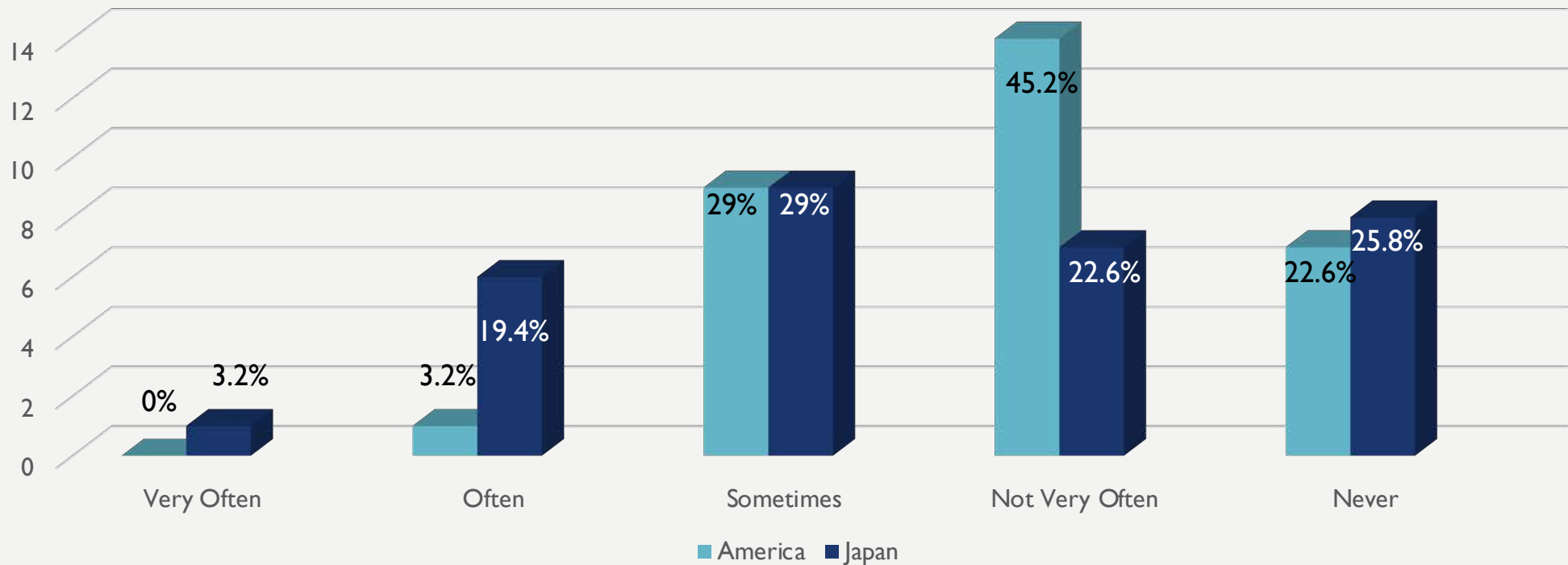


# HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE ADVERTISEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA STARRING MUSICIANS?



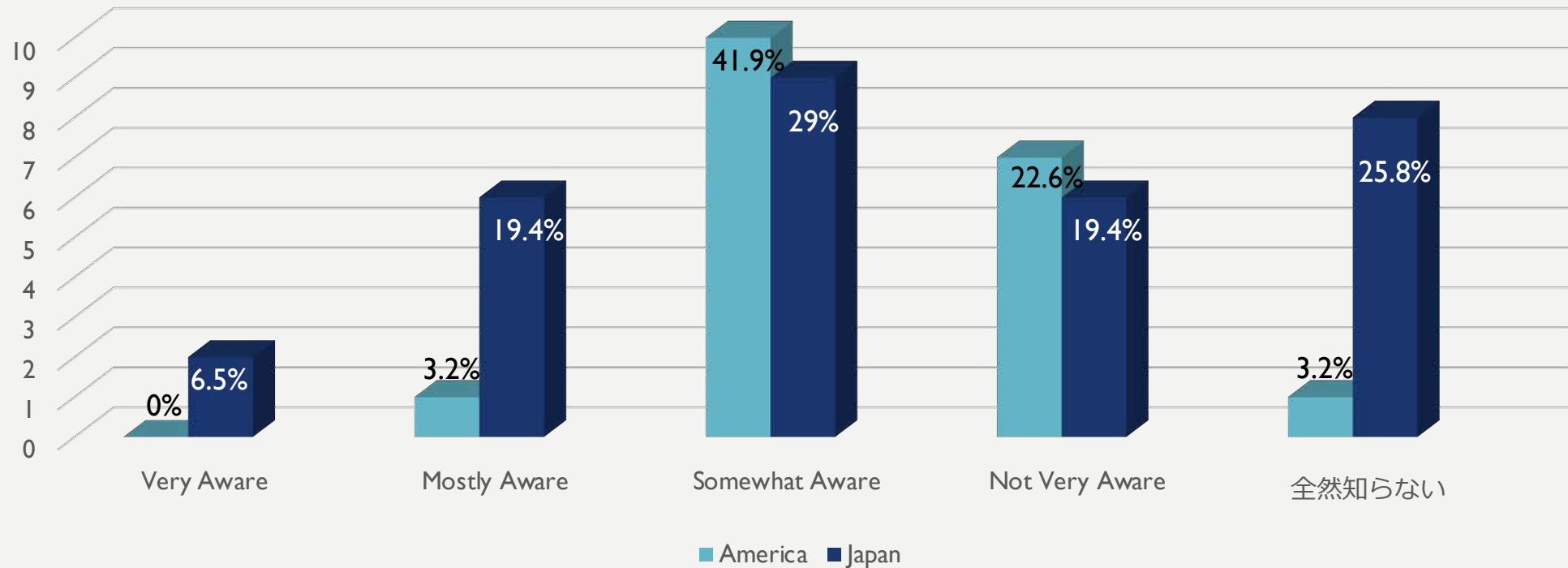
While the majority of respondents in both groups often see advertisements starring artists on social media, there was a somewhat higher percentage of Japanese respondents who said they never see such advertisements.

# HOW OFTEN HAS THE ENDORSEMENT OF A MUSICIAN AFFECTED YOUR DECISION TO PURCHASE OR NOT PURCHASE A PRODUCT?



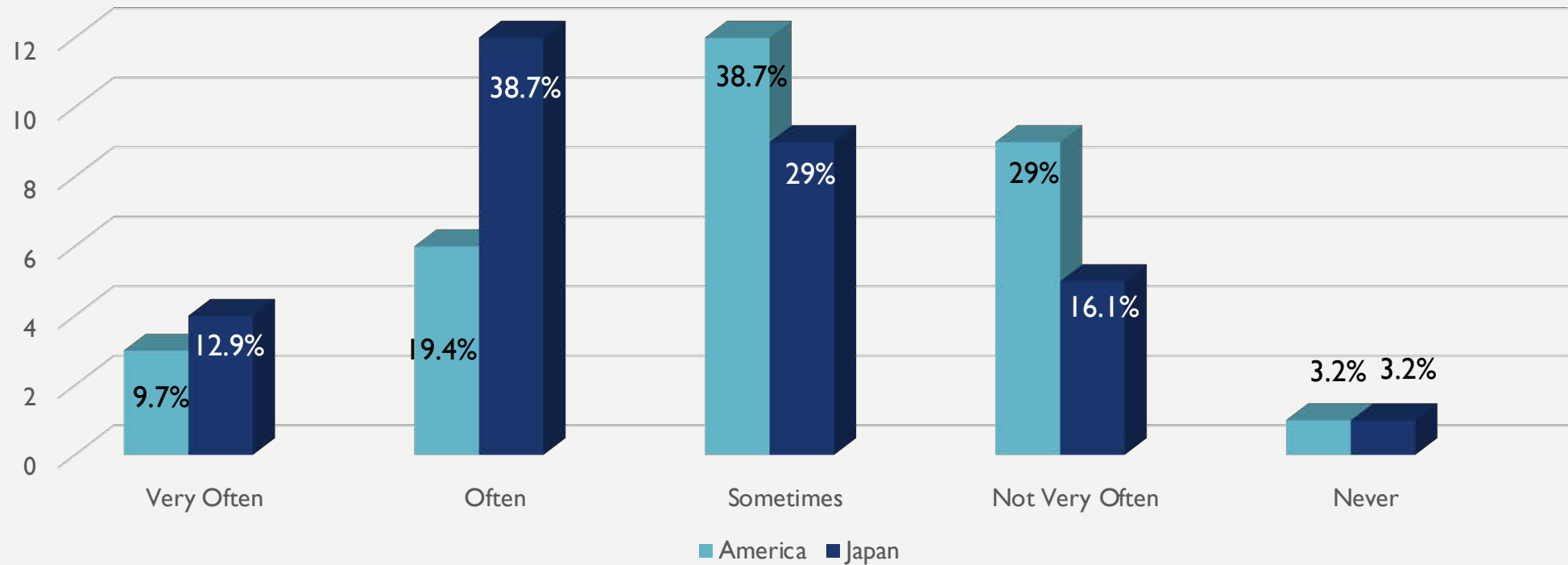
Within the Japanese respondents 22.6% said they often or always decided to buy or not buy a product based on artist endorsement, whereas in the American respondents only 3.2% said they were often affected.

# HOW AWARE ARE YOU OF THE LABEL OR COMPANY YOUR FAVORITE MUSICIAN WORKS FOR?



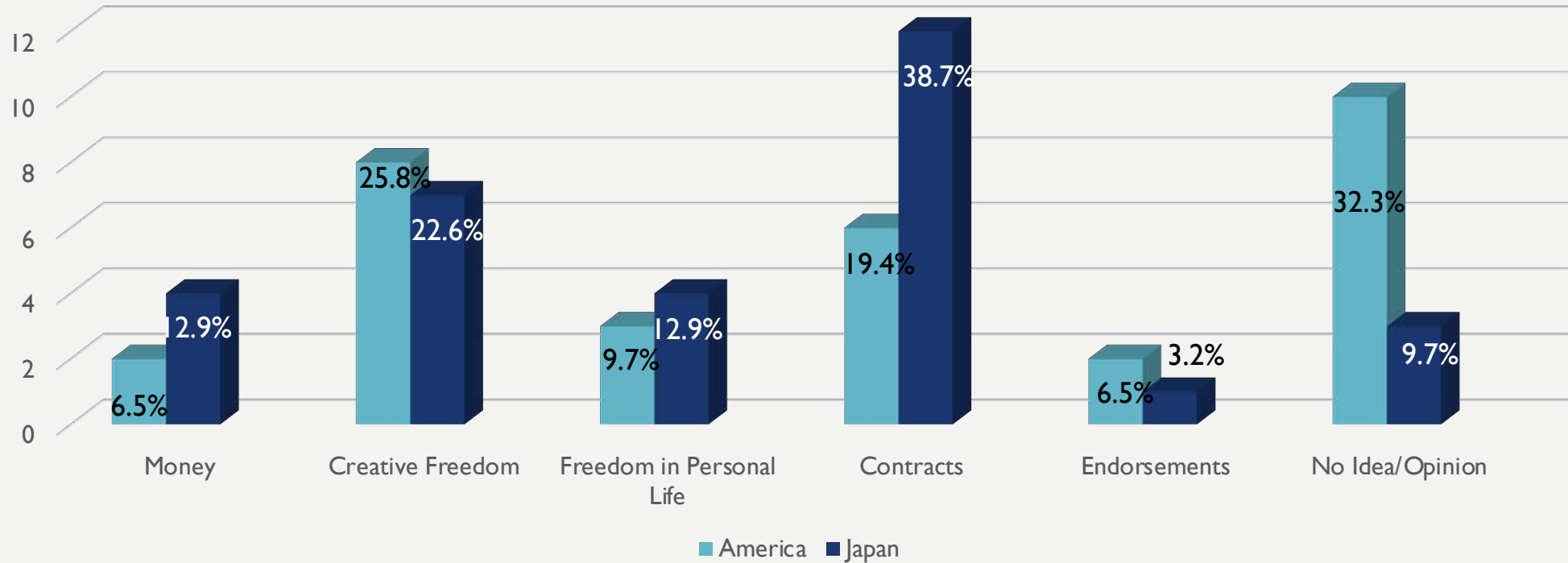
The Japanese respondents were overall more aware of the labels their favorite artists work for, in contrast to the American respondents who mostly had no idea, with only 3.2% saying they were mostly aware.

# HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU FEEL MUSICIANS DISCUSS THE INDUSTRY THEY WORK IN?



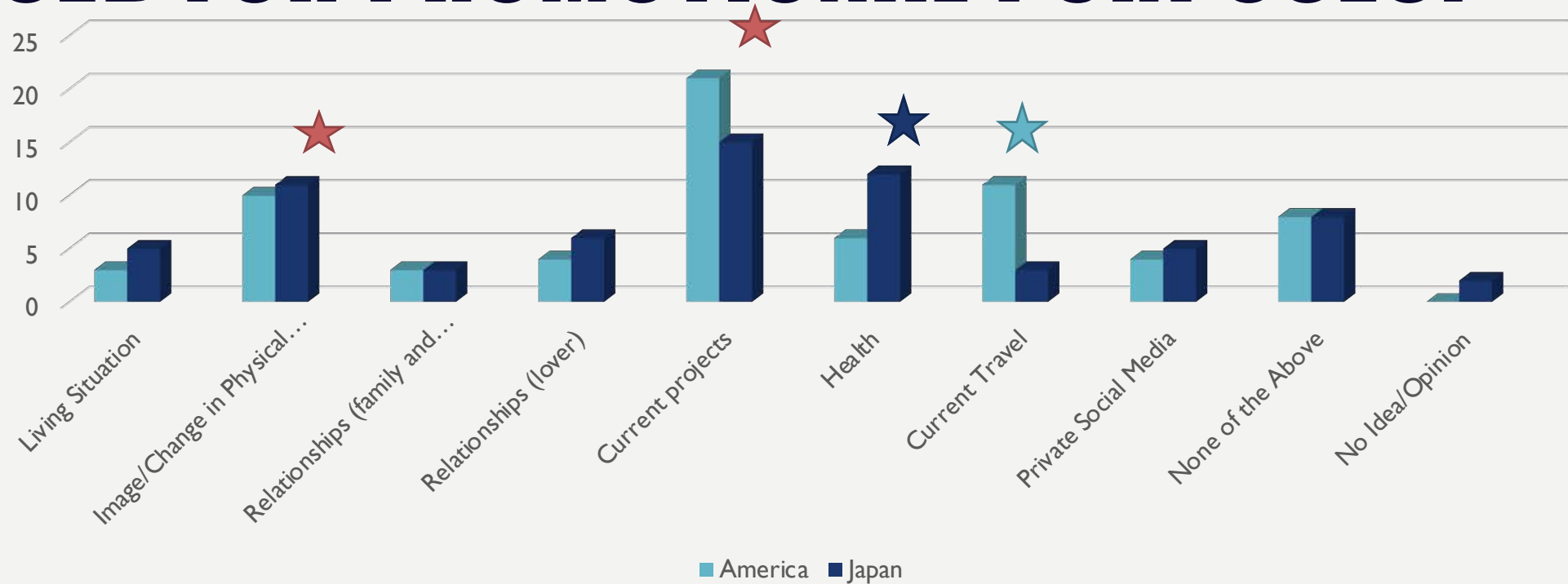
Within the American respondents 29.1% said they feel artists discuss their industry often to very often, whereas in Japan 51.6% felt the same.

# WHAT TOPIC DO YOU MOST OFTEN SEE ARGUED BETWEEN ARTISTS AND THEIR LABEL/PRODUCTION COMPANY?



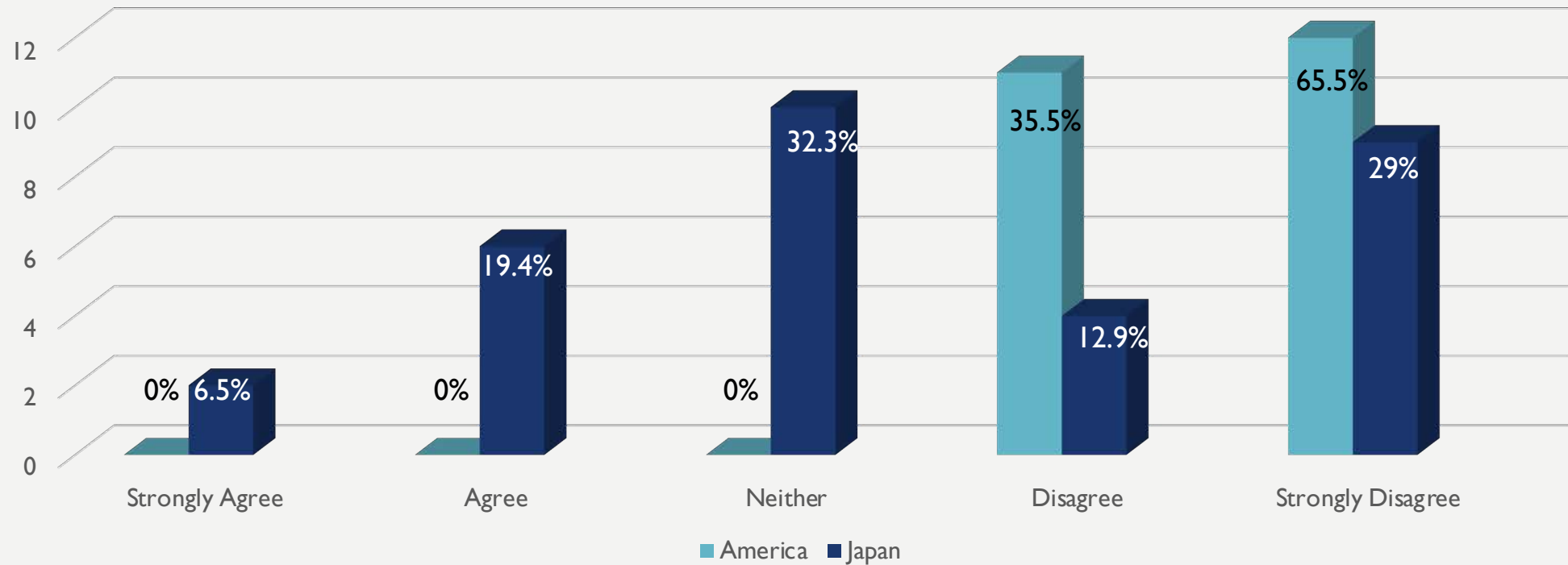
Both groups chose creative freedom and contracts as the largest topics, though the American respondents had 32.3% claim no idea.

# WHAT PARTS OF A POP ICONS' LIFE DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE USED FOR PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES?



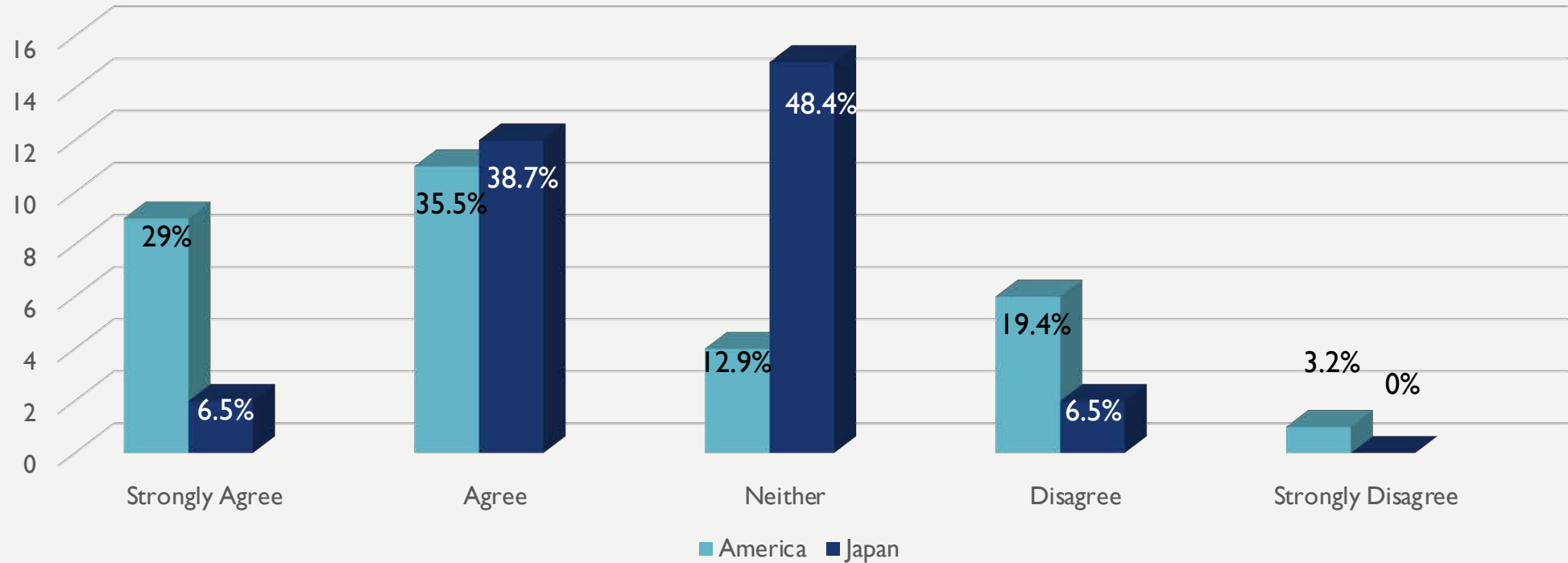
The number one and two picked by both groups were current projects and physical appearance, but in the Japanese respondents third place was current health, and in the Americans third was current travels.

# DO YOU AGREE WITH THE PUNISHMENT THE AKB48 MEMBER WAS GIVEN?



The American respondents overwhelmingly were against the punishment, whereas the Japanese were much more mixed, with the largest portion remaining neutral. However they did have some positive responses.

# DO YOU FEEL THAT IMPROVING REGULATIONS FOR ADVERTISING IN SOCIAL MEDIA WOULD BE BENEFICIAL?



The majority of American respondents agreed, however the majority of Japanese respondents were neutral to the subject.



# CONCLUSION RESEARCH QUESTION: 2

- Both groups were more aware of the artists than the label, however in Japan they do feel it is more talked about than in America.
- Respondents felt that the label had the right to use not only current projects for promotion, but also things such as health, travel, and relationships.
- The Japanese respondents felt that under contract the company had at least some control over an artist's life. The American respondents were heavily against it.
- Both groups feel that there should be more restrictions on advertising in social media.

# CONCLUSION AND CONSIDERATION

- Japanese and American college students are influenced differently through social media by pop artists.
- Japanese students tend to pay more attention to artists' social media, while American students are more apt to paying attention to political statements made by artists. In comparison to American students, Japanese students try to remain neutral when dealing with politics.
- The Japanese students tend to view the artists as belonging to the public and labels, whereas in America the respondents felt the artists should have more freedom to create their own image.
- However, more Japanese students agree there should be restrictions on advertising through social media, possibly due to the fact that they are self aware of how easily influenced by celebrities they can be.

# LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE STUDIES

- Small scale of the online survey makes it difficult to generalize the findings.
- We had difficulties receiving responses from Japanese college students at first.
- We would have liked to have found more opinionated Japanese survey takers.
- Greater push of Japanese participants from the start.
- Survey different age groups for their views.
- Survey on a larger scale.

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**ANY QUESTIONS?**

