Factors that Reflect the Preferred Fashion Styles of Japanese and American University Students

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Capstone Festival
May 18th, 2017
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Research Questions

1. How do Japanese and American university students use their style to represent their identity?

2. How influential are trendsetters' role in Japanese and American fashion consumerism?
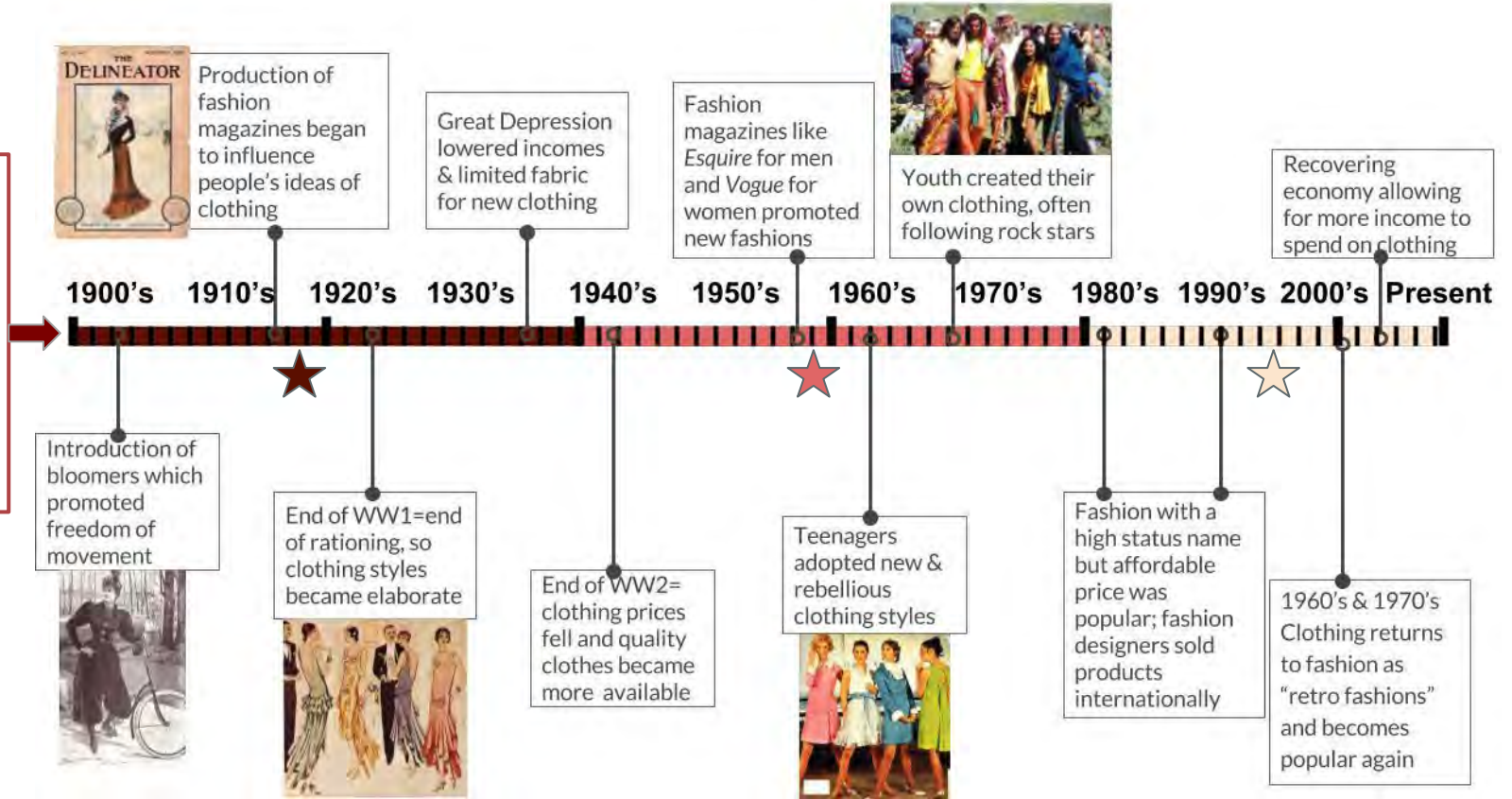
Significance of the Study: Marissa & Diana

- American people dress more individualistic, while Japanese people have a tendency to dress similar to others
- While studying abroad in Japan, we realized that many stores sell similar clothing and we thought that we would like to know what "personal style" means to Japanese people
- Would like to know what differences are there exactly between American and Japanese fashion, and what influences it.
- Would like to learn what is influencing American and Japanese university students' personal style

Research Background

- The History of Fashion
  - America
  - Japan
- Requirements of "Trendsetters"
- Trend Creation Process
- Different Forms of Fashion Media
- Fashion and Identity Correlation

History of Fashion: America

Each **colored bar** will be discussed further in depth in the next slides

Production of fashion magazines began to influence people's ideas of clothing

Great Depression lowered incomes & limited fabric for new clothing

Fashion magazines like *Esquire* for men and *Vogue* for women promoted new fashions

Youth created their own clothing, often following rock stars

Recovering economy allowing for more income to spend on clothing

1900's 1910's 1920's 1930's 1940's 1950's 1960's 1970's 1980's 1990's 2000's Present

Introduction of bloomers which promoted freedom of movement

End of WW1=end of rationing, so clothing styles became elaborate

End of WW2= clothing prices fell and quality clothes became more available

Teenagers adopted new & rebellious clothing styles

Fashion with a high status name but affordable price was popular; fashion designers sold products internationally

1960's & 1970's Clothing returns to fashion as "retro fashions" and becomes popular again

(Pendergast, 2003)

After WWI: America

1900's	Loose, floppy bloomers start trend toward **less restrictive clothing** for women
1920's	End of WW1 = end of rationing, so clothing styles became elaborate
1930's	**Great Depression reduced income**; ignored shift in fashion & wore same clothes

Industrialization, the women's movement, the **rise of popular culture** (magazines, TV, movies), and the war each had an impact on the world of fashion.

Despite prosperity in the 1920's, fashion halted in the 1930's because no one had disposable income for fashionable clothing

(Pendergast, 2003)

After WWII: America

1940's	Servicemen returning from WWII wear T-shirts = newly accepted casual outershirt
1950's	People were tired of clothing restrictions & went back to luxurious clothing
1960's	Influence of rock n' roll; tight blue jeans & poodle skirts

Fashion magazines published clothing designs that illustrated how men's suits could be altered into women's suits

Clothing restrictions due to rationing from the war led to similar clothing styles - creative with new styles to express themselves

(Pendergast, 2003)

New Style: America

1970's	Bell bottom jeans, tie dye, maxi dresses & platform shoes come into fashion
1990's	Grunge (old, stained, or ripped) clothing becomes a fashion sensation
2000's	1960/70's clothing returns to fashion as "retro fashions" & becomes popular again

New styles were invented by people in hot cultural scenes or by rock bands; followers adopted and modified the new styles; and designers then copied the new styles and marketed them to the masses
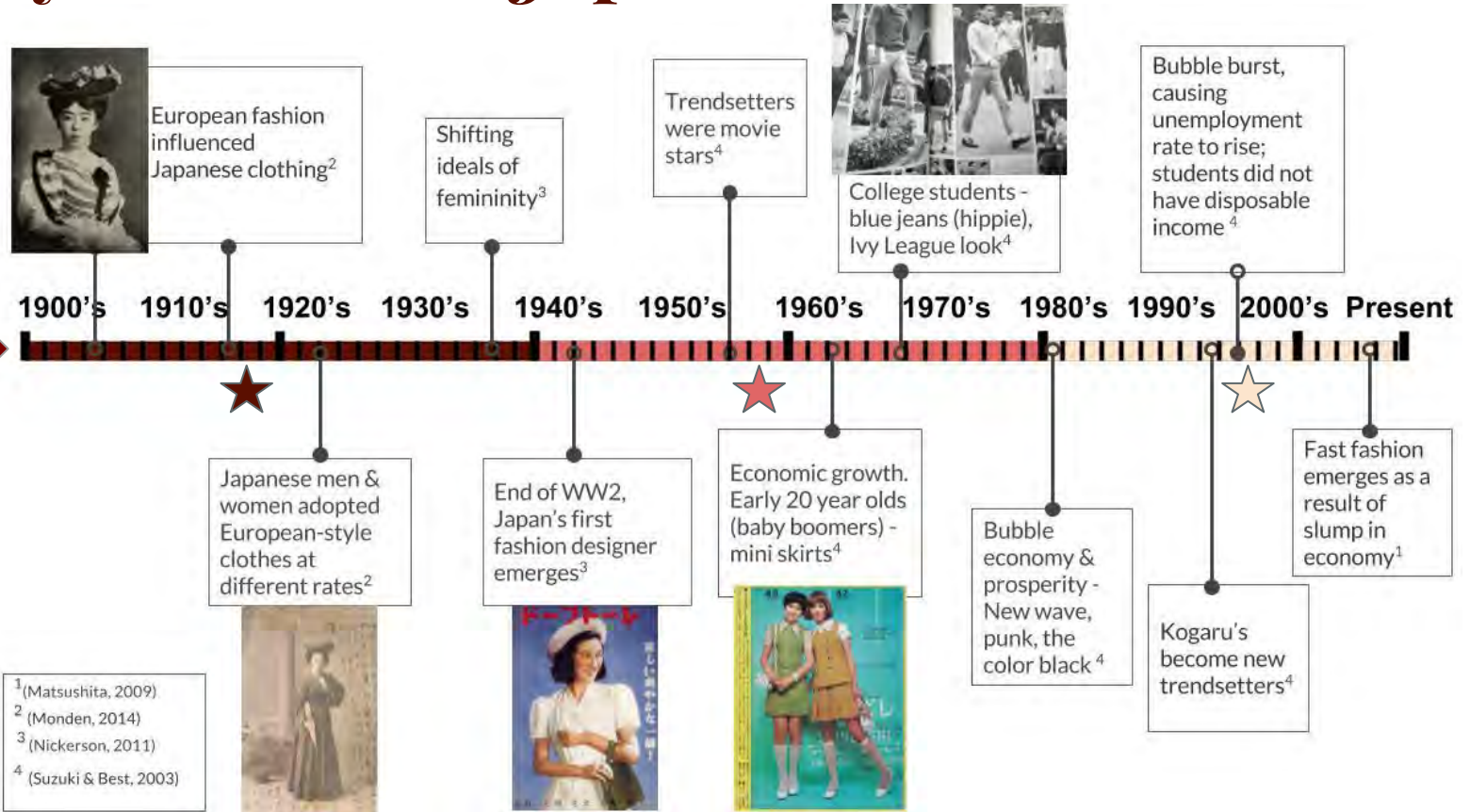

Tired of similar, conforming fashion, a new style revolution created by youth swept the country

(Pendergast, 2003)

History of Fashion: Japan

Each **colored bar** will be discussed further in depth in the next slides

European fashion influenced Japanese clothing[2]

Shifting ideals of femininity[3]

Trendsetters were movie stars[4]

College students - blue jeans (hippie), Ivy League look[4]

Bubble burst, causing unemployment rate to rise; students did not have disposable income[4]

1900's   1910's   1920's   1930's   1940's   1950's   1960's   1970's   1980's   1990's   2000's   Present

Japanese men & women adopted European-style clothes at different rates[2]

End of WW2, Japan's first fashion designer emerges[3]

Economic growth. Early 20 year olds (baby boomers) - mini skirts[4]

Bubble economy & prosperity - New wave, punk, the color black[4]

Kogaru's become new trendsetters[4]

Fast fashion emerges as a result of slump in economy[1]

[1] (Matsushita, 2009)
[2] (Monden, 2014)
[3] (Nickerson, 2011)
[4] (Suzuki & Best, 2003)

After WWI: Japan

1910's	European fashion influenced Japanese clothing
1920's	Japanese men & women adopted European-style clothes at different rates[1]
1930's	"Shifting ideals of **femininity** through discourses on women's fashion"[2]

[1](Monden, 2014)

[2](Nickerson, 2011)

⭐ Overseas fashion began to influence Japan's widespread change in clothing

After WWII: Japan

1940's	Japan's first fashion designer emerges. Women shape their world **through their consumption practices**[1]
1960's	Japan's economic growth. Early 20 year olds (baby boomers) - mini skirts
1970's	College students - blue jeans (hippie), Ivy League look[2]

[1](Nickerson, 2011)

[2](Suzuki & Best, 2003)

Changing from a more conservative look, female clothing became less restrictive; male clothing geared towards professional but comfortable look

New Style: Japan

1980's	Bubble Economy = unparalleled prosperity
1990's	Bubble burst & unemployment rises; students did not have disposable income[2]
2000's	Slump in economy→Fast Fashion: **high quality** clothes offered at **low prices** (ex. UNIQLO)[1]

Nikkei Stock Index

[1](Matsushita, 2009)

[2](Suzuki & Best, 2003)

Changes in economy directly influence change in clothing manufacturing

History of American & Japanese Fashion

America   **Japan**

| Lowered incomes & limited fabric for new clothing | **Great Depression 1930's** | Shifting ideals of femininity |

| Clothing prices fell & quality clothes became more available | **End of WW2 1940's** | Japan's first fashion designer emerges |

| Teenagers adopted new & rebellious clothing styles | **Economic Growth 1970's** | Early 20 year olds wore mini skirts & recreated Ivy League look |

| Recovering economy allowing for more income to spend on clothing | **Economic Recovery 2000's** | Fast fashion emerges as a result of slump in economy |

Requirements of "Trendsetters"

- Apparel market consists of **frequent** and **rapid** changes
  (Goldsmith, Flynn & Clark, 2012)

- As the importance of "**style/design**" in clothing increases, interest in "**durability**" decreases
  (Kawabata & Rabolt, 1999)

Leads To

"**Fast fashion**" - makes it necessary to have **trendsetters** to push the consistently new merchandise

America

Sense of Specialness

Intrigue Factor

Relatable

HIGHLY engaged fans

(Duboff, 2016)

Time

Disposable Income

Social Networks

Followers

(Suzuki, 2003)

Japan

Reliable

Impressive

Trustworthy

Suitable

Convincing

(Suzuki, 2016)

Trend Creation Process

"**Leaders**"

Fashion Designers

"**Trendsetters**"

Celebrities, social media personalities, etc.

"**Followers**"

Normal consumer, typical shopper
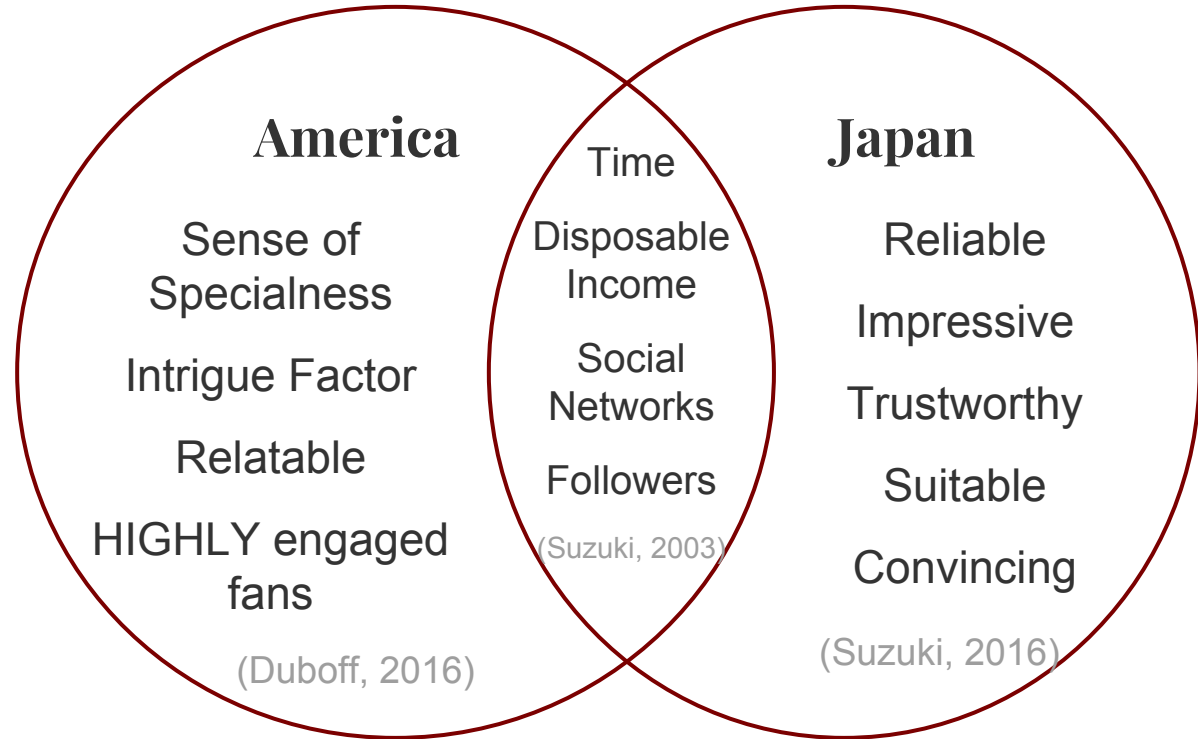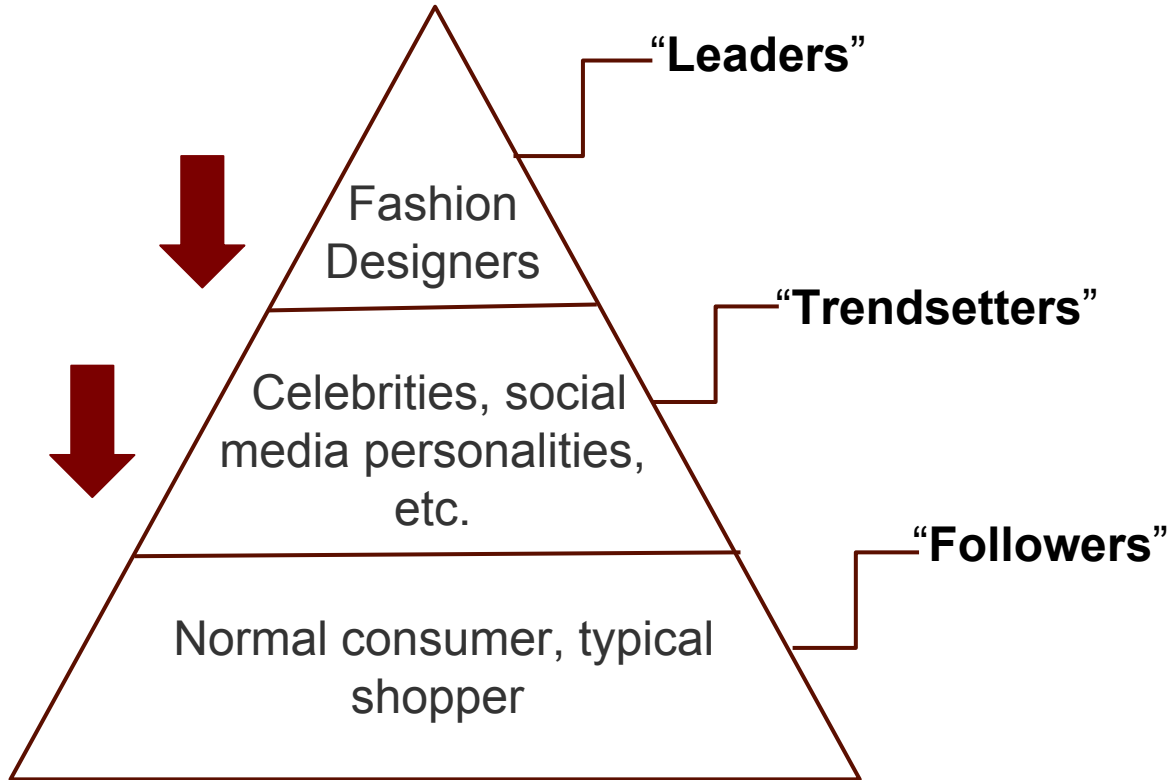
Directional Model

Trends/Fads "trickle down" a set social structure
(e.g. the chart on the left)

Selectional Model

One style/article is chosen out of many options to become a trend

(E.g. this star)

(Suzuki, 2003)

Different Forms of Fashion Media

Trendsetters

↓

Media Outlets

↓ ↓ ↓

Followers   Followers   Followers
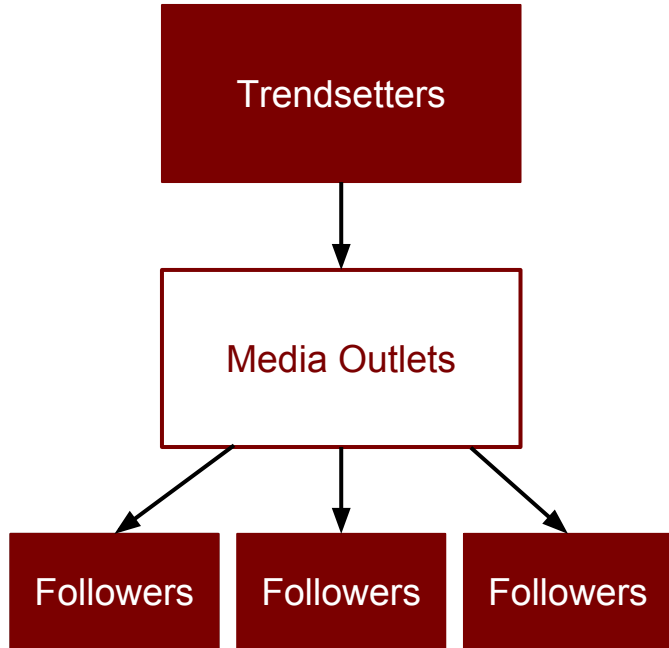
- Coverage draws attention to "innovators"
  - By discovering, identifying, and reporting on the activities and fashion of trendsetters
- Magazines are the most reliable sources of fashion information
  - Japanese magazines often include photos of regular girls

(Suzuki & Best, 2003)

Magazines, store displays, friends, and television influence women's fashion the most

(Kawabata & Rabolt, 1999)

America: Fashion and Identity Correlation

Materialism - "making money, having things, and seeing things as a means to success and happiness in life"

1. High Levels of Materialism - low life satisfaction

(Goldsmith, Flynn & Clark, 2012)

2. Lower Expenditure - reflects a more casual style

(Kawabata & Rabolt, 1999)

3. Interclass Mobility - losing significance since people are able to choose their style regardless of their social status

(Crane, 2009)

Goods are used to represent their status and identity
(Goldsmith, Flynn & Clark, 2012)

Japan: Fashion and Identity Correlation

1. Highly Assertive - prefer individualistic fashion items

2. Highly Individualistic - like to be noticed

3. Highly Imitative - gain confidence by copying and having their fashion copied by friends

4. Highly Competitive - feel they can become more charming by adopting trending fashion items

5. Minority - want to hide themselves by being the same as others

6. Majority - purse being the same as others, but strive to posses a certain distinctive charm

(Nishida, 2015)

Research Method

Participants: 200 University Students (ages 17-43)

- 121 Japanese University Students
    - 80 Female, 41 Male
- 79 American University Students
    - 57 Female, 21 Male, 1 Other
- Research Instruments:
    - Online survey through Google Forms (English, Japanese)

Demographics: Age
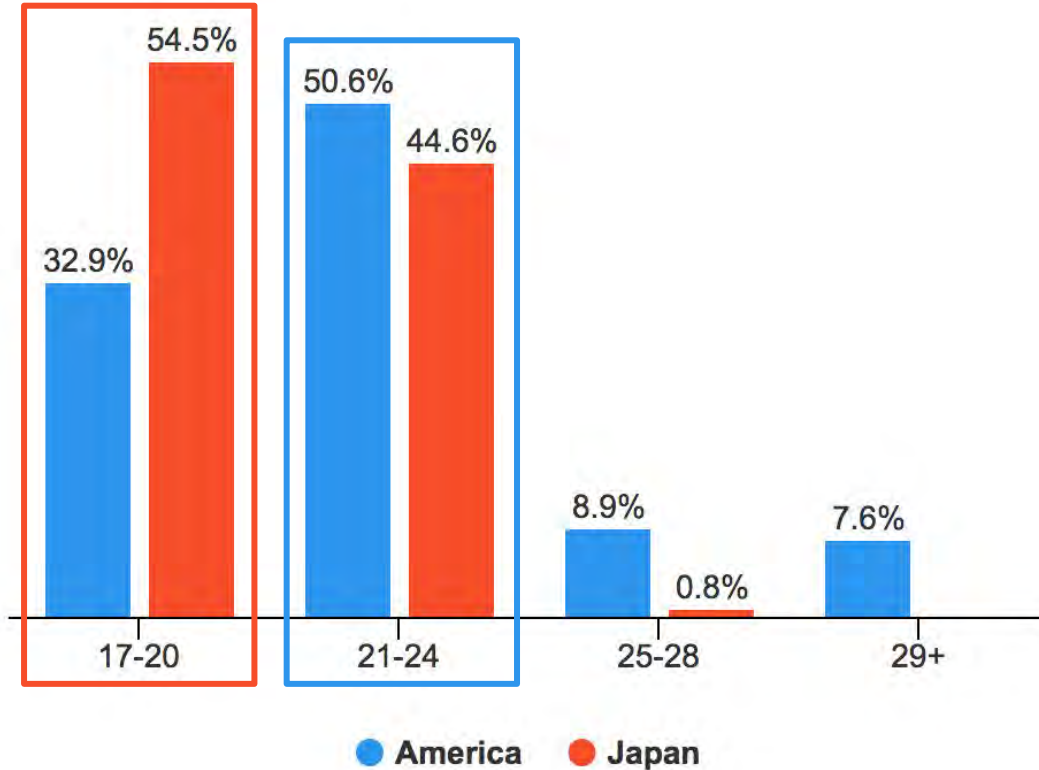
90% of respondents were 17-24 years old

Demographics: Work Status

More **Japanese** students **work part time** than American students

Almost **50%** of **American** students are **not working**

83.5%

46.8%

48.1%

5.1%

0.8%

15.7%

Full Time (≥35 hours/week)   Part Time (≤ 34 hours/week)   Not Working
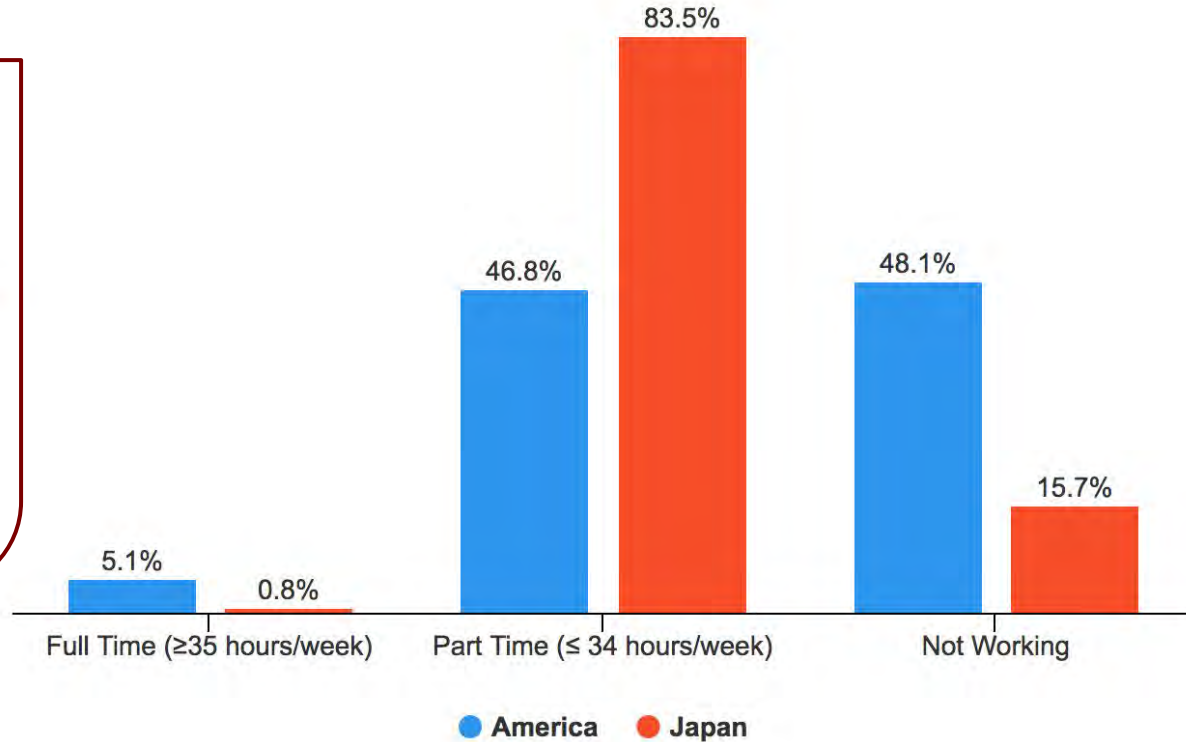
● **America**   ● **Japan**

Research Question 1

How do Japanese and American university students use their style to represent their identity?

Which of the following words most closely represents your clothing taste?

Around half of the American students answered that they **preferred comfortable clothing**, while the Japanese respondents who chose **minimalist** were the most.

American

- 45.6% — Comfortable
- 24.1% — Other
- 13.9% — Stylish
- 10.1% — Minimalist
- Vintage (3.8%)
- Baggy (2.5%)

Japanese

- 28.9% — Minimalist
- 28.1% — Other
- 13.2% — Stylish
- 11.6% — Comfortable
- 11.6% — Baggy
- 6.6% — Vintage

What image do you want to project with your clothing for these occasions?

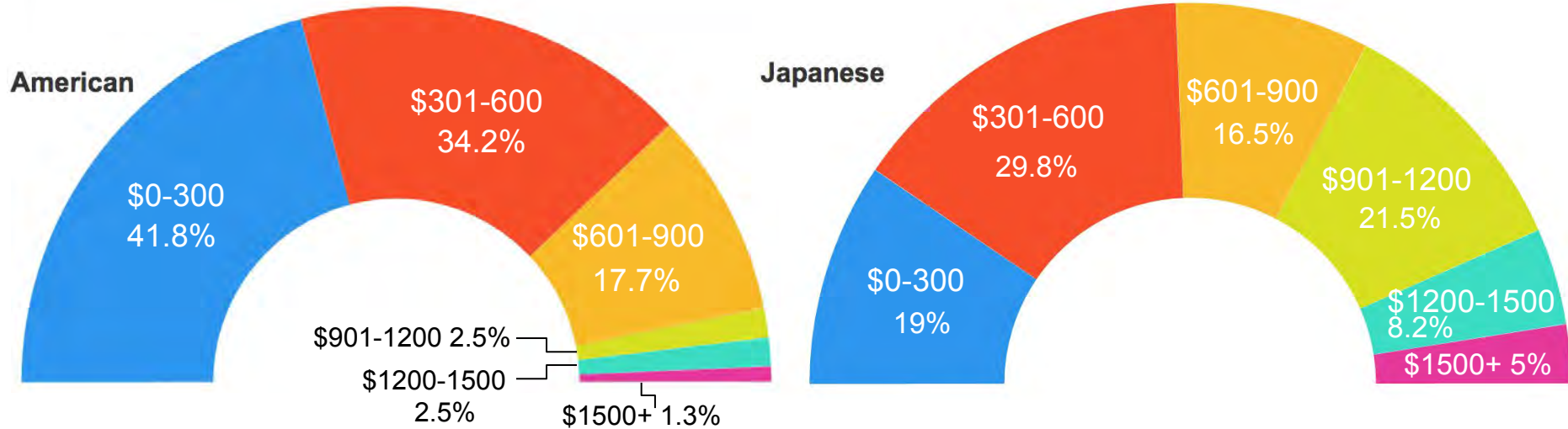| Occasion	American		Japanese	
Work	Confident	48%	Confident	39%
Date	Feminine	33%	Feminine	53%
School club activity	Comfortable	43%	Comfortable	47%
Family dinner	Comfortable	54%	Comfortable	70%
School/classes	Comfortable	59%	Comfortable	41%
Hanging out w/ friends	Comfortable	46%	Friendly	45%

This is the ONLY difference

At what age did you begin to develop your own style (e.g. deciding what type of clothing/brands you like)?

About 65% of American students determine their personal style in **middle/high** school, while 70% of Japanese students' is decided in **high school/college**.
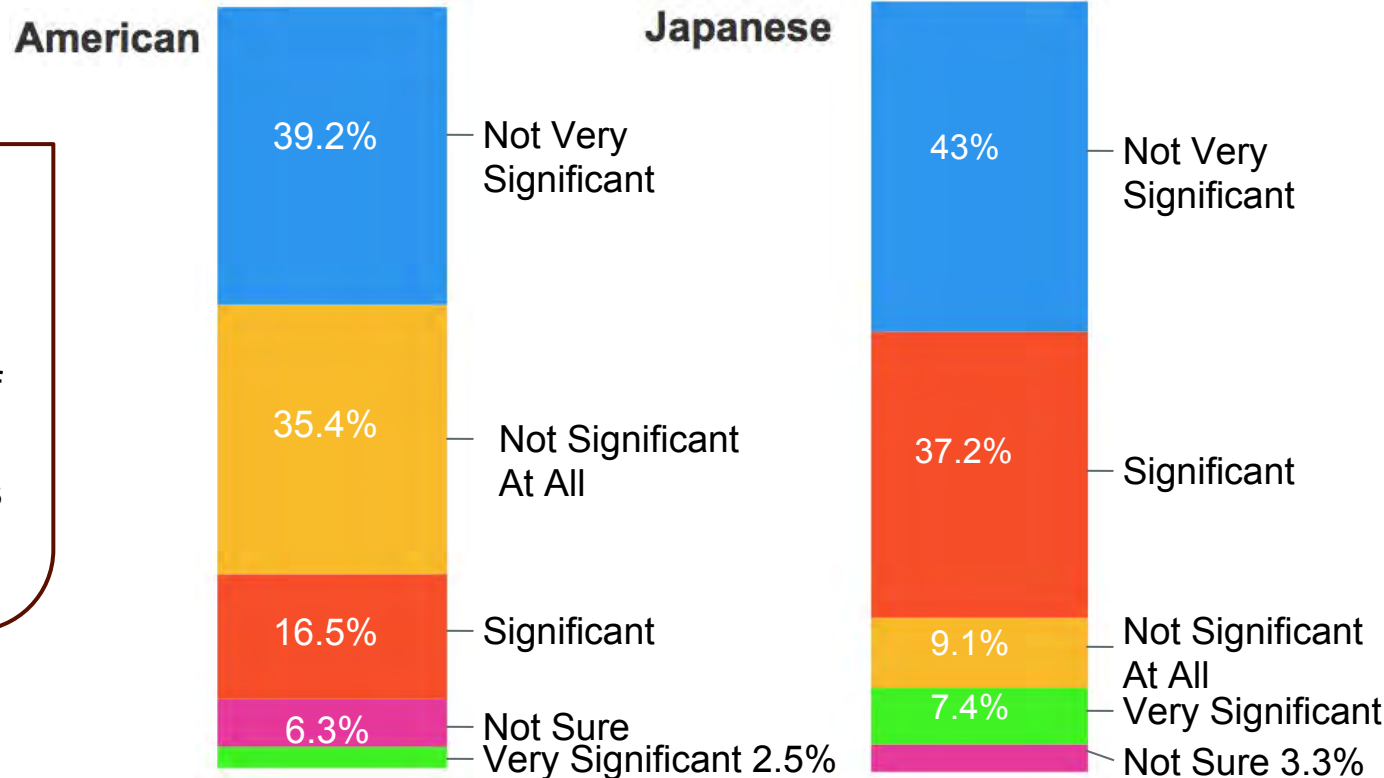
American

Age 21-24 1.3%
Other 1.3%
Age 8-11 16.5%
Age 12-15 35.4%
Age 15-18 30.4%
Age 18-21 15.2%

Japanese

Age 21-24 0%
Other 2.5%
Age 8-11 9.1%
Age 12-15 19.8%
Age 15-18 35.5%
Age 18-21 33.1%
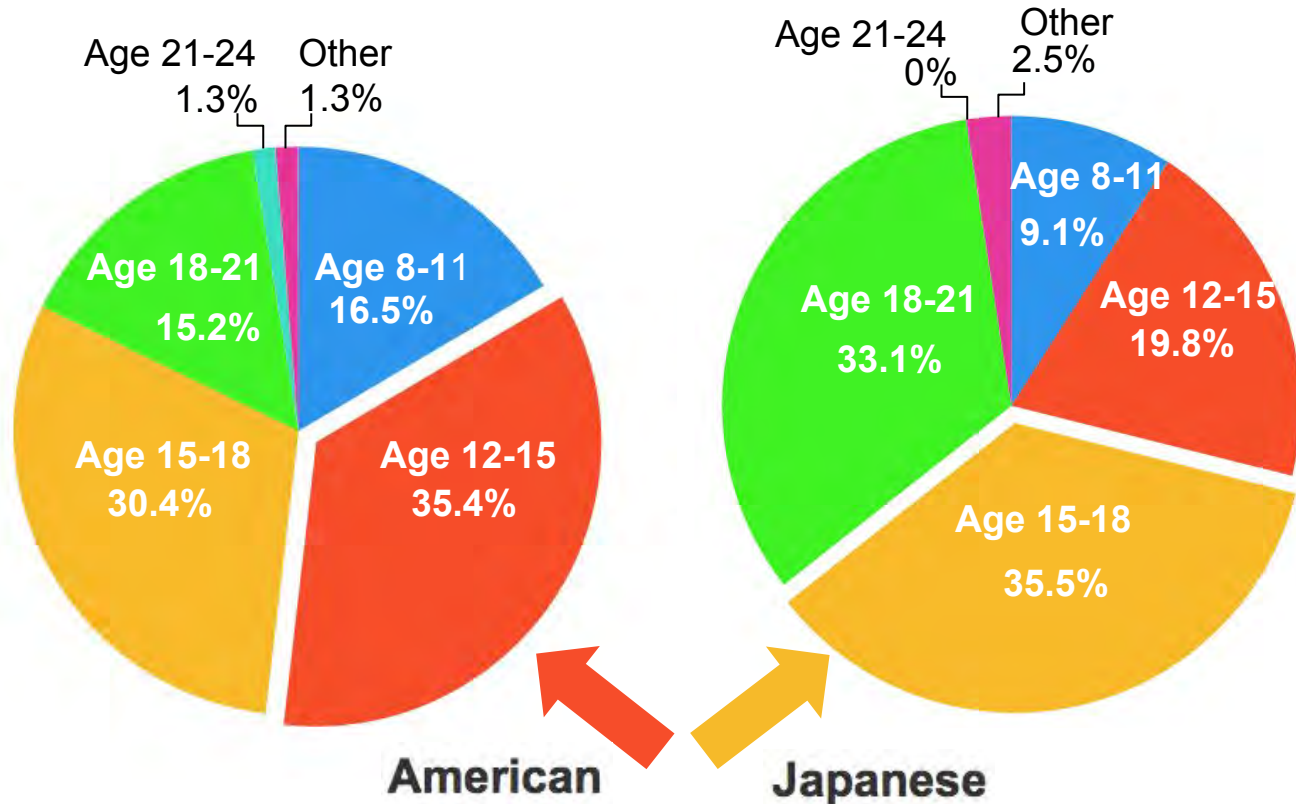
About how much do you estimate that you spend on clothing in a year?

American

- $0-300 41.8%
- $301-600 34.2%
- $601-900 17.7%
- $901-1200 2.5%
- $1200-1500 2.5%
- $1500+ 1.3%

Japanese

- $0-300 19%
- $301-600 29.8%
- $601-900 16.5%
- $901-1200 21.5%
- $1200-1500 8.2%
- $1500+ 5%

American students who spend under $300 are 40%, and Japanese students are 20%. American students who spend $900-1,200 are 2%, and Japanese students are 21%.
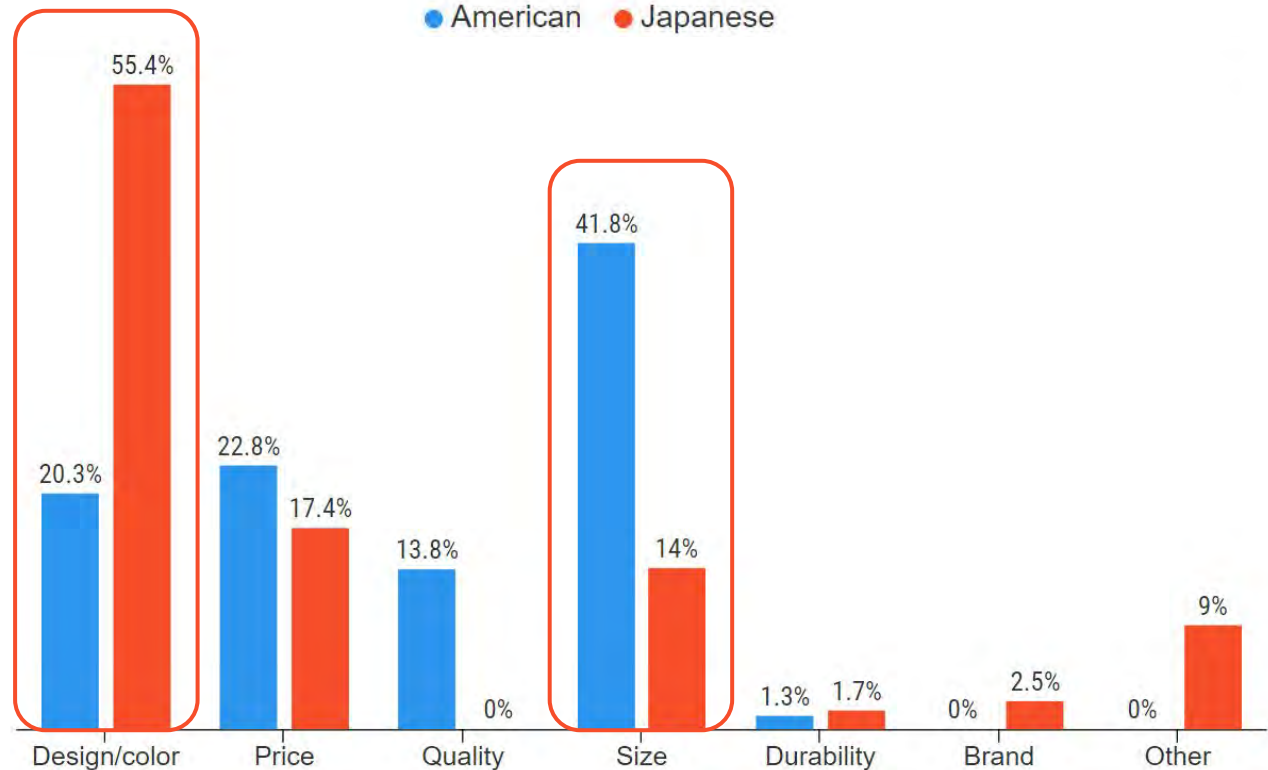
How significant are brands and labels to your own personal identity (e.g. Nike, Forever 21, H&M, etc.)?

To 75% of **American** students, brands are **not important**; however, about half of **Japanese** students answered that brands **are important**

American

- 39.2% — Not Very Significant
- 35.4% — Not Significant At All
- 16.5% — Significant
- 6.3% — Not Sure
- Very Significant 2.5%

Japanese

- 43% — Not Very Significant
- 37.2% — Significant
- 9.1% — Not Significant At All
- 7.4% — Very Significant
- Not Sure 3.3%

What factor is the MOST important to you when purchasing a clothing item?

American students care about **the fit of clothing**, while **Japanese** students care about **design and color**

Legend: ● American ● Japanese

Factor	American	Japanese
Design/color	20.3%	55.4%
Price	22.8%	17.4%
Quality	13.8%	0%
Size	41.8%	14%
Durability	1.3%	1.7%
Brand	0%	2.5%
Other	0%	9%

Summary of Research Question 1 Results

- Compared to American students, more Japanese students work part time. Furthermore, more Japanese students spend money on fashion.

- In contrast to Japanese students prefer a **trend's design**, American students prefer **comfortable** and have a tendency to prefer practical clothing.

- For Americans, brands are not important in expressing their fashion identity; however, about 40% of Japanese students stated that brands are important.

- Japanese students establish their style in high school and college, but for American students it is established slightly earlier during middle and high school.

Research Question 2

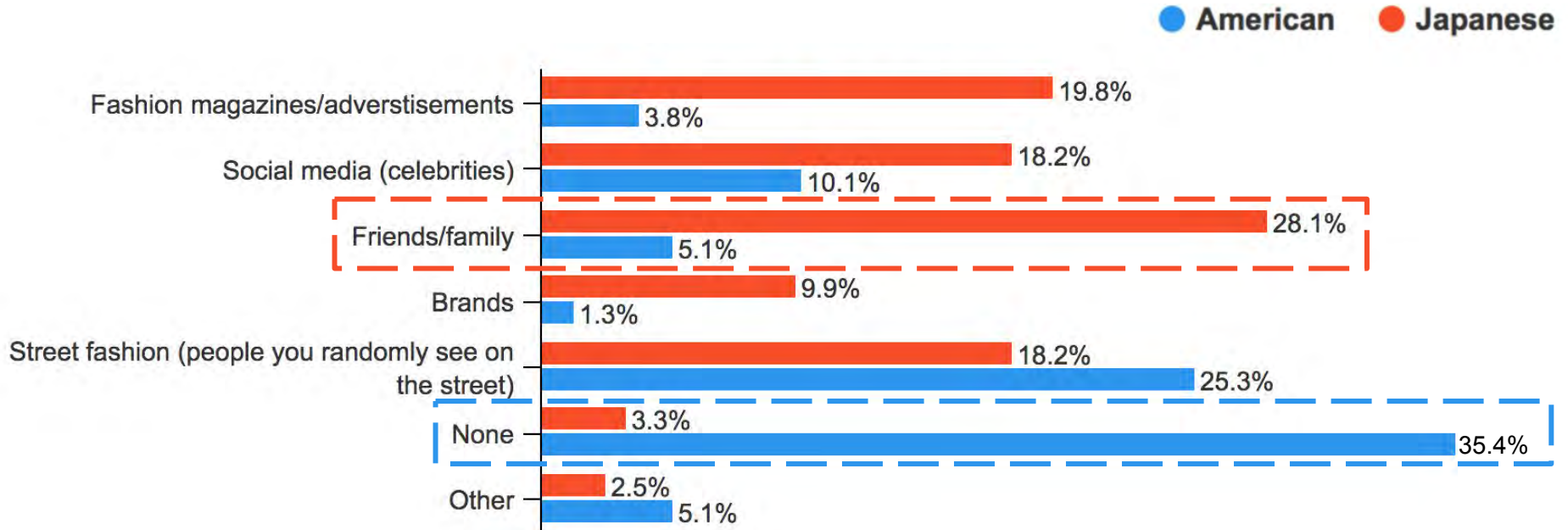How influential are trendsetters' role in Japanese and American fashion consumerism?

How often do you estimate fashion trends in your country to change?

Both American and Japanese students answered that clothing trends change at a frequent speed; however more Japanese students answered "frequently."
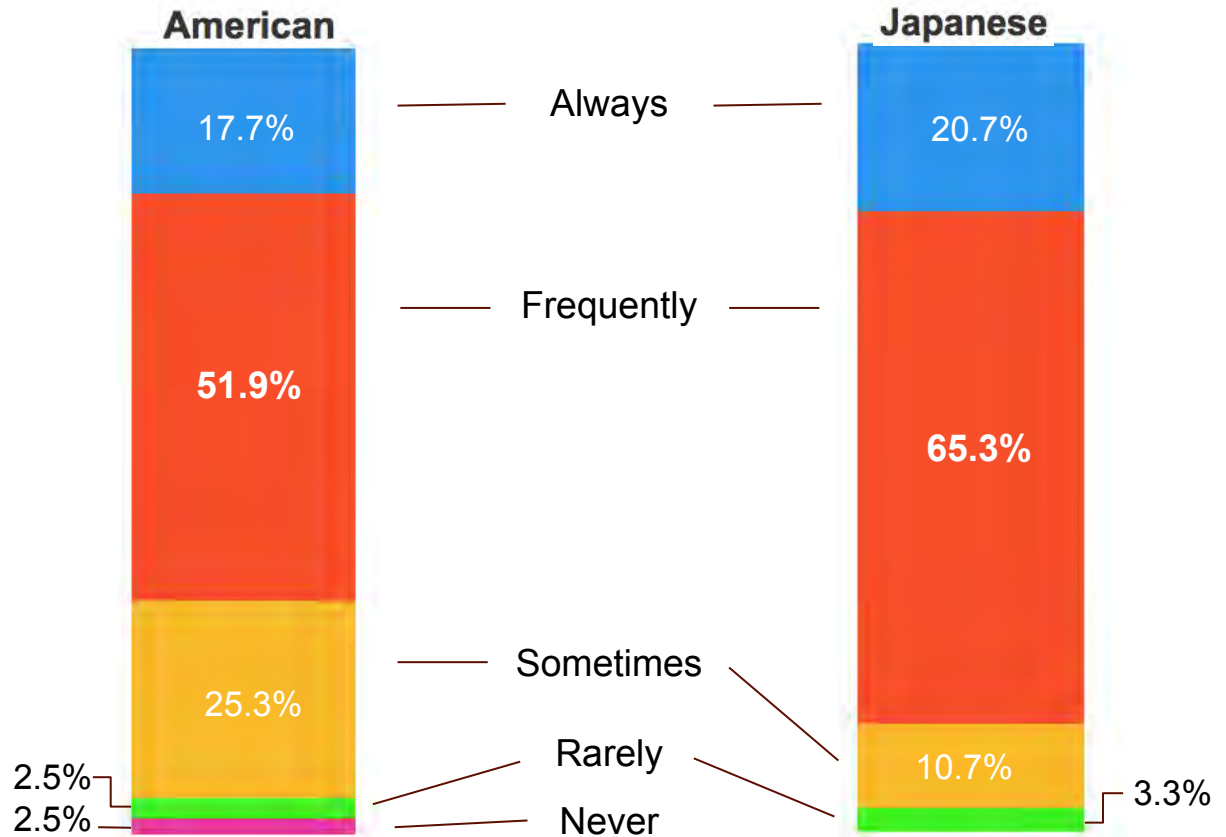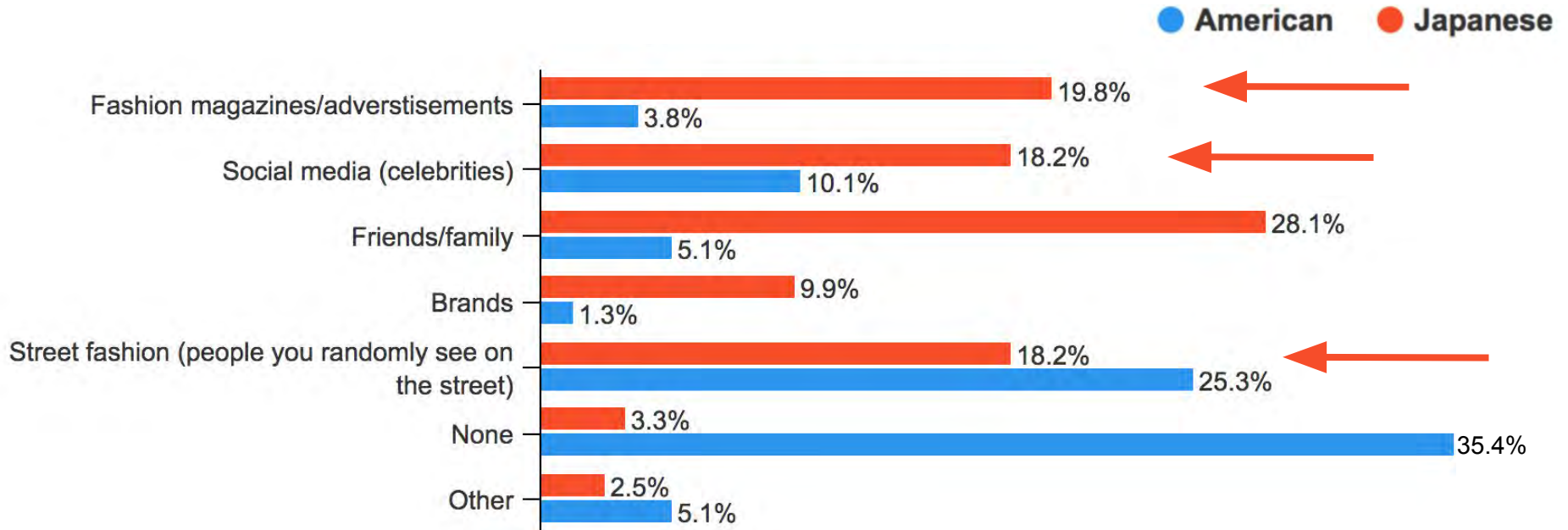
American

Always — 17.7%

Frequently — **51.9%**

Sometimes — 25.3%

Rarely — 2.5%

Never — 2.5%

Japanese

Always — 20.7%

Frequently — **65.3%**

Sometimes — 10.7%

Rarely / Never — 3.3%

What influences your personal style the most?

For American students, the answer most chosen was "none;" however, for Japanese students, they are affected by friends/family, fashion magazines/advertisements, media and so on.

# What influences your personal style the most?

For American students, the answer most chosen was "none;" however, for Japanese students, they are affected by friends/family, fashion magazines/advertisements, media and so on.

How often do you check media to influence your personal style? (e.g. TV, magazines, social media)
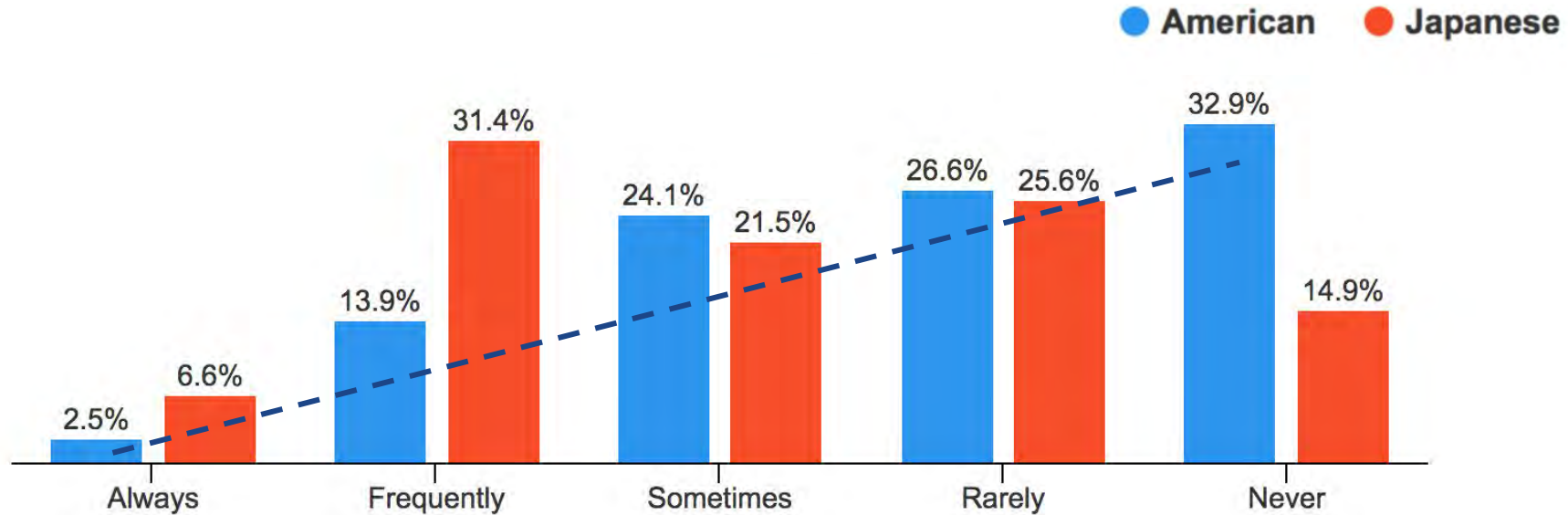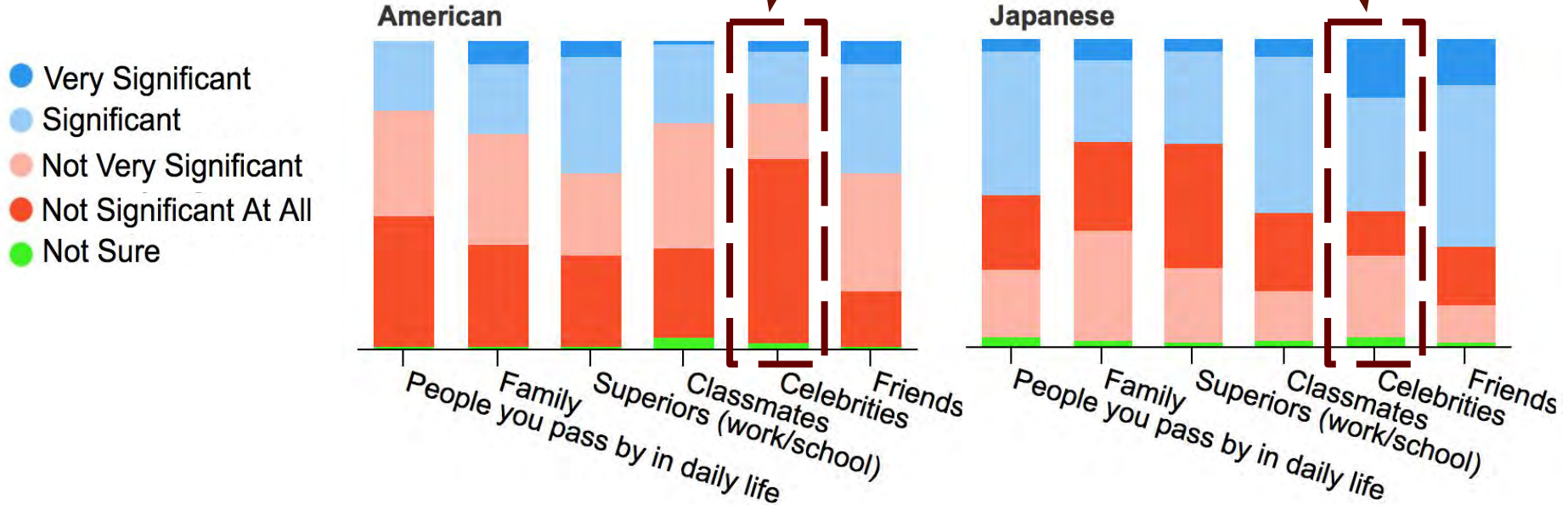

Around 60% of American students stated that media is either "rarely" or "never" influential. About 60% of Japanese students answered that media influences their clothing style.

How significant are others' opinions influencing on how you dress?
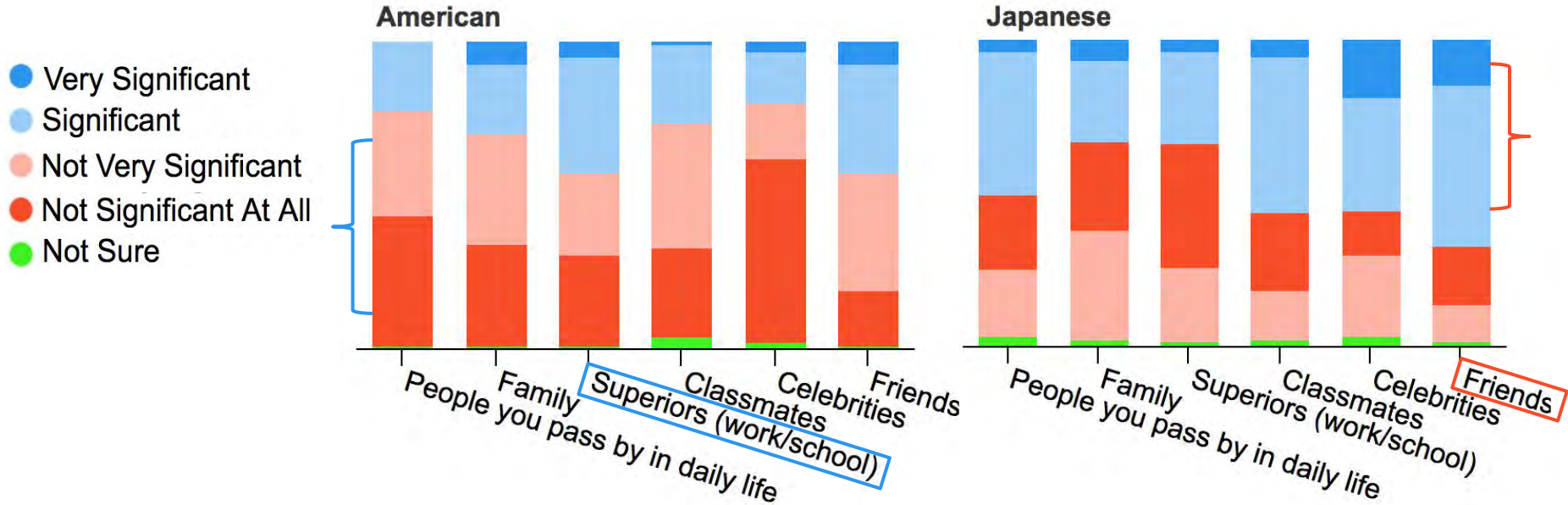
American students' personal style is not really influenced by anyone, yet Japanese students are influenced by someone.

How significant are others' opinions influencing on how you dress?

Legend:
- Very Significant
- Significant
- Not Very Significant
- Not Significant At All
- Not Sure

American — People you pass by in daily life, Family, Superiors, Classmates (work/school), Celebrities, Friends

Japanese — People you pass by in daily life, Family, Superiors, Classmates (work/school), Celebrities, Friends

Over half of the Japanese students are influenced by celebrities, but they influence very few American students.

Who do you think is the trendiest FEMALE?

Top **female** Instagrammers in America and Japan

In **America**

Followers: 118 mil

Followers: 104 mil

Followers: 101 mil

In **Japan**

Followers: 6.5 mil

Followers: 4.5 mil

Followers: 4.4 mil

Who do you think is the trendiest FEMALE?

While Japanese people chose a popular Instagrammer in America, American people chose a popular Instagrammer from Japan.

Who do you think is the trendiest MALE?

Top **male** Instagrammers in America and Japan

In America

Followers: 85.4 mil

Followers: 21.8 mil

Followers: 5.7 mil

In Japan

Followers: 1.9 mil

Followers: 1.7 mil

Followers: 96.2k

Who do you think is the trendiest MALE?

🔵 American 🔴 Japanese

In America

While Japanese people chose a popular Instagrammer in Japan, American people chose a popular Instagrammer from America.

In Japan

What characteristic do you think is most necessary for individuals to become "trendsetters"?

	American	*Japanese*
Individual Sense of Style	**1st (55.7%)**	**1st (47.1%)**
Relatable Personality	**2nd (13.9%)**	**2nd (23.1%)**
Dispensable Income	3rd (11.4%)	3rd (14.9%)
Fan Engagement	3rd (11.4%)	4th (6.6%)
Sincerity	5th (3.8%)	4th (6.6%)

About 70% of American and Japanese students answered that the characteristics of most importance for trendsetters are an "individual sense of style" and a "relatable personality."

In other words...

Individual Sense of Style

+

Relatable Personality

=

American

Kiko Mizuhara
Japan

Joe Jonas
US

Japanese

Taylor Swift
US

Kento Yamazaki
Japan

Summary of Research Question 2 Results

- Because trends rapidly change, trendsetter's role in selling "fast fashion" items is essential

- While American and Japanese trendsetters have the same characteristics, trendsetters in Japan influence fashion more.

- Japanese students have their fashion style influenced by others' opinions and media.

- In America, there is almost no effect from trendsetters because there is an inclination to not have their fashion style influenced by anyone

Conclusion and Consideration

- The standard in which American and Japanese students choose clothing is different

    - Japanese students pay attention to design and use a fairly large amount of money

    - American students care about practicality and do not spend money on things such as brand goods, instead spending it on things like tuition, car payments and food.

- The human relationships in Japanese society is different from the United States, which might be because the population density is high and Japanese people cherishes cooperation with those around them

Conclusion and Consideration (cont.)

- In Japan's case, because students are made to wear uniforms until the end of high school, their personal style is not developed until after they enter college.

- We can understand from this study that an individual's style is reflective of their respective country's culture.

- In Japan, the viewership ratings are high for Nippon Hoso Kyokai (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) and broadcast television, and Japan is more susceptible to trends

  - Trendsetter's influence through media has a tendency to be quickly reflected in new fashion styles in Japan

  - As for America,, because it is a society with a diverse culture and views, it can be said that they have a tendency to respect individual style.

Limitations of the Study and Future Studies

- Limitations:

    - There were more female respondents than male

- Future studies:

    - Will increase the number of male respondents

    - Would like to further pursue why the respondents chose the trendsetter that they did and whether they were familiar with them or not

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Acknowledgements

- Dr. Yoshiko Saito-Abbott
- Dr. Shigeko Sekine
- Mr. Gus Leonard
- WLC 400 Classmates
- Family

Any questions?