



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Engineering

Communication Between Undergraduate Students in Texas A&M: An Ethnography Study

Presented by *Elyas Al-Amri*

The background image shows a modern university interior. The top half features a balcony with a glass railing and the word "INTEGRITY" on the wall. The bottom half shows a lounge area with students sitting on colorful armchairs and sofas, some using laptops. The ceiling has a unique design with curved, wavy panels and hanging lights.

Problem Statement

“To what extent do engineering students develop communication skills at university?”

Background:

Many people seemed reluctant to speak to me while few others were fine. Student interactions are minimal, both face-to-face and virtual.



Methodology:

- Qualitative research using surveys with open-ended questions
- A survey was carried out to students in TAMUQ students.
- 50 responses have been recorded.
- Data is analyzed by grouping results in terms of year of study.

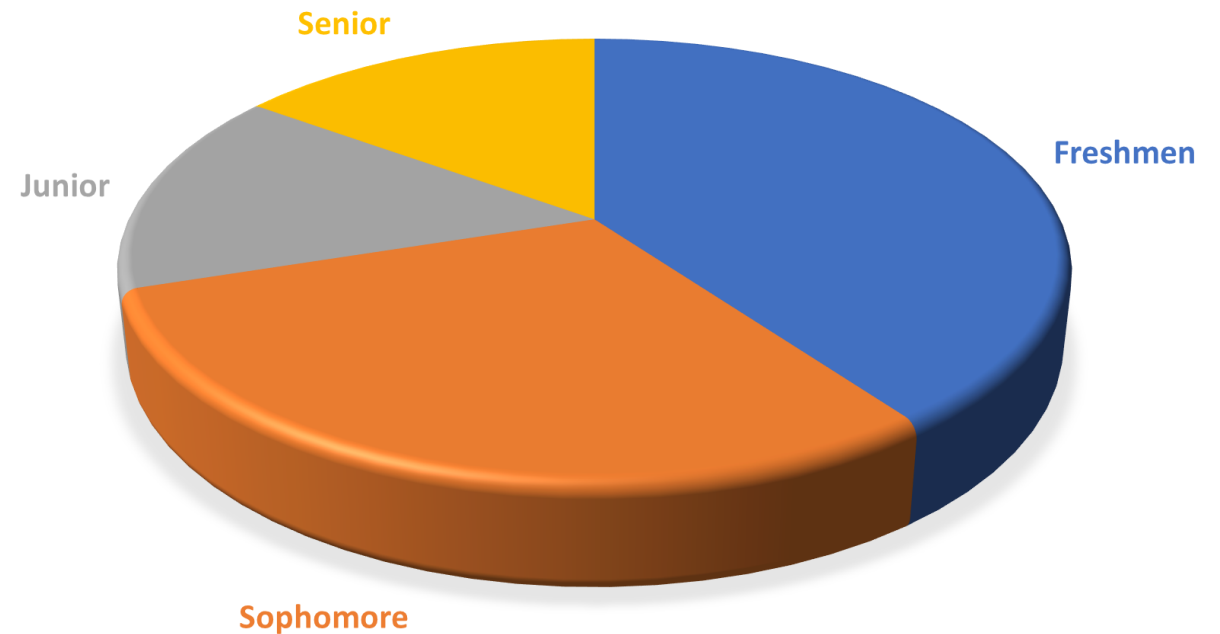
Results



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- Most of the responses were Freshmen and Sophomores, and relatively few responses from Seniors and Juniors
- Analyzing this data could give some insights on the extent to which students are developing social skills in the first two years
- Need more responses from Seniors and Juniors to confidently present an overall picture

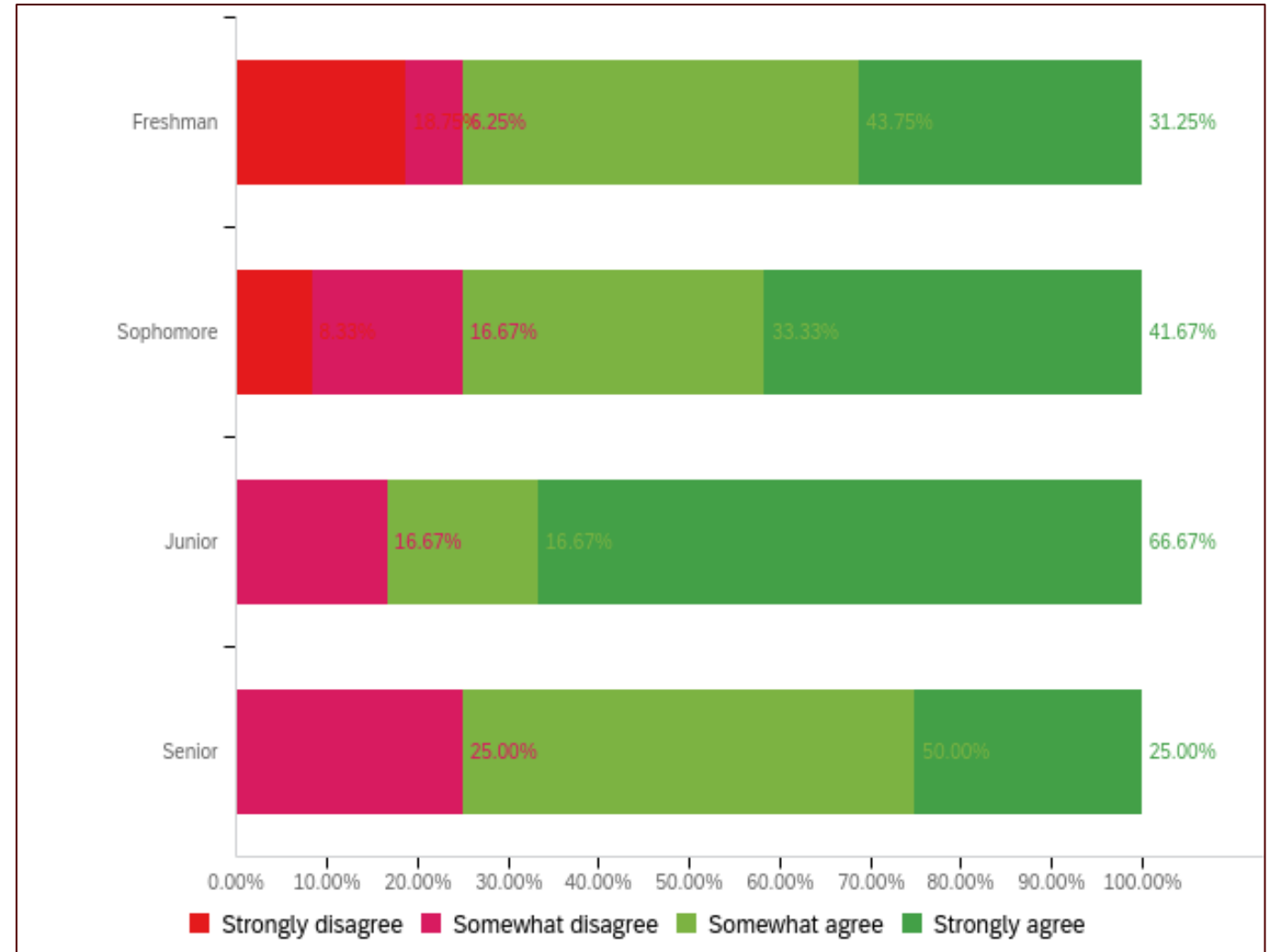
YEAR OF STUDY RESPONSES



Results



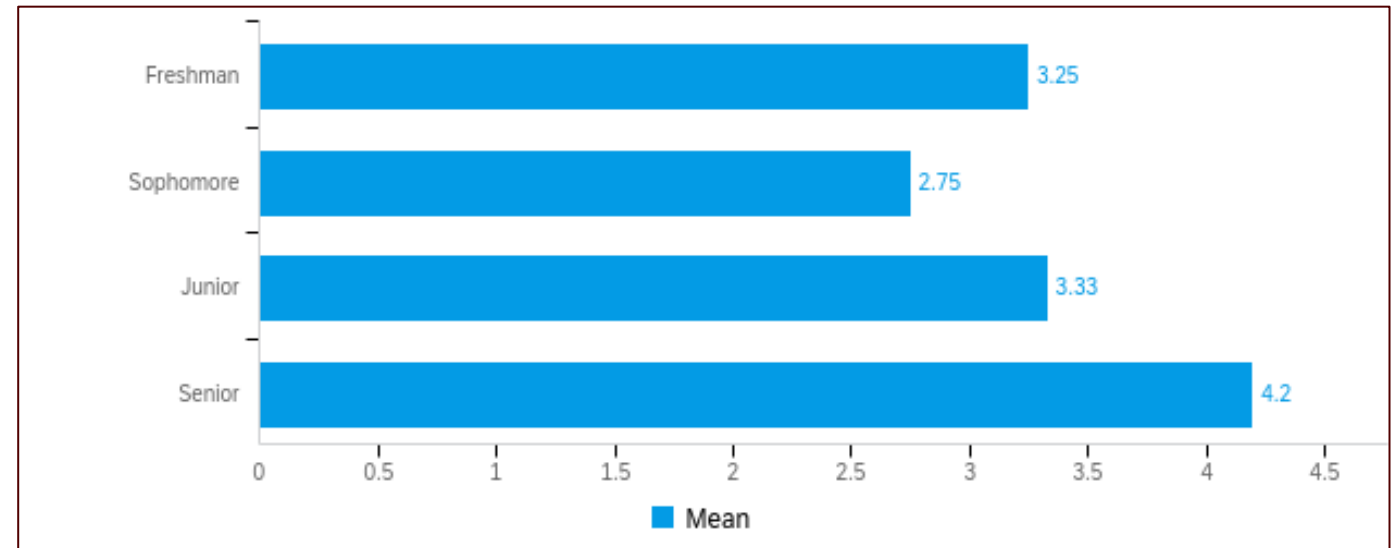
Based on the data collected from students, it appears that my perception of students' lack of social skills is shared by many students in the university.



Results



- Students rated their ability to communicate with someone who has an unfamiliar accent with decent positivity.
- If results are compared in terms of college years, a slight pattern of improvement in that ability can be noticed over the course of students' college years.
- This indicates that the university somehow helps improve this skill for students.



Results

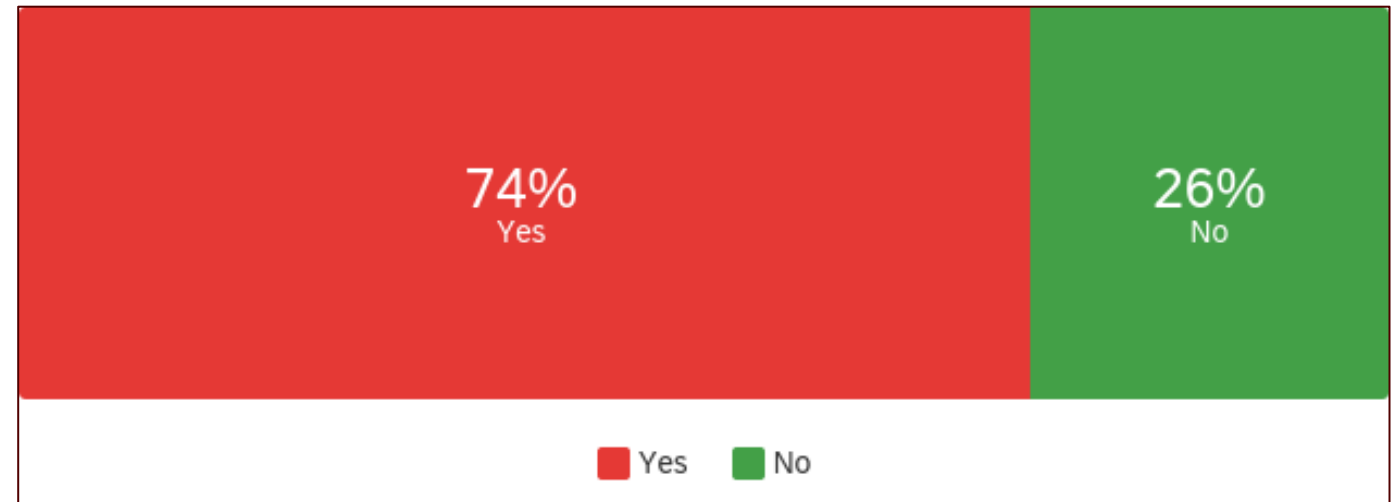


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Three-quarters of students pointed out that many times they would use their phones to avoid face-to-face conversation with others.

All juniors reported they had done so.

This indicates students' unwillingness to communicate.



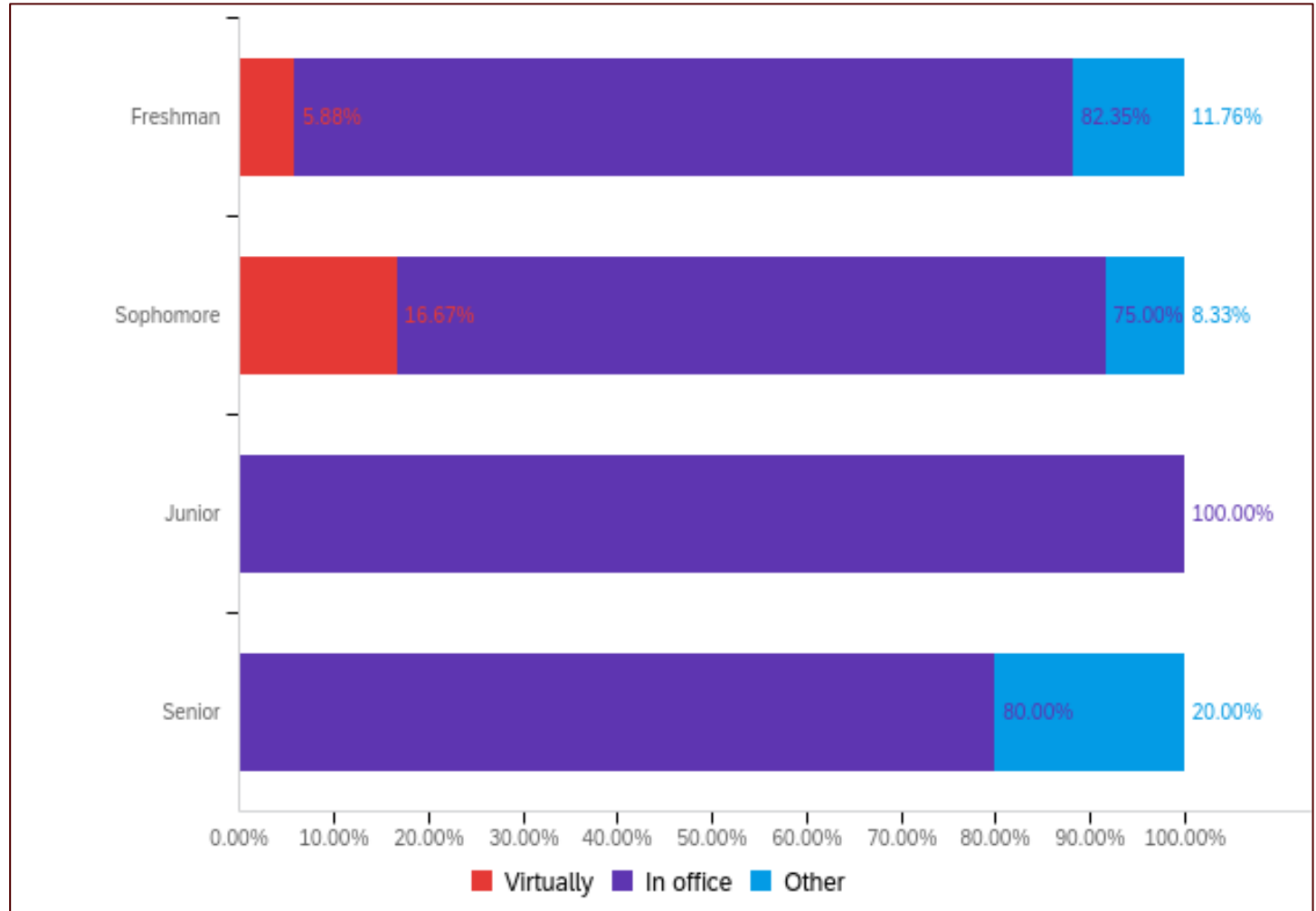
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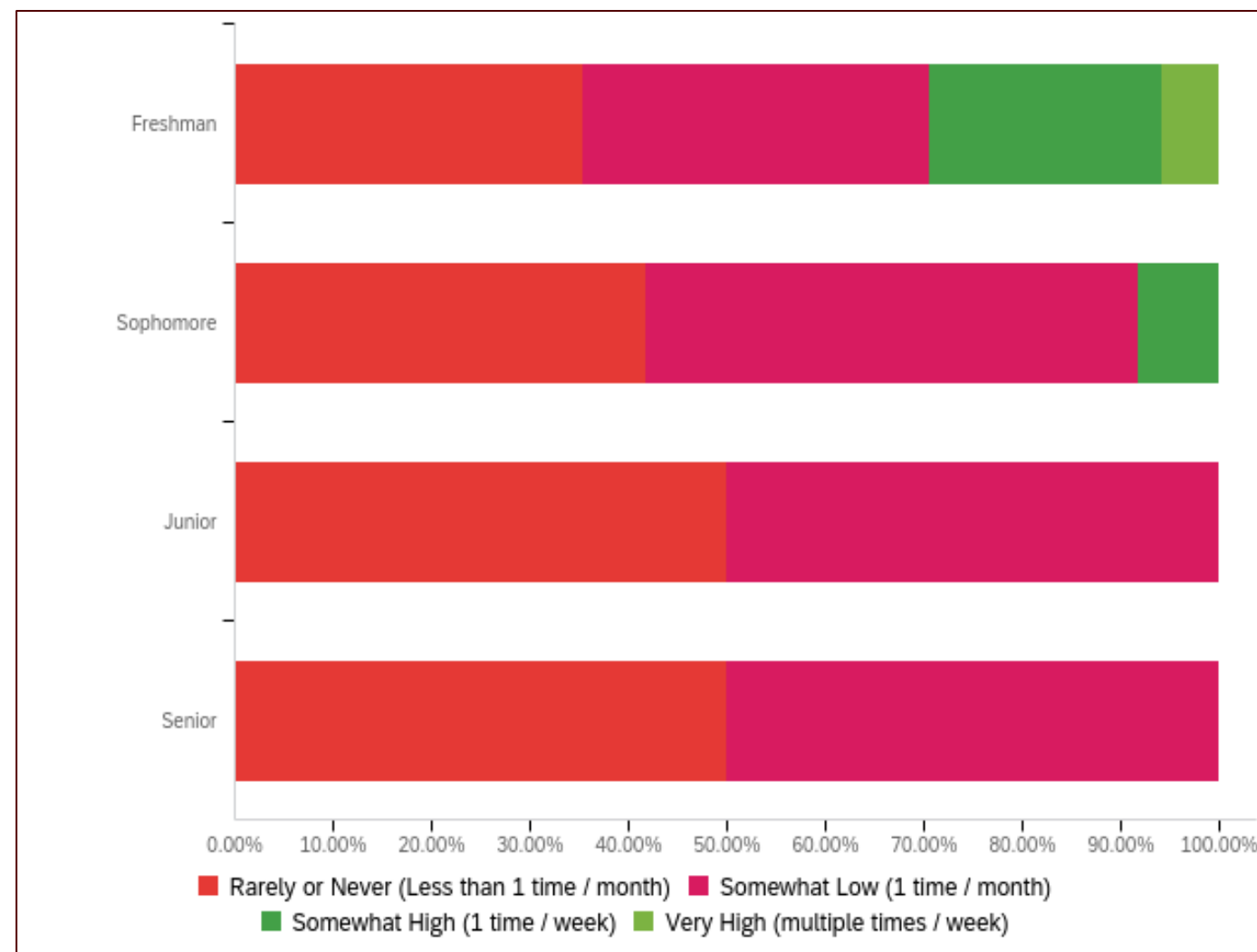
Yet, there is a relatively low frequency of students' visits to professors' offices during office hours.

The answers of over 83% were either "rare or never" or "somewhat low."

Seniors and juniors are less frequent visitors to professors than their early counterparts.

This highlights that students are not incentivized to communicate with their professors over their course of study.

It could be that professors do not encourage students to approach them, or students find this communication not useful.

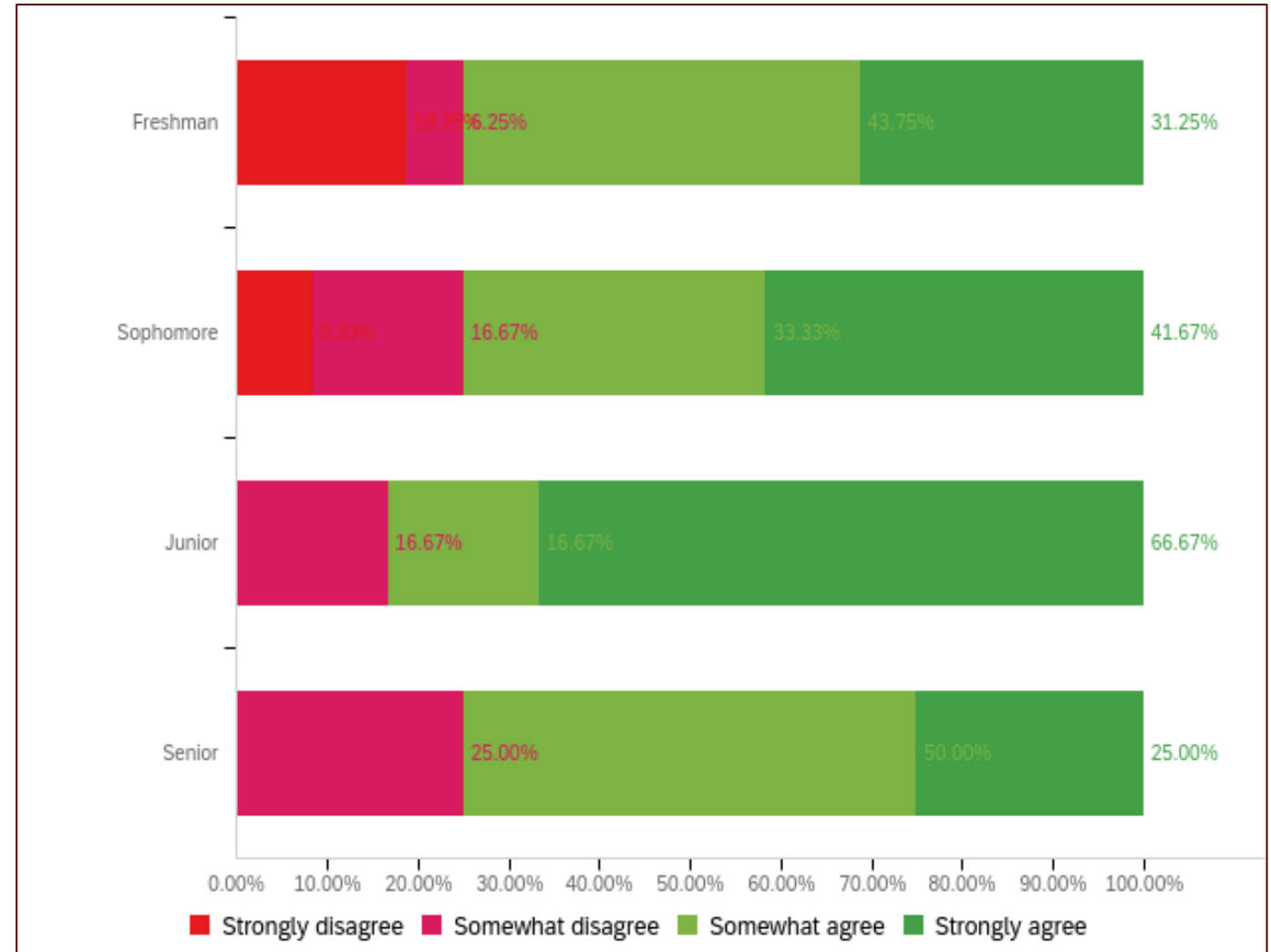


Results



Most students agree that university events help them establish good communication skills.

This confirms that events are a prominent feature of campus services that help students with their communication skills.



Results



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It is possible to see from the word cloud that the most common response from students about advice for newcomers is that they should talk to people.

Therefore, it seems that students believe that the reason behind the lack of communication skills is that students are used to being alone and do not interact with others.



Student Advice



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- Put yourself out there and make fun of the situation.
- Everyone is as confused as you are, even seniors and juniors.
- Try to join more group related projects as they can help you engineer your social skills.
- Get involved in every event.



Error Analysis



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Most survey respondents came from freshmen and sophomores; little input was provided from the senior students (15% juniors, 15% seniors), which might have affected the survey results.

Another factor is that the original survey had a different wording – namely, it asked for social skills rather than communication skills. This could have influenced the results of the research.

Moreover, this research doesn't consider the Covid-Pandemic, which arguably significantly affected students' ability to communicate.



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Thank you for listening

This was a presentation by
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