# NEW REALITIES

## EMPATHY AND TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Technology bridging the empathy gap and the power of
social change in a new world

Kemi Dauda
USA

Ashwini Doddalingappanavar
India

# WELCOME TO A NEW REALITY

Lenovo might be one of the world's leading technology companies, but we strive to also be a company that empowers people to use technology for change the world and instill hope. True to a vision of providing smarter technology for all, Lenovo realizes the need to understand unique perspectives on what actions drive empathy around the world amidst these uncertain times. At a time when we feel there is more than pushes us apart than brings us together, technology can help up increase our understanding and deepen our empathy.

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Xintong Zhou
China

And so our latest global study, **New Realities: Empathy and Technology** not only dives into how people are using technology, whether that's to communicate, work, or stay connected. It also builds on Lenovo's journey toward understanding the increasingly vital role of empathy in people's lives and its relationship with technology. Innovations are not only embracing but now facilitating empathy on a global scale.

This new research plays an important role in Lenovo's dynamic **New Realities** artistic project, which shines a light on 10 diverse, young women from 10 different markets who have the shared dream of raising awareness about global social issues and empower empathy through technology to ultimately make the world a better place. Supported by ARRAY, Ava DuVernay and Girl Up, founded by the United Nations Foundation, **New Realities** embarks on 10 journeys via immersive 360-degree storytelling, filmed amidst the current climate, and giving a voice to young, female changemakers in Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, UK and US.

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# EMPATHY AND TECHNOLOGY REPORT METHODOLOGY

We surveyed more than 15,000 people via a comprehensive survey in 8 languages across 10 global markets – Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, UK and US.
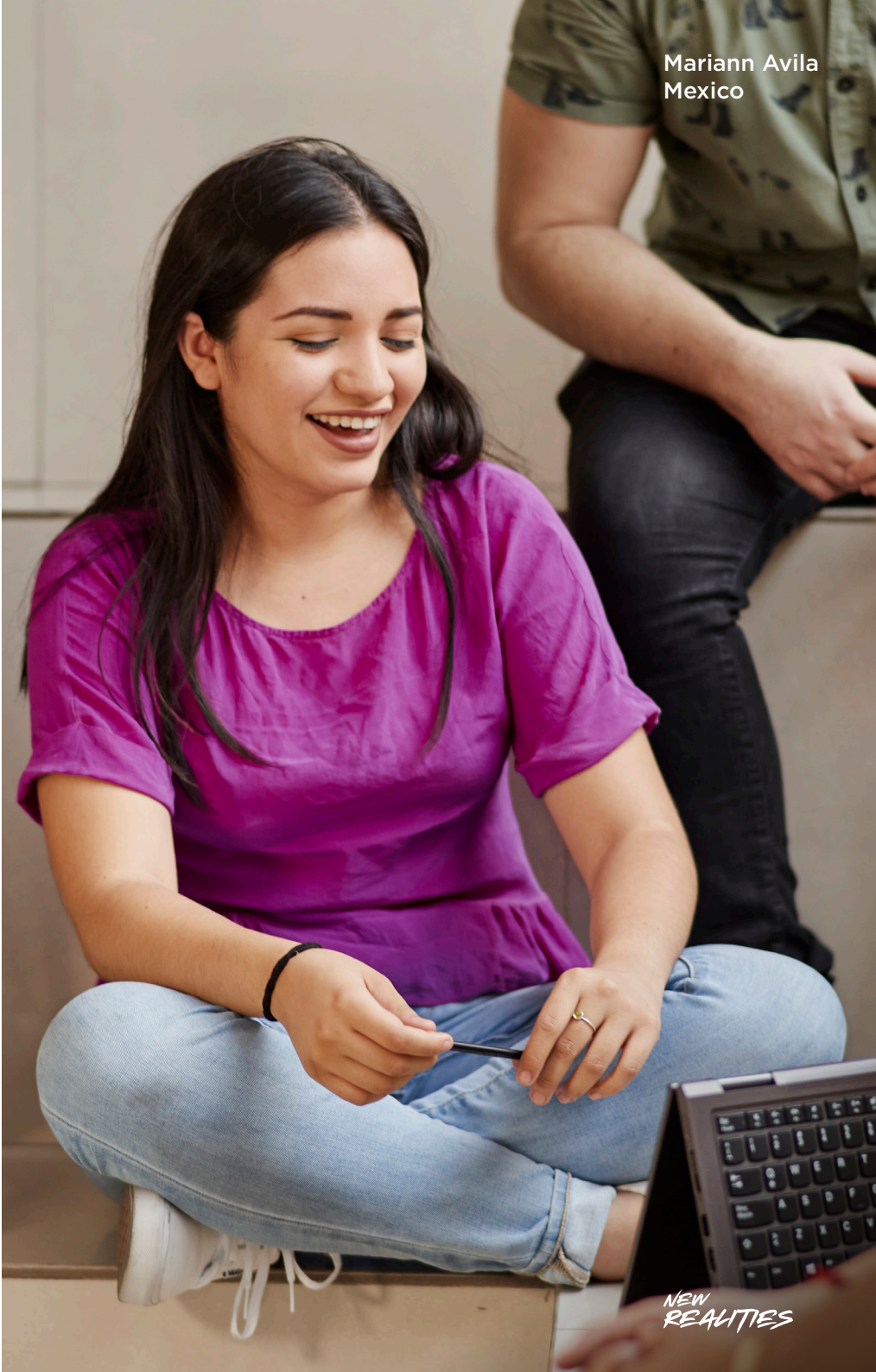
## FIELDING PERIOD
May 29th–June 17th, 2020

## GENERATIONAL COMPARISONS:

| **Gen Z:** Ages 18-24 | **Millennials:** Ages 25-42 | **Mid-Lifers:** Ages 43-55 | **Age:** 56+ |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

*Margin of Error for overall sample is < 1 percentage point (at a 95% confidence level)*

*Margin of Error for each market sample is +/-2 percentage points (at a 95% confidence level)*

Mariann Avila
Mexico

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**Noi Tatsuzaki**
**Japan**

# WHAT WE LEARNED

- The results of the new research underpin Lenovo's belief that technology has the power to drive positive change.

- It demonstrates the myriad of ways that smarter technology is driving empathy, human connection, and societal engagement today, helping people to understand voices from more diverse communities while increasing learning, innovation, connection, and advocacy.

- At the same time, we learned that tech is encountering many challenges on its way to  enabling global populations to be more empathetic. Yes, it's helping to increase learning, innovation, connection, and activism. But people are also concerned about the spread of misinformation, online bullying, information overload, and tech fatigue.

- Whether it's  through empowering young people to take action or inspiring the makers of technology to stand up and play a more pivotal role in achieving a better good, it's clearer than ever that it's not just technology that's having the biggest impact, but the people using it. They're the ones who can really make a difference and inspire.

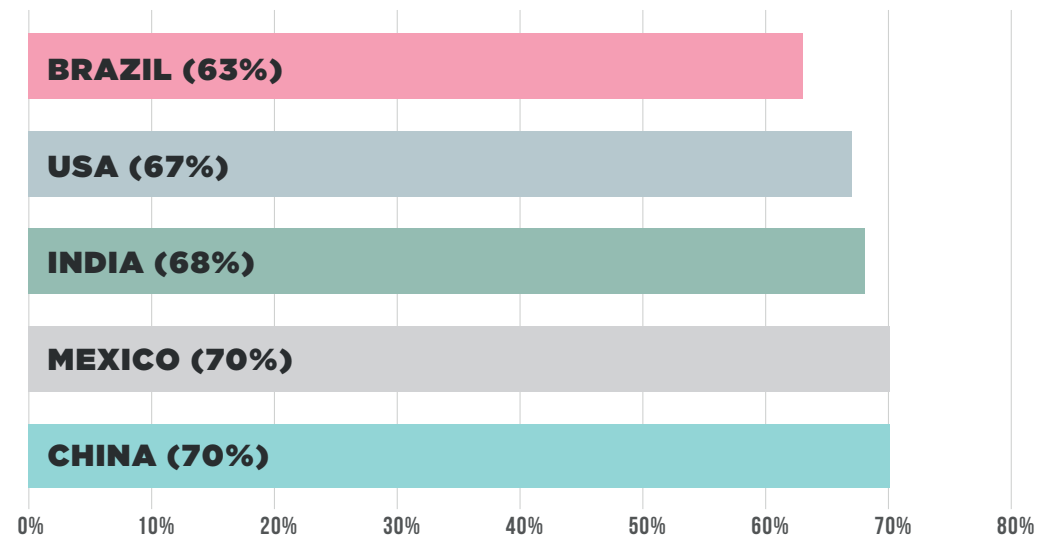NEW REALITIES

# GEOGRAPHICAL COMPARISON: EMPATHY

60% of global respondents feel that they are more empathetic now (during COVID-19), than in the past. However, there is a wide range of opinion amongst the global markets.
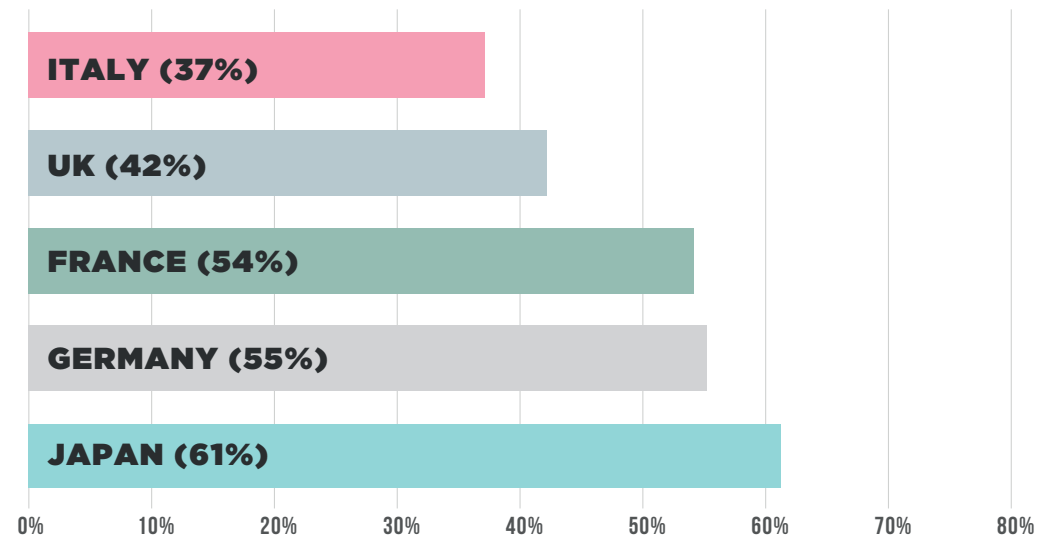
Could these differences between levels of empathy in different countries be cultural? Perhaps higher populations, generally, are impacting levels of empathy. Japan, traditionally is known as being one of the most densely populated places in the world with 126 million in habitants. It's also one of the most technoligically developed. Where as Italy is a similar-sized country yet has a population at more than half the size (60 million), making it much more sparsely populated. It's also not as technologically advanced. Could these contrasts be the reason behind the different perspectives in empathy?

Aisha Coulibaly
Italy

## TOP 5 MARKETS THAT RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED BEING AN INCREASE IN FEELINGS OF EMPATHY THAN IN THE PAST:

BRAZIL (63%)

USA (67%)

INDIA (68%)

MEXICO (70%)

CHINA (70%)

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%  70%  80%

## TOP 5 MARKETS WHERE THOSE SURVEYED DO NOT IDENTIFY AS BEING MORE EMPATHETIC THAN IN THE PAST:

ITALY (37%)

UK (42%)

FRANCE (54%)

GERMANY (55%)

JAPAN (61%)

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%  70%  80%

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# AN END TO THE EMPATHY GAP?

The idea that there's an empathy gap in technology is nothing new. It's long been expressed that while tech can benefit society through all of the advancements, it brings, it can also cause apathy, dislocation, and anxiety.
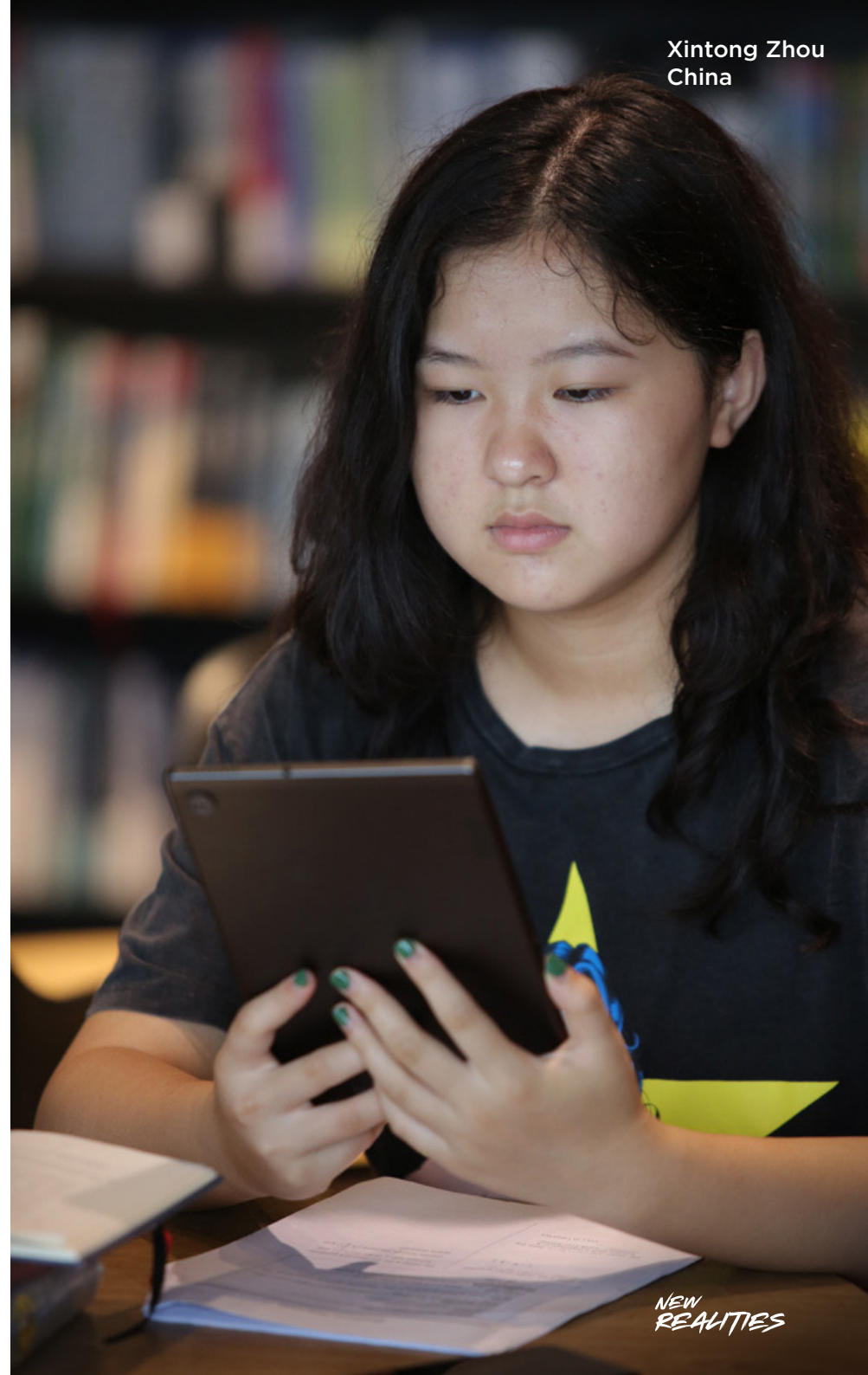
For example, if someone is feeling stressed or sad, they may find it difficult to see or understand the perspective of someone who feels a different way, such as happy or excited.

Globally, there is broad agreement in our research that our societies must become more empathetic if we are to solve the biggest challenges that face us and create a world in which people of all backgrounds and abilities can thrive. And we have found that people believe technology can be a way to help and bridge the current empathy gap that exists.

**OVER THREE QUARTERS (78%)** of global respondents see an empathy gap and think society should be more empathetic than it is today

**MOST RESPONDENTS REVEALED** that tech has made them feel more empathetic during the COVID-19 pandemic, **PRIMARILY TOWARDS THEIR COMMUNITIES (66%), THEIR COUNTRIES (62%) AND THE WORLD OVERALL (59%).**

This optimism for technology bridging the empathy gap is felt more widely in younger generations, where over **THREE QUARTERS (76%) OF GEN Z AND 71% OF MILLENNIALS AGREED THAT DURING THE PANDEMIC**, it has made them more empathetic to their communities.

Xintong Zhou
China

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**OVER HALF (51%) OF MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z AGREE** that tech makes them personally more empathetic by giving them a greater ability to experience life through other people's eyes.

Research highlights **A CHANGE IN PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH TECH** all over the world, especially during the pandemic. For example: 79% say they feel more comfortable with their personal capabilities with tech after COVID, with another 79% believing that they will be more appreciative of technology overall.

Those who have recognized the positive impact that tech had on their lives while dealing with COVID-19 are 12-14% more likely to believe that it is a positive force in the world – creating more empathy in their communities, country, and the globe.

While respondents trust that their relationships with technology will change after COVID-19, **53% OF RESPONDENTS INDICATE THEY WANT TO DISCONNECT FROM TECH MORE THAN THEY DID BEFORE THE PANDEMIC**, perhaps due to a greater reliance on technologies and decreased connection with outdoor and nature during these times.



**Daze Aghaji**
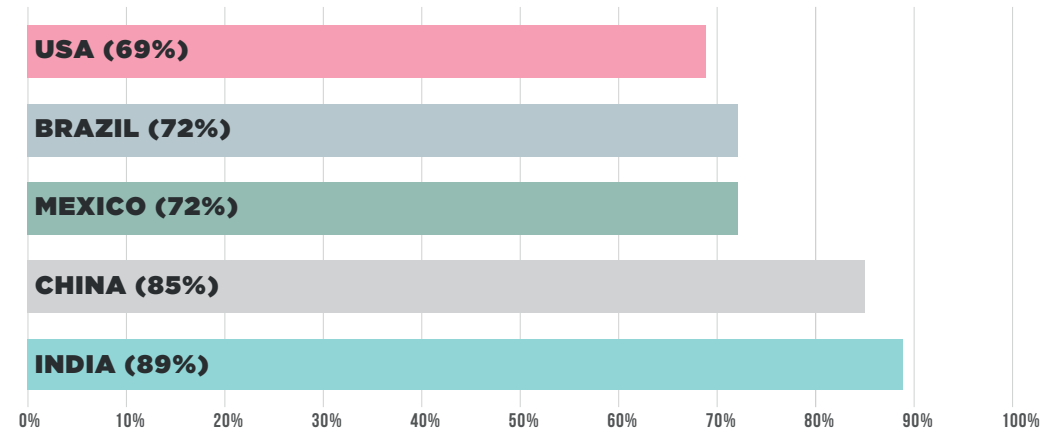**UK**

## ANALYSIS:

While tech has long been thought to suffer an 'empathy gap', the role it has played during the COVID-19 pandemic – facilitating communication to bring people closer together during times of isolation – is shifting attitudes, for the better, and especially in younger people.

Still, there is a broad consensus that society should become more empathetic than it is today. But people are split on whether things are actually changing for the better on this front, with 40% believing that society, in general, is currently becoming more empathetic and 39% actually saying it is becoming less empathetic. This is a critical gap we must strive to close.
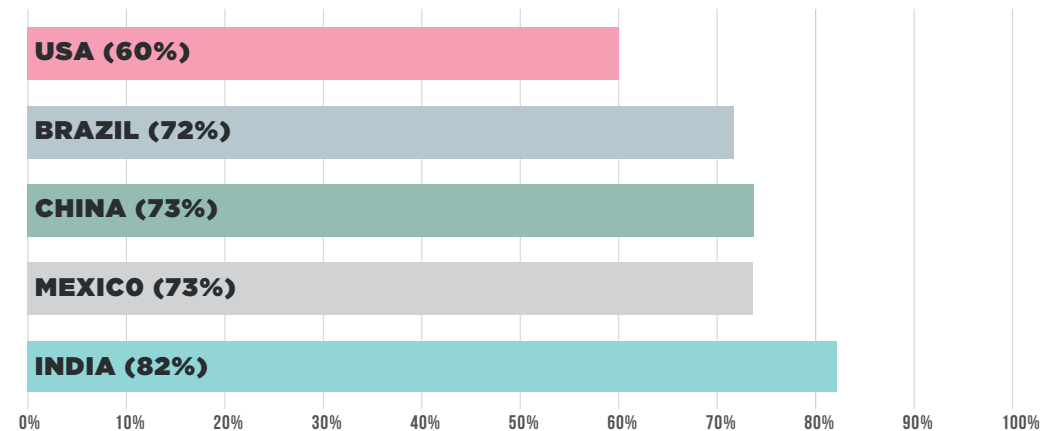
**NEW REALITIES**

# GEOGRAPHICAL COMPARISON: END TO THE EMPATHY GAP?

DURING COVID-19, TECH DEVICES AND SERVICES SUCH AS STREAMING PLATFORMS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES ARE MAKING PEOPLE MORE EMPATHETIC TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

USA (69%)
BRAZIL (72%)
MEXICO (72%)
CHINA (85%)
INDIA (89%)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

**Noi Tatsuzaki**
**Japan**

## DURING COVID-19, TECH DEVICES AND SERVICES ARE MAKING PEOPLE MORE EMPATHETIC TO THE WORLD

USA (60%)
BRAZIL (72%)
CHINA (73%)
MEXICO (73%)
INDIA (82%)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

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# TECH IS EMPOWERING YOUTH TO DRIVE EMPATHY

People across the world believe technological advancements, such as connected and powerful smart devices – from laptops, tablets and smartphones to VR headsets, can help younger generations, and are having a positive impact on their ability to engage with major global issues, empowering them to rise up and become responsible for helping to change tomorrow.

**THREE QUARTERS (73%) OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS HAVE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT** on the ability for young people to engage with global issues.
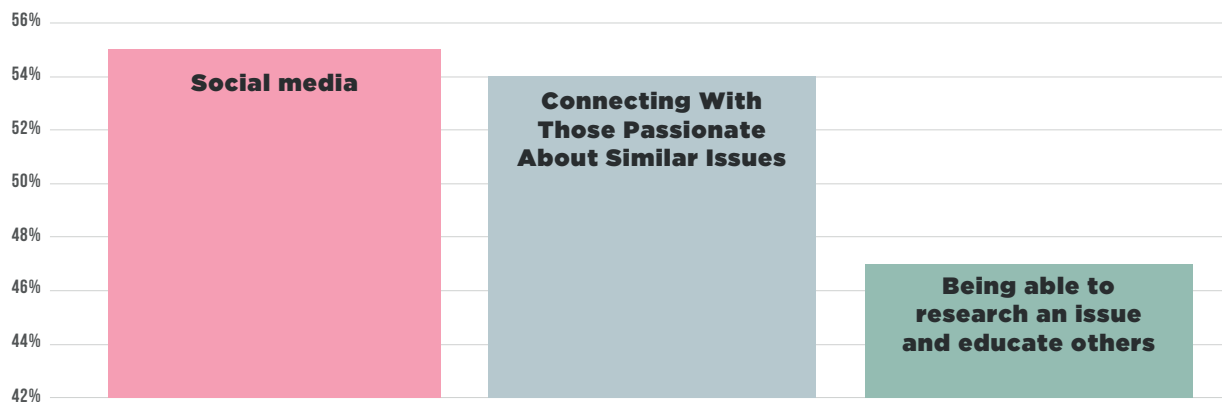
This, the respondents said, can be seen through advancing causes that young people care about through a variety of ways, such as using social media to help fundraise and creating apps to make it easier for people to get involved.

At the same time, our research has also demonstrated how smarter tech is also responsible for the increasing spread of misinformation, online bullying, information overload, and tech fatigue. They also worry about tech's impact on anxiety, isolation, and superficiality.

For example, the research found that tech is viewed as causing an **INCREASE IN ANXIETY (57%), ISOLATION (57%), BULLYING (57%), SUPERFICIALITY (56%), AND SELFISHNESS (54%)**.

On the other end of the spectrum, people view tech as causing an increase in **LEARNING OF MORE THAN TWO THIRDS (68%), INNOVATION (67%), SOCIAL CONNECTION (63%), ACTIVISM (59%), AND COMMUNITY (54%).**

## THE TOP 3 WAYS TECHNOLOGY IS DRIVING EMPATHY, ENABLED VIA SMART DEVICES



Bar chart showing: Social media (55%), Connecting With Those Passionate About Similar Issues (54%), Being able to research an issue and educate others (47%)

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# THE BENEFITS OF TECH AND EMPATHY

Mariann Avila
Mexico

## TECH HELPS MAKE SOCIETY MORE EMPATHETIC BY MAKING IT EASIER TO...

| Help Build Connections | Facilitate Access to a Wider Range of Voices | Make it Easier to Learn About Causes and Get Involved | Provide Exposure into Other People's Lives |
|---|---|---|---|

## TECH IS VIEWED AS CAUSING AN INCREASE IN:

| Learning | Innovation | Social Connection | Activism | Community |
|---|---|---|---|---|

## BUT ALSO...

| Anxiety | Isolation | Bullying | Superficiality | Selfishness |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Our research found that Gen Z are the most likely to report tech "burnout" during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 48% stating they spend too much time staring at screens, 38% feeling bored of tech that they used to find fun, and 32% saying they have increased anxiety due to the tech they use.

### A CALL TO ACTION:

While tech companies are facilitating positive interactions amidst COVID-19, they also hold the key to finding solutions via the creation of new, smarter technology that helps combat feelings that induce negativity.

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# TECH COMPANIES: A SOLUTION TO DRIVING EMPATHY?

Khady Dieng
France

This research presents a significant opportunity for self-reflection. The majority of respondents in our research believe technology companies need to change their behavior and do better in order to succeed.

This gives us, and companies like us, a chance to consider how we can contribute in a post-COVID-19 world to not only enable empathy with our technologies but take on a more empathetic role in the world to help solve big, global issues and, at the same time, empower people to be more empathetic.

We at Lenovo are using these challenging times to reflect upon how we can do better in the future. While we realize we cannot change the world in a day, we are proactively thinking hard about how we can take the next steps towards a world where technology companies contribute to a better good and help drive more empathy between global populations.

**OVER THREE QUARTERS (78%) OF GLOBAL RESPONDENTS THINK SOCIETY SHOULD BE MORE EMPATHETIC THAN IT IS TODAY**

**ALMOST HALF (45%) OF RESPONDENTS SAID TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES NEED TO CHANGE IN A POST-COVID WORLD** by being more empathic to help close the current perceived empathy gap. People today place significant value on empathy and are confident that they are making progress on a personal level. There is also broad consensus that society should become more empathetic than it is today. But people are split on whether things are actually changing for the better on this front, with 40% of people globally saying society is currently becoming more empathetic and 39% actually saying it is becoming less empathetic. This is a critical gap we must strive to close.

**9 IN 10 PEOPLE (89%) BELIEVE THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES NEEDS TO CHANGE** to use profits and innovation to take bigger steps in addressing major issues that are unfolding around the globe.

**CONVERSELY, 59% OF GLOBAL RESPONDENTS INDICATED THEY WILL HAVE A GREATER APPRECIATION AND EXPECTATION OF TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPERS AFTER THE PANDEMIC**, given the role that technology has played in helping us maintain social connection and, for many of us, hold onto our jobs during this challenging, difficult, unchartered time.

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# THANK YOU

Kemi Dauda
USA