

Background to Declining Birthrates - Japan's Situation

Director (General Policy), Children and Families Agency, Cabinet Office
NAKAHARA Shigehito

Current State of Birthrate Decline (Overview)

Number of births: 727,288 people (2023 <Final data>) [Compared to previous year: Down 43,471 people]

*“Dankai Junior” generation (second-generation baby boomers born between 1971 and 1974) is in their 50s

← Around 2 million people were born every year of the “Dankai Junior” generation

*Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, “Vital Statistics of Japan” (Final data)

Total fertility rate: 1.20 (2023 <Final data>) [Compared to previous year: Down 0.06 points]

*Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, “Vital Statistics of Japan” (Final data)

Percentage of people unmarried at age 50: Males 28.25% / Females 17.81% (2020)

← Males 2.60% / Females 4.45% (1980)

*National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, “Population Statistics of Japan 2024”

Average age at the first marriage:

Husbands 31.1 years old / Wives 29.7 years old (2023 <Final data>)

← Husbands 27.8 years old / Wives 25.2 years old (1980)

*Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, “Vital Statistics of Japan” (Final data)

Average age of women at birth of first child: 31.0 years old (2023 <Final data>)

← 26.4 years old (1980)

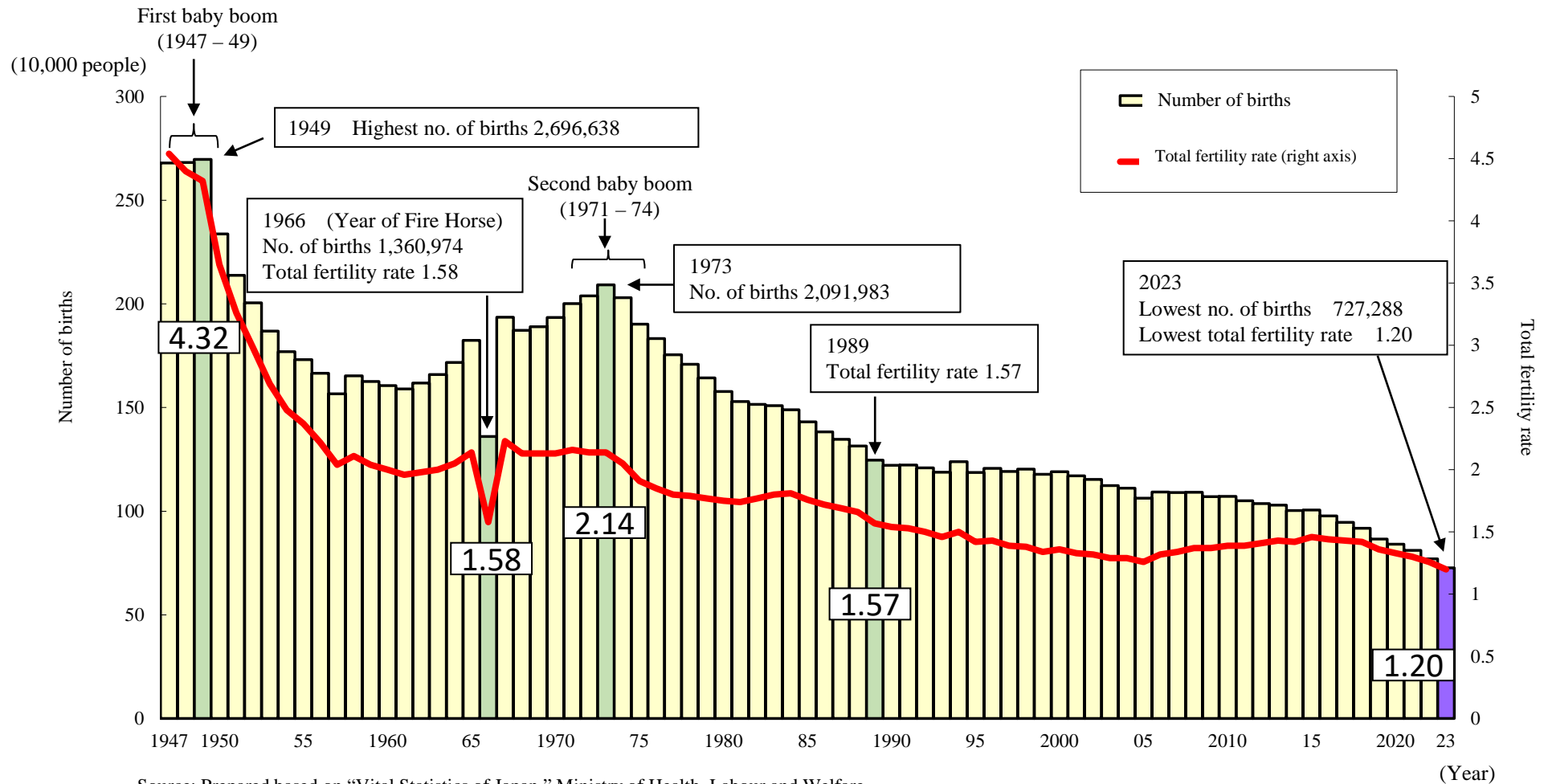
*Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, “Vital Statistics of Japan” (Final data)

→ **If the current trend continues, the population will decline to approx. 87 million by 2070.**

* National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, “Population Projections for Japan (2023 revision)” (Medium-fertility projection)

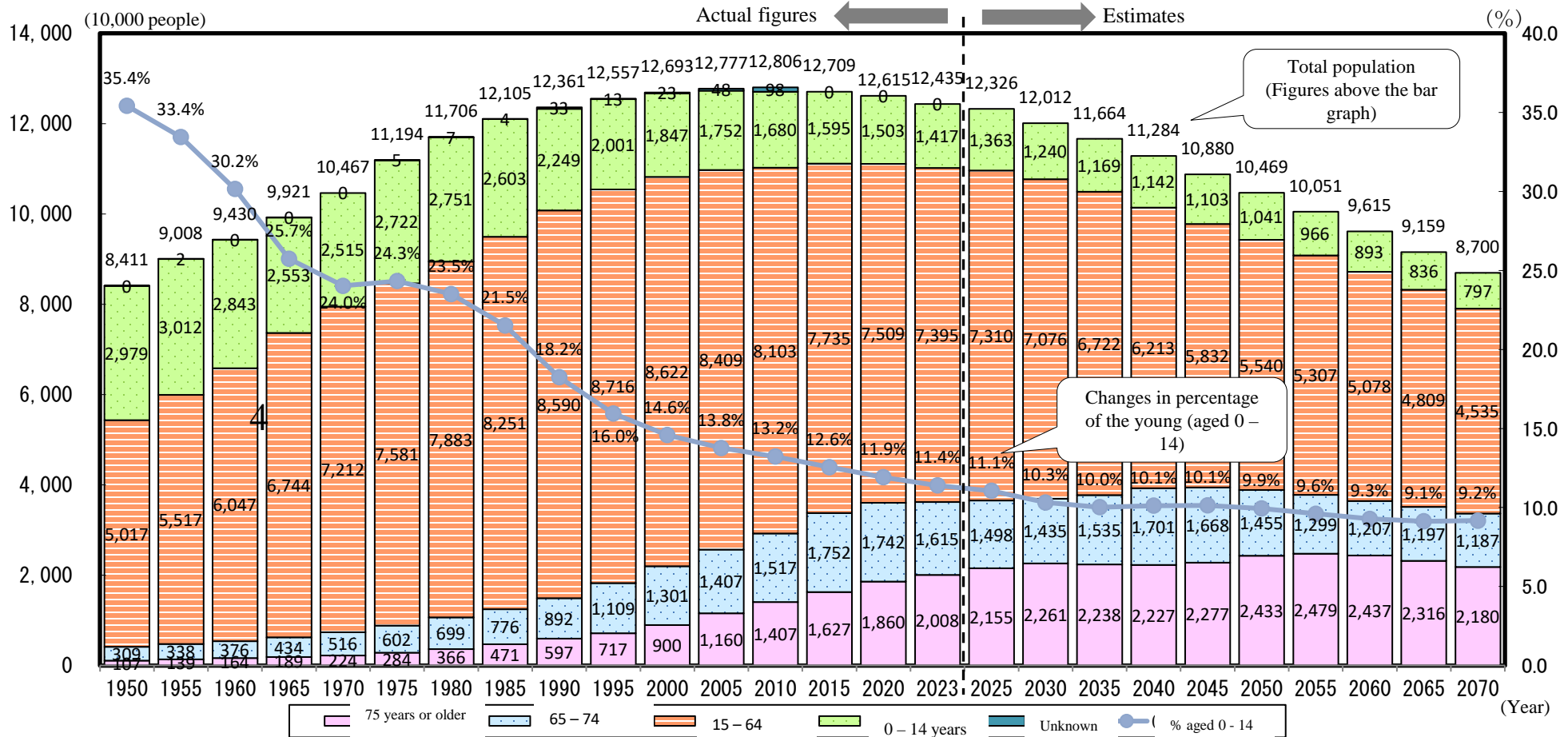
Changes in Number of Births and Total Fertility Rate

- In 2023, the number of births was 727,288, **the lowest ever on record** (a decrease for the 8th consecutive year, down 43,471 (5.6%) from the previous year)
- In 2023, total fertility rate was 1.20, **the lowest ever on record** (a decrease for the 8th consecutive year, down 0.06 points from the previous year)



Japan's Population Structure

○ Total population will fall below 90 million in 2070, and the percentage of the young (percentage of those aged 0 - 14) will also fall below 10% from 2050.



Source: Prepared based on estimates from "Population Census," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (figures for 2015 and 2020 are based on results with imputation) for figures until 2020; "Population Estimates," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, for 2023 figures; "Population Projections for Japan (2023 revision)" (medium-fertility/medium-mortality assumptions), National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, for 2025 figures and after.

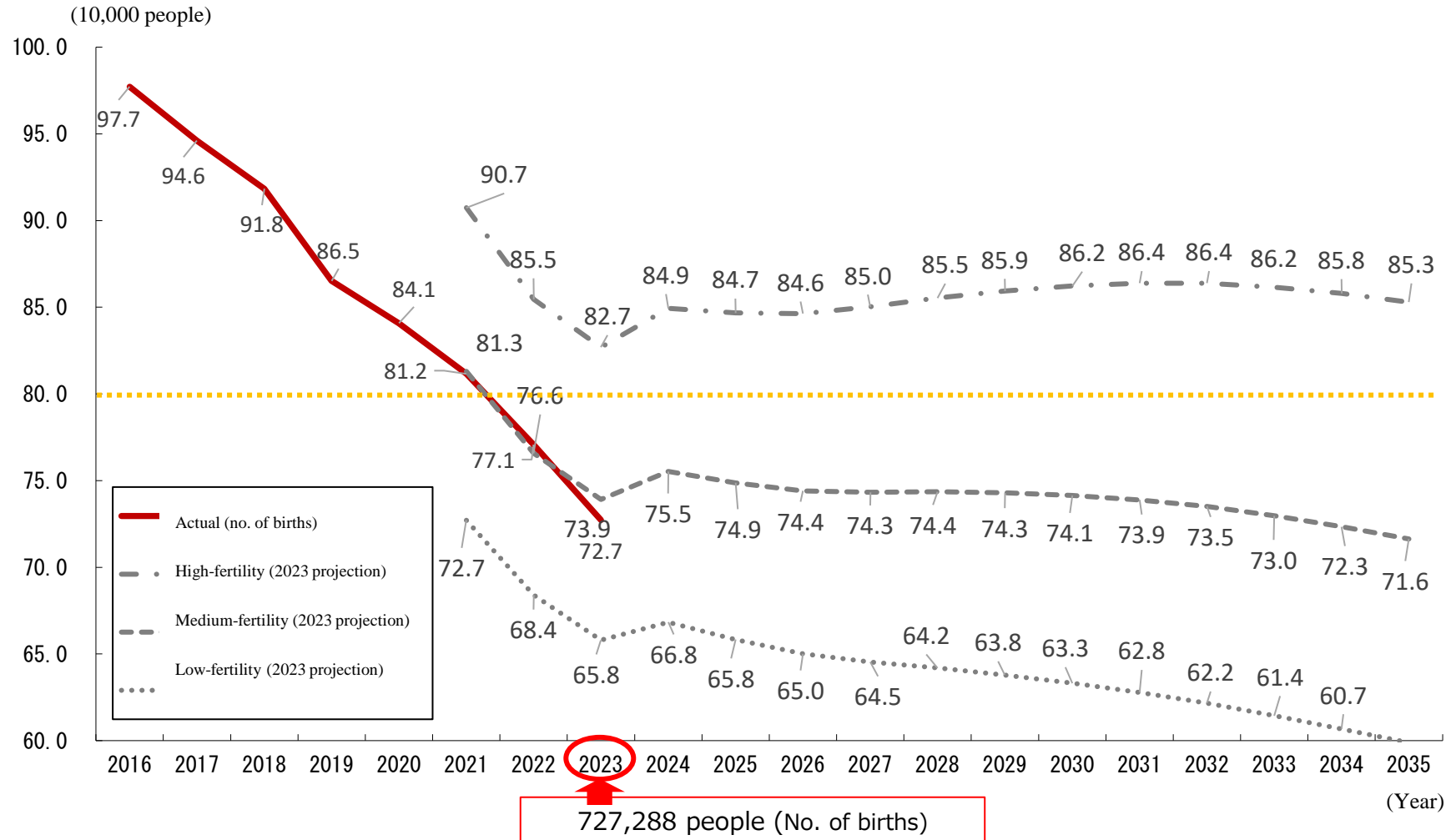
Note 1: Population by age group for 2015 and 2020 are based on results with imputation, so there is no population with unknown ages. The population by age group for 2025 and after are calculated based on the population prorated for unknown ages, based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau's 2020 Population Census (reference table including population of unknown age and nationality after prorating), so there is no population with unknown ages. Note that in calculating the percentage of the young from 1950 to 2010, those with unknown ages have been excluded from the denominator. However, when calculating the percentages in 1950 and 1955, a part of the population of Okinawa Prefecture population, as noted below, is not included in the unknown portion.

Note 2: The number of foreign nationals of age 70 and above in Okinawa Prefecture was 136 (55 males, 81 females) in 1950 and 23,328 (8,090 males, 15,238 females) in 1955. These figures exclude those of ages 65 - 74 and ages 75 and above, and are included in the "unknown" category.

Note 3: Percentages are rounded off to the nearest first decimal place. For this reason, the total may not add up to 100.0%.

Comparison of Number of Births and Population Projections

○ The number of births in 2023 was 727,288.



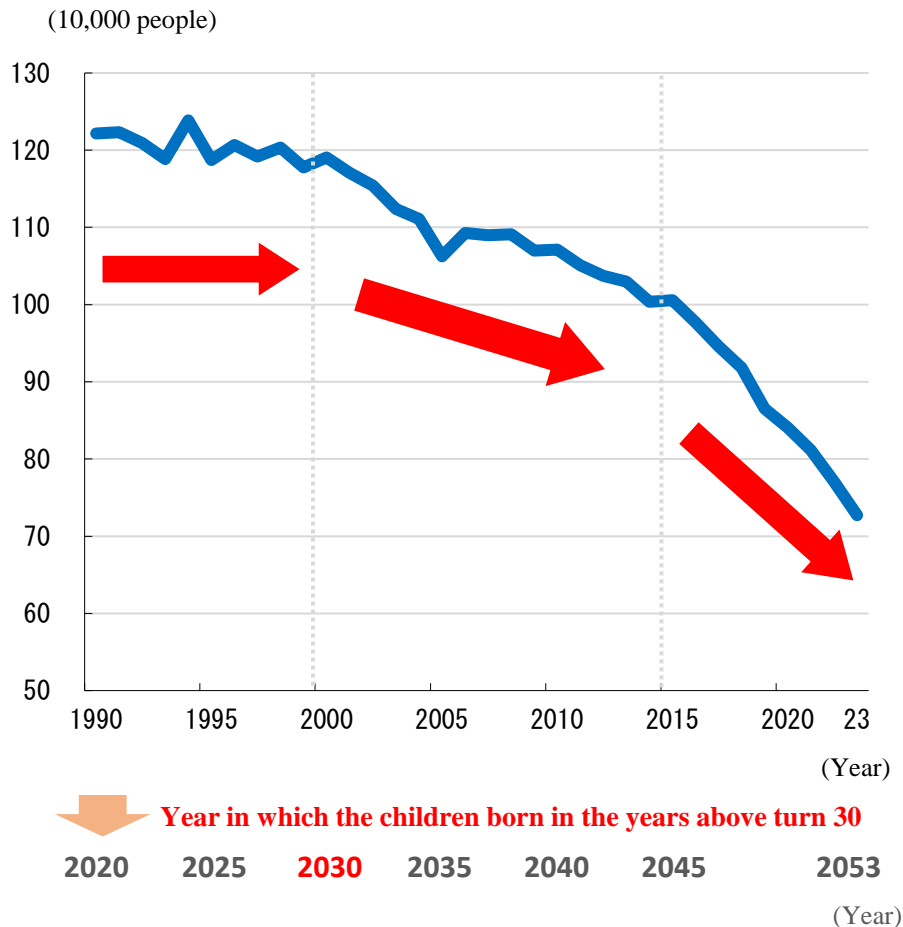
Source: Prepared based on “Population Projections for Japan (2023 revision),” National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, and “Vital Statistics of Japan,” Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Note 1: The population projections and actual figures shown above refer to the Japanese population.

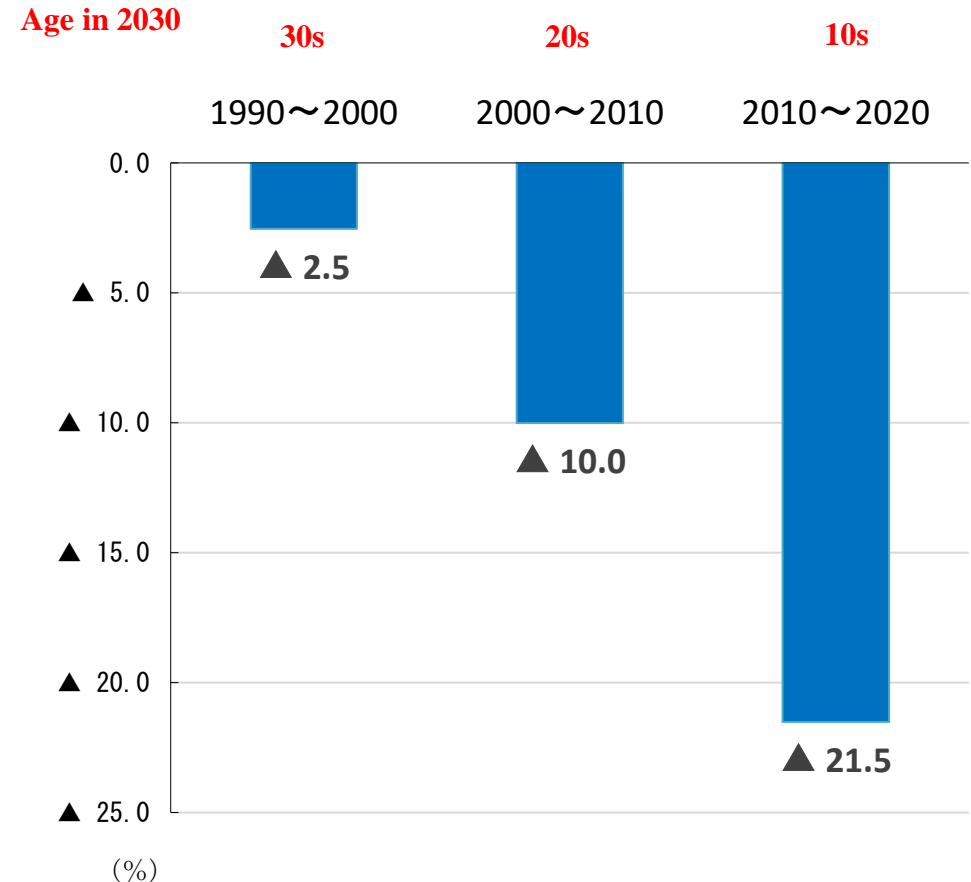
Sharp and accelerated decline in youth population from the 2030s

- From the beginning of the 2030s, Japan's youth population will decline sharply at twice the current rate, and the declining birthrate will reach an intractable situation.
- The next six to seven years before we enter the 2030s is our last chance to reverse the trend of declining birthrates.

[Changes in number of births]



[Percentage decrease by birth year (10 years)]



Analysis of Factors Behind the Decline in Number of Births

The factors behind the decline in the number of births have been broken down into the following three factors:

- (1) Population factor (decline in the number of females)
- (2) Marriage rate factor (decline in number of marriages)
- (3) Marital fertility rate factor (decline in births from married couples)

• Based on that, concerning the decline in the number of births from 2005 and after:

- (1) For the population factor (= impact of birthrate decline in the past), the greatest downward pressure is caused by a decline in the female population itself.
- (2) Similarly, the marriage rate factor has continued to put downward pressure since the 1990s.
- (3) The marital fertility rate factor had been driving birth numbers upward until around 2015, but has been putting downward pressure on numbers in the past five years.

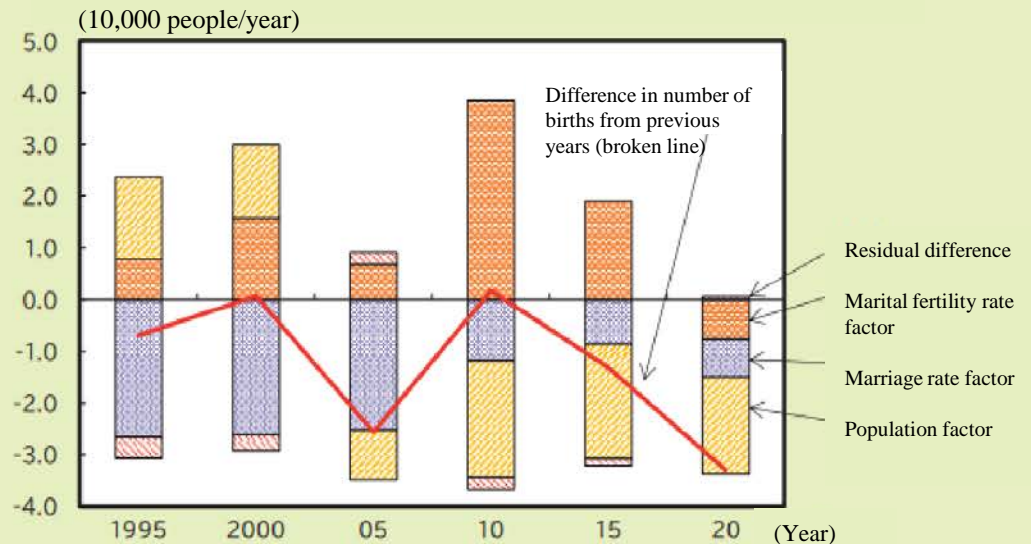


The advancing decline in the number of births from 2015 to 2020 can be attributed to the following three factors:

- (1) Decline in female population**
- (2) Growing trend of not marrying**
- (3) Decline in fertility rates among married couples**

Fig. 2-2-4: Analysis of factors behind the number of births

Currently, birthrates are declining due to three factors: population, marriage rate, and marital fertility rate.



Remarks: 1. Prepared based on "Population Census," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and "Vital Statistics of Japan," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

2. The figures cover births in which the mother's age is between 15 and 49 years old. Figures for each year are the difference from the figures from five years before, converted into an annualized rate.

For each factor:

Number of births = $\sum a \text{ Population } a \times \text{Marriage Rate } a \times \text{Marital Fertility Rate } a$

(Subscript "a" indicates the value at age a, and $\sum a$ indicates the sum of the values by age.)

Therefore, Population Factor = $\sum a \Delta \text{Population } a \times \text{Marriage Rate } a \times \text{Marital Fertility Rate } a$

Marriage Rate Factor = $\sum a \text{Population } a \times \Delta \text{Marriage Rate } a \times \text{Marital Fertility Rate } a$

Marital Fertility Rate Factor = $\sum a \text{Population } a \times \text{Marriage Rate } a \times \Delta \text{Marital Fertility Rate } a$

Here, Δ indicates the annualized rate of increase or decrease over five years.

Source: Cabinet Office, "Annual Report on the Japanese Economy and Public Finance 2023"

*Upon inquiring with officials from the Cabinet Office on the reasons behind the increase/decrease for each factor every five years, we were informed that no analysis had been conducted.

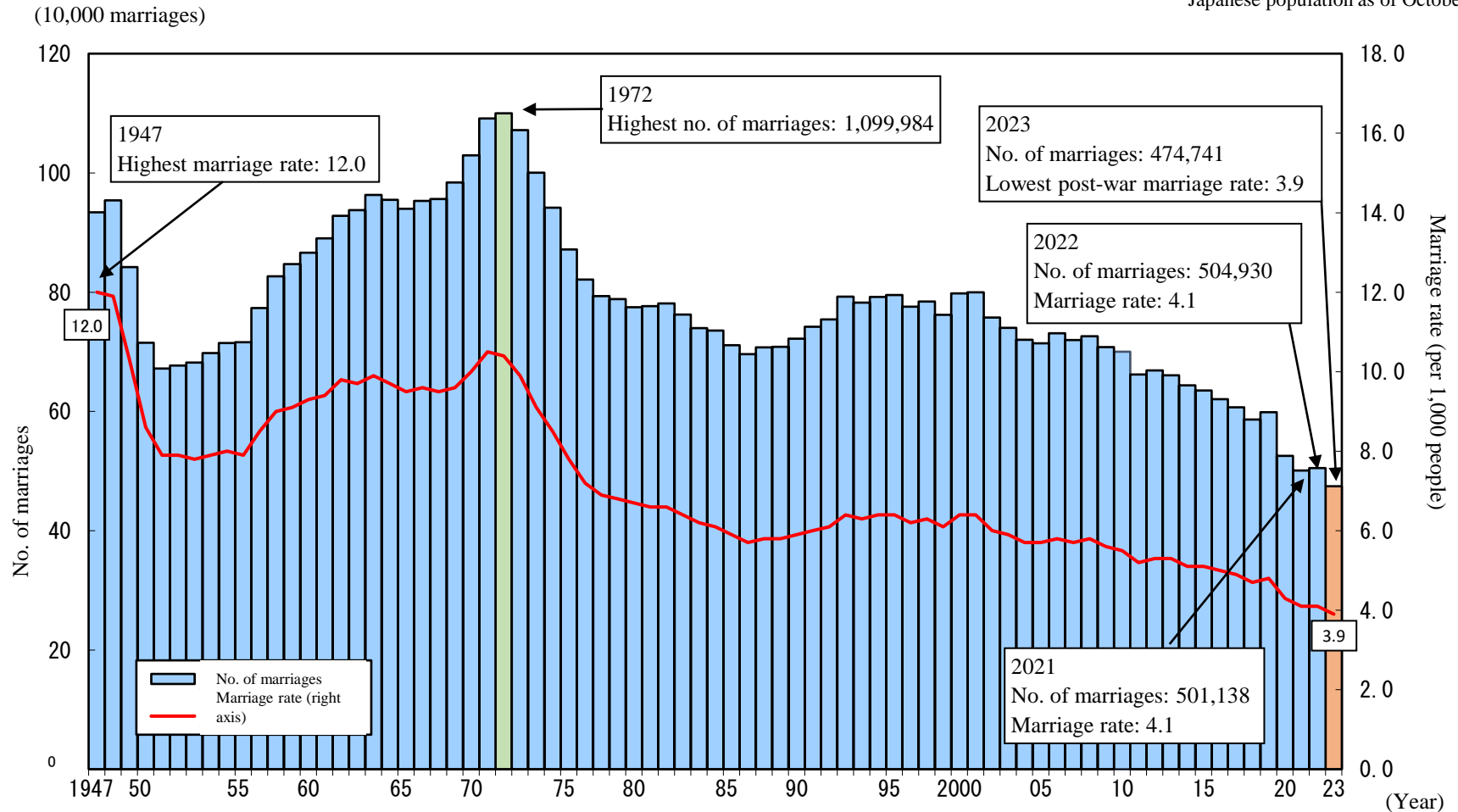
Marital Status

- The number of marriages in 2023 was 474,741, a decrease of 30,189 from 504,930 in the previous year.
- The marriage rate (per 1,000 people in the population) in 2023 was 3.9, declining from 4.1 in the previous year.

[Yearly changes in the number of marriages and marriage rate]

• Marriage rate: Percentage marriages per 1,000 people.

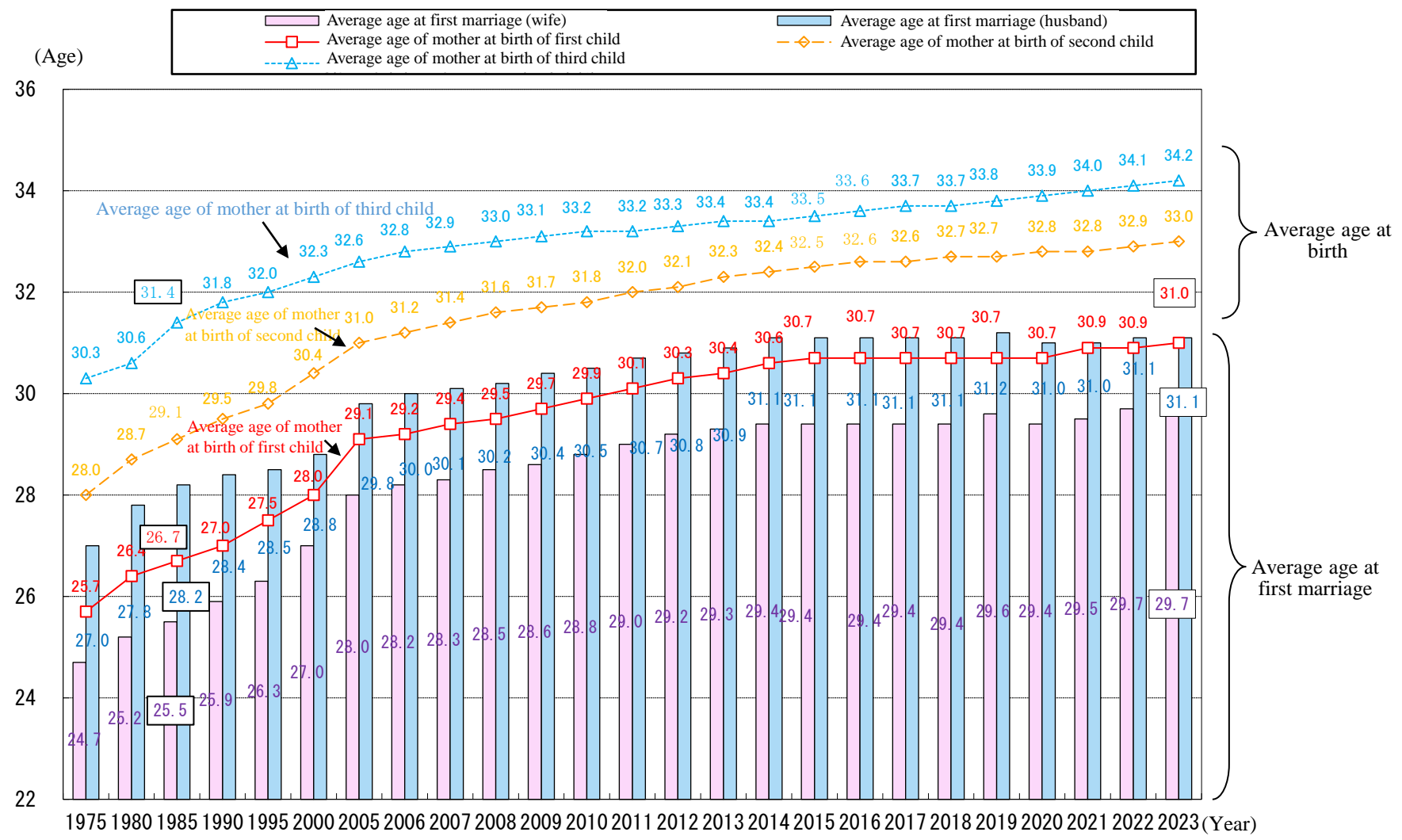
Marriage rate = $\frac{\text{Number of marriages per year}}{\text{Japanese population as of October 1}} \times 1000$



Source: Prepared based on "Vital Statistics of Japan," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (approximate figures for 2023)

Changes in Average Age at First Marriage and Average Age of Mother at Birth by Birth Order

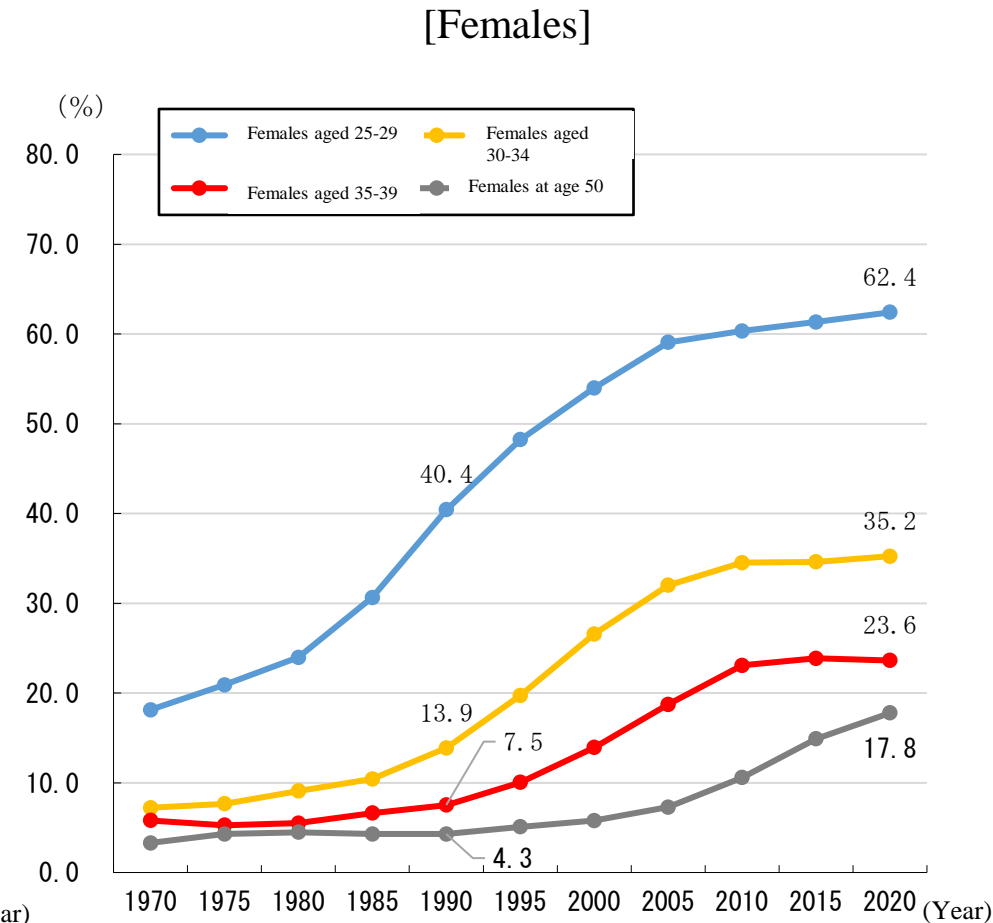
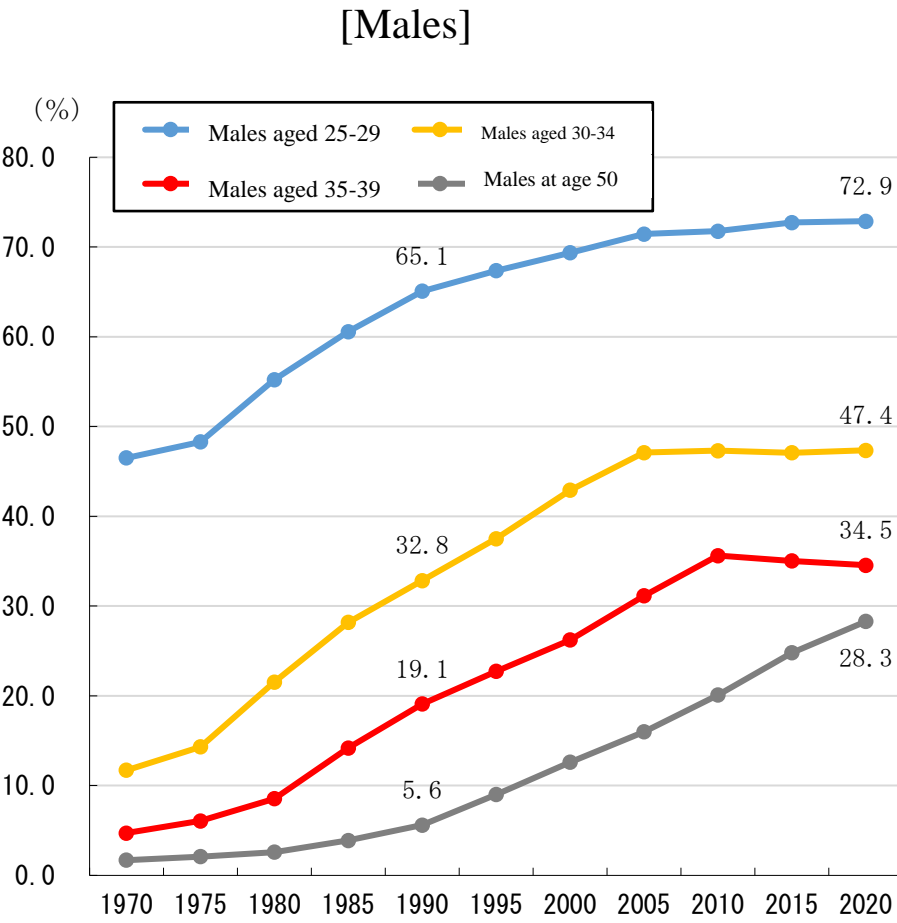
- Average age at first marriage remained unchanged from the previous year, at about 29.7 years old for wives and about 31.1 years old for husbands.
- Average age of mothers at the birth of the first child rose above 30 years old in 2011, and reached 31.0 years old by 2023.



Source: Prepared based on "Vital Statistics of Japan," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Changes in the Percentage of Never-married Persons (by Sex and Age)

- From a long-term perspective, the percentage of never-married persons is set to continue on an upward trend.
- As of 2020, approximately 1 in 3.5 males and 1 in 5.6 females were unmarried at age 50.



Source: Percentages of never-married persons aged 25-29, 30-34, and 35-39: Prepared based on "Population Census," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Percentage of never-married persons at age 50: Prepared based on "Population Statistics of Japan," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research/

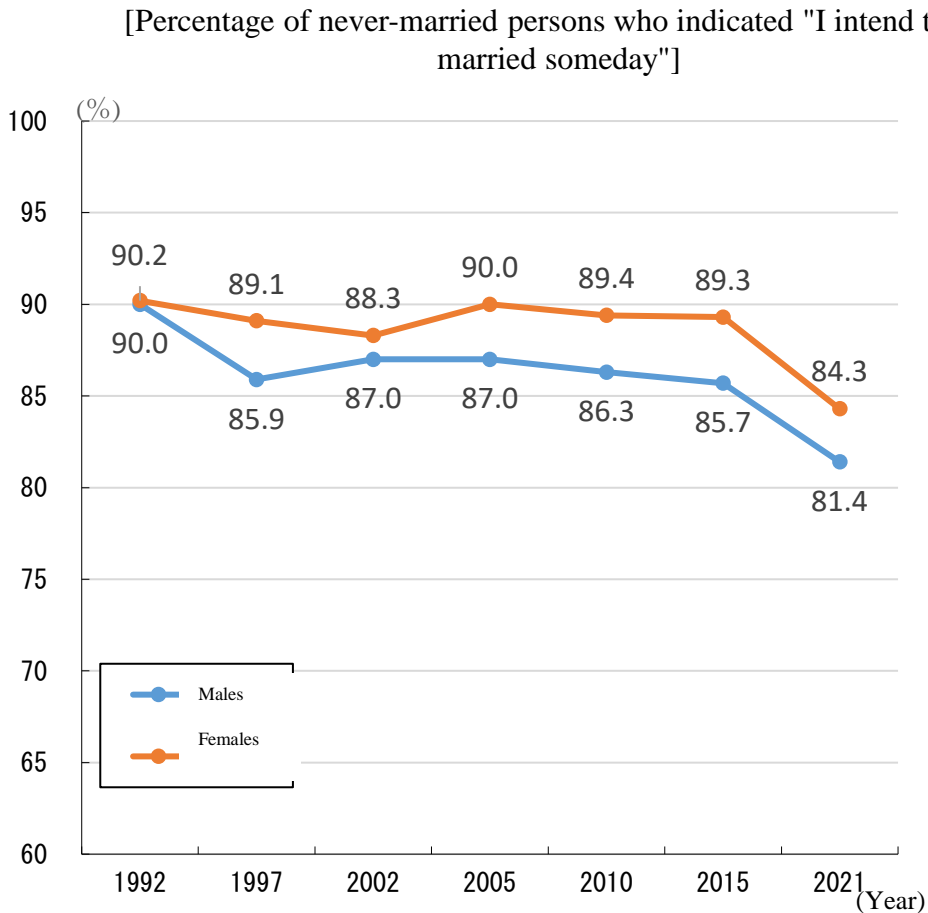
Note 1: Here, "never-married persons" refers to those who have never been married.

Note 2: The percentage of never-married persons at age 50 is calculated based on the "Population Census Report," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau. Figures shown are average percentages of never-married persons among those aged 45-49 and 50-54.

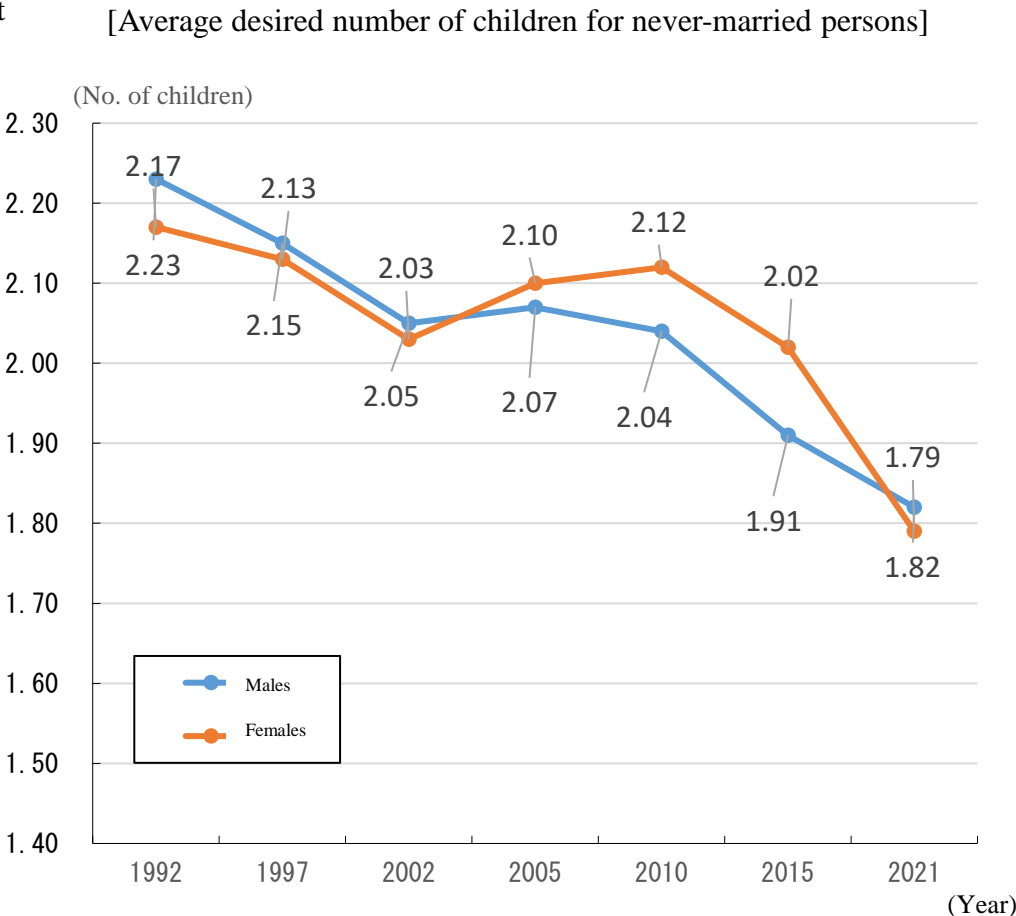
Note 3: The 2015 and 2020 data for the percentage of never-married persons at age 50 is based on results with imputation for those with unknown marital status.

Younger generations cannot envision a future of marriage and raising children

- The percentage of never-married persons who indicated that they "intend to get married someday" had remained largely unchanged for a long time, but fell in the most recent survey.
- The average number of children that never-married persons wish to have has continued to decline, with an especially large drop among females and in the most recent survey.



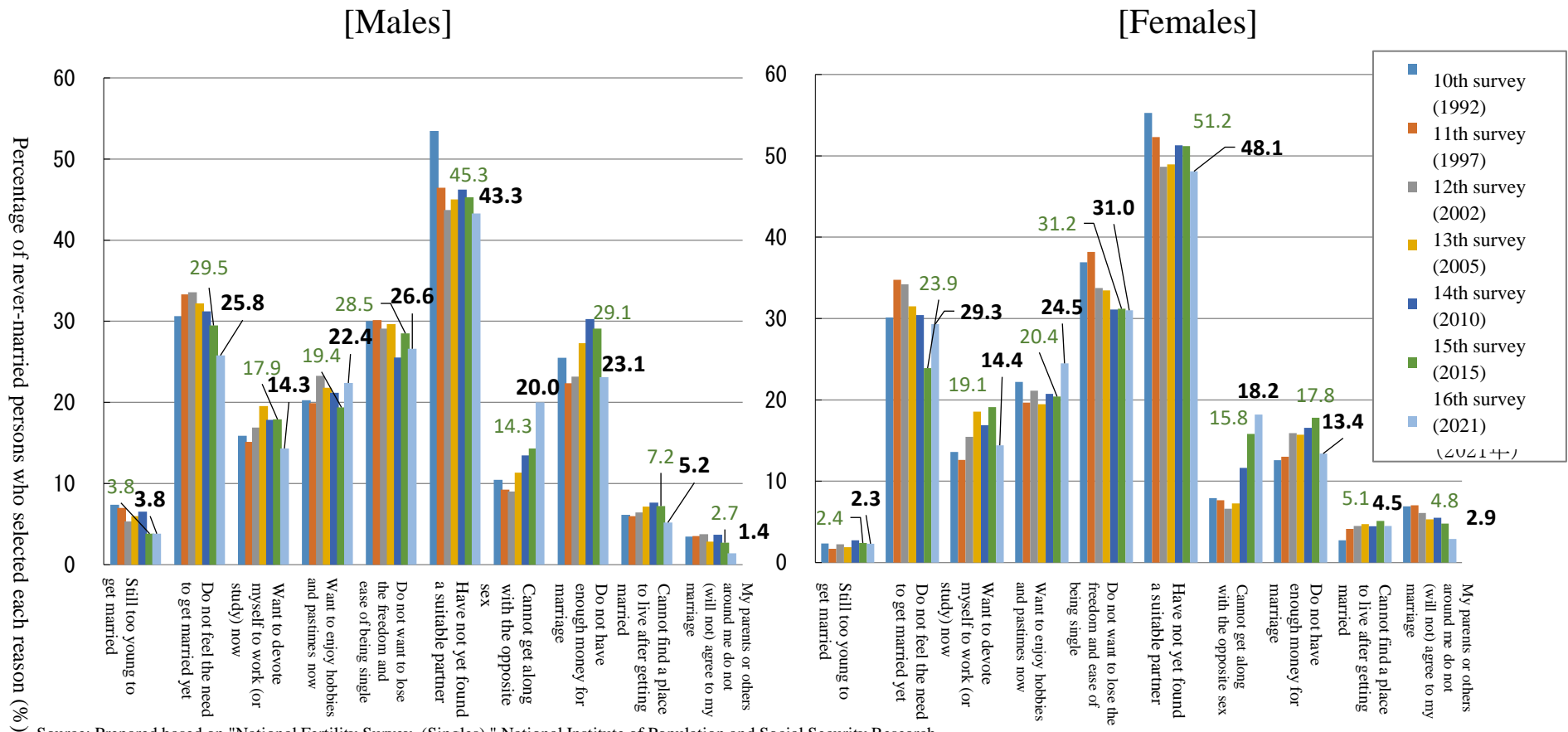
Source: Prepared based on "National Fertility Survey," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.
Note 1: The percentage of 18-34 year olds who answered "1" to the question, "What are your thoughts on marriage from the perspective of your entire lifetime? Select one of the following." (1. Intend to get married someday, 2. Have no intention of ever getting married.)



Source: Prepared based on "National Fertility Survey," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.
Note 1: The percentage of never-married 18-34 year olds who answered, "I intend to get married someday."
Note 2: The average desired number of children is calculated as 5 for those who wish to have 5 or more.

Reasons Why Young People Are Remaining Single

- When never-married persons aged 25-34 were asked why they have remained single, the most common answer for both males and females was "Have not yet found a suitable partner" (43.3% of males, 48.1% of females). The next most common answers were, "Do not want to lose the freedom and ease of being single" and "Do not feel the need to get married yet."
- The percentage of people who answered "Cannot get along with the opposite sex" has been increasing since the 2005 (13th) survey. In the most recent survey, there was also an increase in the percentage of both males and females who answered "Want to enjoy hobbies and pastimes now."



Source: Prepared based on "National Fertility Survey, (Singles)," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

Note 1: The percentage of never-married 18-34 year olds who answered "intend to get married someday."

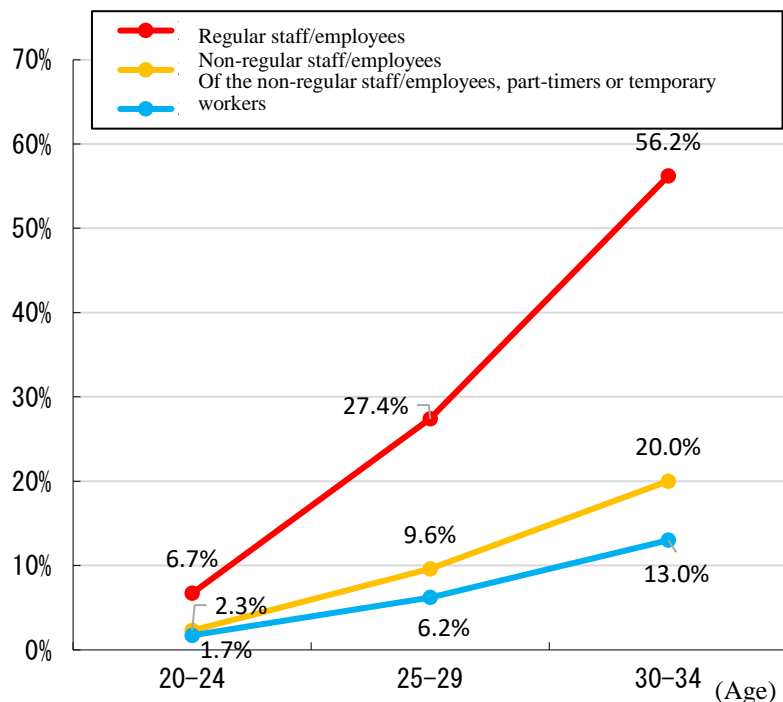
Note 2: The graph shows the percentage of never-married persons who selected each item as their reason for remaining single (up to three options may be selected).

Note 3: The figures on the graph are the results from the 16th survey.

Marriage Rates (by the employment status, type of employment, and annual income of males)

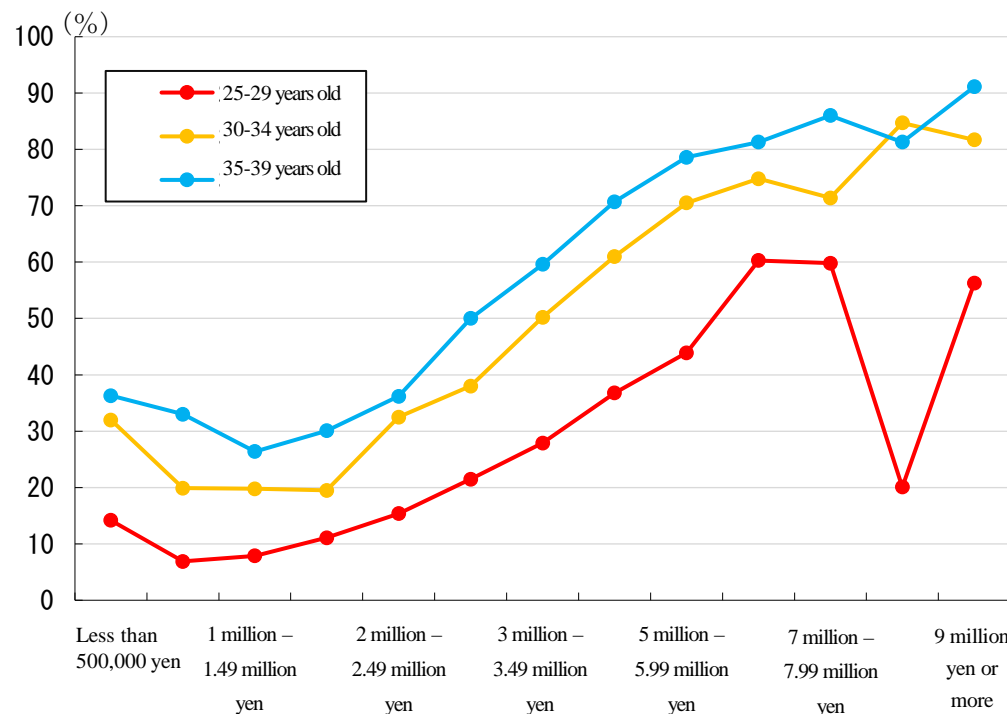
- The marriage rates among younger males are significantly lower for males in non-regular employment than those in regular employment.
- Looking at marriage rates by the annual income of males, across all age groups and up to a certain level, the higher the annual income, the higher the percentage of married persons.

[Marriage rates by the employment status and type of employment of males]



Source: Prepared based on "2022 Survey on Employment Structure," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

[Marriage rates by the annual income range of males]

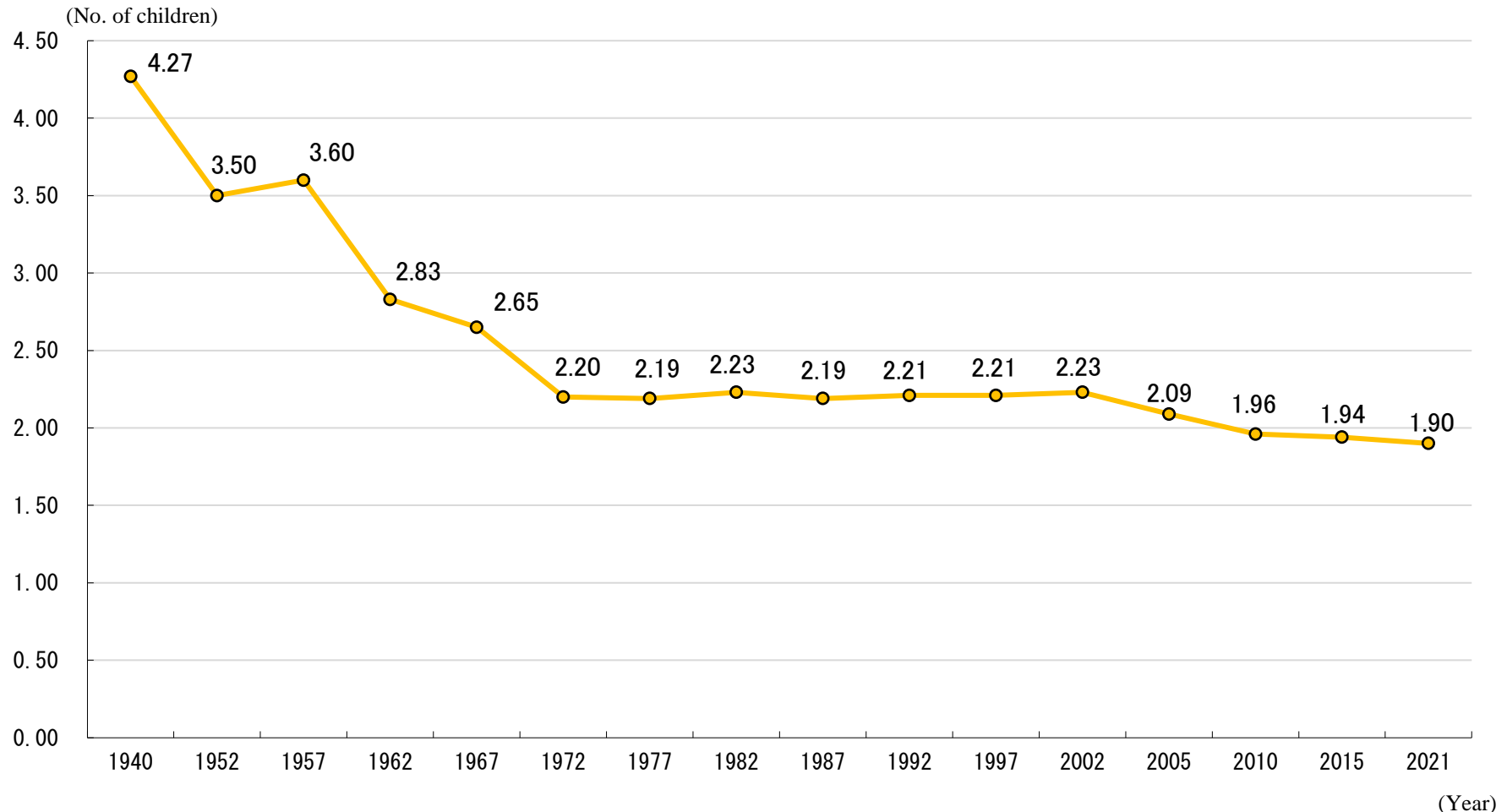


Source: Prepared based on the "Current Status of Youth Employment Status, Careers, and Vocational Skills Development (3) - Based on the 2017 Survey on Employment Structure," Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (2019).

Note 1: This material is a secondary compilation and analysis of the Survey on Employment Structure (as of 2017) prepared originally by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training.

Changes in Completed Number of Children

○ The completed number of children for married couples remained stable at around 2.2 children from the 1970s through to 2002, but has been on a declining trend since 2005, reaching a record low of 1.90 children in the most recent survey.



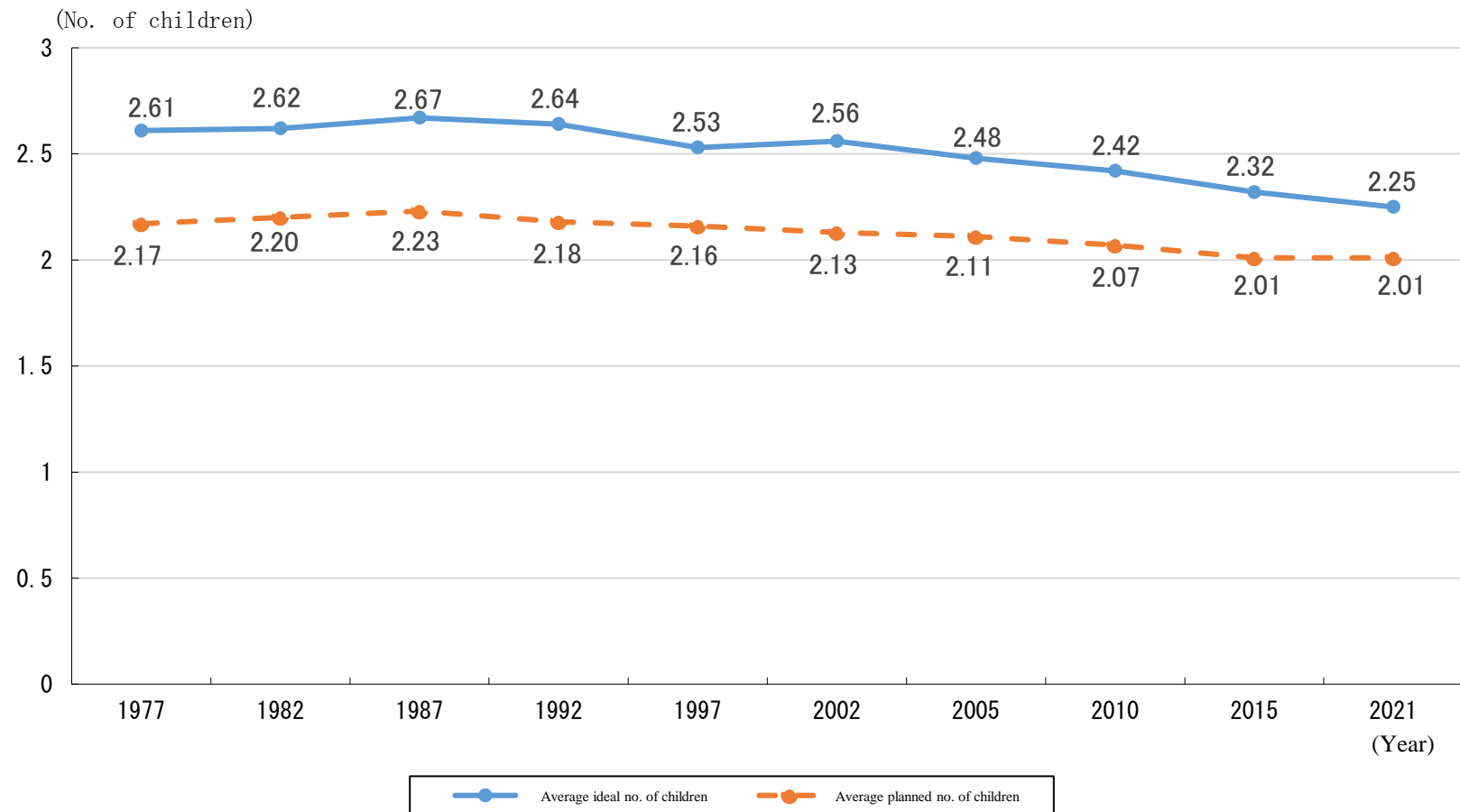
Source: Prepared based on "National Fertility Survey, (Married Couples)," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

Note 1: The survey was conducted on married couples in their first marriage, with a marriage duration of 15-19 years (excluding those with unknown number of births). The year for each survey is the year in which the survey was conducted.

Note 2: Until 2015 (15th survey), the figures were for married couples where the wife was below 50 years old at the time of the survey. For 2021 (16th survey), the figures were for couples where the wife got married before the age of 50 and was below 55 years old at the time of the survey.

Changes in the Average Ideal Number of Children and the Average Planned Number of Children Among Married Couples

- The average ideal number of children for married couples has been decreasing gradually since the 2000s.
- The average planned number of children for married couples has continued to decline gradually since the 1990s, but has remained unchanged in the most recent survey at 2.01, compared to the previous survey.



Source: Prepared based on "National Fertility Survey," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

Note 1: The survey was conducted on married couples in their first marriage, where the wife was below 50 years of age.

Note 2: The average number of children is calculated as 8 for those who indicated 8 or more children.

Reasons for Not Having the Ideal Number of Children (by Combinations of Ideal/Planned Number of Children)

- There are various reasons why married couples do not have their ideal number of children.
- The most common reason for not having the first child was “I have not been able to get pregnant even though I want children.”
 - The most common reason for not having the second, third or subsequent children was “it costs too much to raise and educate children.”
- The burden of child-rearing and inability to get the husband’s cooperation in housework and childcare were also barriers to having the second or subsequent child.

(Multiple answers accepted)

Combinations in which the planned no. of children is less than the ideal no. of children	(No. of subjects) Breakdown of married couples whose planned no. of children is less than the ideal no.	Reasons for not having the ideal number of children											
		Economic reasons			Age/Physical reasons			Child-rearing burden	Reasons related to husband			Other reasons	
		It costs too much to raise and educate children	House is too small	Interfere with one's job or business	I do not want to have children at an older age	Health reasons	I have not been able to get pregnant even though I want children	I cannot bear the psychological and physical burden of child-rearing any longer	I cannot get my husband's cooperation in housework and childcare	My husband does not want a child	I want my youngest child to reach adulthood before my husband retires	The environment is not conducive for children to grow up freely	I want to cherish my life and our life as a couple
Ideal 1 or more, planned 0	4. 7% (39)	17. 9	2. 6	12. 8	23. 1	12. 8	61. 5	7. 7	5. 1	17. 9	5. 1	2. 6	12. 8
Ideal 2 or more, planned 1	37. 0% (316)	46. 2	6. 0	9. 2	40. 5	18. 7	32. 0	23. 7	10. 4	7. 0	4. 7	3. 5	8. 5
Ideal 3 or more, planned 2 or more	58. 4% (499)	59. 3	12. 0	20. 2	41. 7	17. 0	15. 8	23. 6	12. 6	9. 4	8. 0	6. 2	7. 6
Total	100. 0% (854)	52. 6	9. 4	15. 8	40. 4	17. 4	23. 9	23. 0	11. 5	8. 9	6. 7	5. 0	8. 2

(%)

Source: Prepared based on "16th Japanese National Fertility Survey (2021)," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

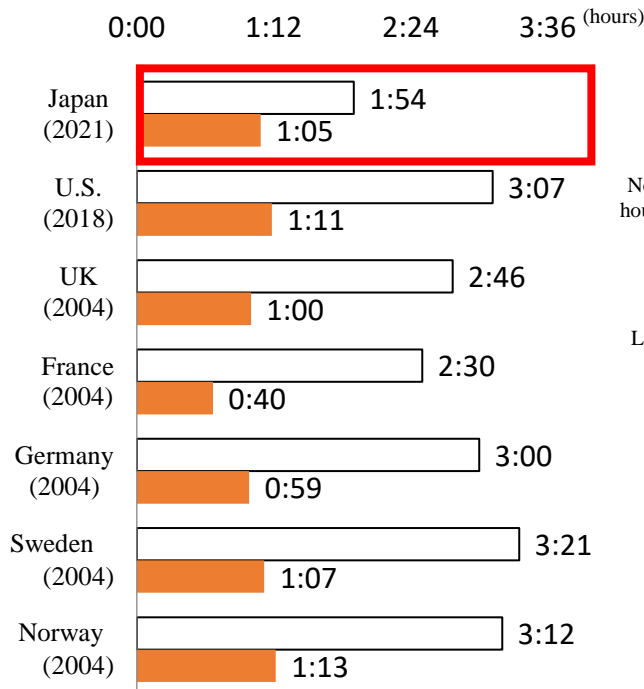
Note 1: The survey was conducted on married couples in their first marriage, with the wife below 50 years old at the time of the survey, and for whom the planned number of children is less than the ideal number of children.

Note 2: As respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers, the total exceeds 100%.

Relationship Between Continued Employment and Childbirth for Females, and Time Spent on Housework and Childcare for Males

- The average time that Japanese husbands (with children under the age of 6) spend on housework and childcare is around 2 hours, which is low by international standards.
- The longer the time husbands spend on housework and childcare, the higher the percentage of wives in continued employment and the higher the percentage of having a second or subsequent child.

[Time spent on housework and childcare among husbands with children under 6 (per day)]

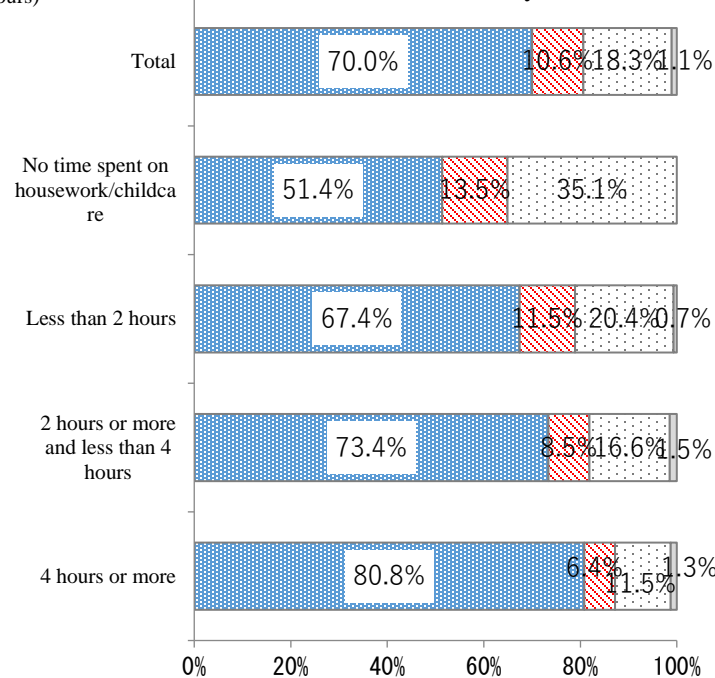


□ Total no. of hours spent on housework/childcare
 ■ Of which, hours spent on childcare

Source:

- Prepared based on "How Europeans Spend Their Time Everyday Life of Women and Men," Eurostat (2004); "American Time Use Survey," Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. (2018), and "2021 Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
- Figures for Japan are time spent by husbands and limited to households of married couples with children.

[Percentage of wives in continued employment before and after childbirth, by the hours husbands spend on housework and childcare on weekdays]



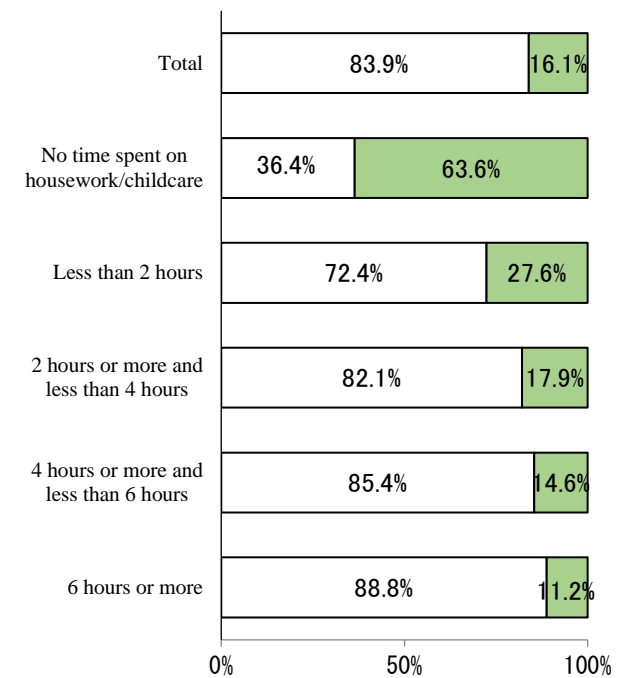
■ Stay in same job ■ Change jobs
 □ Leave employment □ Unknown

Source: Prepared based on "10th Longitudinal Survey of Adults in the 21st Century (2012 Cohort)," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Survey conducted in November 2021).

Notes:

- Tabulated figures are for cohabiting married couples for whom (1) or (2) below, as well as (3), apply.
 - Married couples for whom both parties had responded from the 1st to 10th surveys
 - Married couples who were single in the 1st survey and got married between the 1st and 9th surveys, and responded up till the 10th survey after marriage
 - Married couples for whom the wife held a job before childbirth, was a target subject in the 1st "Female Questionnaire," and had a child/children in the past nine years
- If there were two or more births in the past nine years, the youngest child is included in the tabulation.
- "Total" includes those whose hours spent on housework and childcare are unknown.

[Rates of birth of second or subsequent children, by the hours husbands spend on housework and childcare on non-working days]



□ Birth ■ No birth

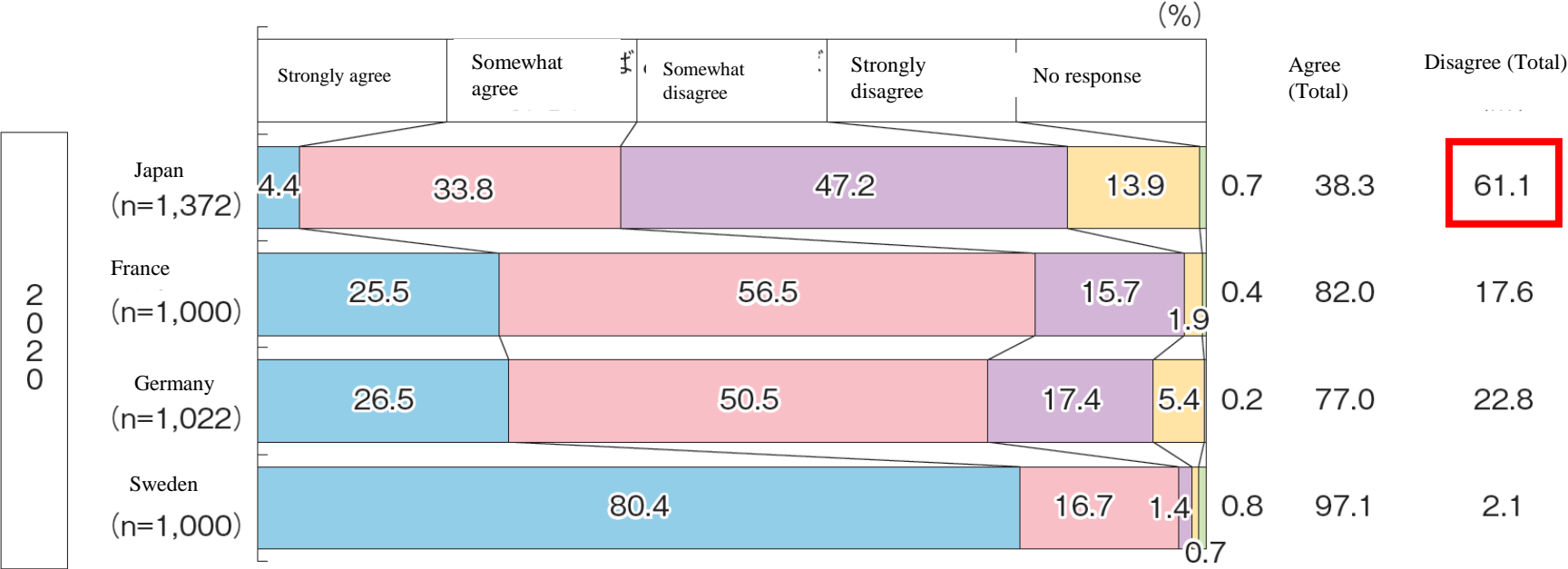
Source: Prepared based on "10th Longitudinal Survey of Adults in the 21st Century (2012 Cohort)," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Survey conducted in November 2021).

Notes:

- Tabulated figures are for cohabiting married couples for whom (1) or (2) below, as well as (3), apply. However, this excludes married couples for whom the wife's data prior to giving birth cannot be obtained.
 - Married couples for whom both parties had responded from the 1st to 10th surveys
 - Married couples who were single in the 1st survey and got married between the 1st and 9th surveys, and responded up till the 10th survey after marriage
 - Married couples with one or more children at the time of the survey conducted prior to the birth of their child
- For hours spent on housework and childcare, "birth" refers to the situation at the time of the survey conducted prior to the birth of the child, and "no birth" refers to the situation at the time of the 9th survey.
- If there were two or more births in the past nine years, the youngest child is included in the tabulation.
- "Total" includes those whose hours spent on housework and childcare are unknown.

Do You Think Your Country is an Easy Place to Have and Raise Children?

○ In response to the question “Do you think your country is an easy place to have and raise children?” about 60% of the respondents in Japan disagreed.



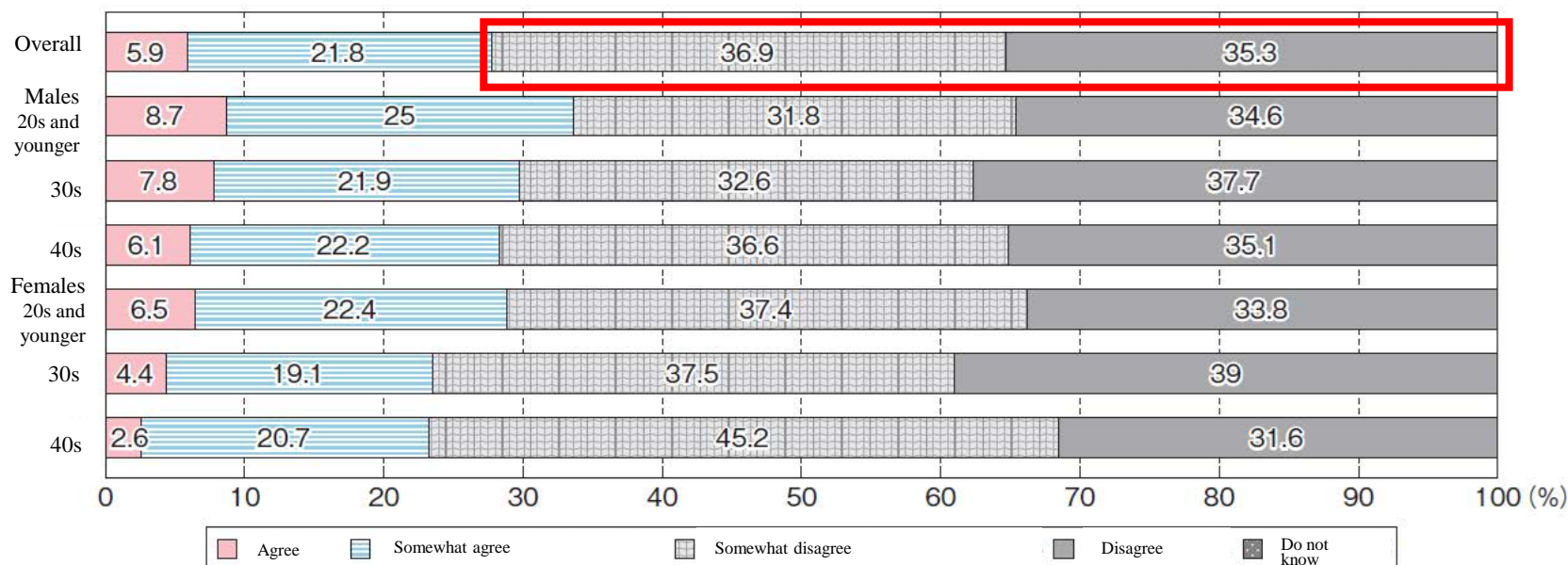
Source: Cabinet Office, "FY2020 International Attitude Survey on the Declining Birthrate Society," (March 2021).
Note 1: Percentages are rounded off to the nearest first decimal place. For this reason, the total may not add up to 100.0%.

Are We Moving Toward a Society that is Supportive of Marriage, Pregnancy, Children and Child-rearing?

○ In response to the question “Is Japan moving toward a society that is supportive of marriage, pregnancy, children and child-rearing?” about 70% of the respondents disagreed.

Fig. 1-1-52

Percentage of respondents who feel that Japan is “moving toward a society that is supportive of marriage, pregnancy, children and child-rearing”



Source: Children and Families Agency, “Survey of Attitude toward the Promotion of Child-related Measures” (FY2023)

Working Group on Life Design and Encounters Envisioned by the Younger Generation

The General Principles for Child-Related Measures (Cabinet Decision on December 22, 2023) states that marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing are based on free decisions made by individuals, and are based on the important premise of respecting diverse values and ways of thinking.

Furthermore, it states that **measures to address declining birthrates are based on society as a whole supporting younger generations by listening sincerely to their opinions, taking their perspective, and supporting them in accordance with their wishes when they choose to get married, have children, and raise them through their own will and choice.**

In light of this, the "**Working Group on Life Design and Encounters Envisioned by the Younger Generation**" will be convened under the Minister of State for Policies Related to Children, Measures for Declining Birthrate, Youth's Empowerment, Gender Equality, and Measures for Loneliness and Isolation, for the purpose of listening to opinions from the relevant parties and considering various issues, etc. when considering the life designs and encounters envisioned by the younger generation.

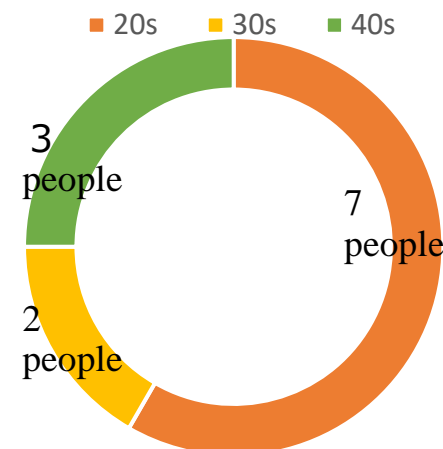
Members of the Working Group

© Chairperson

In order of the Japanese
syllabary; titles omitted

Name	Affiliation, etc.
Kanako Amano	Research fellow, Social Improvement and Life Design Research Department, NLI Research Institute
Miyu Inai	Representative, Coco Motion, Inc.
Mizuki Yamagishi	Social Media Representative, Advertising Department, N.D.Promotion
Ayumu Ochiai	Director, Recruit Bridal Research Institute
Misora Ochi	Representative Director, Specified Non-profit Organization manma
Maoko Kobayashi	Graduate student
Rei Nagi	Researcher, Dentsu Youngster Research Unit: Wakamon
Kaito Nanko	University student
Iori Harada	Graduate student, inaugural representative of Amagasaki City Youth Council Project "Up to You!"
©Shigeki Matsuda	Professor, School of Contemporary Sociology, Chukyo University
Shiori Muramiya	University student
Kakuto Yamamoto	University student

Age structure



More than half of the members
are in their 20s



To gather the opinions of various people from the younger generation, we put effort into ensuring a balanced gender ratio. Moreover, in addition to young people living in Tokyo, many young people living in other regions are also involved!

Agenda of the Working Group

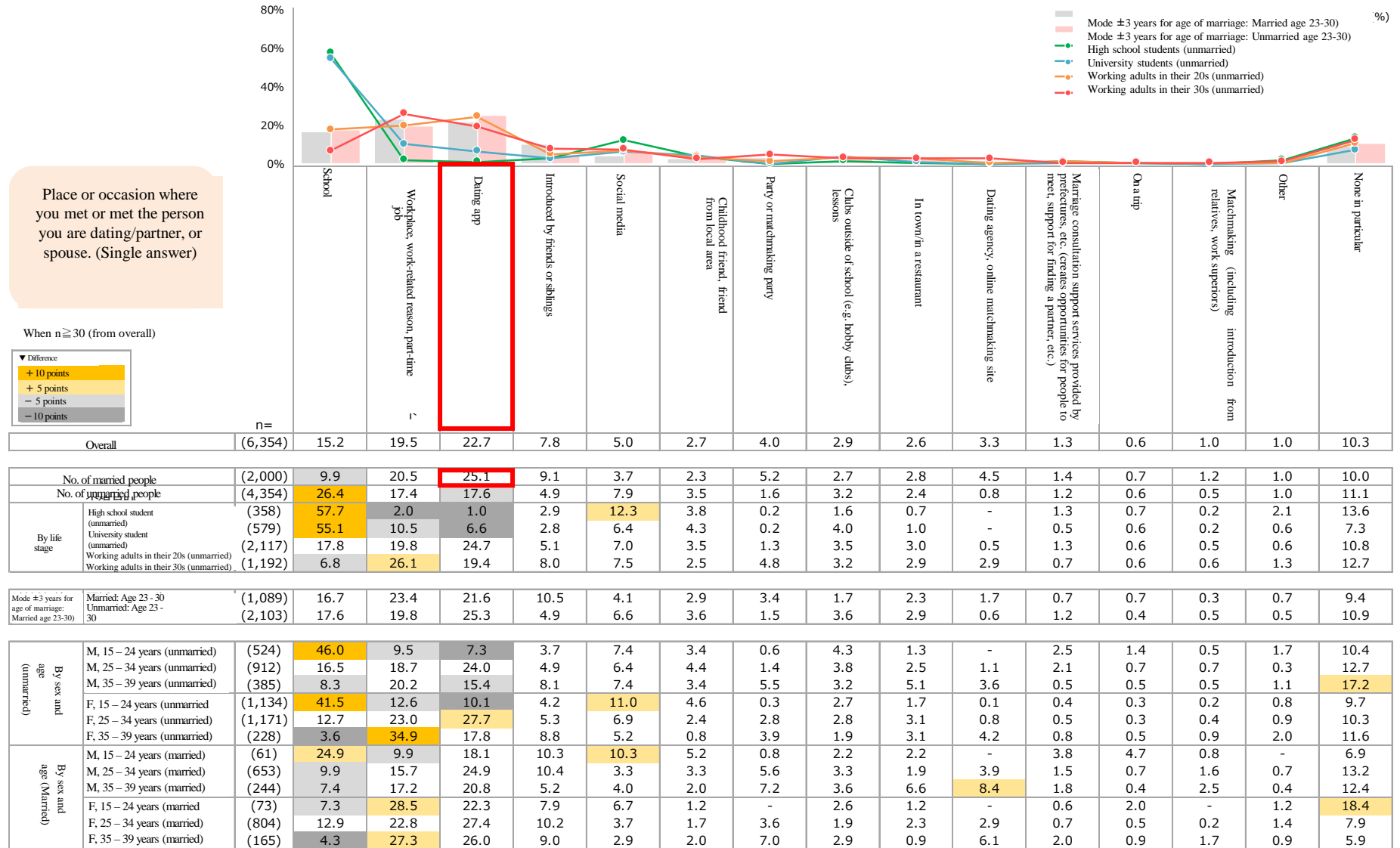
1st session	July 19, 2024 (Fri) 15:30 – 17:30	1. Current situation and issues regarding marriage 2. Values, etc. of Generation Z
2nd session	August 1, 2024 (Thu) 14:00 – 16:00	1. Considering the meaning of working on "life design" 2. Supporting the life design of young people through an experiential program to visit families with children 3. National and local government initiatives related to life design
3rd session	August 8, 2024 (Thu) 10:00 – 12:00	Public-private partnership to support marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Affairs Policy Division, Welfare Department, Saitama Prefectural Government • Children's Policy Bureau, Welfare and Health Division, Nagasaki Prefectural Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan Marriage Introduction Council • Marriage Support Project etc.
4th session	August 26, 2024 (Mon) 13:00 – 15:00	1. Results of online survey (brief report) 2. Summary of discussions (draft interim report)
5th session	November 18, 2024 (Mon) 15:30 – 17:30	1. Discussions to date 2. Examples of life design initiatives by private businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IBJ, Inc. 3. Current situation of life design support and enhancement measures (provision of information for each generation, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Division, Education Policy Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology • Children and Childrearing Support Section, Health and Welfare Division, Shimane Prefectural Government
6th session	December 16, 2024 (Mon) 15:30 – 17:30	1. Attitudes and values, etc. regarding marriage 2. Disseminating information to the younger generation

Awareness Survey Conducted in Parallel with the Working Group

Survey title	Survey period	Contents of survey, etc.
FY2024 “Awareness Survey on Life Design and Encounters Among Young People” Quantitative Survey	July 8 (Mon) – July 17 (Wed), 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Online survey•Conducted on 20,000 males and females, aged 15 – 39, across Japan•About daily life, family, and work•Attitude, actions toward marriage•Background/events leading to marriage, etc. 77 questions in total

FY2024 “Awareness Survey on Life Design and Encounters Among Young People” Quantitative Survey - Key Survey Results (1)

Q28. (2) Please select the place or occasion where you met or met your spouse or the person you are currently dating/current partner. (Select one applicable answer)



*Sorted in descending order based on multiple selections overall

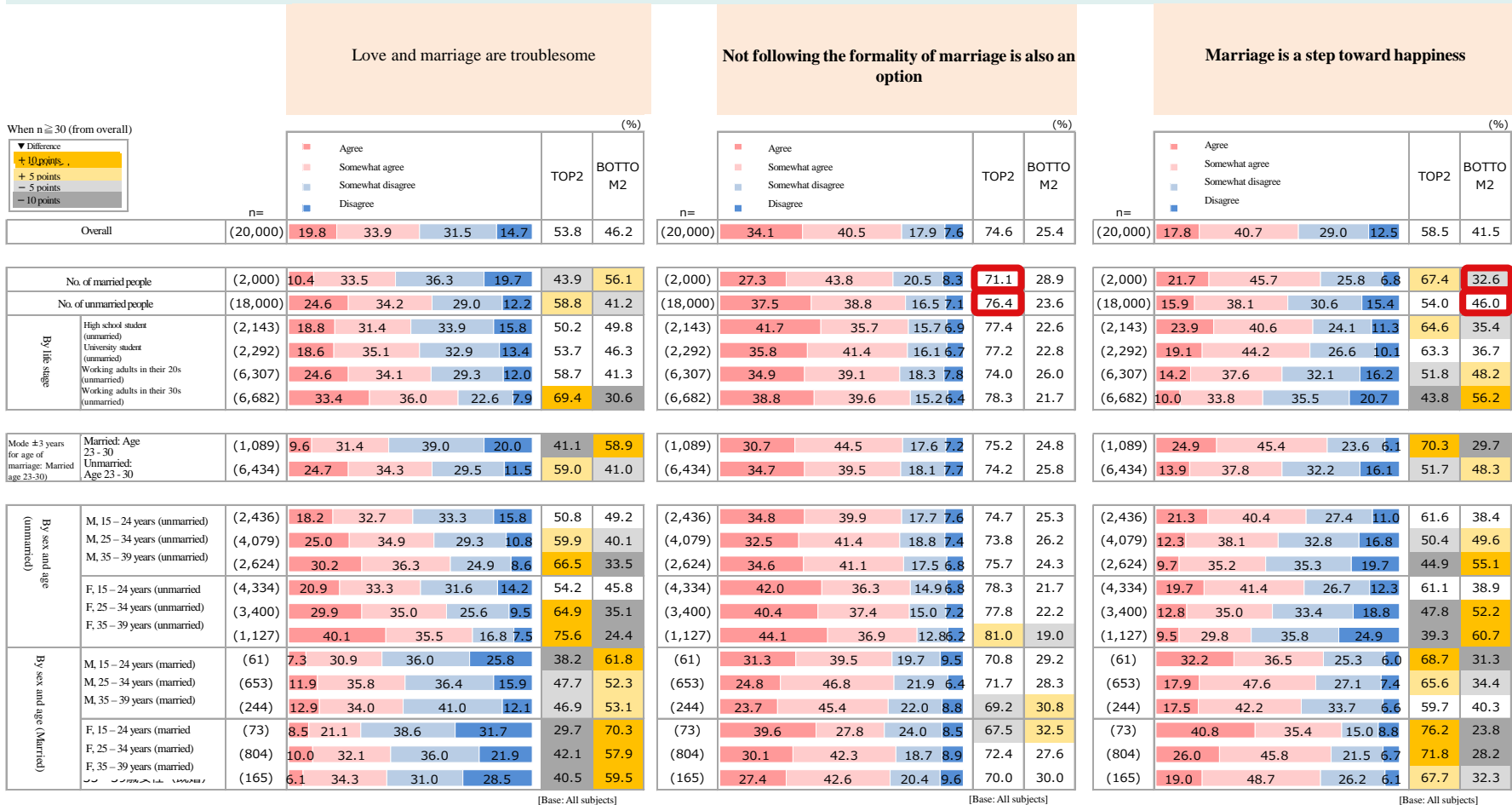
[Base: Married: All subjects / Unmarried: Those who are dating someone/have a partner]

**"-" in the table indicates that there were no respondents.

Q: Approximately 80% of unmarried people answered that "not following the formality of marriage is also an option," while approximately 50% did not see marriage as "a step toward happiness."

- 76.4% of unmarried people answered that "not following the formality of marriage is also an option," which is about 5 points higher than for married people (71.1%). (Q31)
- 46.0% of unmarried people answered that "marriage is a step toward happiness" does not apply to them, which there is about a 13 points difference between married people (32.6%). (Q31)

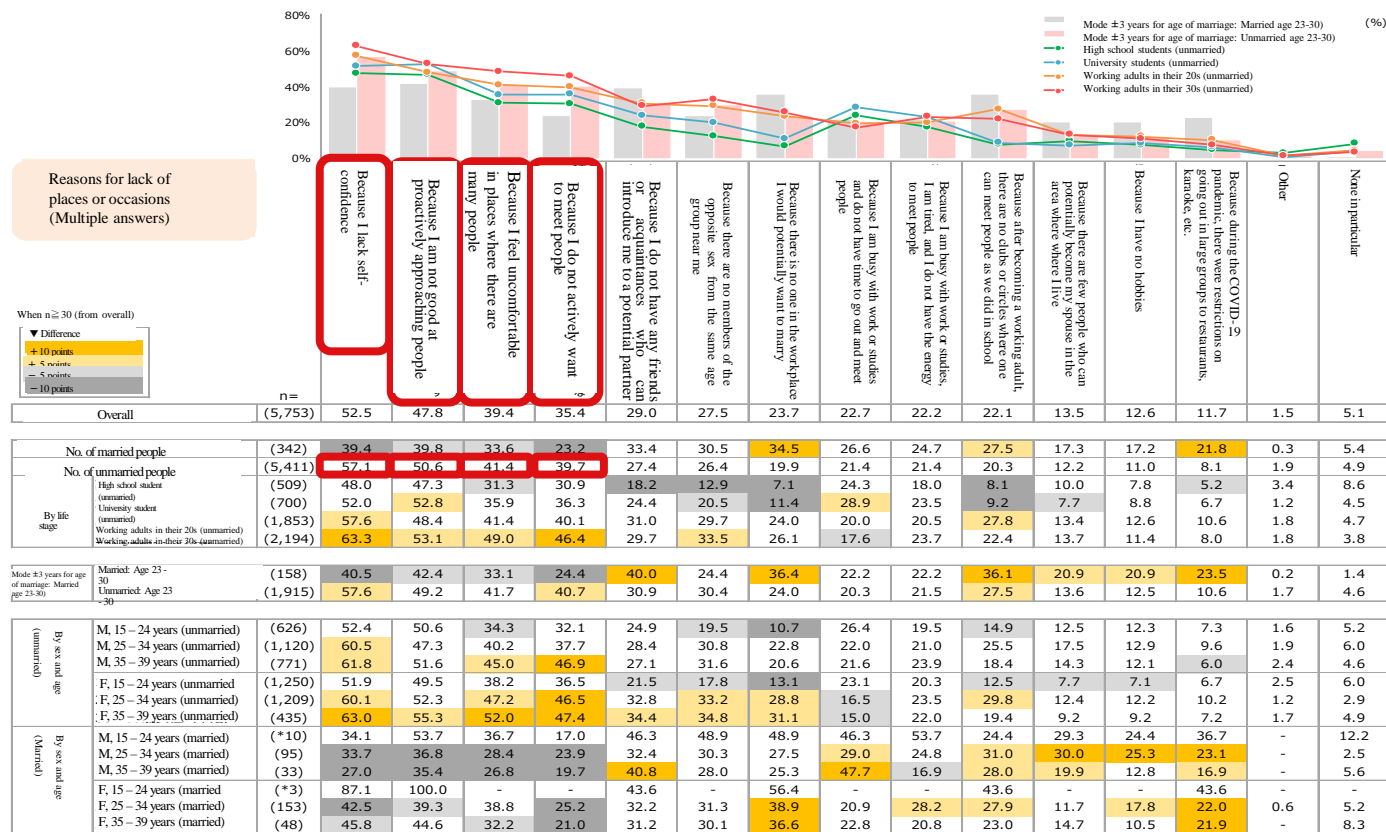
Q31. What are your thoughts and attitude toward love and marriage?
Please select the answer that is most applicable for each item. (Select one answer that applies for each item) *If you are already married, please answer with respect to your thoughts and attitude before marriage.



Q: Among unmarried people, the most common reason for lacking places or occasions to meet people was "because I lack self-confidence" (approx. 60%), followed by "I am not good at proactively approaching people," "I feel uncomfortable in places where there are many people," and "I do not actively want to meet people."

- Among unmarried people, the most common reason for lacking places or occasions to meet people was "because I lack self-confidence" (57.1%), followed by "because I am not good at proactively approaching people (50.6%)," "because I feel uncomfortable in places where there are many people (41.4%)", and "because I do not actively want to meet people (39.7%)". (Q45)
- Compared to unmarried people, married people had higher scores for the following: "because there is no one in the workplace I would potentially want to marry (approx. 15 points difference)," "because after becoming a working adult, there are no clubs or circles where one can meet people as we did in school (approx. 7 points difference)," and "because I do not have any friends or acquaintances who can introduce me to a potential partner (approx. 6 points difference)." (Q45)

Q45. (1) You have indicated that you did not have places or occasions to meet people. Why is that so? Please select the applicable reasons.
(Select all applicable answers) *If you are already married, please answer with respect to the reasons that would be applicable before marriage.

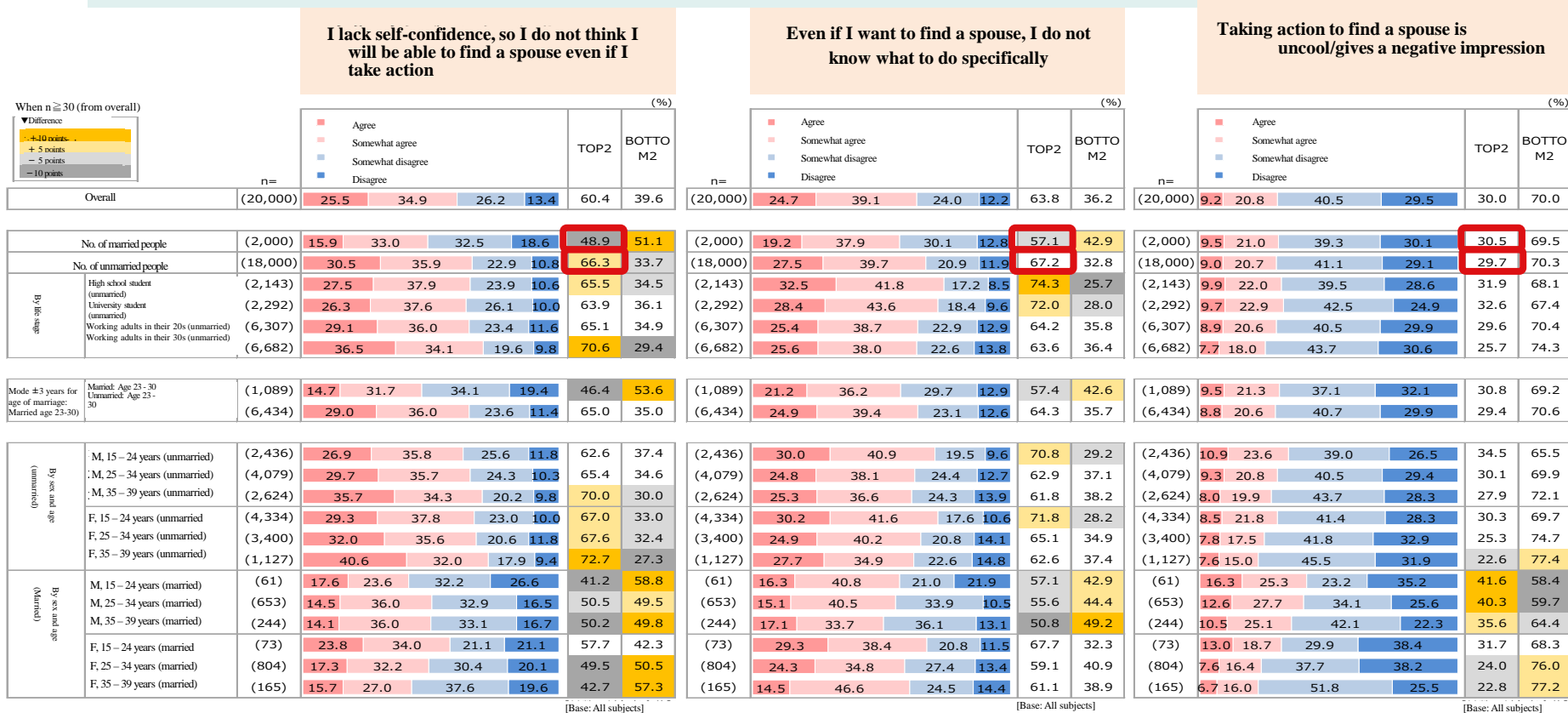


Q. When it comes to "konkatsu" ("marriage hunting activities"), about 70% of unmarried people answered "I do not know what to do specifically," or "I lack self-confidence, so I do not think I will be able to find a spouse even if I take action." In addition, about 30% of both married and unmarried people answered "taking action to find a spouse is uncool/gives a negative impression."

- With regard to finding a spouse, 67.2% of unmarried people and 57.1% of married people (based on attitudes and thoughts before marriage) answered "Even if I want to find a spouse, I do not know what to do specifically," a difference of about 10 points between the two groups. 66.3% of unmarried people and 48.9% of married people (based on attitudes and thoughts before marriage) answered "I lack self-confidence, so I do not think I will be able to find a spouse even if I take action," a difference of about 17 points between the two groups. (Q30)
- 29.7% of unmarried people and 30.5% of married people (*based on attitudes and thoughts before marriage) answered "taking action to find a spouse is uncool/gives a negative impression." (Q30)

Q30. What is your attitude toward "finding a spouse"?

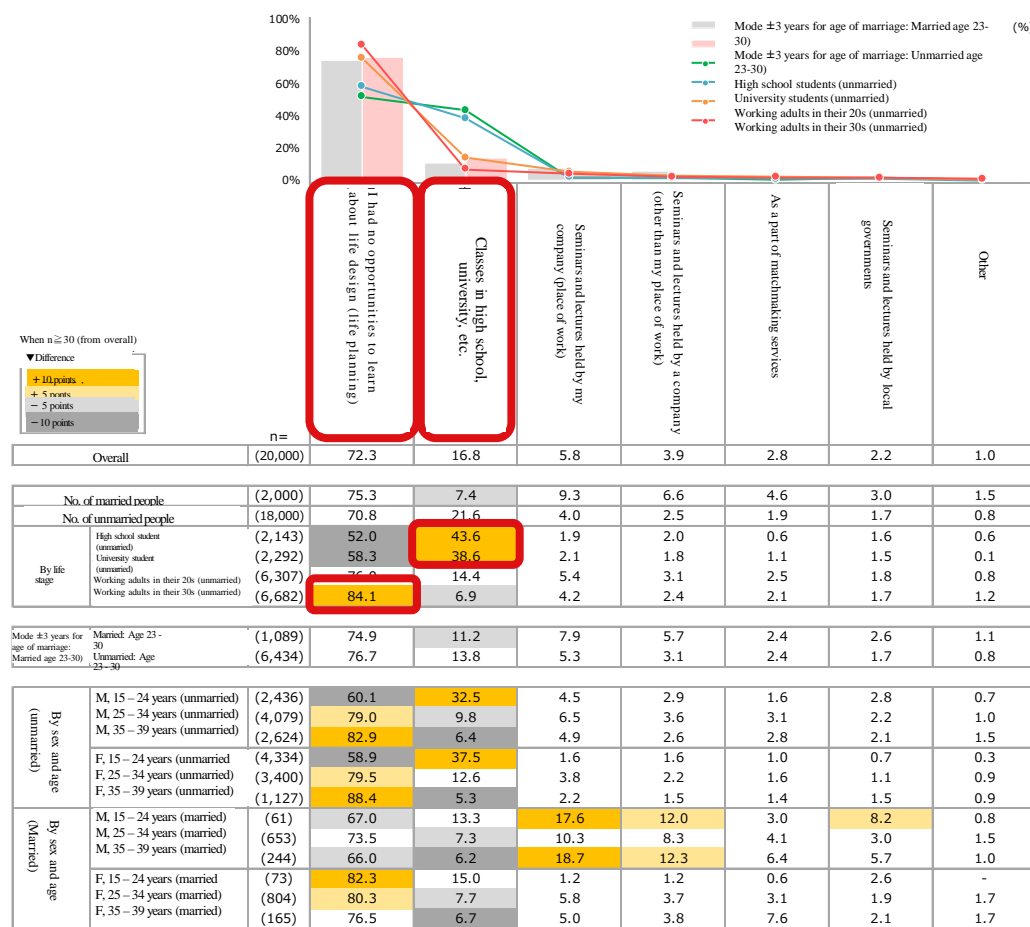
Please select the answer that is most applicable for each item. (Select one answer that applies for each item) *If you are already married, please answer with respect to your thoughts and attitude before marriage.



Q. Approximately 70% of unmarried people have never learned about life design, and the percentage who have not learned it increases with age. About 40% of both high school and university students have learned about life design in school classes or other settings.

- 70.8% of unmarried people answered that they had no opportunities to learn about life design. The percentage increases with age, with 84.1% of working adults in their 30s having never learned about it. (Q50)
- 43.6% of high school students and 38.6% of university students have learned about life design through school classes and other settings. (Q50)

Q50. Have you ever had the opportunity to learn about your own life design (life plan)? If so, could you also tell us where you learned about it? (Select all applicable answers)



*" - " in the table indicates that there were no respondents.

Working Group on Life Design and Encounters Envisioned by the Younger Generation - Summary of Discussions (Interim Report) Overview 1/2

○ From July to August 2024, discussions were held on 1) the current situation and issues regarding marriage, 2) the values of young people, including Gen Z, 3) supporting life design, and 4) public-private partnership to support dating, etc. The discussions held up to that point were compiled in the Interim Report.



Recognition of current situation of the younger generation and main views regarding their values, etc.

- **With the disappearance of a "socially correct" way of life**, the younger generation of today tends to **place value on "whether they are satisfied and convinced (an answer that they themselves are convinced with)"** rather than "the correct answer for others or society."
- They feel that the era that they are living in now has **completely different social values and range of choices than the era that their parents' generation lived in when they were young**. In this context, the younger generation of today **desires to learn about various role models from a similar generation** who have different backgrounds from their parents, **and to "sharpen the resolution" of their own future**.
- Getting married and having children is not "something natural," but merely **one of the ways of achieving personal happiness**, and is something to be chosen when the individual desires it.
- An increasing number of women feel that they can live with financial independence, and that it is difficult to resonate with the view that women must get married in order to be financially dependent on men. **A growing number of young people consider the ideal married couple to be one in which both spouses continue working, even during the child-rearing years**.
- **Due to the impact of a shift toward nuclear families and the weakening of community bonds**, a considerable number of people grow up without having had the opportunity to care for or interact with infants and young children. Experiences of caring for infants and young children, gaining knowledge about fertility, and taking classes to think about life plans can all provide opportunities to begin thinking about children, pregnancy, and childbirth.
- In order to **understand the reality of declining birthrates in rural areas**, such as the phenomenon of a large-scale outflow of fresh graduates in their early 20s from rural areas to urban areas to seek employment, **and to link this to effective initiatives, it is important to consider the characteristics of each region, including the flow of people between regions**.

Working Group on Life Design and Encounters Envisioned by the Younger Generation - Summary of Discussions (Interim Report) Overview 2/2

Main views regarding future initiatives, etc.



The following were the main views, etc. about future initiatives, **with the important premise of steadily implementing efforts to increase the income of young people and to promote dual-income/co-parenting**, based on the "Children's Future Strategy" and other policies and measures.

(1) Supporting life design

- It is important to encourage initiatives in schools, local governments, and companies, and **to expand the range of support for life design.**
- In supporting life design, **knowledge of facts related to future choices and a sense of reality from actual experience** are both important. It is also necessary to **consider regional characteristics.**
- Rather than provide a single set of contents common to all age groups, it is important to **offer the necessary contents through the appropriate methods, corresponding to the respective age groups.**

(2) Dating apps, marriage agencies

- With regard to dating apps, it is important to **promote and spread awareness** of third-party authentication systems, safe use, etc. **to ensure that users can use such apps safely and with peace of mind.**

(3) Dating and marriage support services provided by government bodies

- The **issue** with dating and marriage support provided by government agencies is the **poor awareness of such services.**
- To enhance the effectiveness of marriage support in the regions, the government needs to establish a framework for verifying the effectiveness of each support phase and work to **spread best practices laterally.** It is also necessary to proceed with considering **cooperation measures between prefectures with matching systems.**
- **Public-private partnership and cooperation to enhance services** should also be further promoted.

(4) Information dissemination by the younger generation

- It is necessary to **harness the opinions, ideas, and cooperation of the younger generation itself** and **apply creative efforts and mechanisms regarding information dissemination methods and contents** that will reach and speak to the younger generation, who tend to shy away from information released by public institutions.
- Rather than disseminating information unilaterally through specific media outlets, it is **effective to distribute information in a multifaceted manner through various information distribution channels**, such as posting on social media, advertising, and word-of-mouth among friends.

Thank you for your kind attention.

