

Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report 2025

Message to Young People who Will be the Next Generation of Leaders

**— Understand the Roles of Social Security and Labor Measures
in a Changing Society —**

【Summary】

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Part 1 (Theme Part*) Message to Young People who Will be the Next Generation of Leaders - Understand the Roles of Social Security and Labor Measures in a Changing Society -

* This annual report focuses on specific themes related to health, labour and welfare, analyzes the current situation and introduces relevant measures taken by the government in order to help people to deepen their understanding of the themes.

Part 2 (Annual Administrative Report) Response to Current Policy Challenges

- In this annual administrative report, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare explains how it deals with a wide variety of policy challenges.

2025 Edition Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report Part 1(Theme)

Table of Contents

Part 1 (Theme) Message to Young People who Will be the Next Generation of Leaders

- Understand the Roles of Social Security and Labour Measures in a Changing Society -

Introduction

Chapter 1 Roles of Social Security and Labor Measures and Their Future

Section 1 Roles of Social Security

- 1 History of Japan's Social Security System and Outline of Major Programs
- 2 Why Social Security is Necessary

Section 2 Roles of Labor Measures

- 1 History of Japan's Labor Measures and Outline of Key Measures
- 2 Why the Measures are Necessary

Section 3 Super-Aging Society With a Shrinking Population and the Future of Social Security and Labor Measures

- 1 Change the Course of Declining Birth Rates and the Shrinking Population
- 2 Prepare for a Super-aging Society
- 3 Strengthen Mutual Support in Communities
- 4 Summary

Chapter 2 Young People's Attitude Toward Social Security and Labor Measures and the Importance of Learning About Them

Section 1 Young People's Attitude Toward Social Security and Labor Measures

- 1 Interest in and Understanding of Social Security and Labor Measures
- 2 Experience in Receiving Education About Social Security and Labor Laws
- 3 Effects of Education About Social Security and Labor Laws
- 4 Means Available for Learning About Social Security and Labor Measures
- 5 What Young People Think About Social Security and Labor Measures

Section 2 Why it is Important to Learn About Social Security and Labor Measures

- 1 Micro Perspective -Apply knowledge to deal with issues that each individual faces in social life-
- 2 Macro Perspective -Get involved proactively in creating a better society-

Chapter 3 Efforts to Educate Young People About Social Security and Labor Measures: Current State and Future Course of Action

Section 1 Previous Discussions About Education About Social Security and Labor Laws

- 1 Previous Discussions About Education About Social Security
- 2 Previous Discussions About Education About Labor Laws

Section 2 Ongoing Efforts Being Made on Site

- 1 Efforts for Promoting Education About Social Security
- 2 Efforts for Promoting Education About Labor Laws
- 3 Initiatives Taken by Private Sector Entity
- 4 Efforts in Each Area of Policy Measures

Section 3 Future Course of Action

- 1 Promote Collaboration With Different Fields
- 2 Future Course of Action on the Social Security System and Labor Measures

Conclusion

※ Young people used in this report refer to high school and university students and people who have newly entered the workforce.

Chapter 1 Roles of Social Security and Labor Measures and Their Future

- This chapter offers an overview on the roles of social security and labor measures.
- Japan will need a social security system for all generations in the future as the country's population is expected to shrink and its society to become super-aged one. The chapter also discusses the future course of action for creating a desirable society by clarifying current issues based on data while examining reports from the meetings on building the social security system for all generations.

* Before thinking about the importance of social security and labor measures, young people should learn what the future course of social security and labor measures will look like as society changes.

1. Roles of Social Security

- ◆ History of Japan's social security system and the outline of major programs
- ◆ Why social security is necessary

【MEMO】

- Mechanism to support the country's social security system (benefits and cost responsibility, fiscal health of social security)

2. Roles of Labor Measures

- ◆ History of labor measures in Japan and the outline of key measures
- ◆ Why those measures are necessary

【MEMO】

- Mechanism to support the country's labor measures
(prefectural labor offices, labor standard inspection offices, and Hello Work public employment security offices)

3. Super-Aging Society With a Shrinking Population and the Future of Social Security and Labor Measures

(1) Reverse the trend in population declines and lowering birth rates

This subsection

- ◆ states trends in the number of births and the total fertility rate in Japan, an increase in the number of people who get married later in life and a larger share of people who have never been married.
- ◆ explains the importance of improvements in child-rearing environments, the employment system and labor market

(2) Prepare for a super-aging society

This subsection

- ◆ states the situation surrounding the elderly and women as well as the diversification of employment patterns.
- ◆ explains the importance of developing a neutral social security system, encouraging the elderly and women to work, and making the social security system available to all generations.

(3) Strengthen mutual support in communities

This subsection

- ◆ states depopulation in certain regions and how community ties are weakening.
- ◆ explains the importance of building a comprehensive care services such as health and long-term care and welfare services as well as creating a community-based inclusive society.

(4) Summary

- ◆ It is necessary to reevaluate social security and labor measures in accordance with current social circumstances.
- ◆ Japan needs to establish a social security system based on the following common recognition: social security shall be supported by all generations, and it shall support all generations.

Chapter 2 Young People's Attitude Toward Social Security and Labor Measures and the Importance of Learning About Them

- This chapter offers an overview on young people's attitude toward social security and labor measures based on the results of a questionnaire survey covering high school students.
- The chapter also discusses why it is important for young people to learn about social security and labor measures, citing detailed examples.

1. Young People's Attitude Toward Social Security and Labor Measures

(1) Interest in and Understanding of Social Security and Labor Measures

- ◆ Among high school students surveyed, just over 40 percent are interested in long-term care services and nearly 50 percent show interest in welfare and public health. Approximately 60 percent have an interest in healthcare and pension while about 80 percent are interested in labor measures.
- ◆ Roughly fifty to sixty percent said that they understand the social security system and labor measures. (See Reference (1))

(2) Effects of Education About Social Security and Labor laws

- ◆ Highschool student who have ever learned about social security and labor laws tend to have a stronger interest in those subjects and have a better understanding of them. (See Reference (2))

2. Importance of Learning About Social Security and Labor Measures

(1) Micro Perspective -Apply the knowledge to deal with issues that each individual faces in social life -

- Look at how to deal with issues through detailed case examples

1 Ensure that young people can ask for help or deal with daily life issues they face

- ◆ Importance of learning about how social security works and what services are available at consultation desks *Municipal efforts to support young carers (see Reference (3))

3 Ensure that young people can prepare for emergencies

- ◆ Preparation for risks people face in daily life: essays about pension
- ◆ Preparation for risks at work/ a case example of an accidents on the way to work

2 Ensure that young people can deal with a difficult situation when having problems at work

- ◆ Importance of understanding work rules

*The MHLW is promoting a campaign that encourages young people to check working conditions before stating a part-time job. (See Reference (3))

4 Ensure that young people are proactive in choosing their future

- ◆ Estimates for household disposable income by women's work style after childbirth (The disparity in disposable household income is estimated to be approximately 170 million yen between households in which the mother continues to work as a full-time regular employee after childbirth and those in which the mother left work after childbirth.)

(2) Macro Perspective -Get involved proactively in creating a better society-

- Look at the importance of learning about social security and labor measures based on the following four points of view

1 Understand the importance of establishing a system in which everyone in society comes together to help each other

- ◆ Understand why it is necessary and important to establish a system in which everyone in society helps each other to deal with risks that are not foreseeable and preparable

3 Get involved proactively

- ◆ Get involved not just as beneficiaries but also those who support social security and labor measures

2 Understand that how to get involved in social security and labor measures differs from person to person

- ◆ Recognize that individuals face different situations depending on their circumstances to deepen understanding of the nature of society

4 Develop young people's awareness that they are responsible for creating a community-based cohesive society

- *Provide examples of activities by young people who are playing an active role in creating a community-based cohesive society (See reference (3))

<Chapter 2: Reference (1)>

Interest in and Understanding of Social Security and Labor Measures

- Among high school students surveyed, just over 40 percent are interested in long-term care services and nearly 50 percent show interest in welfare and public health. Approximately 60 percent have an interest in healthcare and pension while about 80 percent are interested in labor measures.

*The figures represent the sum of the percentage of respondents who said “strongly” and that of those who said “slightly” when asked whether they are interested in each component of the social security system and that of labor measures.

- Roughly 50 to 60 percent said that they understand each component of the social security system and that of labor measures.

*The figures represent the sum of the percentage of respondents who said “very well” and that of those who said “somewhat” when asked whether they understand each component of the social security system and that of labor measures.

Fig. 1 Interest in each component of the social security system and labor measures

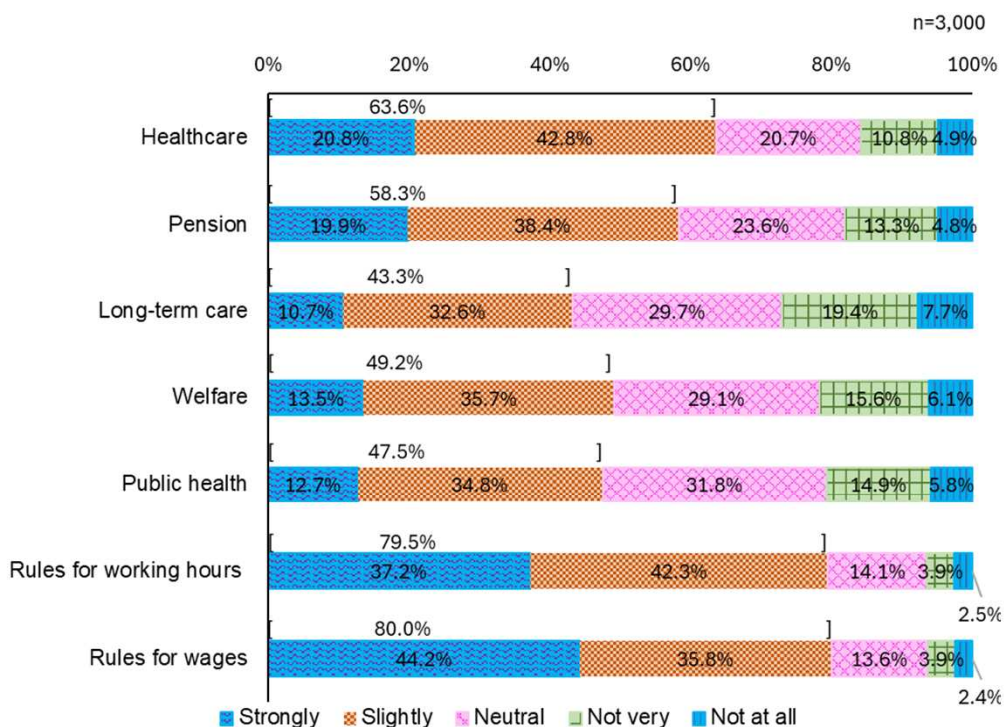
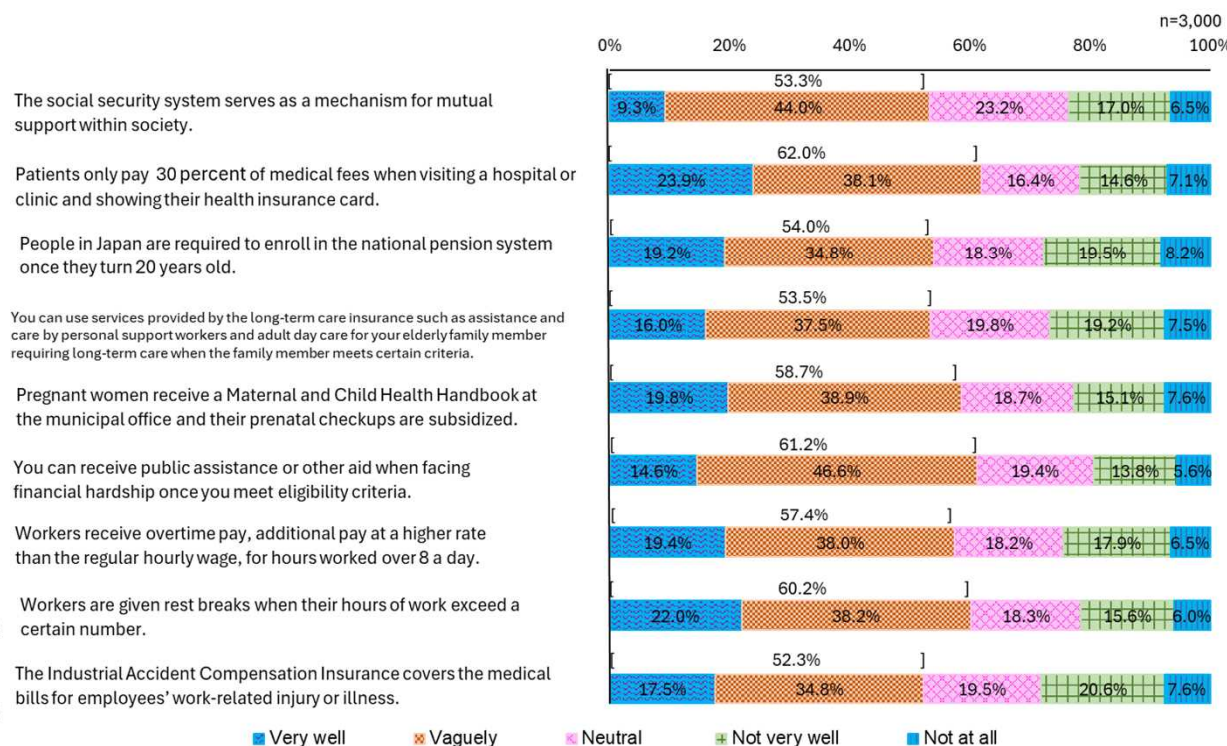


Fig.2 Understanding of how the social security system and labor measures work



Source: The 2024 Project on Survey and Evaluation of Aging Society With Falling Birth Rates

*An online questionnaire was conducted between January 14 and January 31, 2025, to survey high school students (1st to 3rd year) about young people's attitude toward social security and labor measures and 3,000 valid responses were given.

<Chapter 2: Reference (2)>

Effects of Education About Social Security and Labor Laws

- Highschool student who have ever learned about social security and labor measures tend to have a stronger interest in those subjects and have a better understanding of them.

Fig. 3 Level of interest in social security by experience in receiving education about social security

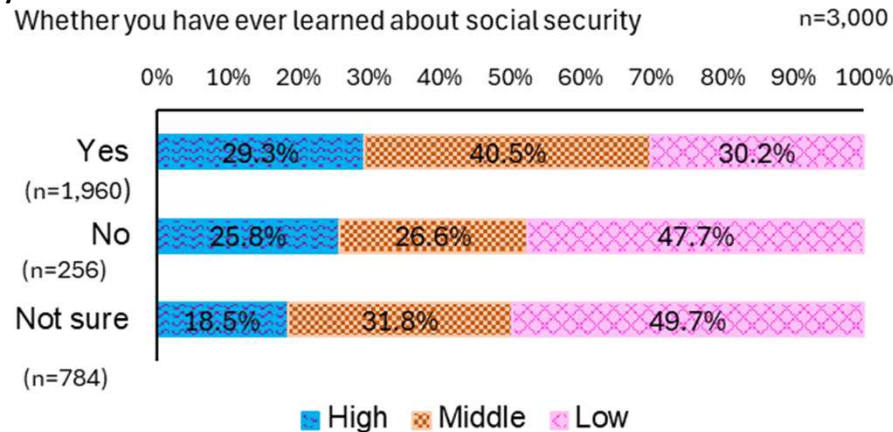


Fig.4 Level of Understanding of social security by experience in receiving education about social security

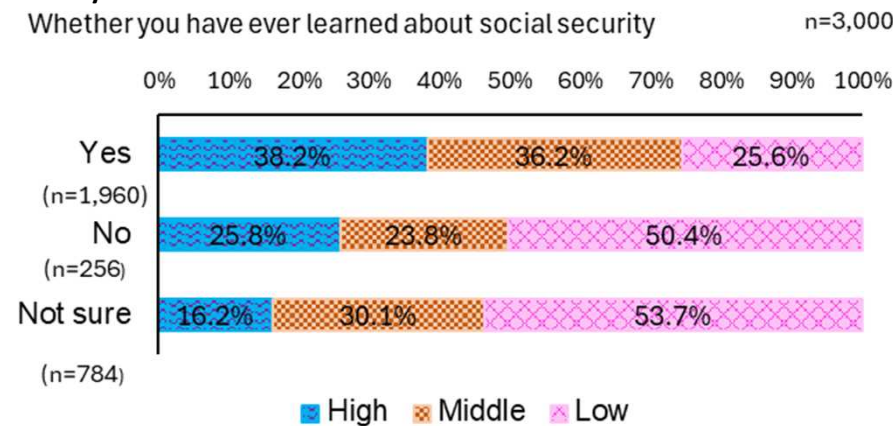


Fig.5 Level of interest in labor measures by experience in receiving education about labor laws

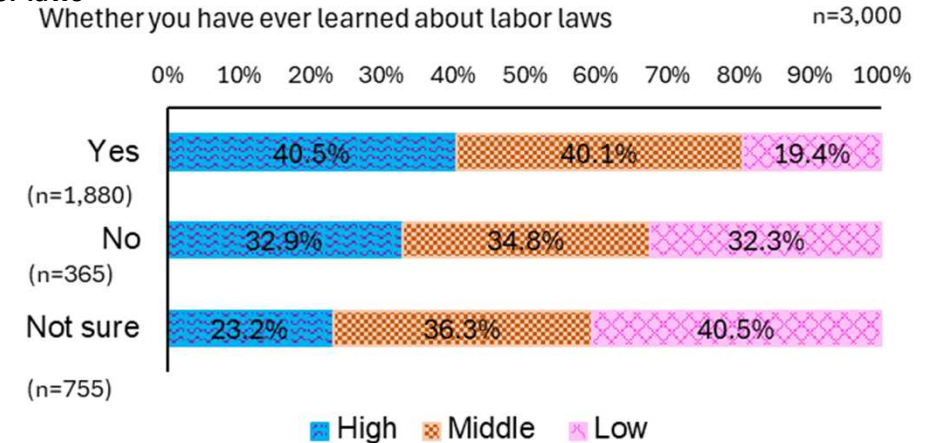
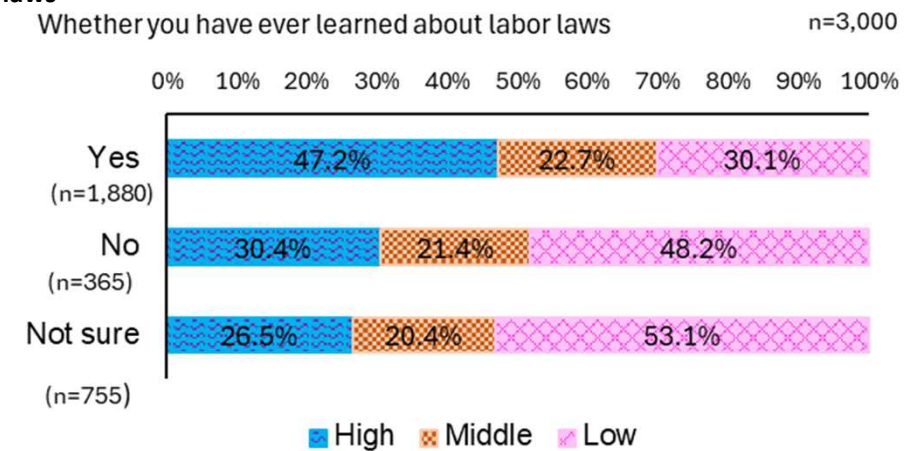


Fig.6 Level of Understanding of labor measures by experience in receiving education about labor laws



Source: The 2024 Project on Survey and Evaluation of Aging Society With Falling Birth Rates

- An online questionnaire was conducted between January 14 and January 31, 2025, to survey high school students (1st to 3rd year) about young people's attitude toward social security and labor measures and 3,000 valid responses were given.
- A series of numbers is assigned to rate the level of interest in social security and labor measures, ranging from 0 to 4: score 4 corresponds to strongly, 3 to slightly, 2 to neutral, 1 to not very, and 0 to not at all. The sum of scores collected is then divided into three categories to reflect them in the bar chart above.
- A series of numbers is assigned to rate the level of understanding of social security and labor measures, ranging from 0 to 4: score 4 corresponds to very well, 3 to vaguely, 2 to neutral, 1 to not very well, and 0 to not at all. The sum of scores collected is then divided into three categories to reflect them in the bar chart above.

<Chapter 2: Reference (3)> Case Examples

<Efforts to provide support for young carers (i)>

<A pioneer in providing support for young carers> (Kobe City)

- ◆ Following a tragic event involving a young carer that happened in 2019, the Kobe municipal government has set up a consultation desk for young carers to provide support and advice to become the first local government in the country to launch such a service.
- ◆ Students in a high school in Kobe city has created videos for raising awareness of young carers.
- ◆ The municipal government and an operators of nursing home are working together to provide employment assistance services to young carers.

consultation desk



<Efforts to provide support for young carers (ii)>

<Strengthen outreach>

(Toyohashi City)

- ◆ The municipal government has changed its approach to supporting young carers: it is trying to identify young carers who need assistance instead of waiting for calls for help.
- ◆ It provides support, fully understanding the conditions of young carers.
- ◆ The city of Toyohashi is working together with groups and organizations that provide safe spaces for children such as *kodomo shokudo*, or children's cafeterias.

Support center for children and young people



< Campaign encouraging young people to thoroughly check working conditions before stating a part-time job>

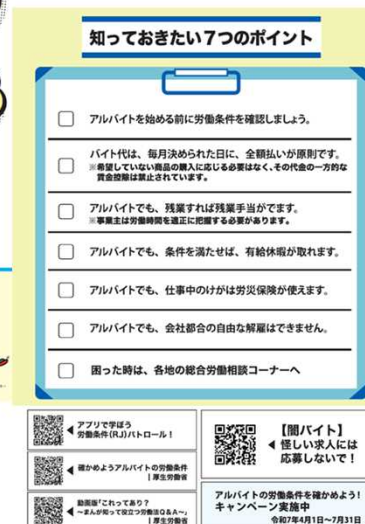
<Before you start a part-time job>

(MHLW)

- ◆ The ministry runs the campaign between April and July every year, the period in which many students new to school start a part-time job.
- ◆ It distributes leaflets and posters to universities and other educational institutions across the country and encourages them to hand those materials to students at school orientations.
- ◆ Prefectural labour offices offer on-site consultation services on demand from educational institutions including universities.



Campaign flyer



<Young people who are playing an active role in creating a community-based cohesive society>

<Get to know each other and help each other>

(Tokai University and NPO Kumamoto Fukushimai)

- ◆ Students sell vegetables grown by people with disabilities.
- ◆ Students and people with disabilities together pick up litters in the community.
- ◆ Students say that it is like they and people with disabilities help each other rather than they give a helping hand to disabled people when asked what they think of their experience of supporting people with disabilities.



Students selling vegetables

Chapter 3 Efforts to Educate Young People About Social Security and Labor Measures: Current State and Future Course of Action

- This chapter explains how efforts have been made so far and what kind of education programs on social security and labor laws are provided to students at schools and other education institutions.
- The chapter also covers a future course of efforts for education about social security and labor laws.

1. Previous Discussions

- ◆ The MHLW has created teaching materials and reference handbooks referring to the opinions from expert meetings as well as those from teachers.
(see Reference (1))

2. Ongoing efforts

Efforts for Promoting Education About Social Security

- See Reference (2) for detailed case examples

- The MHLW has created teaching materials in a storytelling style so that they can be used in high school classrooms.

1 Efforts made in “public” class (education about social security)

- ◆ Students learn about the social security system, mainly from a macroeconomic approach.

2 Efforts made in “basic home economics” class (education about social security)

- ◆ Students learn about social security, mainly from a microeconomic approach.

Efforts for promoting education About labor laws

- The MHLW and Hello Work public employment security offices organize seminars by dispatching instructors to educational institutions such as high schools and universities.

3 Seminars on terms and conditions of employment for young people to acquire basic knowledge they need before starting to work

- ◆ The MHLW organizes seminars by dispatching instructors for students who have a part-time job or who are supposed to work after graduation.

5 Employees of Hello Work public employment security offices helping students develop their career awareness

- ◆ Prefectural labor offices help students develop their career awareness in their early years in school by dispatching employees of Hello Work to deliver lectures.

4 Classes to raise awareness of labor issues

- ◆ The MHLW organizes classes to raise awareness of labor issues by dispatching a lawyer and a bereaved family member of a person who died from overwork to schools, following growing public concerns.

Initiatives taken by private sector entity

6 Initiatives taken by Japan Federation of Labor and Social Security Attorney's Associations

- ◆ The federation dispatches labor and social security attorneys to schools to give classes on social security and labor laws as part of social contribution.
- ◆ The federation also provides new employee training at companies and organizes a wide variety of seminars in the community.

3. Future course of action

- ◆ The MHLW is promoting its (1) collaboration with educational institutions and efforts to combine social security education with financial education, (2) initiatives to incorporate social security education in education about labor laws, and vice versa, and (3) cooperation with prefectural labor offices.
- ◆ The needs for social security and labor measures are changing along with social changes. It is necessary for the government to think continuously about what kind of systems should be opted for together with young people.

<Chapter 3: Reference (2) > Detailed Case Examples

<Efforts to Promote Education About Social Security>

<“Public” class>

(Tokyo Metropolitan Setagaya Izumi High School)

- ◆The school uses teaching materials in a storytelling style created by the MHLW.
- ◆Students are encouraged to think about why the social security system is necessary and what the nature of the system should be.
- ◆Students tend to think of social security as something that concerns them or feel right about paying social security taxes after the class. (questionnaire results)

Students working in groups



<“Basic home economics” class>

(Ibaraki Prefectural Tsuchiura Daiichi High School)

- ◆Students are encouraged to think carefully about social security in the class while assuming life events.
- ◆The class helps students expand their views by focusing on the impact of social security on individual's life first and then the implications of social issues on social security. (Students discussed the importance of paying social security taxes and desirable levels of social security benefits while considering the impact on household finances.)

Students engaging in group discussions



<Efforts to Promote Education About Labor Laws>

<Learn about work rules>

(Seminars on working conditions at Shukutoku University and Yamaguchi Prefectural Nanyo Technical High School)

- ◆The purpose is
 - (1) To make sure that students develop an eye for determining if a company offers fair employment conditions,
 - (2) To make sure that they will not face issues related to employment conditions,
 - (3) To make sure that they learn how to deal with employment-related issues they face.
- ◆In the seminars, instructors talked about their experiences and used three-option quizzes to engage students in learning.
- ◆The schools expect students to learn about work rules while in school.



Shukutoku University



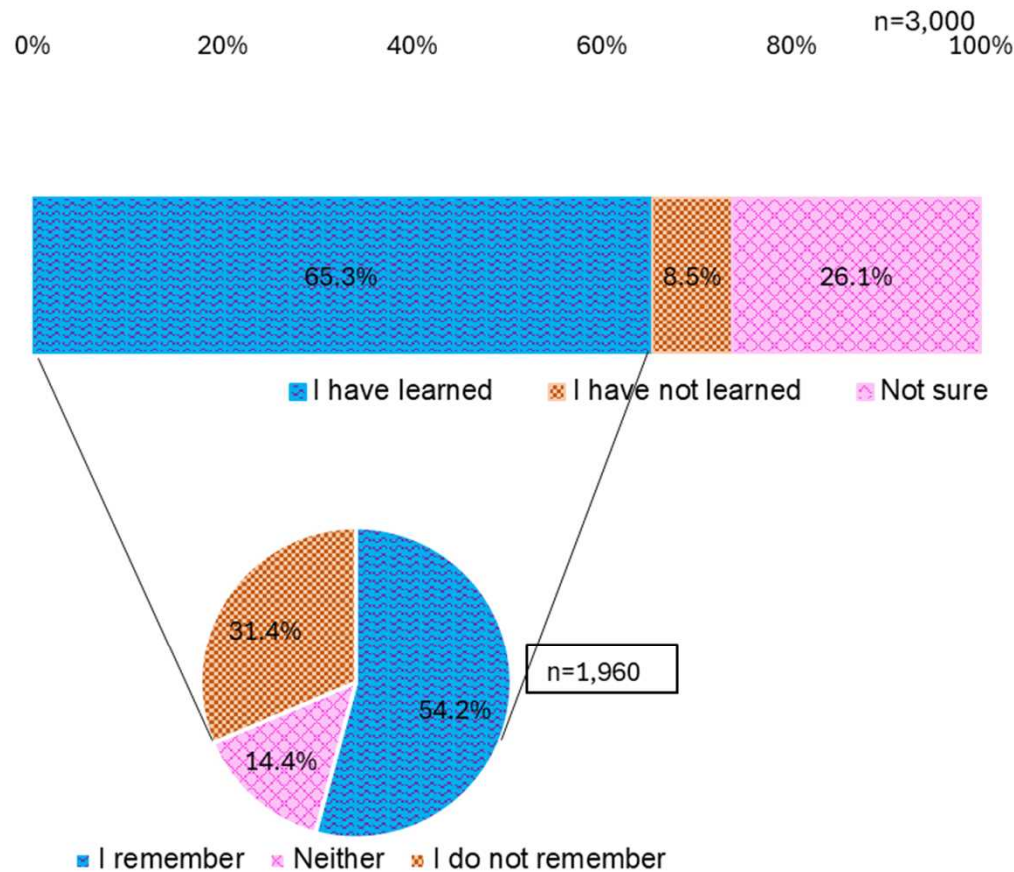
Yamaguchi Prefectural Nanyo Technical High School

(Reference materials)

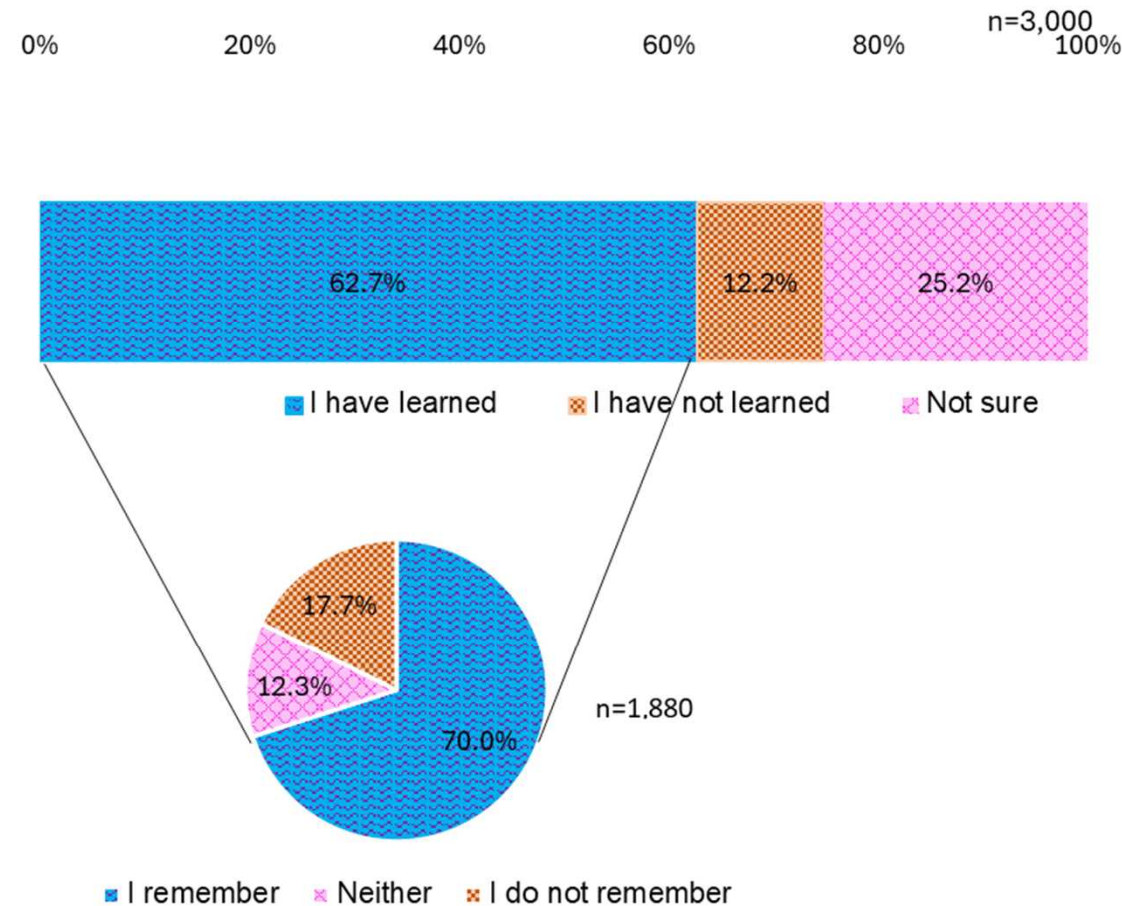
<Reference Material 1> Experience in Receiving Education About Social Security and Labor Laws Among Young People

- More than 60 percent of high school students have experience in learning about social security or labor laws.
- More than 50 percent of the students who have been educated about social security remember what they have learned while 70 percent who have been educated about labor laws remember what they have learned.

**Fig. 7 Whether you have ever learned about social security/
Whether you remember what you have learned**



**Fig.8 Whether you have ever learned about labor laws /
Whether you remember what you have learned**



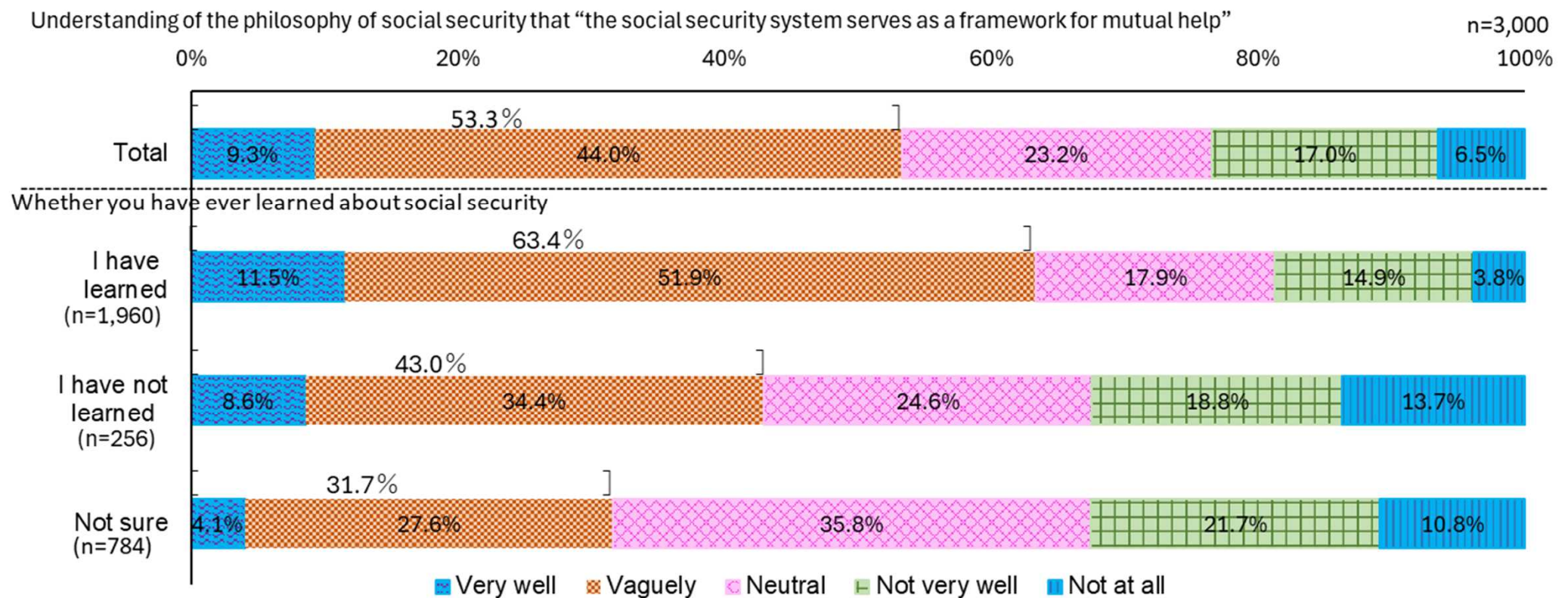
Source: The 2024 Project on Survey and Evaluation of Aging Society With Falling Birth Rates

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<Reference Material 2 > Education About Social Security: effects on the promotion of the understanding of the philosophy of social security

● It is suggested that education about social security will enhance the understanding of the philosophy of social security that “the social security system serves as a framework for mutual help.”

Fig.9 Level of understanding of the philosophy of social security by experience in receiving education about social security



Source: The 2024 Project on Survey and Evaluation of Aging Society With Falling Birth Rates

- An online questionnaire was conducted between January 14 and January 31, 2025, to survey high school students (1st to 3rd year) about young people's attitude toward social security and labor measures and 3,000 valid responses were given.