



Strangers in a Strange Land: The Impact of Foreign Workers in Japan

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Outline

Significance of the Study

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Significance of the Study

- Study abroad experience in Japan
 - ◆ Experiences challenges of being foreigners
 - ◆ Interacted with foreign workers and their children
- Want to know the problems facing foreign worker and their children
 - ◆ Foreign labor policies
 - ◆ National second language education requirements
- Would like to deepen our understanding of how Japanese people look at foreign workers and their children

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Japanese people accept or reject foreign workers in Japan?
2. What are Japanese people's understanding of the education of foreign workers' children in Japan?

Research Background Outline

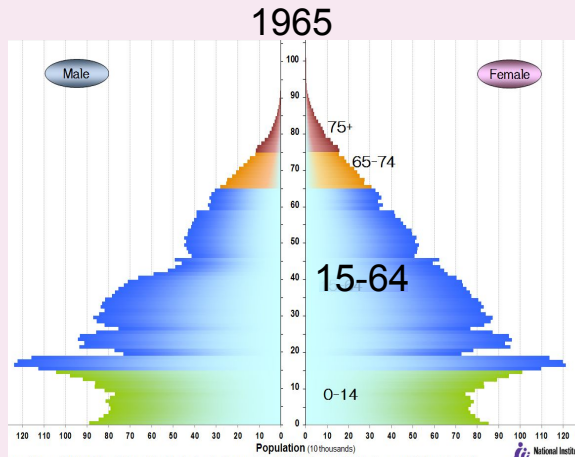
- A. Need for Foreign Workers in Japan
- B. Statistics of Foreign Workers
- C. Issues Faced by Foreign Workers
- D. Education of Foreign Workers' Children



A-1 Japanese Aging Society

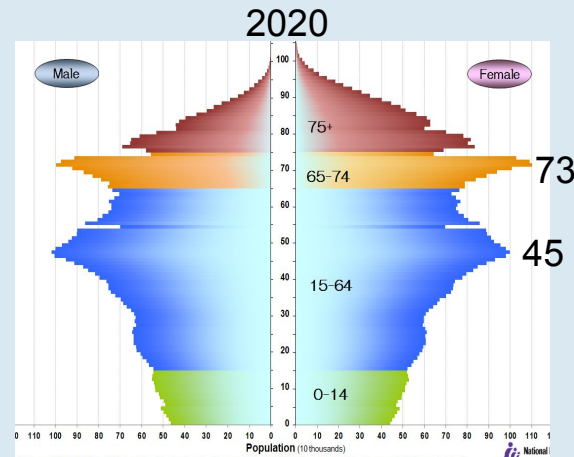
1965

Population below
working age of 65



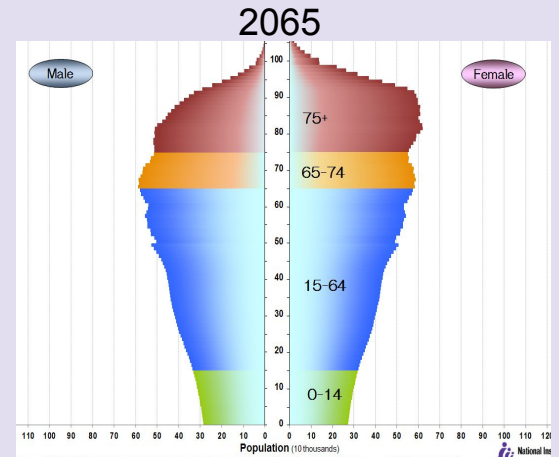
2020

Population **shifting up**
with one of the two
peaks being **over 64**



2065

Elderly live longer,
decreased working
population, **fewer
births**

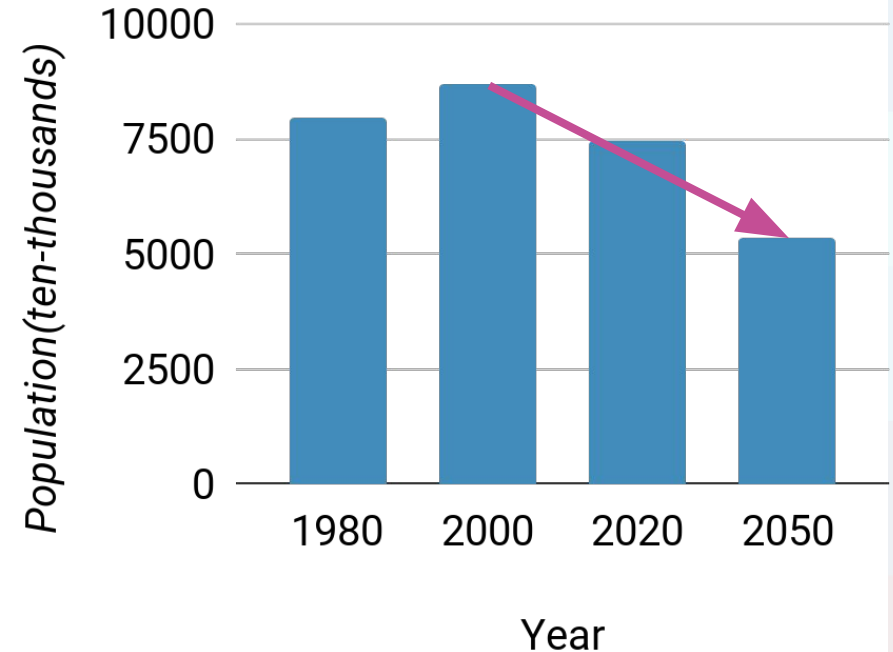


A-2 Japanese Labor Shortage

By the year 2050, Japan's labor force will have decreased nearly **40%**.

- Aging society trend leads to Labor Shortage
 - ◆ **Decrease** in those of working age in Japan
 - ◆ **Decrease** in young people to fill jobs
 - ◆ **Increase** in older workers prolonging retirement

Japanese Working Age Population (15-64)



A-3 Need for Foreign Workers

- Increasing 65+ population relies on working population to provide pensions
- **Public debt increases to pay pensions as workers decline**
- Abenomics, Japan's Economic Recovery plan, seeks to remedy through:
 - increasing young people and women in the labor force
 - increase wages and child care
 - Capital investment in technologies
 - **Increase Foreign labor supply**
- **While other parts have been the focus, labor supply is the main struggle which is remedied fastest through allowing increased immigration**

A-4 Changes to Working Visa Policy

1990

- Immigration Control and Refugee Act includes unskilled workers
- Worker trainee programs begin

1990

2000

2010

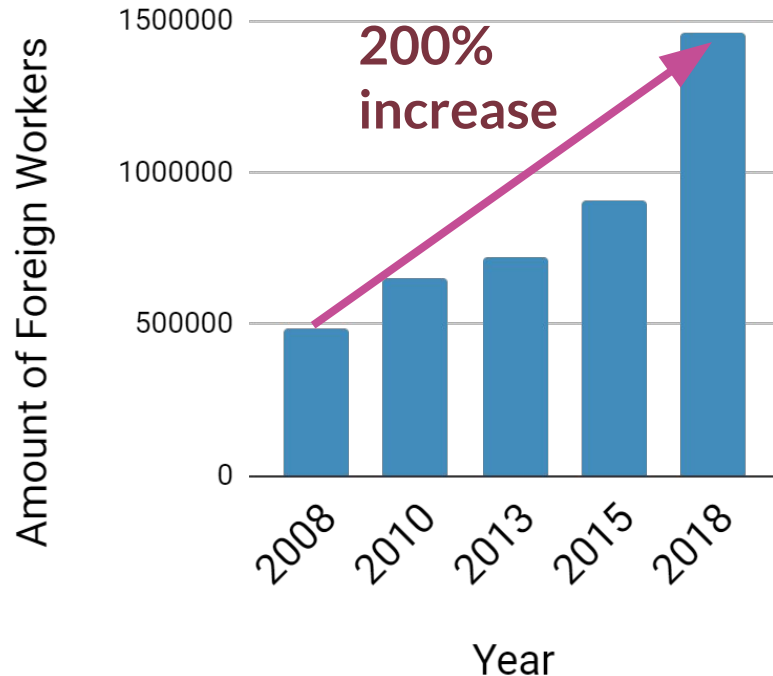
2020

2019

- New law allows visa for more workers and increases highly skilled workers
- Expected over next 5 years a 23.3% increase of foreign laborers

B-1 Significant Increase of Foreign Workers in 10 Years

Total Number of Foreign Workers



- Amount of foreign workers in Japan is **1.4 million**
 - 2.1% of the total working population of Japan (2018)
- From 2008 until 2018, Japan saw a **200% increase** in the amount of foreign workers in the country

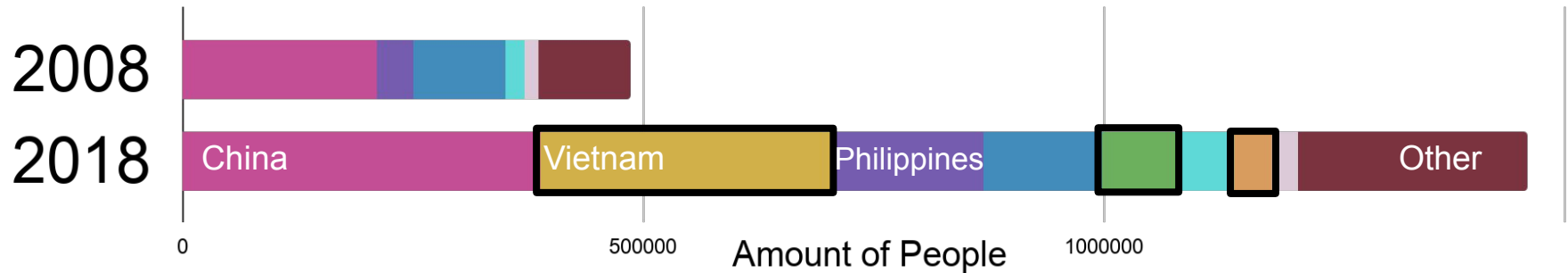
B-2 Needs and Reality Do Not Match

- Each year at least 609,000 new immigrant workers are needed to maintain Japan's working-age population (2008)
- Real numbers are drastically below projected needs

According to 2008 study	Immigrants needed per year
Maintain Peak Population	381,000
Maintain Working-age Population	609,000

B-3 Who are the Foreign Workers Living in Japan

Foreign Workers' Country of Origin



- From 2008 to 2018 there was a **300% increase** of amount of foreign workers in Japan
 - **Chinese, Filipino**, and **Korean** populations have **doubled**
- Countries with the **fastest-growing** populations:
 - **Vietnam, Nepal**, and **Indonesia**

B-3 Where Foreign Workers are Living

- Top prefectures where foreign workers live:

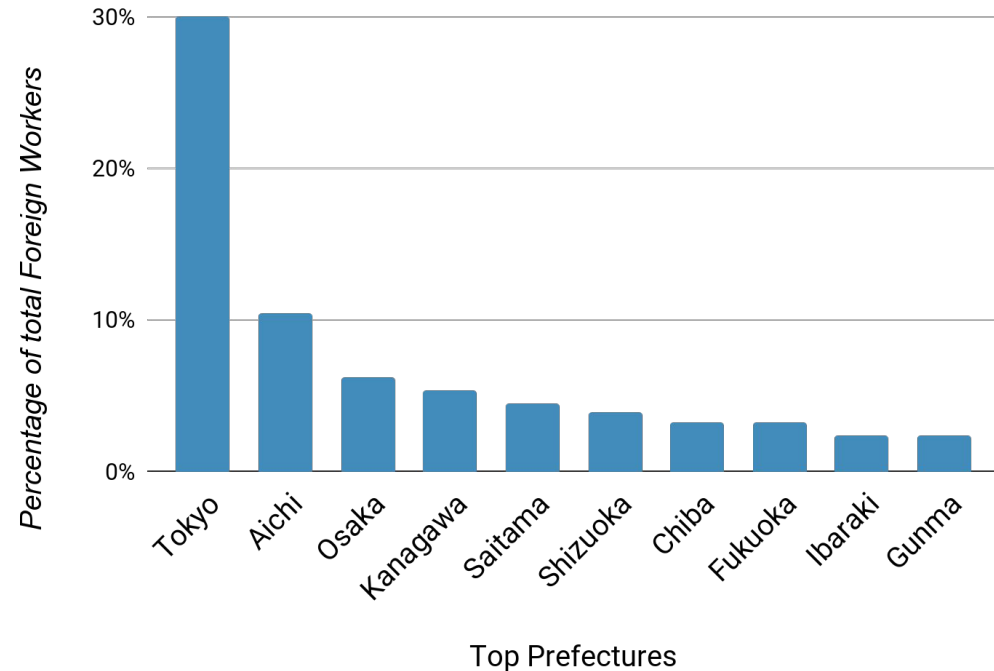
#1 Tokyo, which is an urban area, with **30%** of all foreign workers working there

#2 Aichi with 10%

- Other 45 prefectures

- relatively even
- all having some population foreign workers

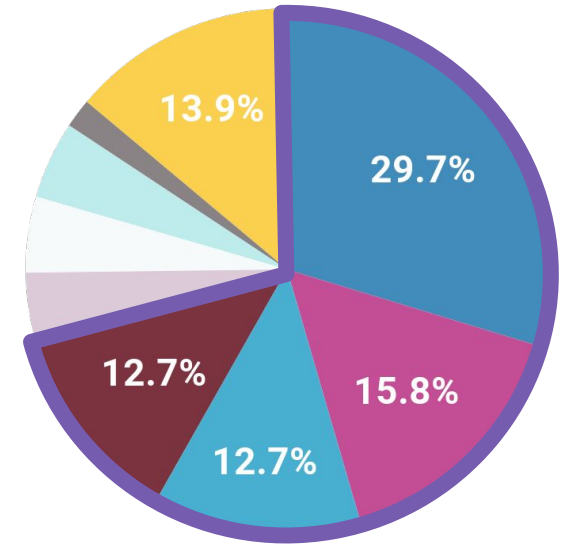
Prefectures with Most Foreign Workers



B-3 Which Industries Employ Foreign Workers

- **Lower-skilled jobs** make up close to **75%** of the industries where foreign workers were employed:
 - **Factory work**
 - **Service**
 - **Retail**
 - **Foodservice**
- Few were in skilled jobs like education or medicine

Industries Foreign Workers are Employed



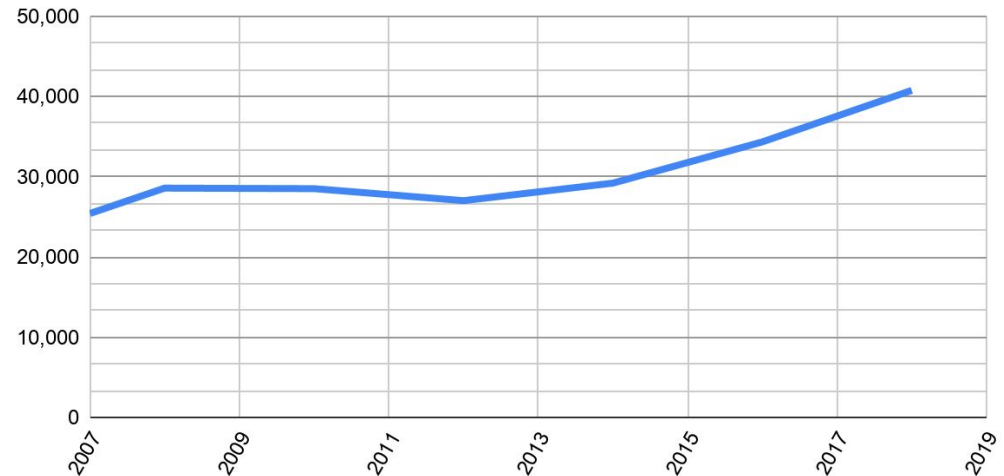
C-1 Issues faced by Foreign workers

- Culture: **Collectivist culture** can be hard for foreigners to find acceptance.
- Language: **Complex writing system** and **low-context communication** style adds to the language barrier.
- History: **Korean foreign nationals** still heavily **discriminated against** setting precedent for how foreigners are treated.

D-1 Education of Foreign Workers' Children: Numbers

- Foreign children are **not required** to attend school.
- **Exact numbers** of children in school **not known**.
- Increased reporting by schools will bring government awareness to and support for children's needs.

Schools' Self-Reported Foreign Children on the Rise



D-2 Education of Foreign Workers' Children: Limited Teacher Support

- National Japanese as a second language curriculum exists, but only a **few schools implement** it because of **lack of resources**
- Prefectures and local schools **left on own** to provide professional development (PD) for teachers
 - **Limited financial support** to provide PD
 - **Not enough experts** to teach PD
- Teachers suffer with **limited support and resources**

(Douglass & Roberts, 2006; Graburn, Ertl & Tierny, 2008; Kanno, 2008; Motohashi, 2011)

D-3 Education of Foreign Workers' Children: Case Study

Name of School	Type	Populations served	Limitations	Successes
Zhonghua Chinese Ethnic School	Private, Non-Government funded	Chinese residents	Only caters to one demographic	Prepares bilingual & bicultural children
Hal International School	Private, Government funded	Western & Japanese middle-class	Parents' demands	Mirrors western education systems
Sugino Public Elementary School	Public, Government funded	Chinese and Southeast Asian families (blue-collar workers intending to stay in Japan)	Loss of native language	Vision of long-term contributing citizen
Midori Public Elementary School	Public, Government funded	South American children (migrant workers intend to return to home countries)	Parent-Teacher ideological conflict	Teachers sensitive to children's' native languages, have bilingual assistant

D-3 Case Study: Public school Examples

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(Kanno, 2008)

D-3 Case study Summary

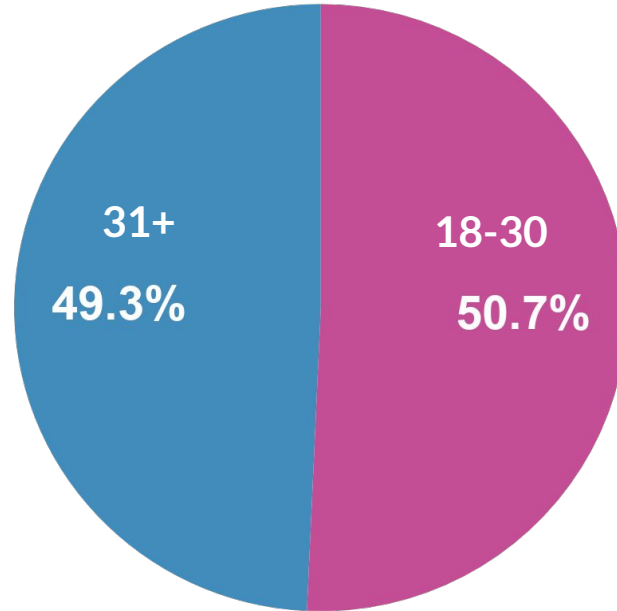
- Government funding of Private schools
 - Only certain Private schools receive funds in addition to fees paid by parents
 - Ethnicity is a discriminating factor
- Population served influences outcomes of education
 - "Long-term" pupils educated with different perspective
 - "Short-term" pupils' issues addressed with "Band-aid" solutions

The Study: Research Method

- Participants
 - 69 People who have attended compulsory education in Japan
 - 35 people age 18-30
 - 34 people age 31+
- Survey Method
 - Google Form Survey in Japanese
 - Link to PDF of [Google Form \(Japanese\)](#)

Demographics of Participants

Age



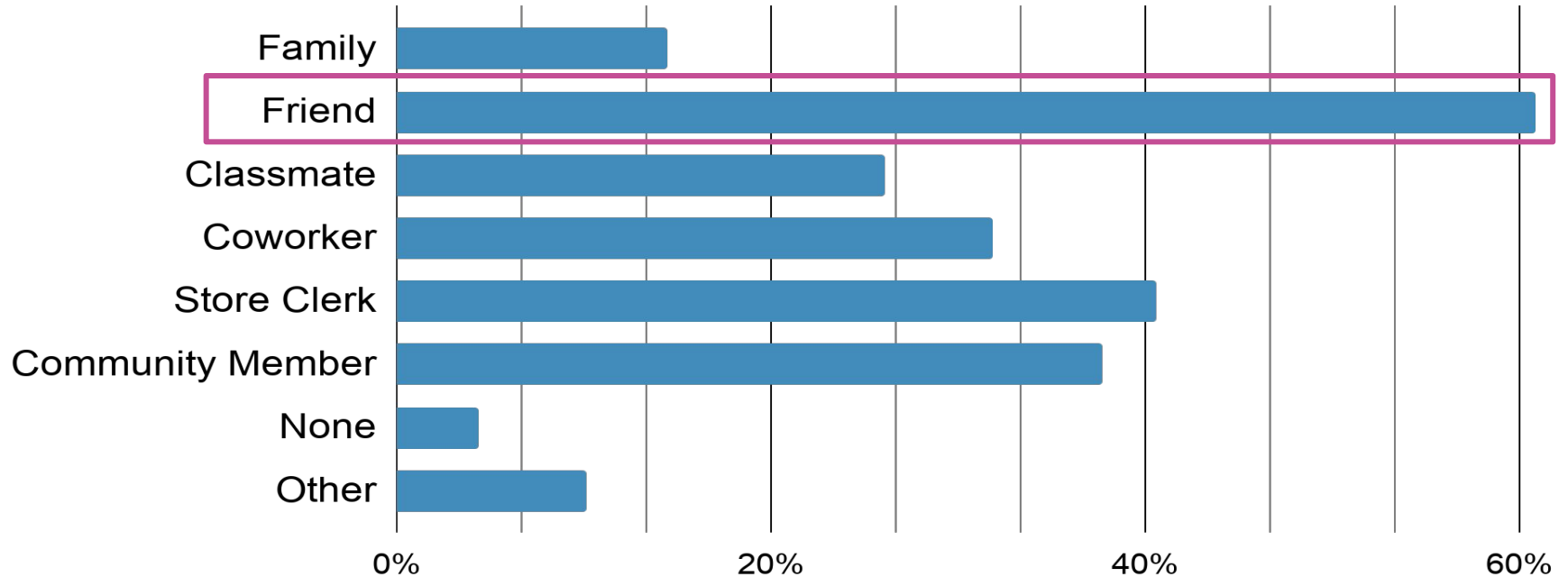
- Total Participants: 69
- Approximately 50% ages 18-30 and 50% 31+
- Age did not significantly impact results in most cases

Survey Findings 1

Research Question 1:

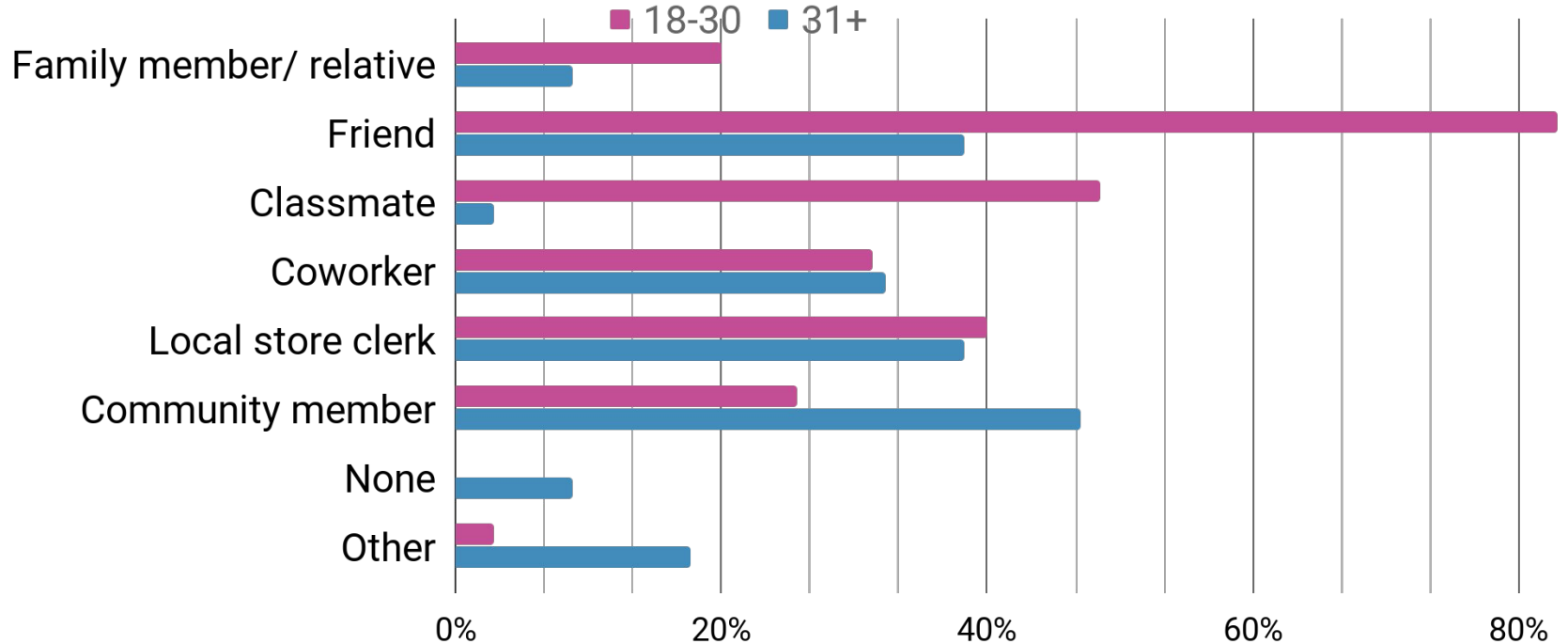
To what extent do Japanese people accept or reject foreign workers in Japan?

1. Who are the foreigners around you?



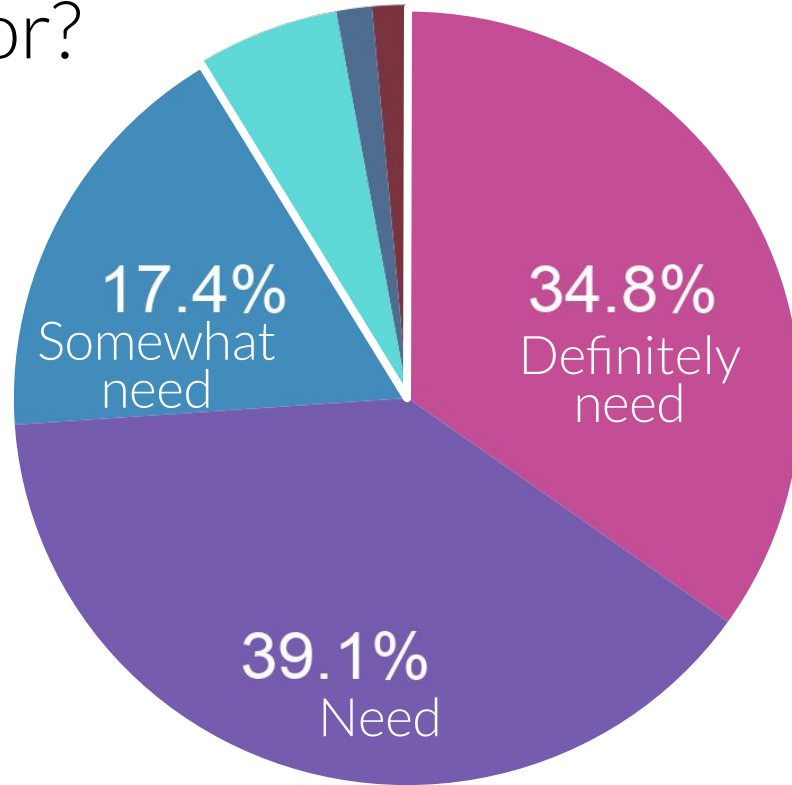
Over 60% of respondents said they have **friends** who are foreigners.

1.1. By age: Who are the foreigners around you?



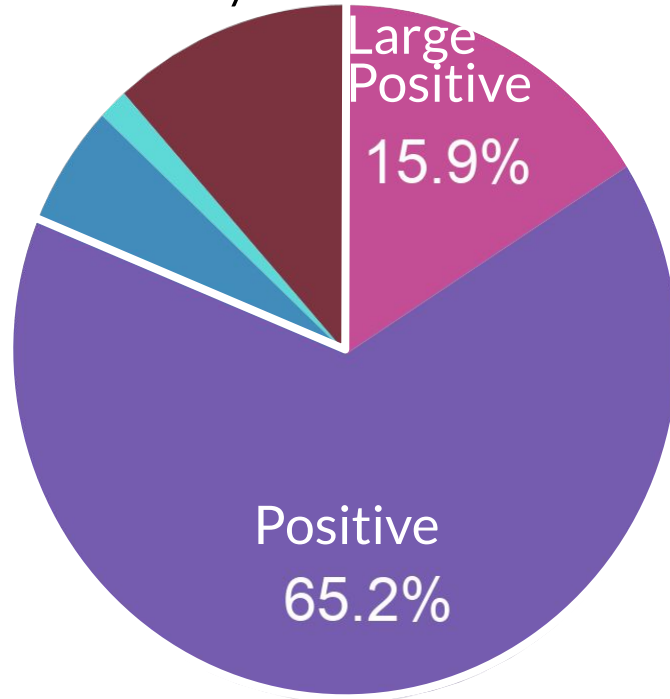
18-30 year olds tended to have **closer relationships** with foreigners such as friends, family and classmates than **31+** respondents.

2. How much do you think Japan currently needs foreign labor?



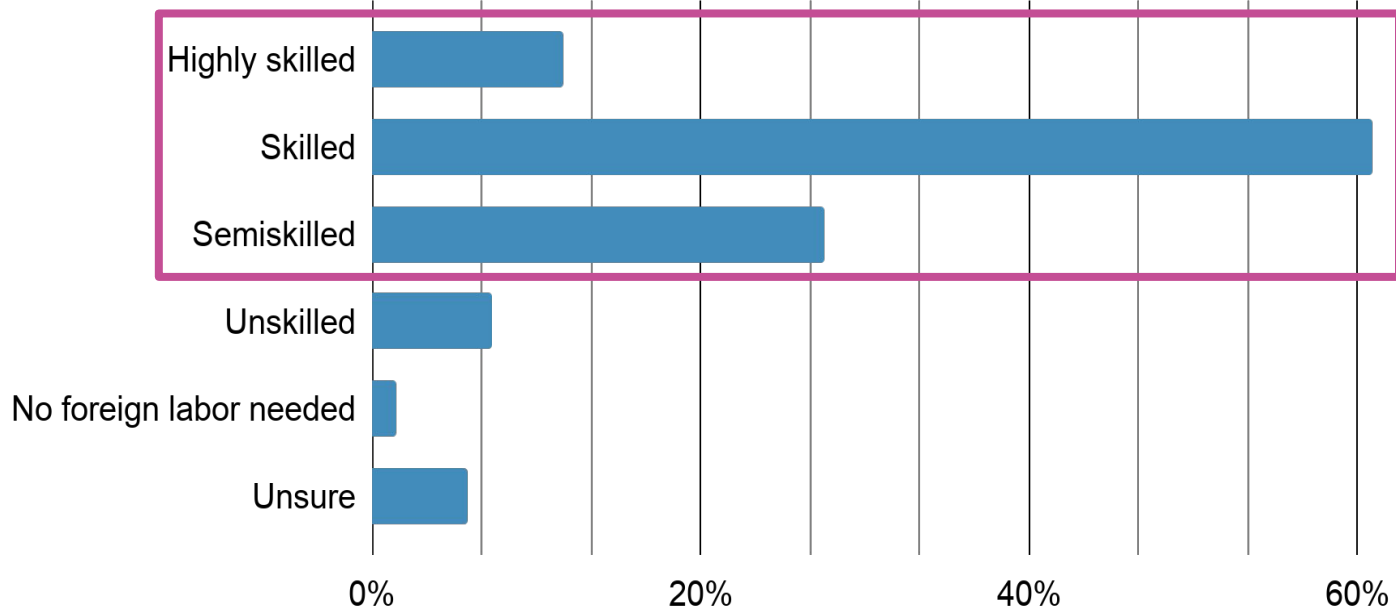
Over **90%** of respondents think that there is **some need** for foreign labor in Japan.

3. How much do you believe foreign workers impact the current economy?



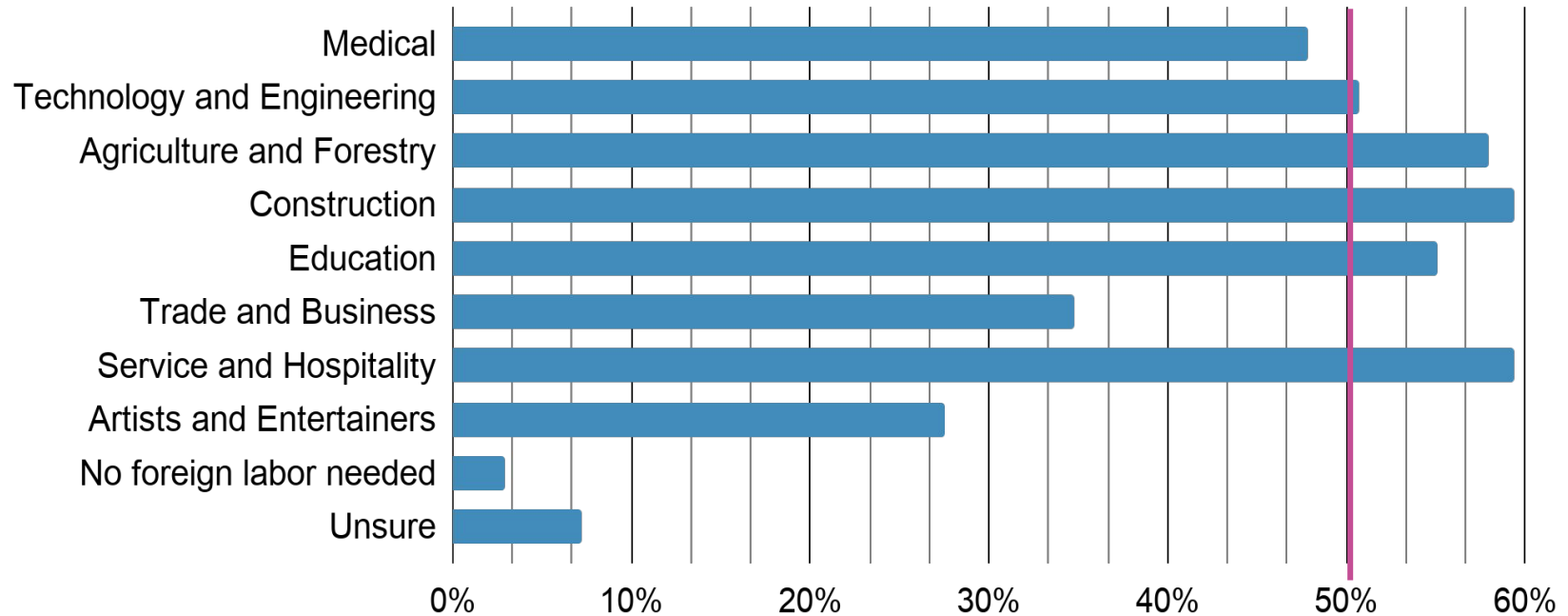
Over **80%** of respondents think that foreign workers have a **positive impact** on the current economy.

4. In your opinion, what level of skill should foreign workers have in order to work in Japan?



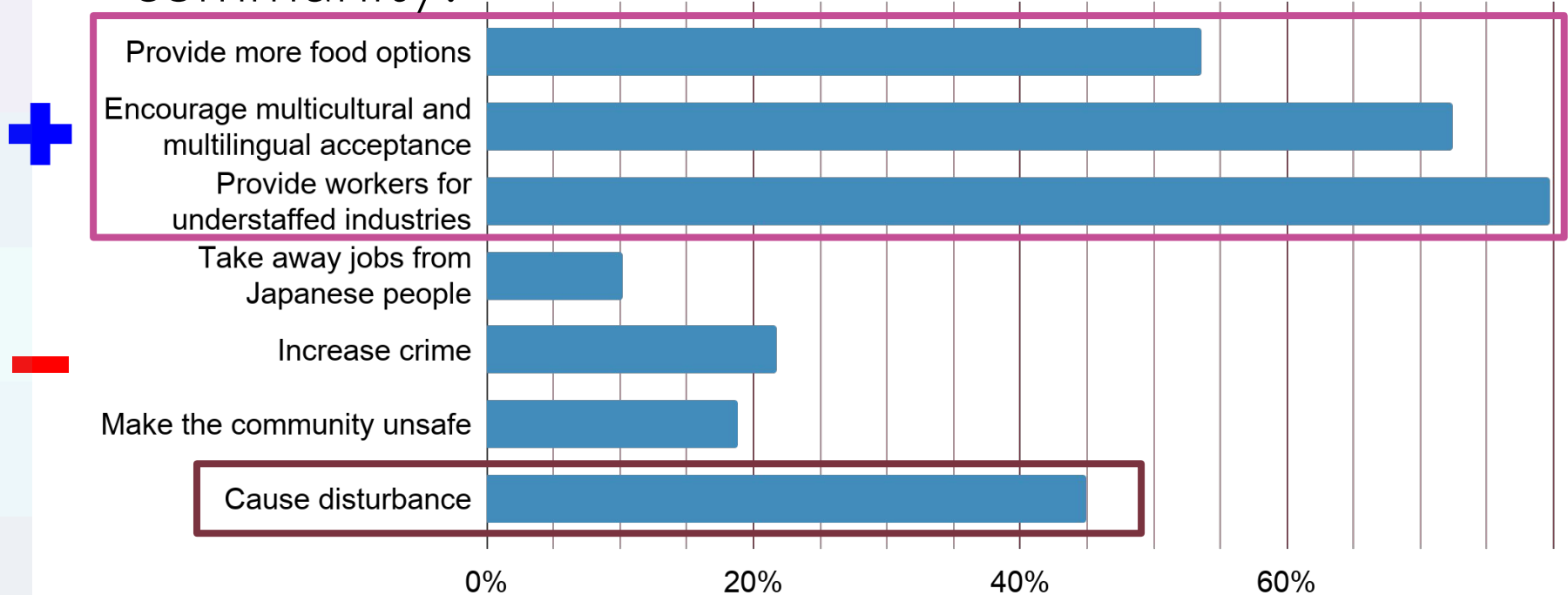
Respondents identified the **need** for foreign workers to have **some level of skill** in their fields. Only **7%** identified **unskilled labor as acceptable**.

5. In your opinion, what industries need foreign labor in Japan?



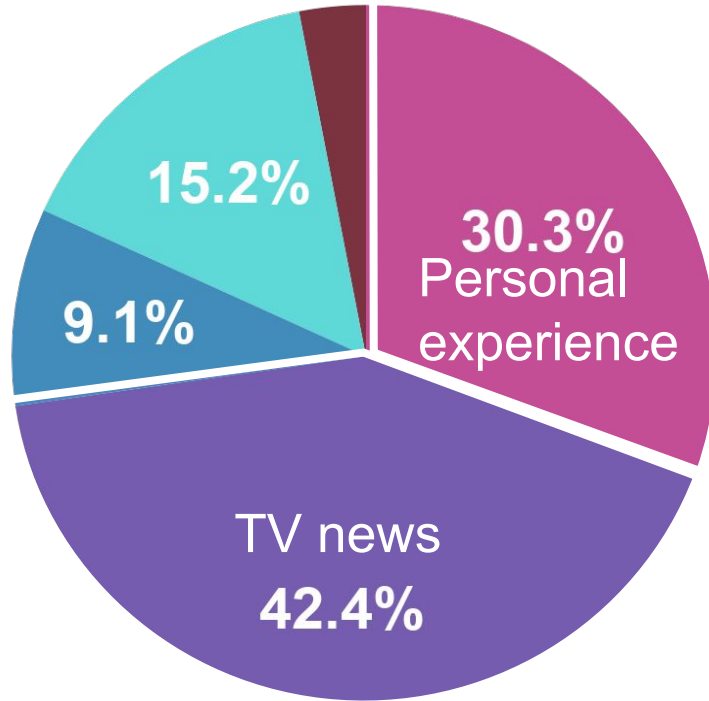
Almost every respondent identified the **need** for foreign labor **in at least one industry**. Nearly **60%** answered **farming, construction, and service industries**.

6. In what ways do foreign workers change the community?



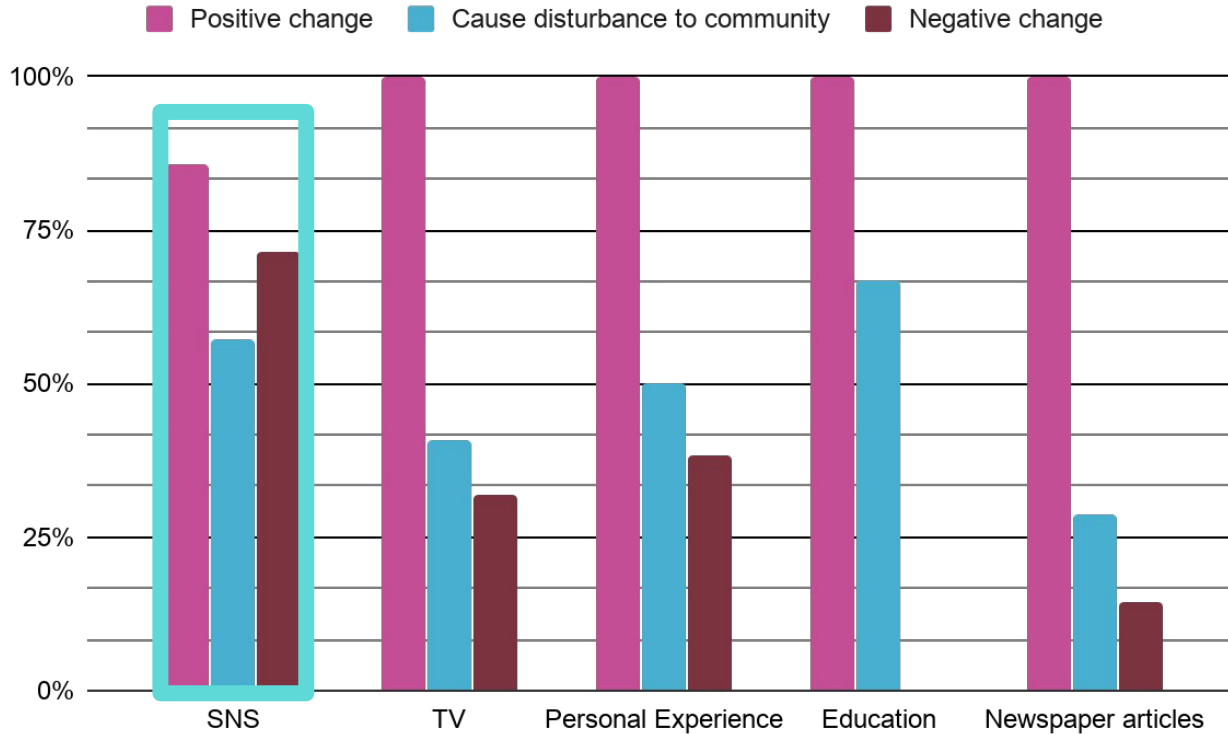
Almost **80%** of respondents chose at least one **POSITIVE** answer reflecting the changes that foreign workers create in the community. **42%** are also concerned with disturbances to the community.

7. What source of information MOST reflects your opinion on foreign workers?



Over **40%** of respondents said **TV news** reflects their opinion on foreigners, followed by **personal experiences with foreigners** at **30%**.

7.1 Changes to the community by Sources of Opinion



While positive changes were high among all, **social media** seems to have a high influence on the perception of **negative changes**.

Summary of Findings: Research Question 1

- There was an overall POSITIVE response towards foreign workers in Japan.
- Not only do most respondents think that there is a need for foreign labor, almost all think that the foreigners have a positive impact on the economy and the community
- Majority of respondents think that the foreign workers must have a certain level of skill to work in Japan and recognize in-demand industries.
- Respondents' opinions tended to be reflected most in TV news as well as their personal experience with foreigners, with whom a majority of the respondents have some sort of connection with.

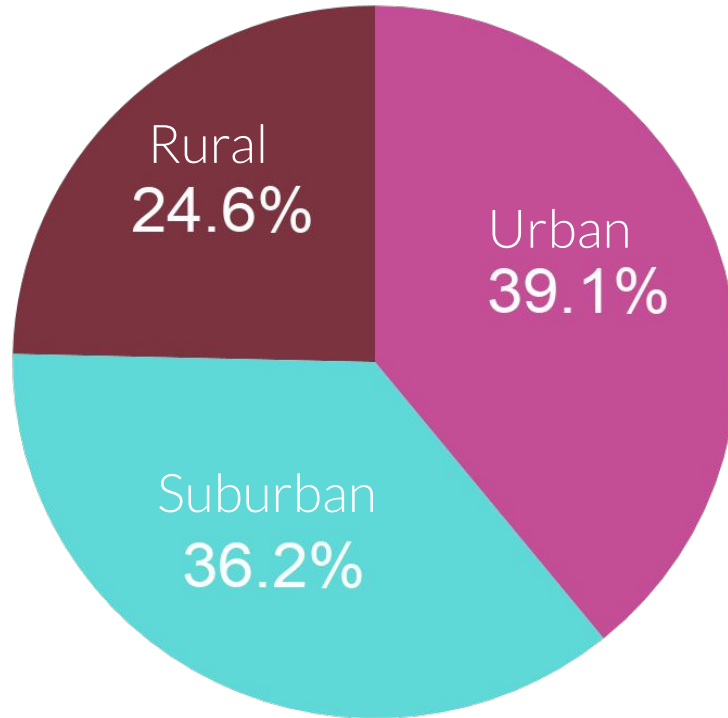
Survey Findings 2

Research Question 2:

What are Japanese people's understanding of the education of foreign workers' children in Japan?

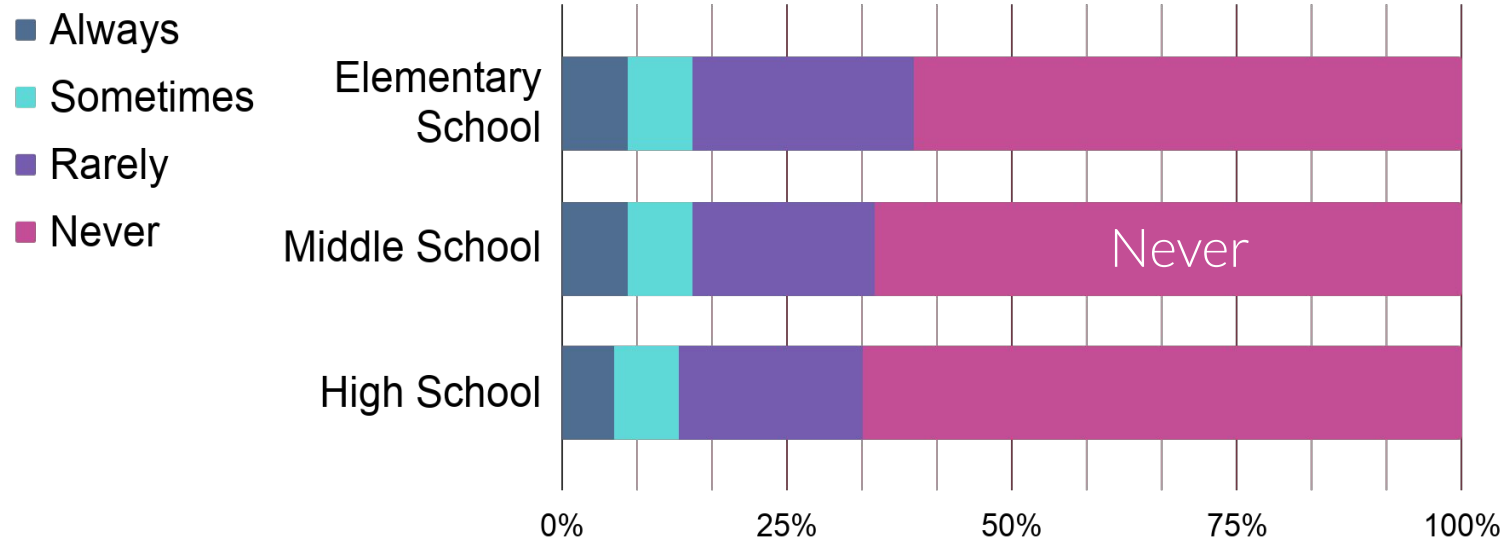


1. What kind of area did you live in up until high school?



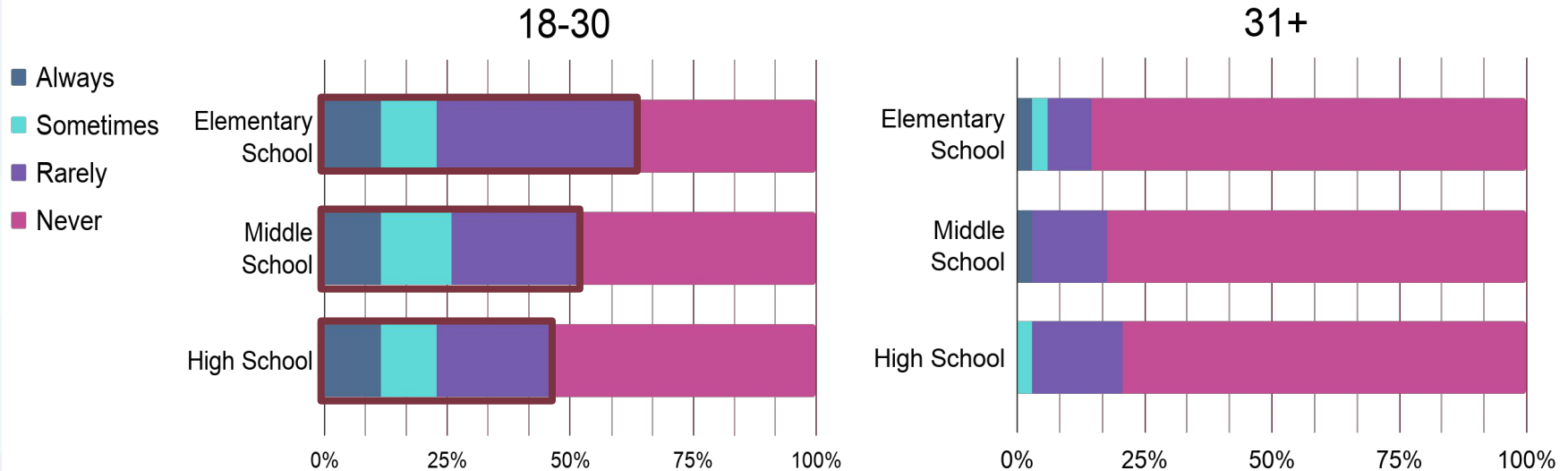
There is an almost even dispersion of where respondents lived during the time they attended compulsory education.

2. How often did you have children of foreign workers in your classes?



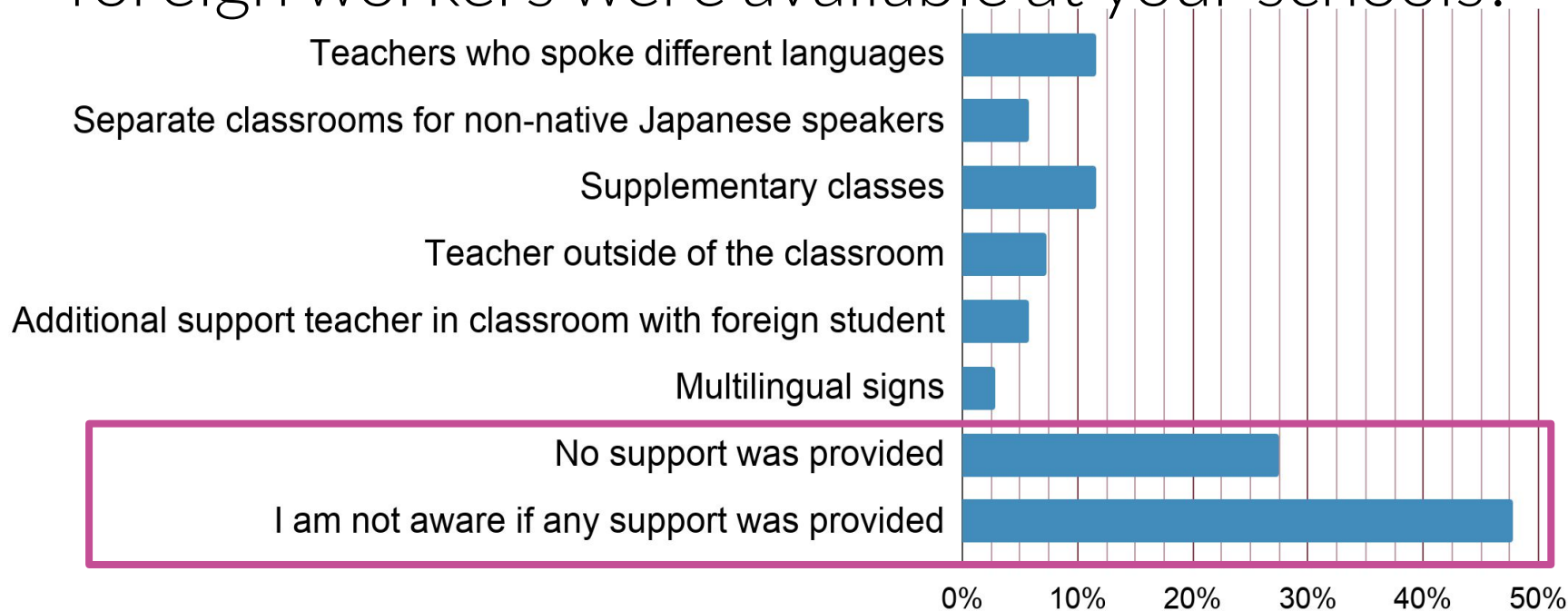
Majority of respondents said they **never** have children of foreign workers in their classes.

2.1 By age: How often did you have children of foreign workers in your classes?



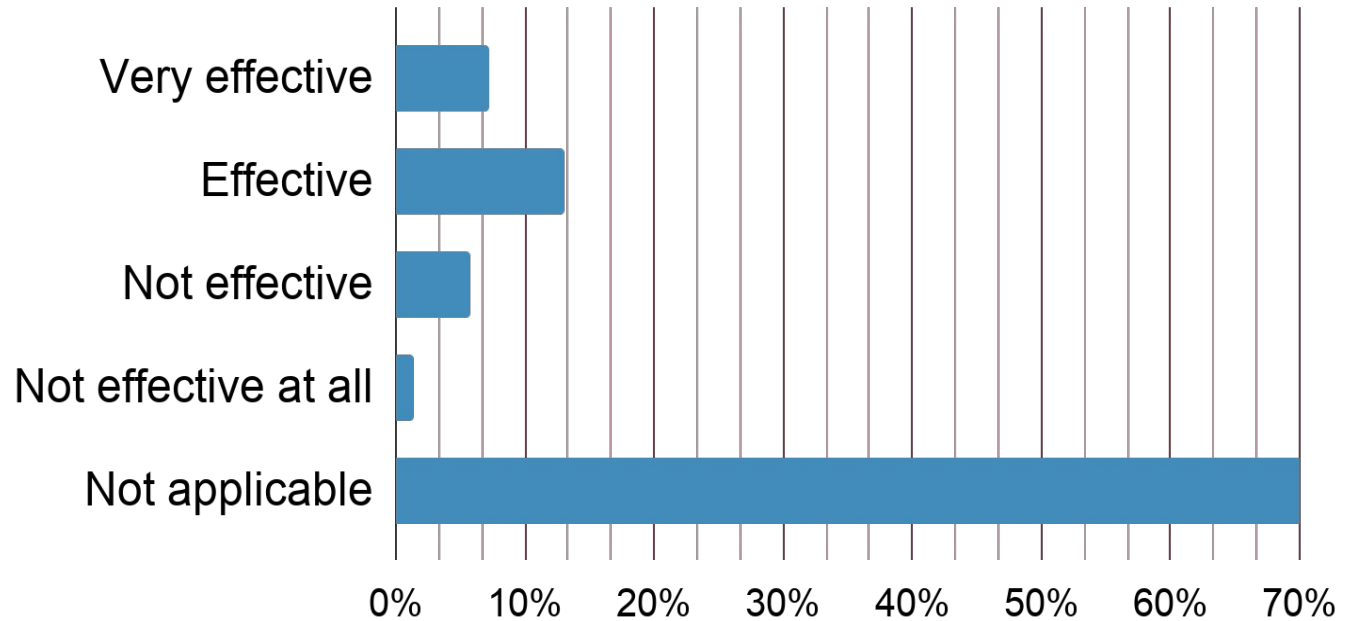
18-30 year old participants saw children of foreign workers **more often** in school. The amount of foreign children in class **decreased** over time.

3. What kind of accommodations for children of foreign workers were available at your schools?



75% said there were **none or were not aware** if there were any accommodations. All accommodations were seen but were infrequent.

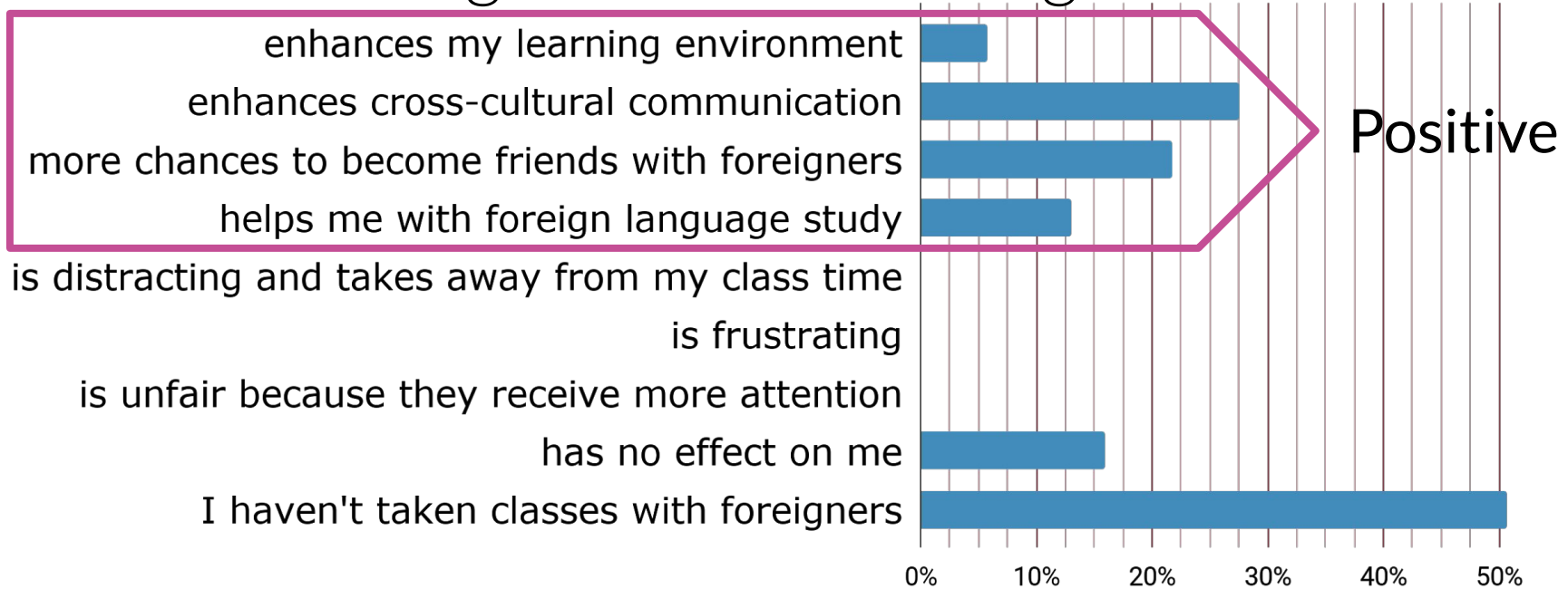
4. How effective do you think those accommodations are in helping foreign workers' children?



No accommodations were provided in many respondents' schools, so **70%** chose **not applicable**. Of those who did see accommodations, half answered they were effective.

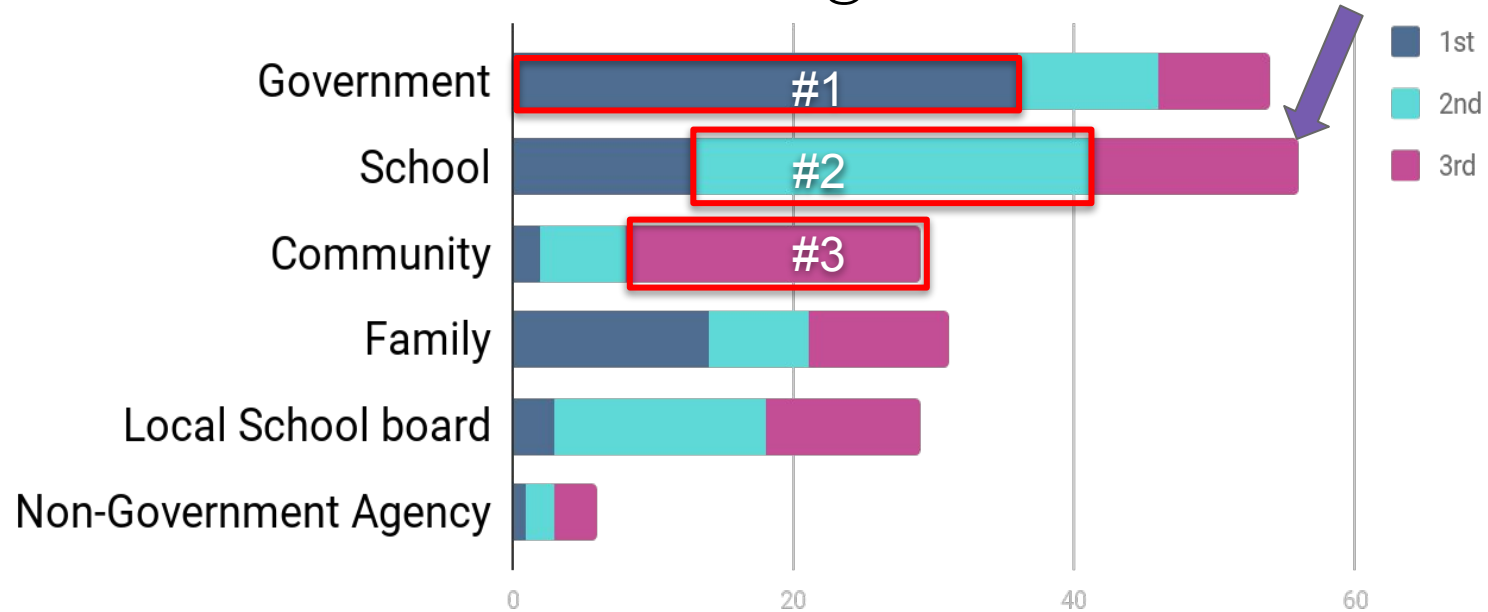
5. Complete the sentence:

Taking classes with foreigners...



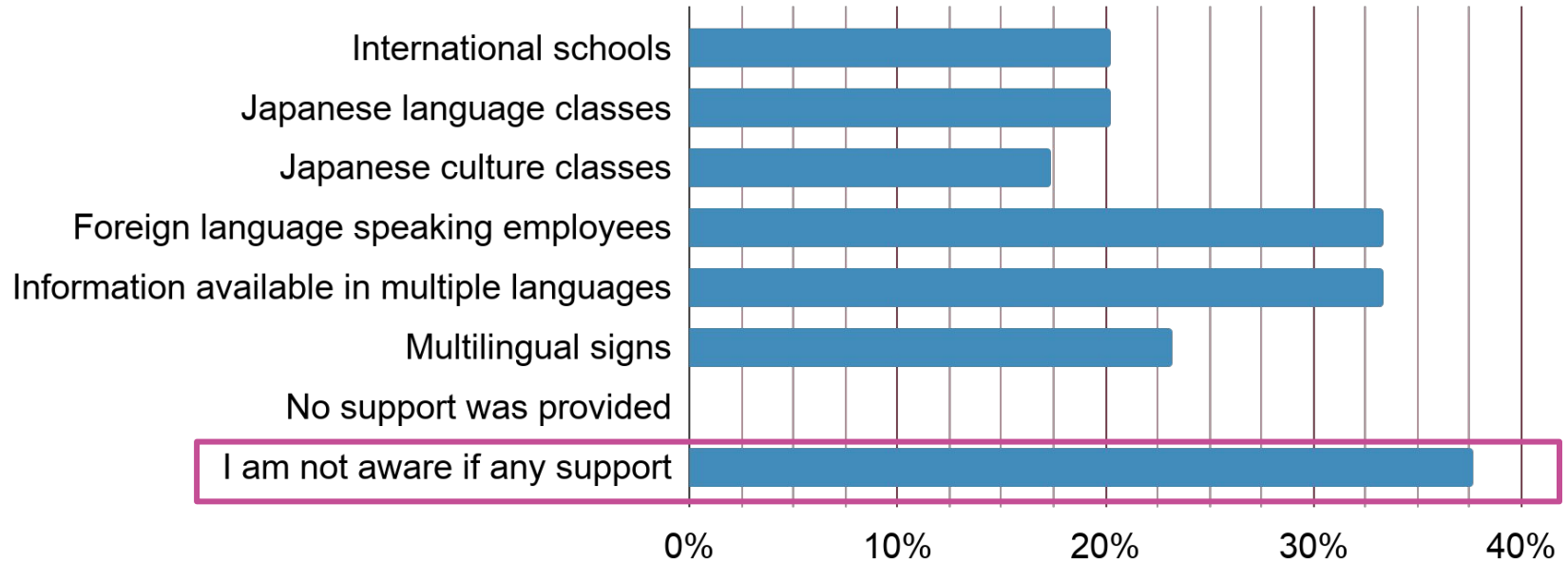
Most of the respondents who have taken classes with foreigners answered **POSITIVELY** to how foreigners affect their learning environment.

6. Rank the top three institutions most responsible for the education of foreign workers' children



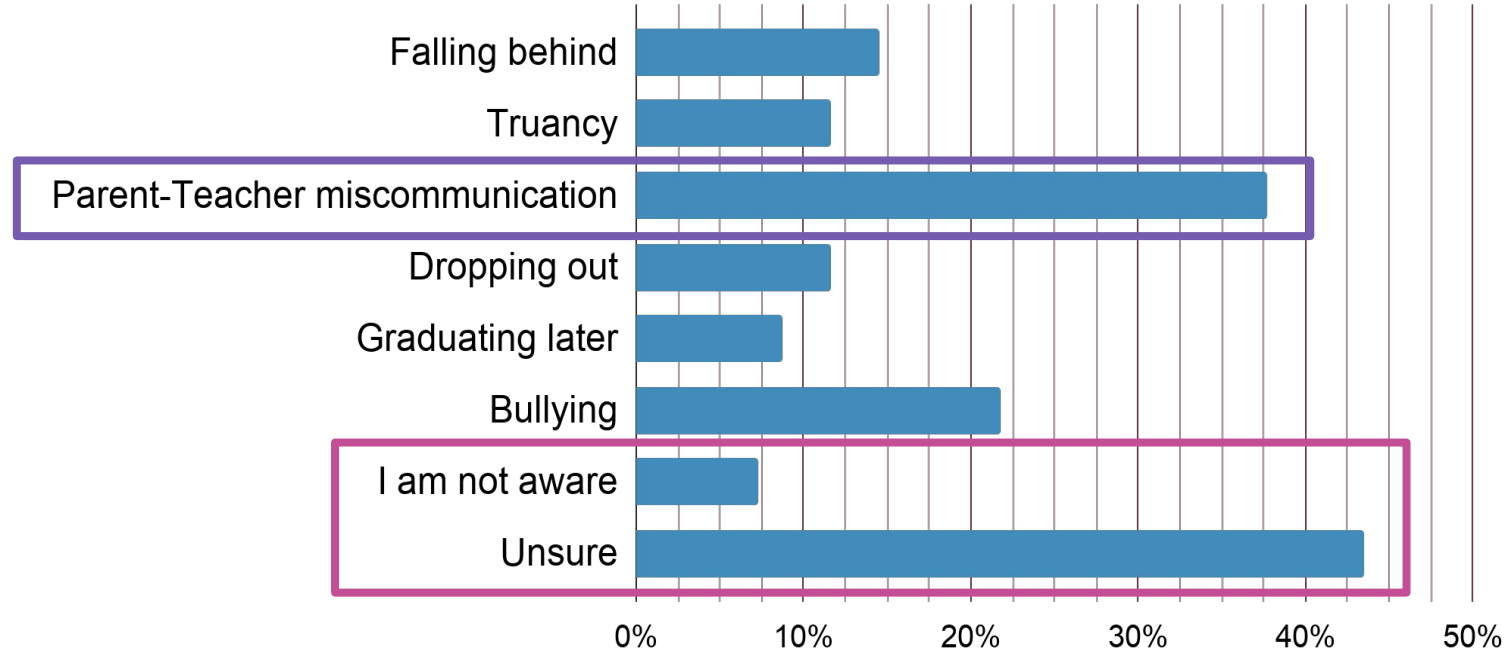
More respondents ranked **SCHOOL** as having high level of responsibility, however, **GOVERNMENT** was picked as the **#1** institution responsible.

7. What kind of support for foreign workers and their children was available in your community?



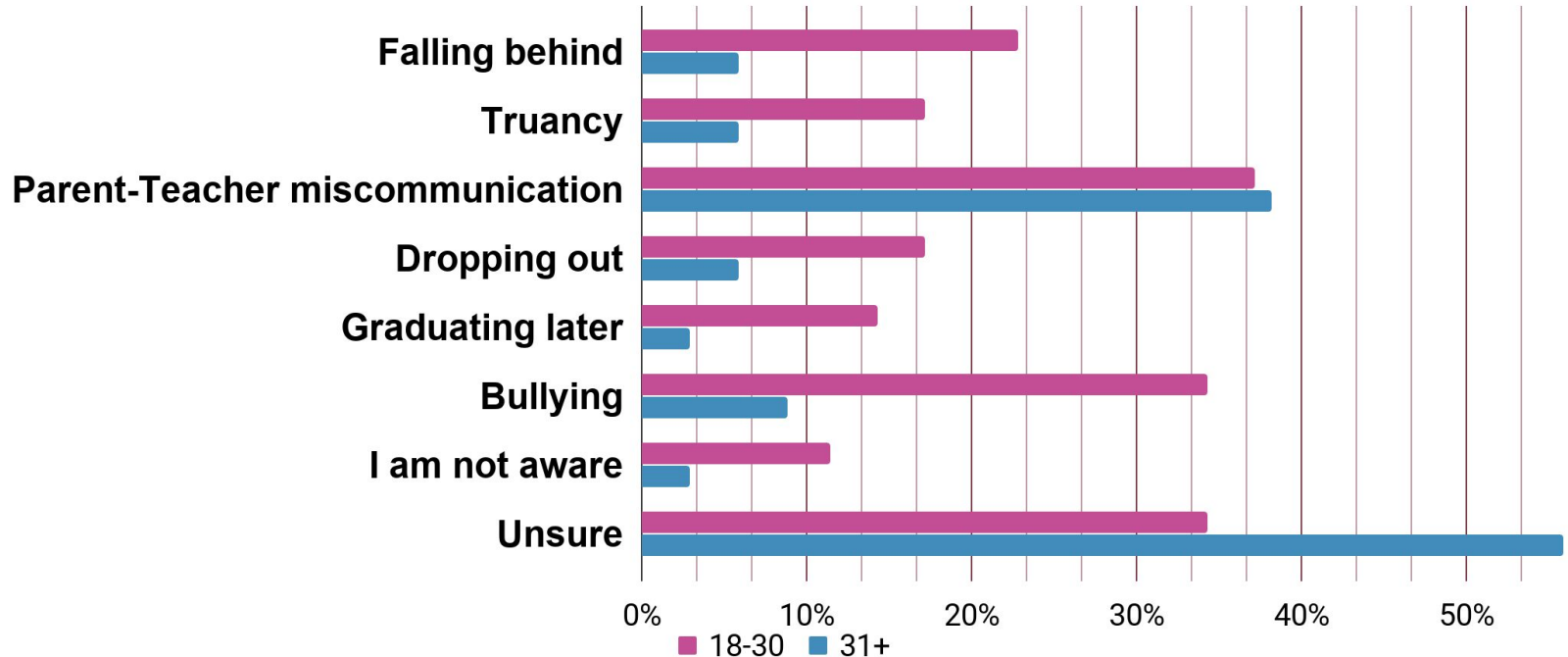
Although nearly **40%** of respondents were unaware of any support, a majority answered there was **at least one type** of support in their community.

8. Please choose all the occurrences that apply to children of foreign workers at school



Over 50% of respondents were **not aware** or **unsure**. Of those who were aware of the issues, **70%** were concerned with **parent-teacher communication**.

8.1 By age: Please choose all the occurrences that apply to children of foreign workers at school.



18-30 year olds showed more awareness of the issues than **31+** respondents.

Summary of Findings: Research Question 2

- Majority of respondents did not have the children in their class, however, those who did, tended to be younger and answered positively to ways the children affected their learning environment.
- The lack of foreign workers' children may have led to the lack of accommodations in the classroom that the respondents reported. However, of those who did see those accommodations, over half thought they were effective.
- Respondents did choose school as the institution that holds the second most responsibility in educating foreign workers and their children, however, in their community, which came in third, is where they saw more accommodations for them.

Summary of Findings: Participants' Comments

Types of comments:

- Japan and the government not doing enough
 - Human rights
- Levels of recognition of or disconnection from the issue
 - Personally not having much experience with foreigners

*"...Before thinking of foreign workers as just manpower, the government needs to consider them as **human beings**."*

"There little interest in the rural areas..."

"It is difficult to see the problem when there are few foreign children."

Conclusion and Discussions

- While there was a general acceptance of Foreign workers presence and impact on the economy and community, respondents recognized the government's role in helping integrate foreign workers and their children into society was lacking.
- Social media seems to have a role in spreading the negative image of foreign workers in Japan.
- The influx of foreign workers' children in schools in recent years seems to have influenced younger respondents' acceptance foreign workers and awareness of the issues they face.
- Many respondents attributed the lack of support for foreigners to their low population in their comments.

Limitations of the Study

- Sample size was not large enough to accurately represent all opinions
 - Sample limited to certain group so not generalizable

Future Studies

- Further investigate Social media's negative influence on foreigners' image
- In-depth interview of wider range of Japanese respondents to have better understandings
- Compare between Japanese and American perceptions toward education of foreign workers' children

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