



Consumer Affairs Agency

White Paper on Consumer Affairs 2026

Summary

June 2026

Consumer Affairs Agency, Government of Japan

White Paper on Consumer Affairs 2026: Table of Contents

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* Note that the fiscal year (FY) in Japan begins on April 1 and ends on March 31 of the following year. FY2025 is from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

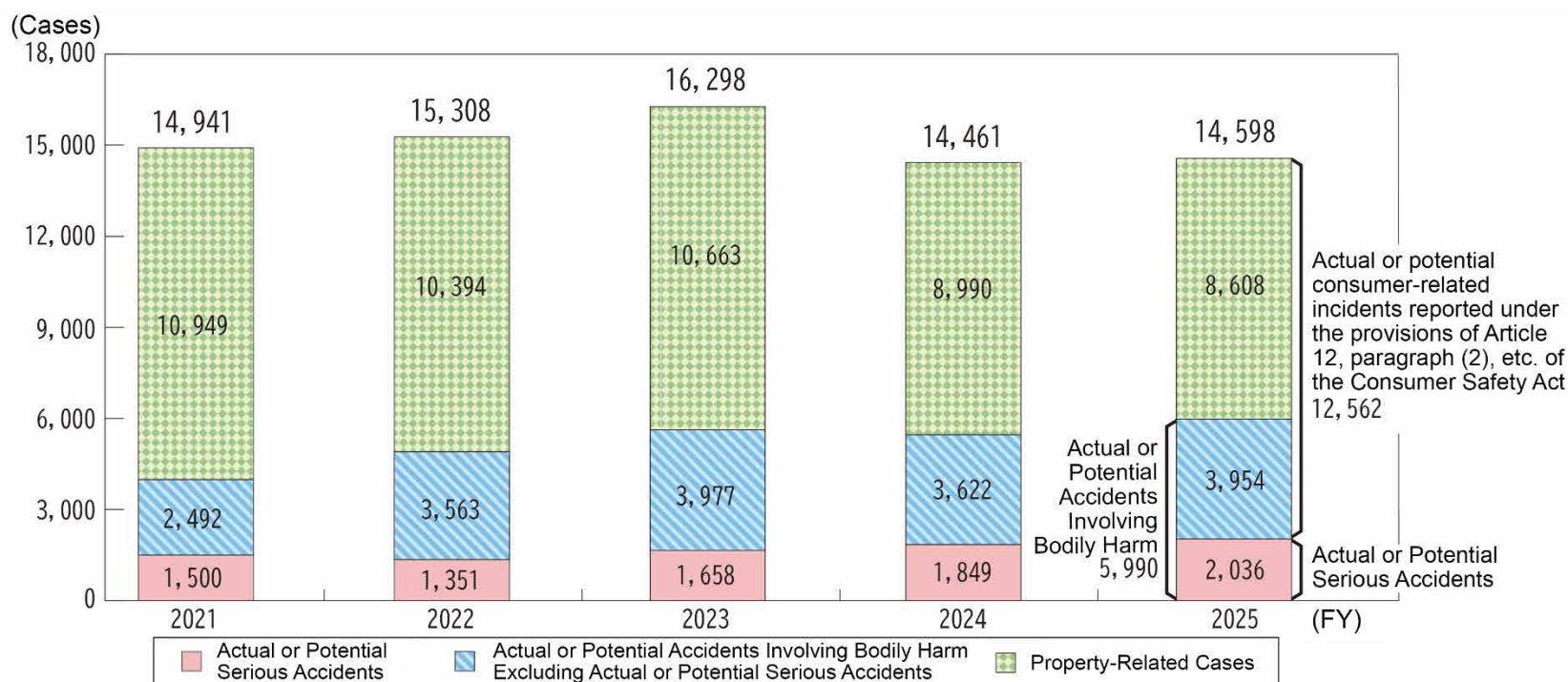
Part 1 Chapter 1

**Results of the Consolidation and
Analysis of Information about Actual or Potential
Consumer-related Incidents**

Results of the Consolidation and Analysis of Information about Actual or Potential Consumer-related Incidents Reported to the Consumer Affairs Agency

- The number of actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported to the Consumer Affairs Agency in FY2025 was 14,598.
- The breakdown is as follows: Actual or Potential Serious Accidents reported under the provisions of Article 12, paragraph (1), etc. of the Consumer Safety Act were 2,036 cases, and actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported under the provisions of Article 12, paragraph (2), etc. of the same Act were 12,562 cases.
- Among these cases, the Number of Actual or Potential Accidents Involving Bodily Harm was 5,990, and the number of property-related cases was 8,608.

Diagram 1-1: The number of actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported to the Consumer Affairs Agency under the Consumer Safety Act



Notes: 1. The number of actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported to the Consumer Affairs Agency from the heads of administrative organs, prefectural governors, mayors of municipalities, and the president of the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan under the provisions of the Consumer Safety Act.
 2. "Actual or Potential Serious Accidents" are serious accidents reported under the provisions of Article 12, paragraph (1), etc. of the Consumer Safety Act.
 3. Since June 2021, amendments to the Food Sanitation Act and the Food Labelling Act have made it mandatory to report the recall of foods.

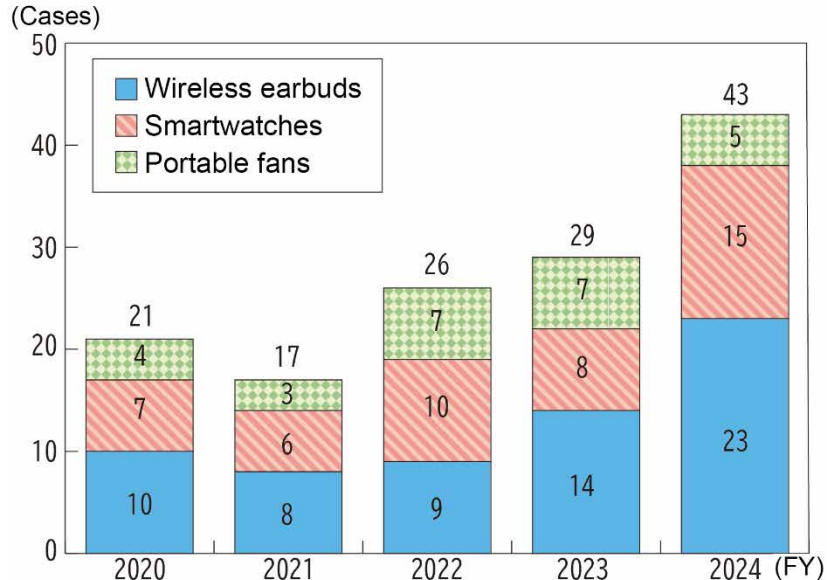
Information on Accidents Involving Bodily Harm Consolidated by the Consumer Affairs Agency

Accidents Involving Bodily Harm for which Consumer Alerts Were Released in FY2025

Fires caused by products containing lithium-ion batteries (consumer alerts released in October 2025)

- Lithium-ion batteries are used in many products integral to our everyday lives. However, incorrect usage can lead to fires and other accidents. Such accidents are occurring with marked frequency.
* According to the National Institute of Technology and Evaluation (NITE), there were 492 fires and other accidents involving lithium-ion batteries in 2024 (in order of the number of incidents: 123 for power banks, 47 for cordless vacuum cleaners, and 41 for portable power supplies).
- Focusing on the wireless earbuds, smartwatches, and portable fans in particular, which have become increasingly common in recent years as products worn or carried in everyday life, there has been an increase in overheating, fires and other accidents believed to be attributable to lithium-ion batteries over the past years; some 43 such incidents were registered with the Consumer Accident Information Databank in FY2024.
- The Consumer Affairs Agency, in collaboration with the Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Ministry of the Environment, has summarized key points regarding the use and disposal of products that contain lithium-ion batteries to raise awareness among consumers.

Diagram 1-2: Breakdown of accidents information on overheating, fires and others by products



Note: Prepared based on "Be aware of fire accidents caused by products using lithium-ion batteries - They are also used in products you wear and carry -" (published in October 2025), jointly issued by the Consumer Affairs Agency, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Ministry of the Environment.

Diagram 1-3: Key precautions in the use and disposal of products containing lithium-ion batteries

[Tips for Safe Use]

- (1) Avoid subjecting products containing lithium-ion batteries (the products) to strong impacts or excessive pressure.
- (2) Do not use or store the products in high-temperature environments.
- (3) Charge the products in a safe location, preferably while you are awake.
- (4) Stop using the products immediately if you notice anything unusual.
- (5) If the products catch fire, ensure your safety first and, if possible, extinguish the fire with plenty of water.
- (6) Check product information and recall notices.
- (7) When using public transportation, follow the applicable rules for carrying the products.

[Tips for Disposal]

- (1) Check whether the product contains a lithium-ion battery.
- (2) Recycle the battery if it is recyclable.
- (3) Check the appropriate disposal method before disposing of the battery.
- (4) If possible, fully discharge the battery before disposal.

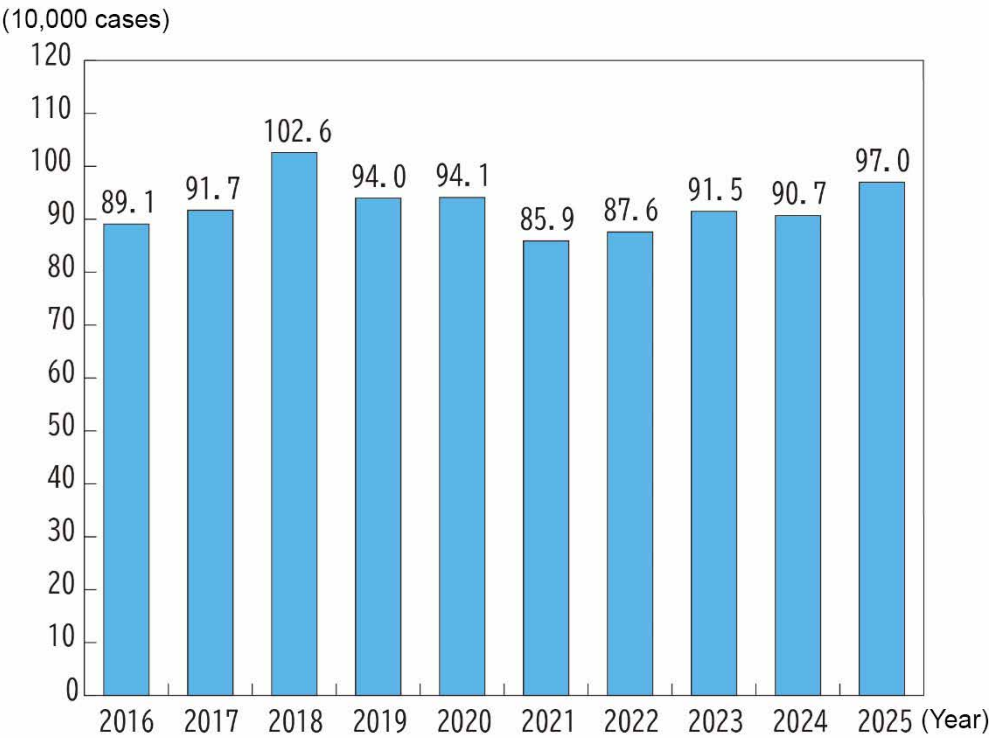


Note: Prepared based on "Be aware of fire accidents caused by products using lithium-ion batteries - They are also used in products you wear and carry -" (published in October 2025), jointly issued by the Consumer Affairs Agency, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Ministry of the Environment.

Overview of Consumer Affairs Consultations

- The number of consumer affairs consultations in 2025 was 970,000, an increase over the previous year. In recent years, the number remains around 900,000 per year.
- By product/service type, the type “Goods in general,” which includes spam e-mails and suspicious phone calls, accounted for the largest number of consultations. Next in number are consultations concerning “real estate leases,” with some cases involving high penalties or repair charges upon termination of the contract.

Diagram 1-4: Trends in the number of consumer affairs consultations



Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Diagram 1-5: Top 10 product/service types in terms of the number of consumer affairs consultations

2025			2024 (Reference)		
Rank	Products/services	Number of cases	Rank	Products/services	Number of cases
	Total number of cases	969, 618		Total number of cases	907, 121
1	Goods in general (e.g., spam e-mails and suspicious phone calls)	106, 341	1	Goods in general (e.g., spam e-mails and suspicious phone calls)	100,373
2	Real estate leasing	47, 239	2	Real estate leasing	39,853
3	Other services (e.g., computer support services, fee-based Q&A websites)	33, 114	3	Other health foods	33,820
4	Other health foods	30, 432	4	Skin-care products	31, 491
5	Skin-care products	29, 938	5	Work & Construction	30, 158
6	Work & Construction	27, 380	6	Other services (e.g., computer support services, fee-based Q&A websites)	26,866
7	Internet connection services	23, 687	7	Personal loans//Consumer finance	20,488
8	Mobile phone services	19, 974	8	Internet connection services	19, 948
9	Personal loans//Consumer finance	19, 731	9	Mobile phone services	17,852
10	Repair services	17, 540	10	Repair services	17,388

In pink : Increased from 2024 to 2025.

In blue : Decreased from 2024 to 2025.

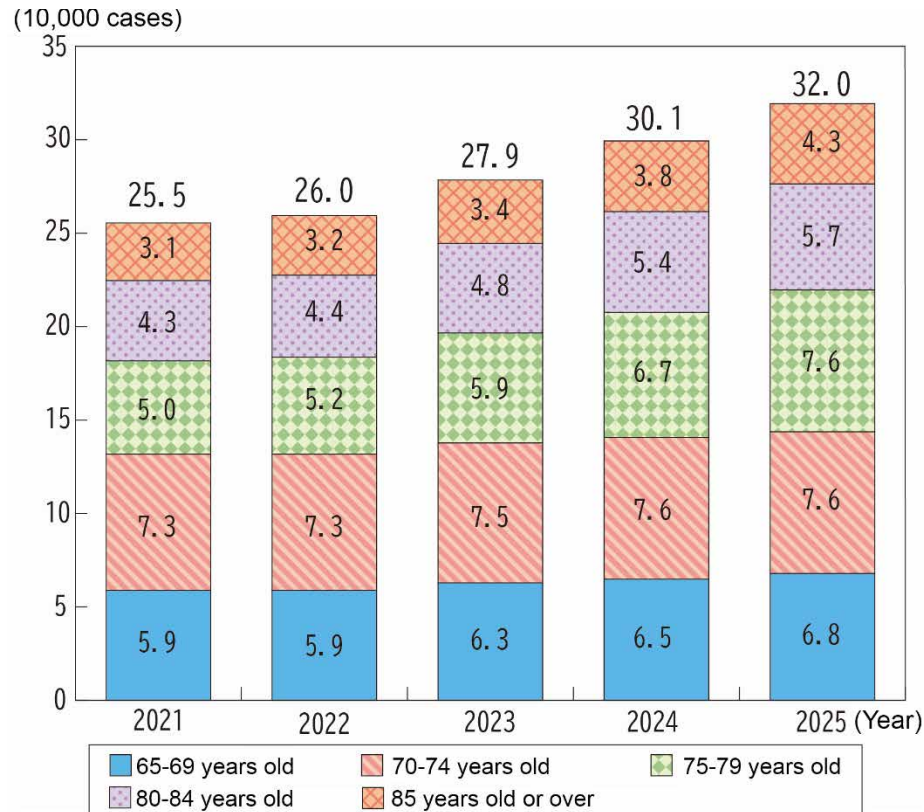
Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Overview of Consumer Affairs Consultations

- Consumer Affairs Consultations from the Elderly People -

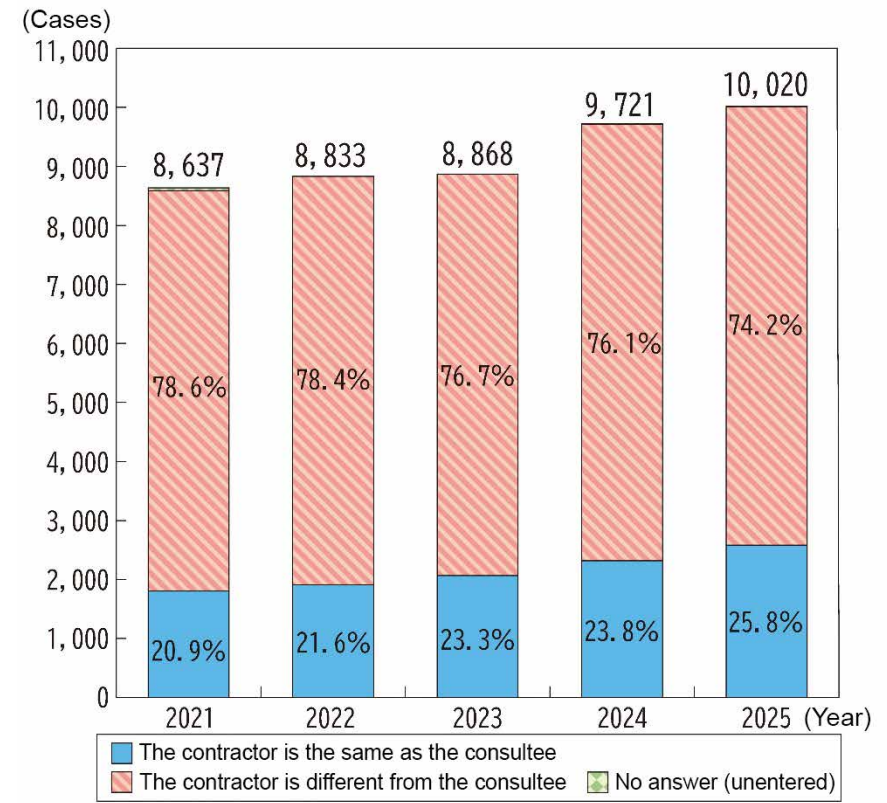
- The number of consumer affairs consultations from elderly people in 2025 was approximately 320,000, an increase over the previous year. In recent years, the percentage of consultations from elderly people remains around 30% of all consultations.
- Consultations involving elderly people with dementia or related disorders are increasing, however, only around one quarter of these consultations are made by the people themselves, compared with around 80% for elderly people overall. It is difficult for elderly people with dementia or related disorders to notice that they are in trouble, so it is important that those who are around them keep close watch.

Diagram 1-6: Trends in the number of consumer affairs consultations from elderly people



Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Diagram 1-7: Trends in the number of consumer affairs consultations from elderly people with dementia and other disorders



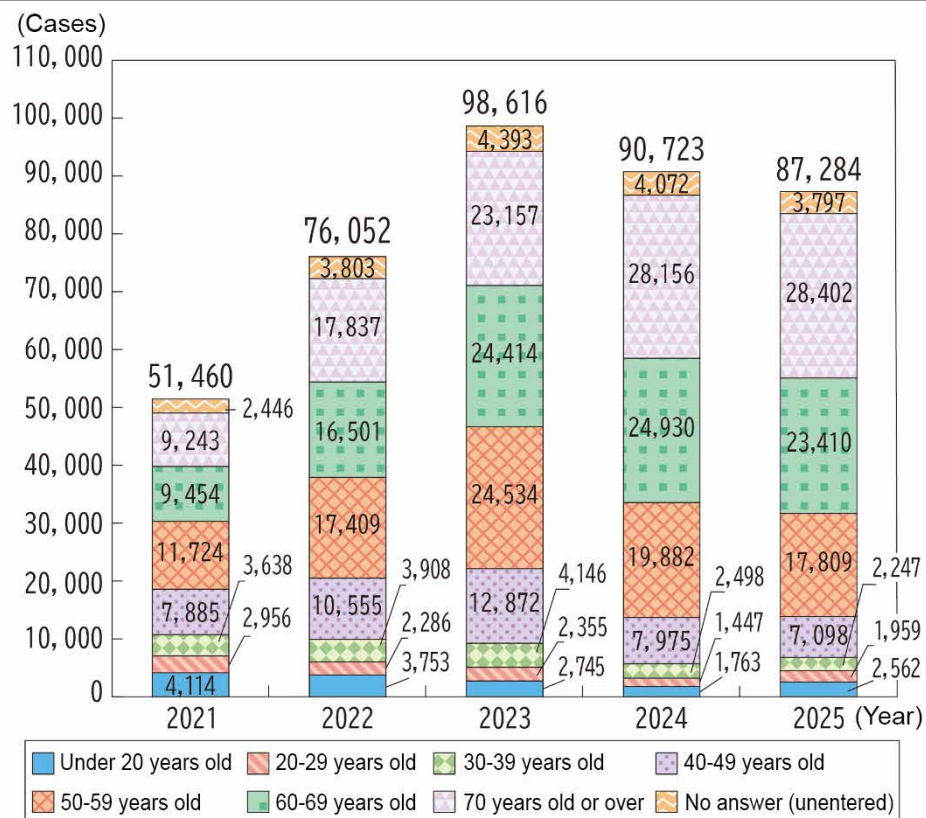
Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Overview of Consumer Affairs Consultations

- Consultations Related to Online and Mail-Order Subscriptions -

- The number of consumer affairs consultations on online and mail-order subscriptions remained high at 87,284 in 2025.
- Regarding the types of goods and services, many of the consultations were related to health foods and cosmetics.

Diagram 1-8: Trends in the number of consumer affairs consultations on online and mail-order subscriptions



Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Diagram 1-9: Top 5 product/service types in terms of the number of consumer affairs consultations on online and mail-order subscriptions

2025			2024 (Reference)		
Rank	Products/services	Number of cases	Rank	Products/services	Number of cases
	Total number of cases	87,284		Total number of cases	90,723
1	Other health food (e.g., diet supplements)	22,063	1	Other health food (e.g., diet supplements)	24,921
2	Face cream	16,931	2	Face cream	16,043
3	Make-up foundation	10,651	3	Milky lotion	8,337
4	Milky lotion	6,446	4	Make-up foundation	4,777
5	Cosmetics (general)	3,206	5	Toothpaste	3,827

Green : Health food Pink : Cosmetics

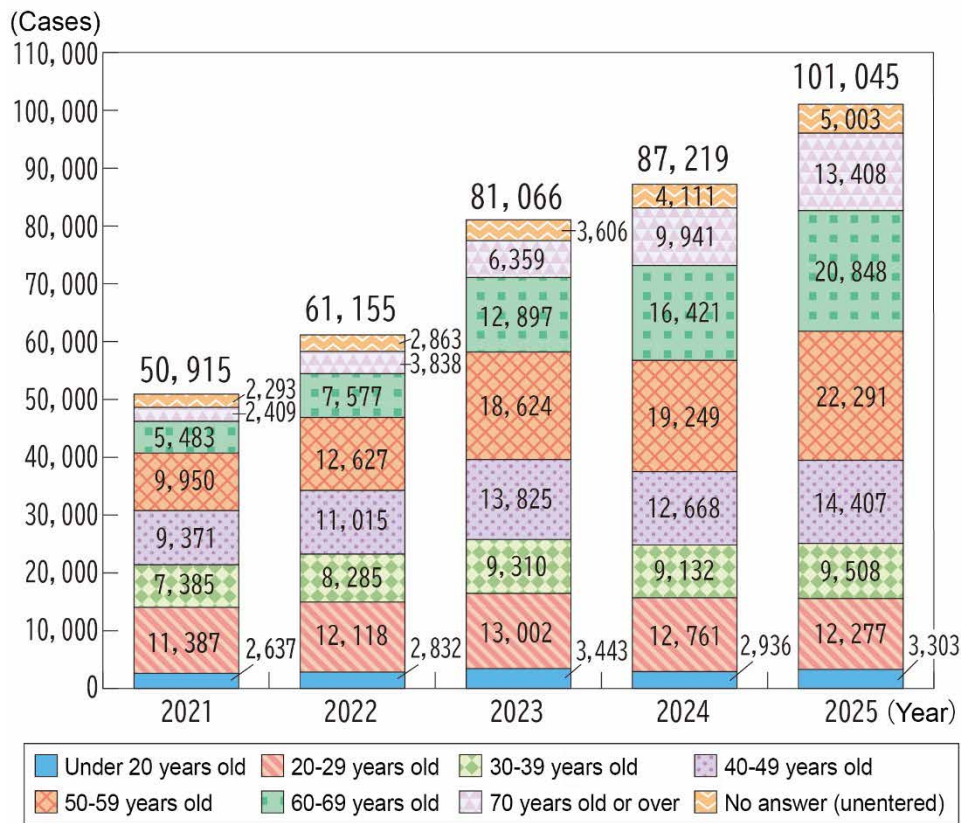
Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Overview of Consumer Affairs Consultations

- Consultations Related to Social Media -

- The number of consumer affairs consultations related to social media in 2025 was 101,045, an increase over the previous year. A high proportion of these consultations were from people in their 40s to 60s.
- Regarding the types of goods and services, many of the consultations were related to cosmetics, health foods, and home-based piecework and side jobs.

Diagram 1-10: Trends in the number of consumer affairs consultations related to social media



Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Diagram 1-11: Top 5 product/service types in terms of the number of consumer affairs consultations related to social media

2025			2024 (Reference)		
Rank	Products/services	Number of cases	Rank	Products/services	Number of cases
	Total number of cases	101,045		Total number of cases	87,219
1	Face cream	7,805	1	Other health food (e.g., diet supplements)	7,394
2	Other health food (e.g., diet supplements)	7,073	2	Other piecework/ side work (e.g., trouble involving registration fees for side work)	6,992
3	Other piecework/ side work (e.g., trouble involving registration fees for side work)	6,101	3	Face cream	5,676
4	Make-up foundation	5,280	4	Other services (e.g., business consulting, computer support)	3,268
5	Other services (e.g., business consulting, computer support)	3,620	5	Goods in general	3,049

Legend:

- Green : Health food
- Pink : Cosmetics
- Purple : Piecework, side work

Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Consumer Harm/Troubles Experienced and the Estimated Amount of Consumer Financial Detriment

- The percentage of consumers who experienced consumer harm/troubles in 2025 was 20.1%, a decrease from the previous year.
- The average amount of consumer financial detriment per case in 2025 (excluding those involving 100 million yen or more) was approximately 529,000 yen, an increase over the previous year.
- The total consumer financial detriment (payment made, including credit granted) in 2025 was approximately 7.6 trillion yen, a decrease from the previous year.

Diagram 1-12: Consumers experiencing harm/troubles due to purchased products and services used

	FY2023 (Nov 2023) N = 5, 544	FY2024 (Nov 2024) N = 5, 046	FY2025 (Nov 2025) N = 5, 473
Product functionality/quality or service quality fell far short of	16.3%	15.7%	14.9%
Product or service differed significantly from its description or advertising	11.0%	11.7%	9.6%
Charged much more than expected	4.5%	5.6%	4.0%
Problems when entering into or canceling a contract	3.6%	3.1%	2.9%
Misleading sales practices or sales talk led to a purchase or contract	3.1%	2.9%	2.1%
Safety or hygiene problems resulting in injury or illness	2.2%	3.4%	1.8%
Paid (or agreed to pay) money to a business as a result of fraud	1.7%	1.7%	1.5%
Experience of other consumer harm	2.7%	2.2%	2.1%
Experienced any of the above	21.6%	22.3%	20.1%

Note: Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life.

Diagram 1-13: Average amount of consumer financial detriment per case

	2023	2024	2025
Payment made (including credit granted)	About 497,000 yen	About 516,000 yen	About 529,000 yen

Note: Average amounts excluding cases of 100 million yen or more. Calculated based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET.

Diagram 1-14: Estimated total amount of consumer financial detriment

	2023	2024	2025
Payment made (including credit granted)	About 7.9 trillion yen	About 9.0 trillion yen	About 7.6 trillion yen

Note:

1. The estimate was calculated by estimating the total number of consumer disputes and incidents of consumer harm nationwide and multiplying that figure by the average monetary loss per case.
2. Because a small number of cases involving exceptionally large losses could have a disproportionate impact on the overall estimate, the estimates presented in the 2025 White Paper on Consumer Affairs are limited to cases involving losses of less than 100 million yen, based on the discussions at the follow-up meeting of the Study Group on the Development of Quantitative Indicators Related to Harm to Consumers held in JFY2024, for which both the incidence rate and the average amount of consumer harm or dispute can be estimated with relatively greater stability. For reference, the estimated amount including cases involving losses of ¥100 million or more (payment made, including credit granted) is shown below.
2023: About 8.8 trillion yen. 2024: About 9.6 trillion yen. 2025: About 8.1 trillion yen.

Part 1 Chapter 2

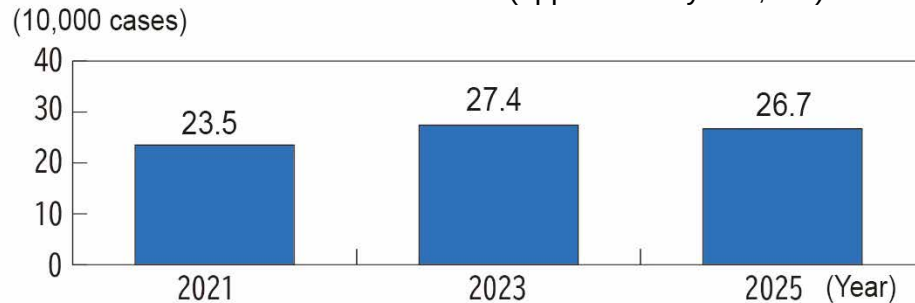
**Featured Content: Changing Consumer
Transactions in Response to Digitalization and
Advances in AI Technology**

Consumer Transactions Changing in Response to Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

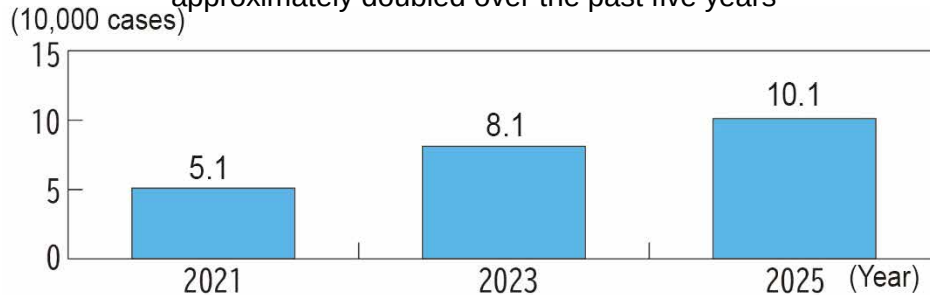
- The nature of consumer transactions has greatly changed in response to digitalization and advances in AI technology. Whilst these changes bring greater convenience to consumers, they can also make it more difficult for consumers to choose suitable products and services, thereby hindering their ability to make autonomous decision and bringing consumer vulnerabilities to the fore.
- The 2026 White Paper on Consumer Affairs features **Consumer Transactions Changing in Response to Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology**.

Increased consumer affairs consultations related to digitalization

Consultations on internet shopping in 2025 made up approximately 30% of the total consultation (approximately 970,000).



The number of consumer consultations related to social media has approximately doubled over the past five years



Note: Prepared based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2026).

Survey focused on understanding the following points in particular regarding changes in consumer transactions in response to digitalization and advances in AI technology

Increasing diversification of business sales practices

- Mechanisms that steer consumers toward unintended actions
- Increasing diversification of persuasive practices in the digital space

Personalized information and consumers' use of AI

- Tailored information for individual consumers
- Consumers' use of AI

Changes in how consumers engage with the marketplace

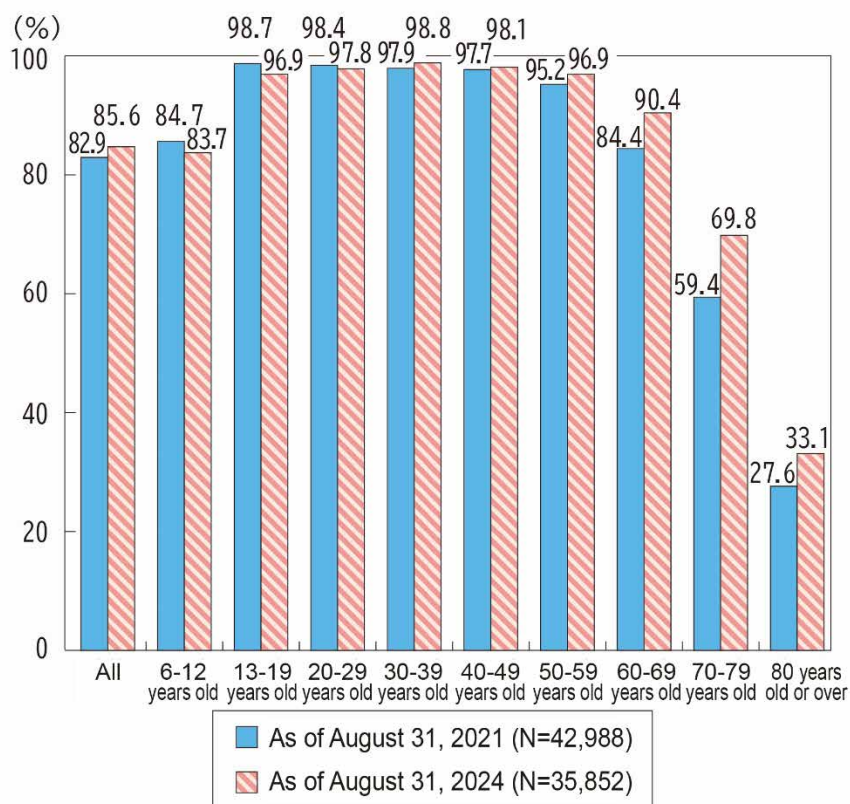
- Consumers who pay for services with their time and attention
- The growing dissemination of information by consumers

Changes in the Environment Surrounding Consumers

- Widespread Use of the Internet and Social Media -

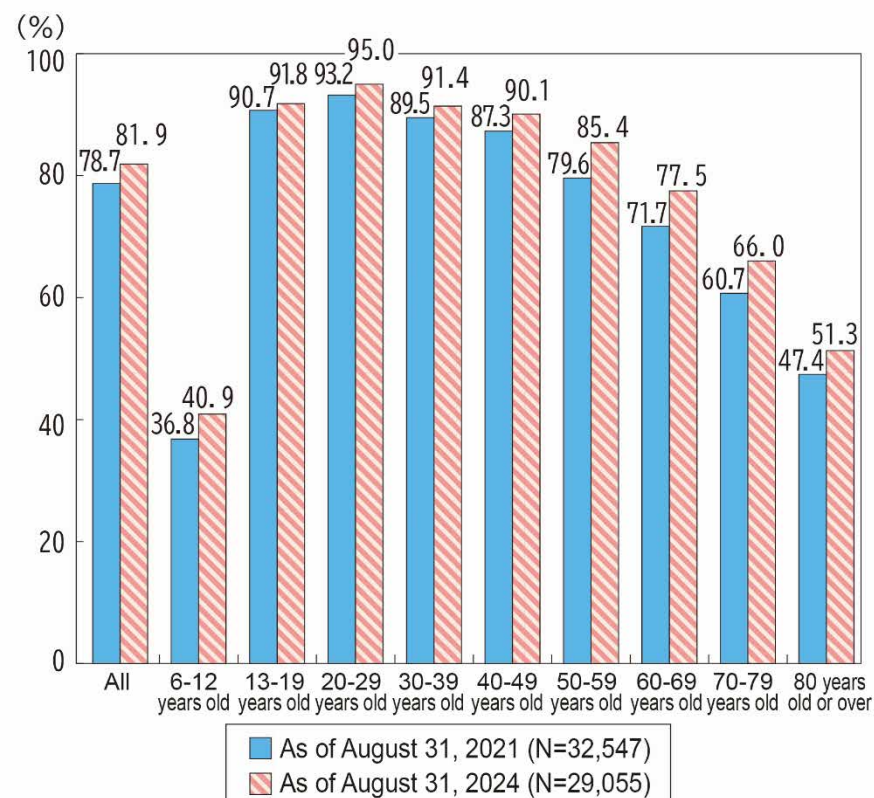
- Use of the internet and social media continues to expand. The proportion of internet users is close to 100% for the age group between 13 and 59, and exceeds 90% among those in their 60s. In addition, the proportion of internet users who use social media has increased across all age groups.

Diagram 2-1: Changes in the proportion of internet users, by age group



Note: Prepared based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' Communications Usage Trend Survey.

Diagram 2-2: Changes in the proportion of social media users among internet users, by age group



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' Communications Usage Trend Survey.
2. The base comprises respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "Have you used the internet during the past year?"

Changes in the Environment Surrounding Consumers

- Sources of Information about Potential Risks -

- The proportion of people who obtain information about potential risks in daily life (such as fraud, fraudulent schemes, and product safety) from websites, social media, and video-sharing platforms has increased. Among people in their late teens and those in their 20s, these online sources have overtaken television and radio as the primary source of such information.
- By contrast, the proportion of people obtaining this type of information from television and radio has declined substantially, particularly among those in their late teens and 20s. The proportion obtaining such information from newspapers, magazines, and books has also declined significantly, especially among people in their 40s and 50s.

Diagram 2-3: Sources of information about potential risks, by age group



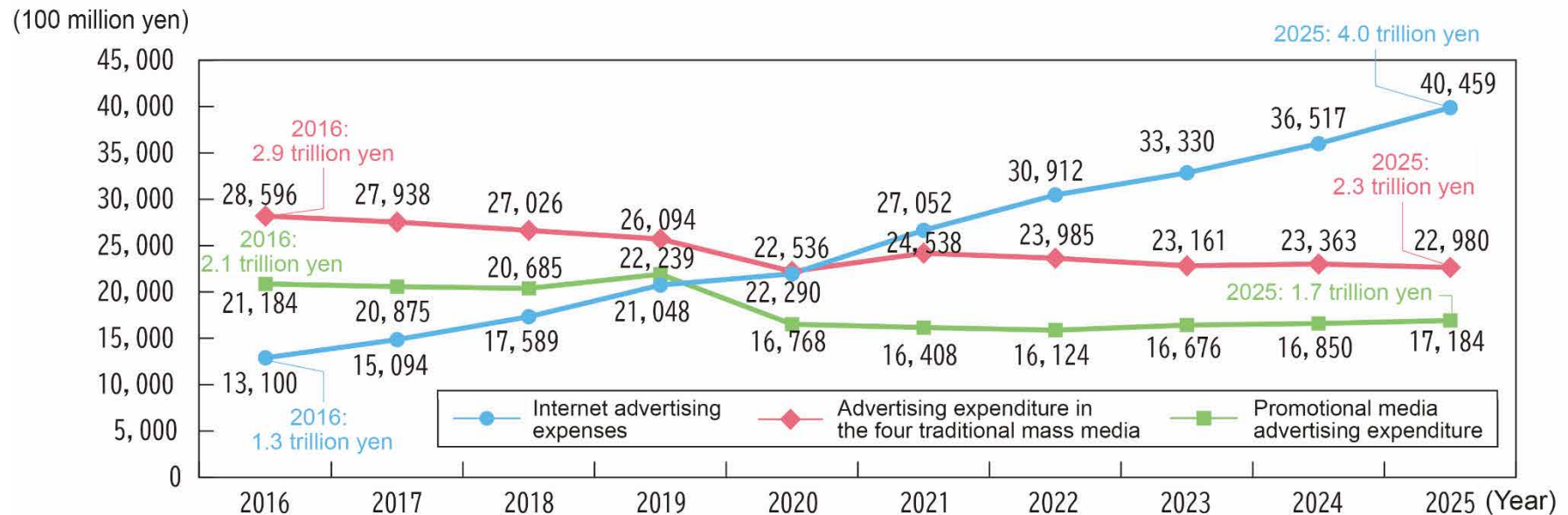
Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life.

2. Categories are shown in descending order based on the number of responses in FY2025. Only the top seven categories overall in FY2025 are included.

Changes in the Environment Surrounding Consumers - Growth in Internet Advertising Expenses -

- Spending on internet advertising has continued to increase. In recent years, it continues to grow exceeding advertising expenditure on the four traditional mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, and television) as well as on promotional media.

Diagram 2-4: Trends in advertising expenditure, by media type



Internet advertising expenditure: The combined expenditure on internet advertising media, advertising on e-commerce platforms for goods, and internet advertising production.

Advertising expenditure in the four traditional mass media: Advertising expenditure in newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.

Promotional media advertising expenditure: Advertising expenditure for outdoor advertising, transit advertising, newspaper inserts, direct mail (DM), free papers, point-of-purchase (POP) advertising, events, exhibitions, screen displays, and other promotional media.

Notes: 1. Prepared based on Advertising Expenditures in Japan published by Dentsu.

2. From 2018, internet advertising expenditure has been estimated by including digital advertising derived from the four traditional mass media.

From 2019, advertising on e-commerce platforms for physical goods has also been included.

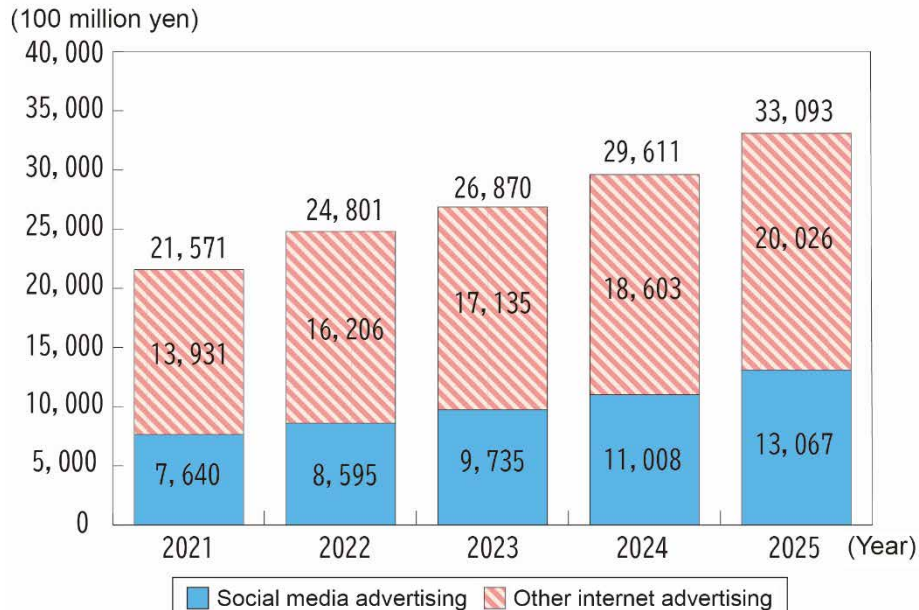
3. From 2019, Promotional media advertising expenditure has been estimated by including the Events category.

Changes in the Environment Surrounding Consumers

- Growth of Social Media Advertising and Increasingly Personalized Advertising -

- Among internet advertising expenditure, spending on social media advertising has been increasing.
 - Expenditure by transaction method shows that “performance-based advertising” has been increasing, which uses platforms processing large volumes of data to automate or provide real-time support for optimizing advertising.
- As a result, traditional advertising methods that deliver the same information broadly to consumers has been replaced by approaches that provide personalized information tailored to each consumer's interests, characteristics, and other attributes.

Diagram 2-5: Trends in internet advertising expenditure, by media type

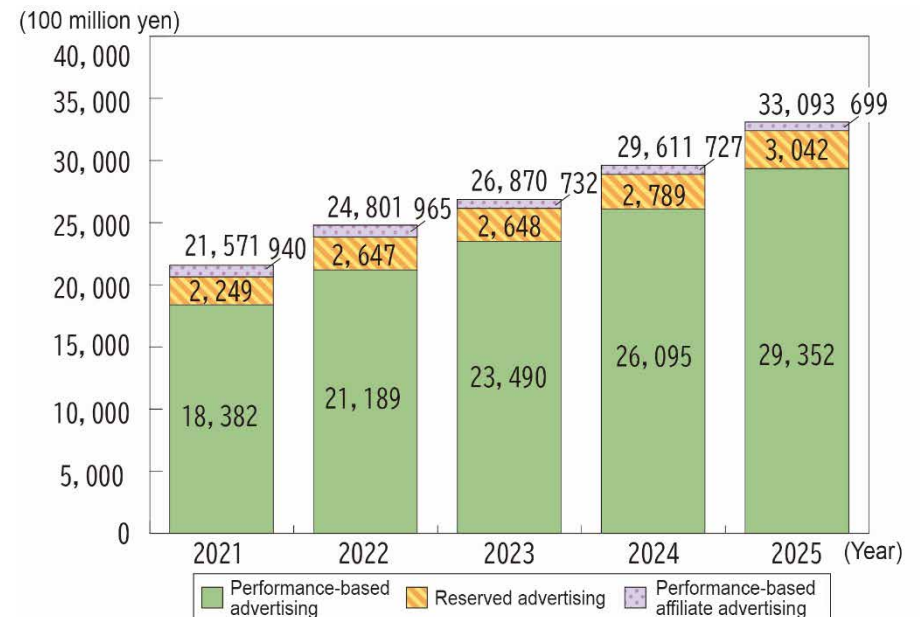


Internet advertising media expenditure: Expenditure on advertising displayed on websites and mobile apps.

Social media advertising: Advertising delivered through social media services, including social networking services (SNS), video-sharing sites, blogs, and similar platforms.

Note: Prepared based on Detailed Analysis of Internet Advertising Media Expenditure in Japan by Dentsu and companies within the Dentsu Group.

Diagram 2-6: Trends in internet advertising expenditure, by transaction method



Performance-based advertising: Advertising that uses platforms processing large volumes of data to automate or provide real-time support for optimizing advertising.

Reserved advertising: Advertising in which advertising space is purchased at a fixed price.

Performance-based affiliate advertising: Advertising in which compensation is paid based on results, such as completed applications or purchases.

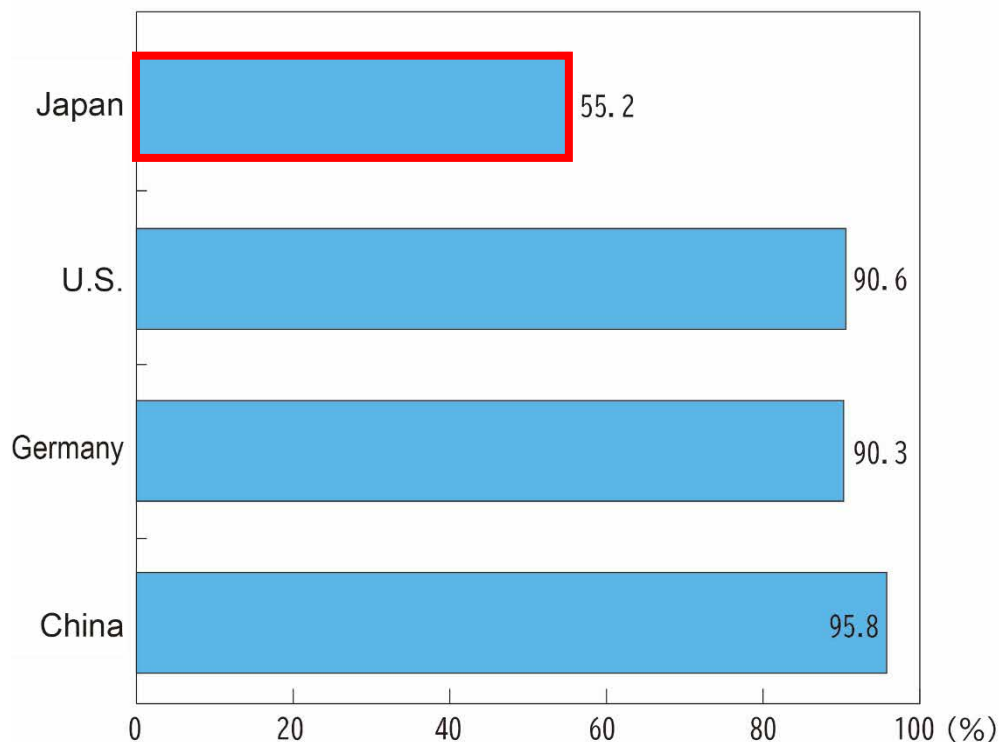
Note: Prepared based on Detailed Analysis of Internet Advertising Media Expenditure in Japan by Dentsu and companies within the Dentsu Group.

Changes in the Environment Surrounding Consumers

- Widespread Usage of AI -

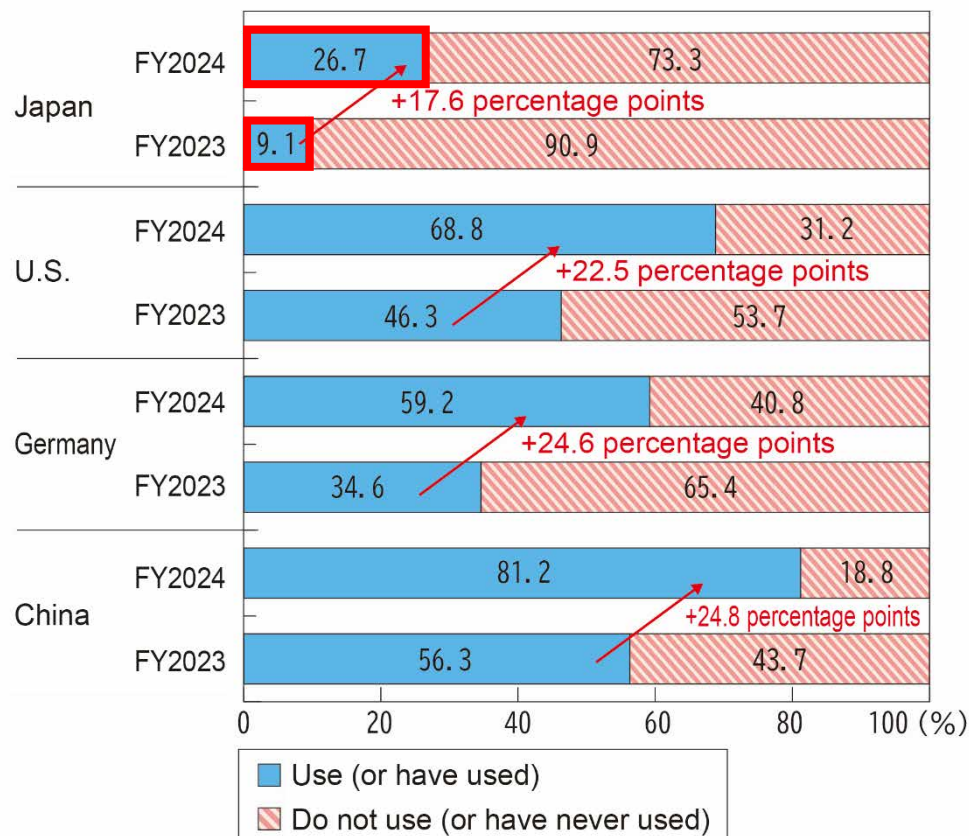
- The use of generative AI is expanding worldwide among both businesses and individuals. In Japan, although adoption rates remain lower than those in the United States, Germany, and China, more than half of businesses use generative AI in their operations, and approximately one in four individuals has used generative AI services.
- The adoption of generative AI in Japan is expected to continue increasing in the future.

Diagram 2-7: Business use of generative AI, by country (FY2024)



Note: Prepared based on the 2025 White Paper on Information and Communications published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Diagram 2-8: Experience using generative AI services among individuals, by country



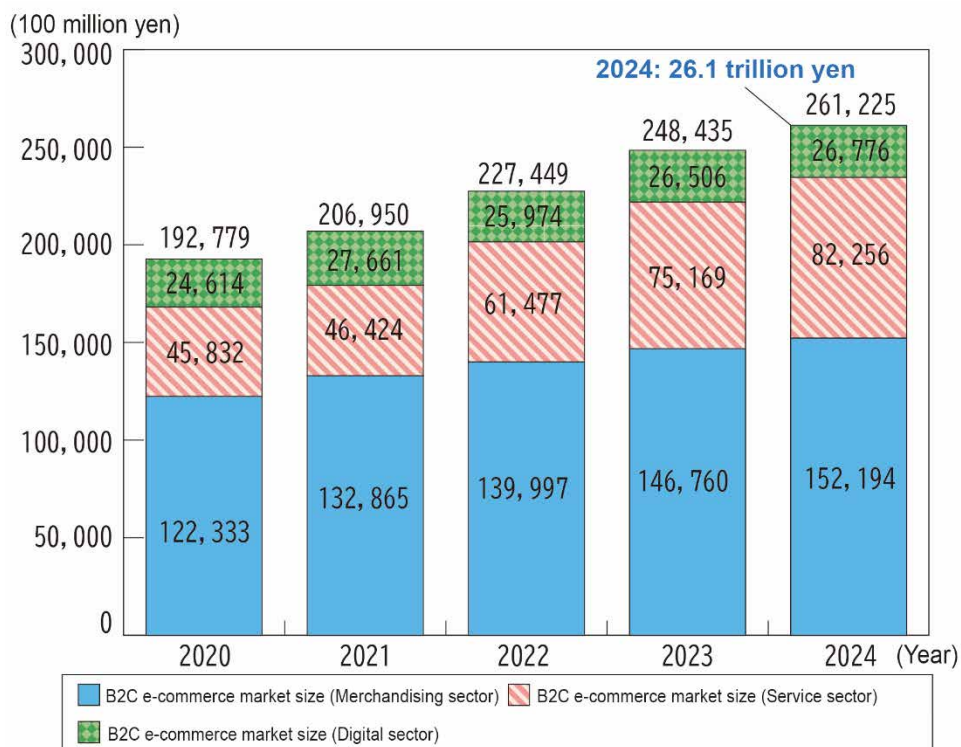
Note: Prepared based on the 2025 White Paper on Information and Communications published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Changes in the Environment Surrounding Consumers

- Expansion of Digital Commerce -

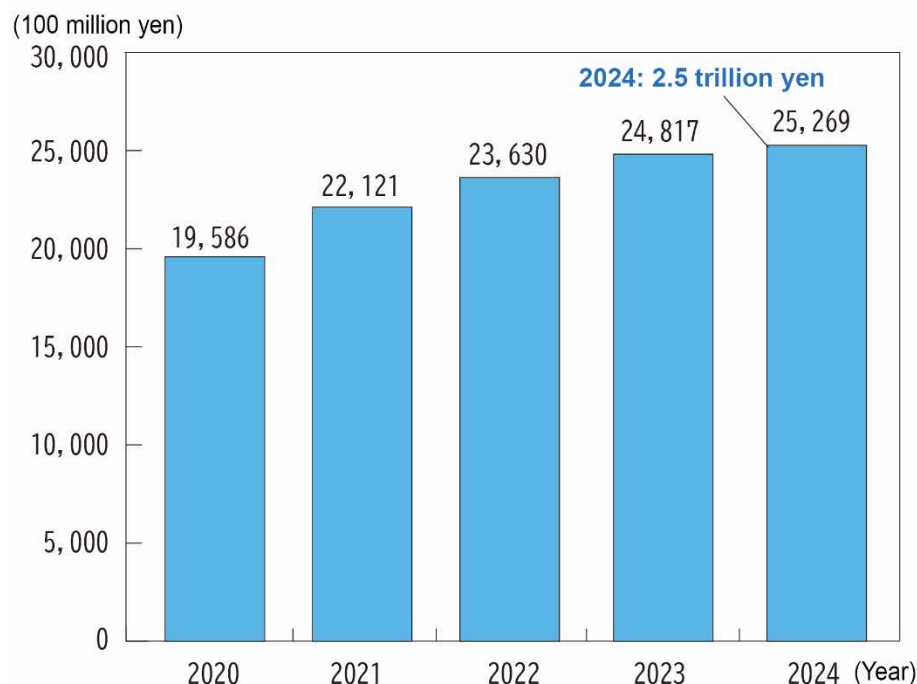
- Japan's business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce market reached 26.1 trillion yen in 2024, representing a 1.4-fold increase over the past five years.
By sector, the market expanded by 1.2 times for goods, 1.8 times for services, and 1.1 times for digital products.
- The market for consumer-to-consumer (C2C) transactions has also continued to grow, reaching 2.5 trillion yen in 2024.

Diagram 2-9: Trends in the size of Japan's B2C e-commerce market



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's E-commerce Market Survey.
 2. The Merchandising sector includes food, beverages and alcoholic drinks; household appliances, audio-visual equipment, personal computers and peripherals; and other goods. The Service sector includes travel services, eating and drinking services, ticket sales, and other services. The Digital sector includes electronic publications (e-books and e-magazines), paid music streaming, paid video streaming, online games, and other digital content.

Diagram 2-10: Trends in the size of Japan's C2C e-commerce market



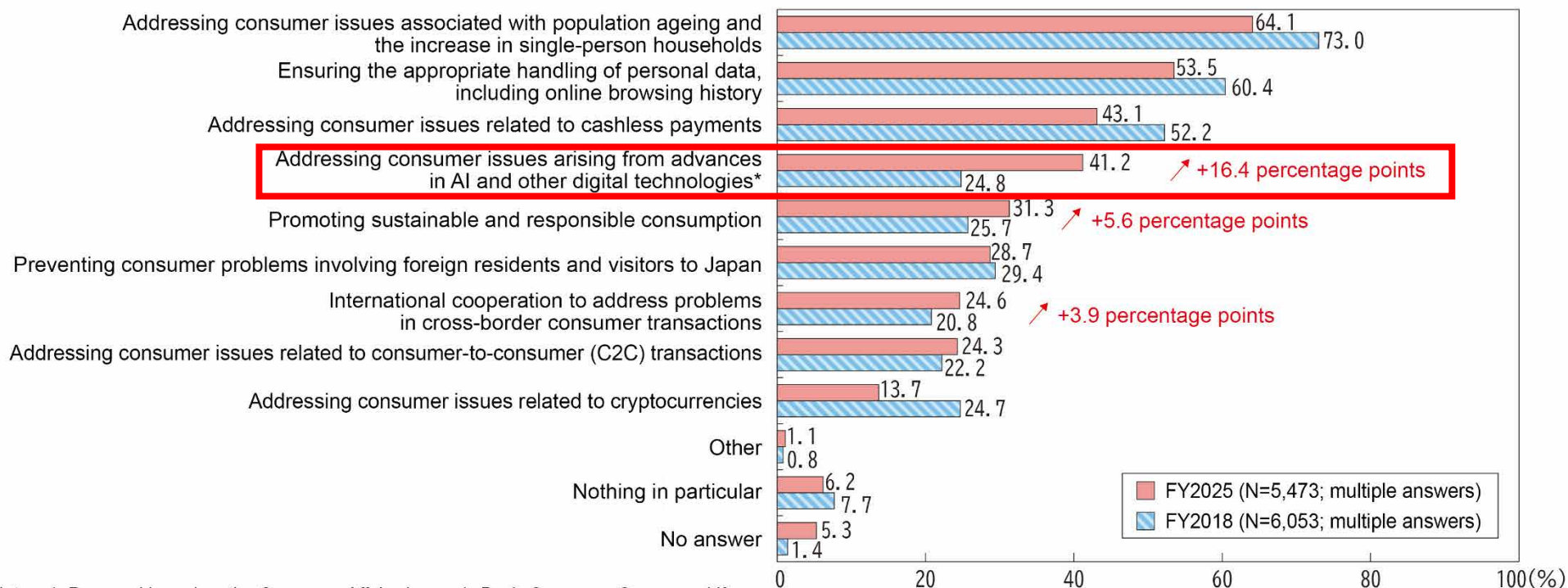
Note: Prepared based on the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's E-commerce Market Survey.

Changes in the Environment Surrounding Consumers

- Changing Consumer Perceptions of Key Consumer Policy Issues -

- Consumers were asked which consumer policy issues they considered particularly important to address. The largest proportion (64.1%) identified consumer issues associated with population aging and the increase in single-person households, followed by the appropriate handling of personal data on the internet (53.5%) and consumer issues related to cashless settlements (43.1%). However, the percentage of respondents selecting each of these issues declined compared with FY2018.
 - By contrast, the issues that saw the largest increases in perceived importance since FY2018 were addressing consumer issues arising from advances in digital technologies, including AI (artificial intelligence) and further digitalization (up 16.4 percentage points), realizing sustainable and responsible consumption (up 5.6 percentage points), and international cooperation to address problems arising from cross-border consumer transactions (up 3.9 percentage points).
- These findings indicate that, in recent years, the number of consumers who regard consumer issues associated with digitalization and advances in AI technology as particularly important has increased substantially.

Diagram 2-11: Consumer policy issues considered particularly important to address



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life.

2. * In FY2018, this item was worded as "Addressing consumer issues arising from technological innovation, including artificial intelligence and further advances in information technology."

Changes in Consumer Transactions, Consumer Attitudes, and Consumer Troubles Resulting from Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

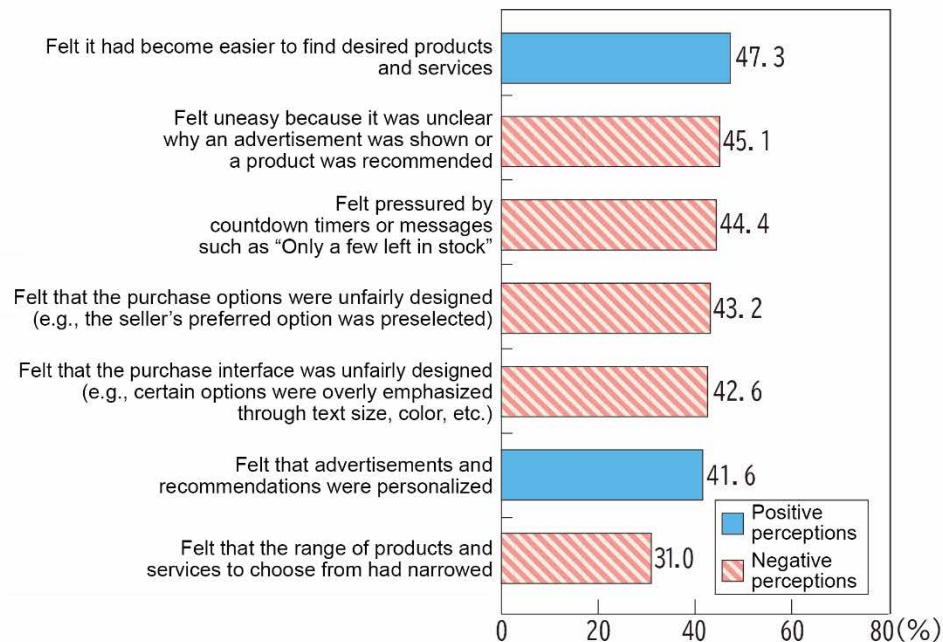
(1) Diversification of Business Sales Practices (Mechanisms That Steer Consumers Toward Unintended Actions)

Digital transactions incorporate mechanisms that may steer consumers toward actions they did not intend to take.

- While many consumers find online advertisements and displays convenient, a comparable proportion feel uneasy or consider such practices unfair.
- Among consumers who have subscribed to online subscription services, approximately one in five has experienced problems when attempting to cancel a subscription.
- More than 40% of those who encountered cancellation problems reported difficulties such as being unable to locate the cancellation page or finding the cancellation process overly complicated.

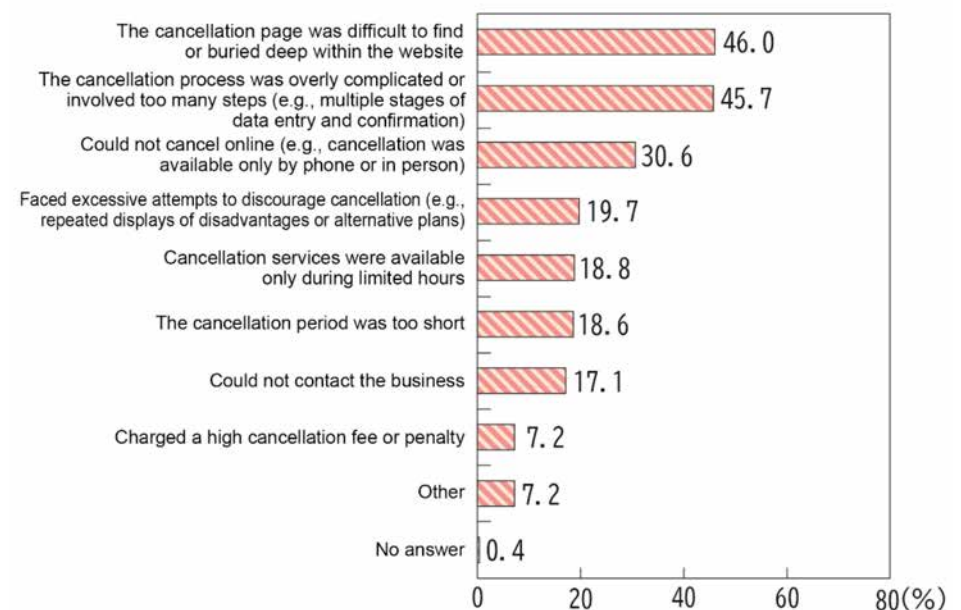
→ **These findings indicate that, while consumers appreciate the convenience of online advertisements and displays, a substantial number also experience feelings of unease or unfairness or have encountered obstacles when attempting to cancel subscriptions.**

Diagram 2-12: Consumers' views and impressions of online advertisements and displays



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
 2. Percentages are based on respondents who answered "Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree" on the four-point scale.
 3. N=3,569

Diagram 2-13: Types of cancellation problems encountered in subscription contracts



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
 2. Percentages are based on respondents who had purchased or applied for products or services online during the past year and had experienced cancellation problems with a subscription contract. Multiple responses were allowed.
 3. N=457

Changes in Consumer Transactions, Consumer Attitudes, and Consumer Troubles Resulting from Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

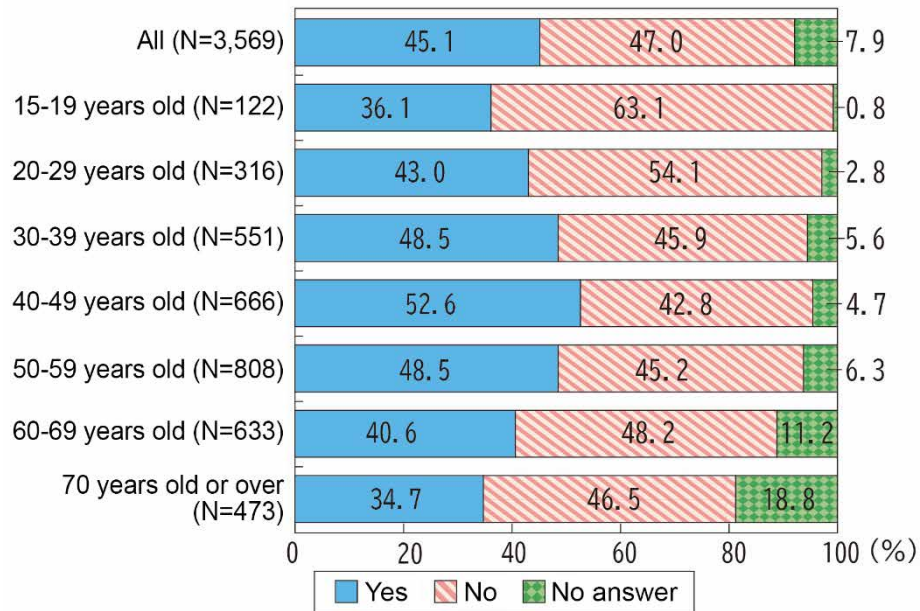
(1) Diversification of Business Sales Practices (Mechanisms That Steer Consumers Toward Unintended Actions)

Some products sold by internet shopping are accompanied by unclear information on return policies, while others are subject to restrictive return conditions.

- Approximately half of consumers who purchase products online have, at some point, wanted to return an item.
- Although more than half of those consumers were able to return the item under the conditions they had expected, some respondents reported that the actual return conditions differed from what they had anticipated or were so restrictive that they were unable to return the item.

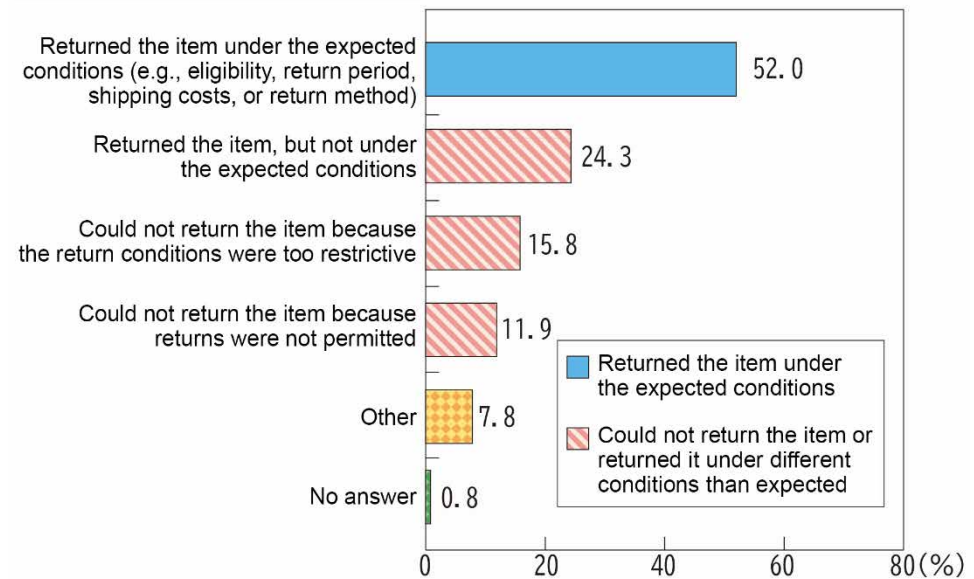
→ These findings indicate that, while about half of consumers who wished to return products purchased online were able to do so as intended, a substantial number experienced difficulties due to return procedures or return conditions.

Diagram 2-14: Consumers who have tried to return products purchased online, by age group



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
2. Responses to the question: "Have you ever wanted to return a product or other item purchased online?"
3. The base comprises respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "Have you purchased or applied for products or services online during the past year?"

Diagram 2-15: Outcomes of attempts to return products purchased online



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
2. The base comprises respondents who answered "Yes" to the question, "Have you purchased or applied for products or services online during the past year?", and who also answered "Yes" to the question, "Have you ever wanted to return a product or other item purchased online?"
3. N=1,610

Changes in Consumer Transactions, Consumer Attitudes, and Consumer Troubles Resulting from Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

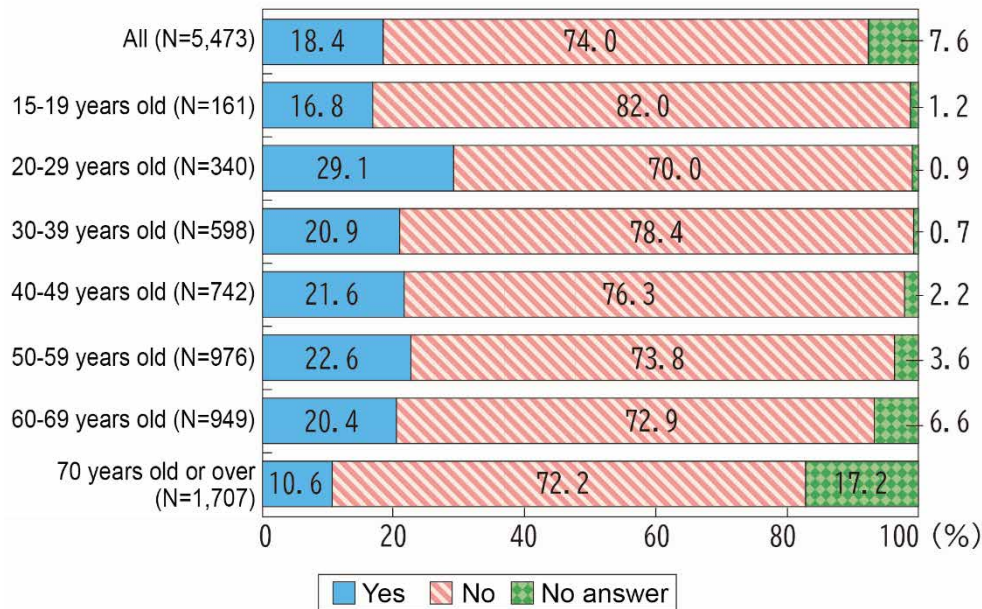
(1) Diversification of Business Sales Practices (Diversification of Solicitation Practices in the Digital Space)

With the widespread use of social media, businesses have increased opportunities to promote goods and services through social media platforms.

- Approximately one in five respondents reported having received a sales solicitation via social media chat during the past year.
- Among those respondents, around 70% felt that the solicitation was unexpected, about 40% felt that it was persistent, and more than 20% reported that it involved false or misleading explanations, an intimidating manner, or an unclear sales purpose.

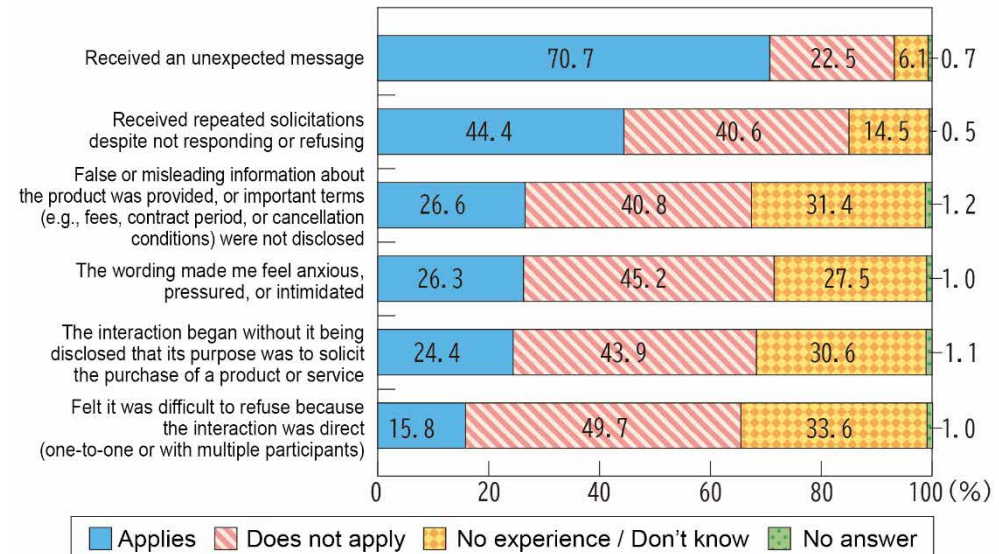
→ These findings indicate that many consumers who receive sales solicitations through social media chat perceive them as unexpected or persistent.

Diagram 2-16: Consumers who have received sales solicitations via social media chat during the past year, by age group



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
2. Responses to the question: "During the past year, have you ever received a sales solicitation to purchase or apply for a product or service via social media chat (direct messages or other messaging services)?"

Diagram 2-17: Content of and consumer perceptions of the most recent sales solicitation received via social media chat



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
2. "Applies" represents the combined percentage of respondents who answered "Strongly applies" or "Somewhat applies" on the four-point scale. "Does not apply" represents the combined percentage of those who answered "Does not really apply" or "Hardly applies/Does not apply at all" on the four-point scale.
3. The base comprises respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "During the past year, have you ever been solicited via social media chat (direct messages or other messaging services) to purchase or apply for a product or service?"
4. N=1,007

Changes in Consumer Transactions, Consumer Attitudes, and Consumer Troubles Resulting from Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

(2) Personalized Information and Consumers' Use of AI (Tailored Information for Individual Consumers)

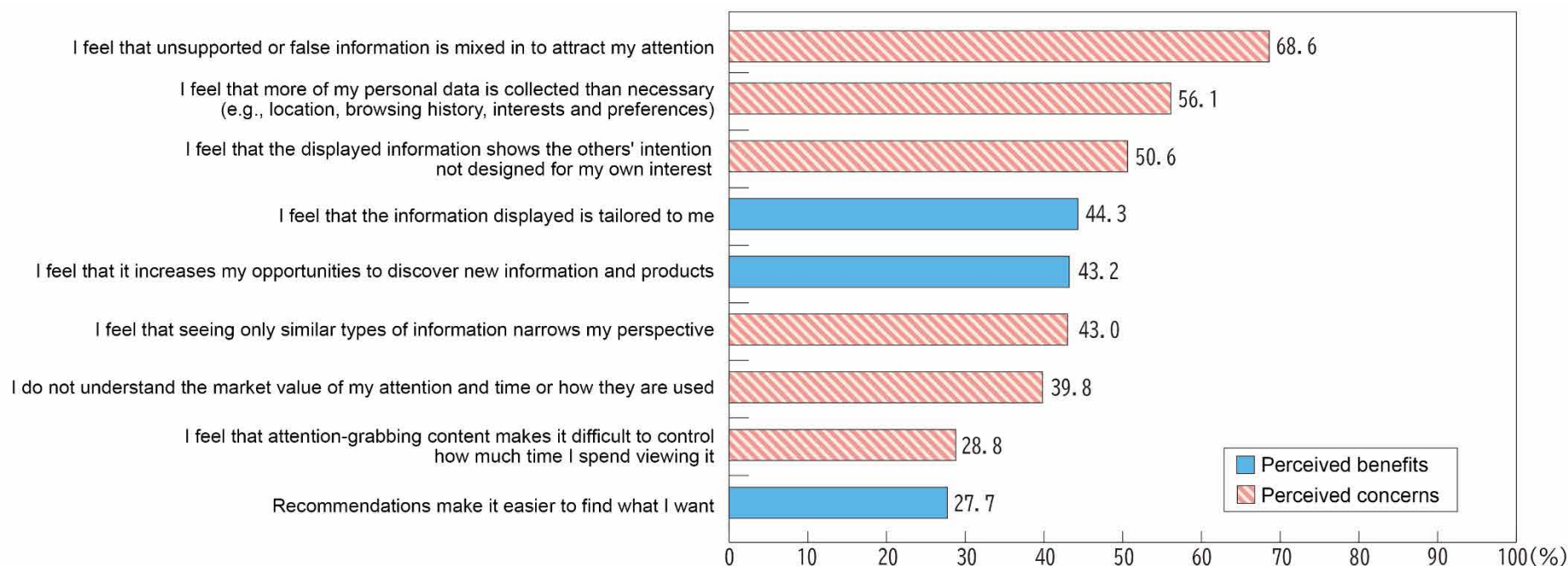
Consumer profiling based on personal data is enabling information to be tailored to individual consumers.

- Around 40% of respondents reported finding personalized information displayed online to be convenient.
- At the same time, more than half expressed concerns that such information may include content of uncertain reliability, may be presented to serve the interests of others, or may involve the excessive collection of personal data.

→ **These findings indicate that, while personalized information offers greater convenience for consumers, it also gives rise to a variety of concerns.**

→ **In addition, it is pointed out that advances in AI technology in recent years have made it possible to provide even more highly personalized information.**

Diagram 2-18: Consumer perceptions of personalized information displayed online



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).

2. Responses are shown in descending order of the percentage of respondents who answered "Strongly applies" or "Somewhat applies" to the following question on the four-point scale: "On the internet, information tailored to you and 'recommended' content are often displayed. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements applies to you."

3. N=5,473

Changes in Consumer Transactions, Consumer Attitudes, and Consumer Troubles Resulting from Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

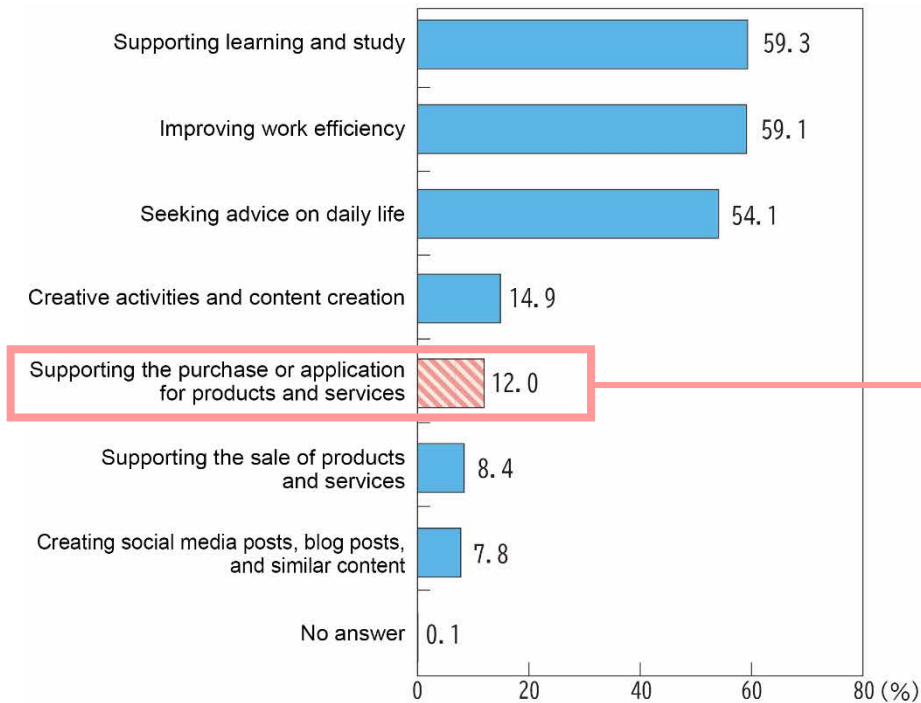
(2) Personalized Information and Consumers' Use of AI

The use of AI by consumers is increasing, with approximately one in four consumers using AI.

- Around one in ten consumers use AI to support their purchase or application for products and services.
- However, the use of AI for preventing consumer problems, such as assessing the reliability of advertisements, remains limited.

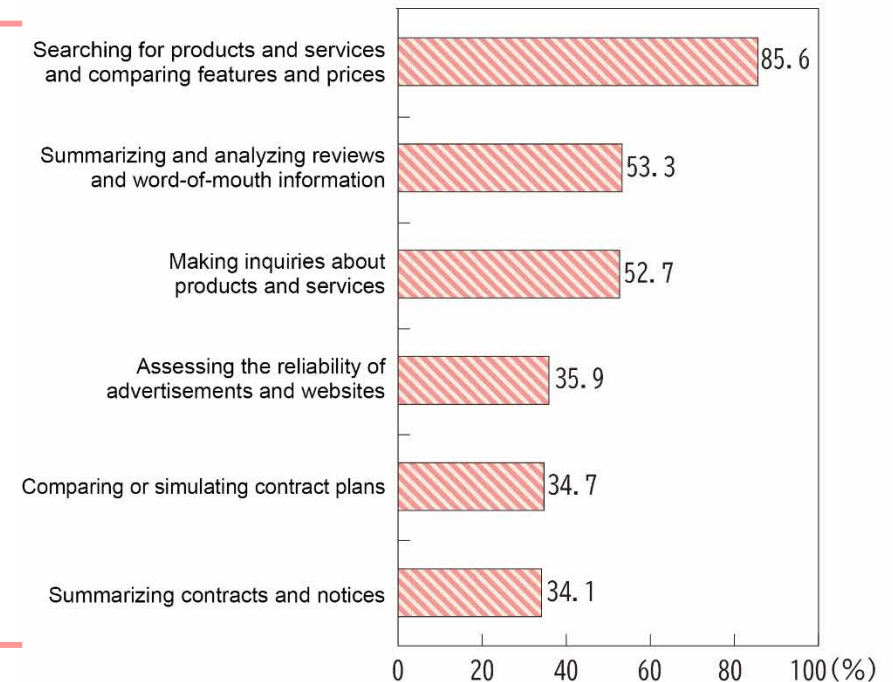
→ These findings suggest that, although AI has the potential to help prevent consumer problems before they occur, its use for this purpose remains limited.

Diagram 2-19: Uses of AI



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
 2. Activities are shown in descending order of the percentage of respondents who selected each option in response to the question: "In what situations do you use AI?" Multiple responses were allowed.
 3. The base comprises respondents who answered "Frequently" or "Sometimes" to the question: "How often do you use AI (artificial intelligence), including generative AI?"
 4. N=1,392

Diagram 2-20: AI functions used when purchasing or applying for products and services



Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
 2. Among respondents who reported using AI ("Frequently" or "Sometimes") and who also indicated that they use AI to support the purchase or application for products and services (N = 167), activities are shown in descending order of the percentage of respondents who answered "Always use" or "Sometimes use." Multiple responses were allowed.

Changes in Consumer Transactions, Consumer Attitudes, and Consumer Troubles Resulting from Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

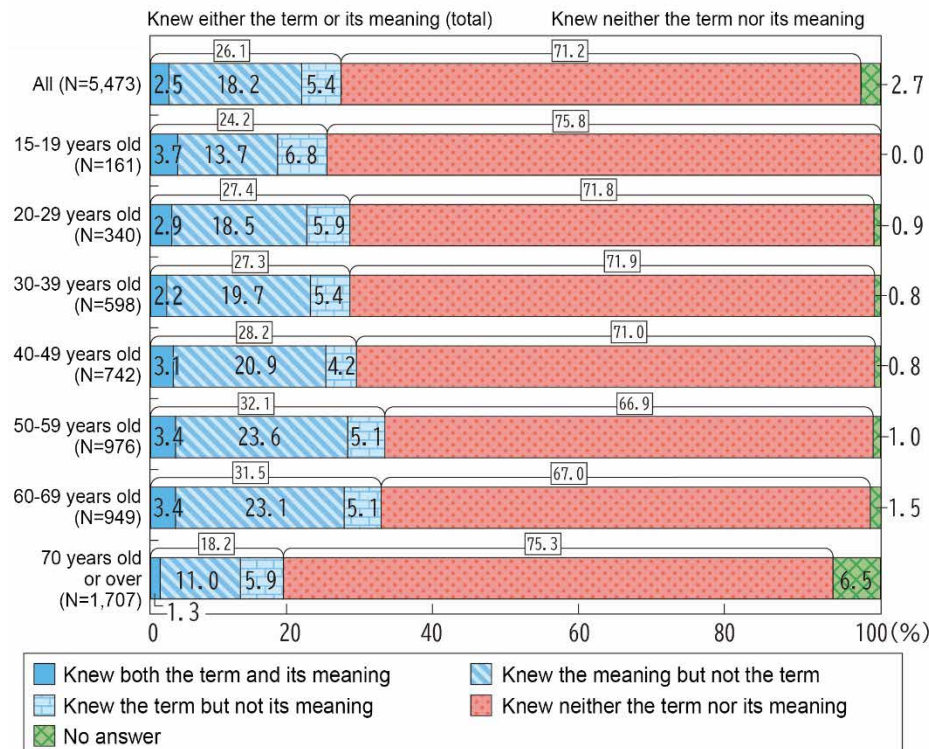
(3) Changes in How Consumers Engage with the Marketplace (Consumers as Providers of Time and Attention)

With the widespread use of the internet and other digital technologies, consumers now pay businesses not only money but also their time and attention. The system in which consumers' time and attention have economic value and are traded is known as the attention economy.

- Around 70% of respondents were unfamiliar with both the term “attention economy” and its meaning.
- Approximately 40% reported that they did not fully understand the market value of their attention and time or how those resources are used.

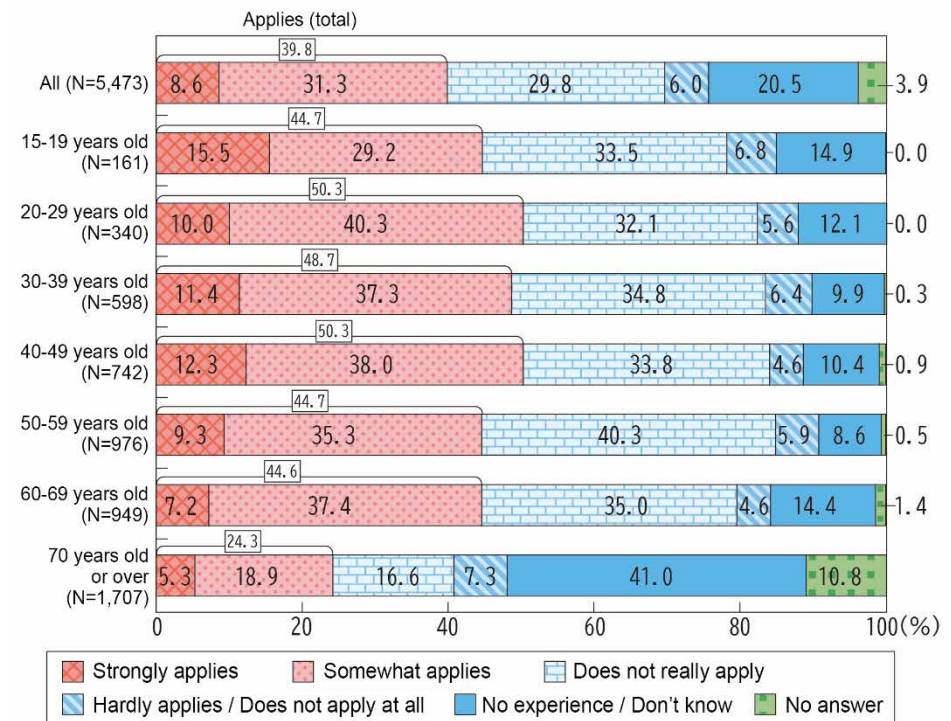
→ These findings suggest that consumers may be using a wide range of services without fully understanding the value of their attention and time.

Diagram 2-21: Awareness of the attention economy, by age group



Note: Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).

Diagram 2-22: Respondents who feel they do not understand the market value and use of their attention and time, by age group



Note: Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).

Changes in Consumer Transactions, Consumer Attitudes, and Consumer Troubles Resulting from Digitalization and Advances in AI Technology

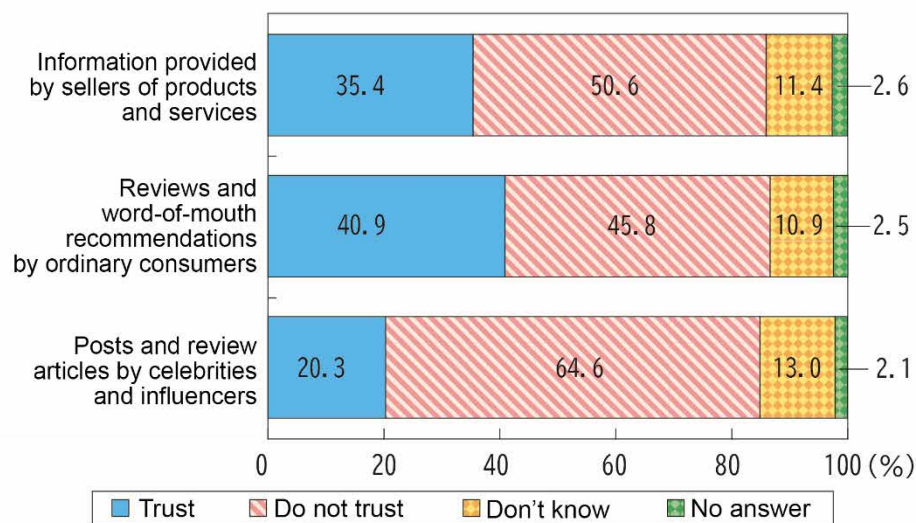
(3) Changes in How Consumers Engage with the Marketplace (The Growing Role of Consumers as Information Providers)

With the widespread use of social media, not only businesses but also individuals can now share product reviews, recommendations, and other information.

- Information shared by ordinary consumers, such as reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations, tends to be regarded as more trustworthy than information provided by sellers.
- Overall, around 20% of respondents reported trusting posts by celebrities and influencers, although the level of trust was higher among younger age groups.

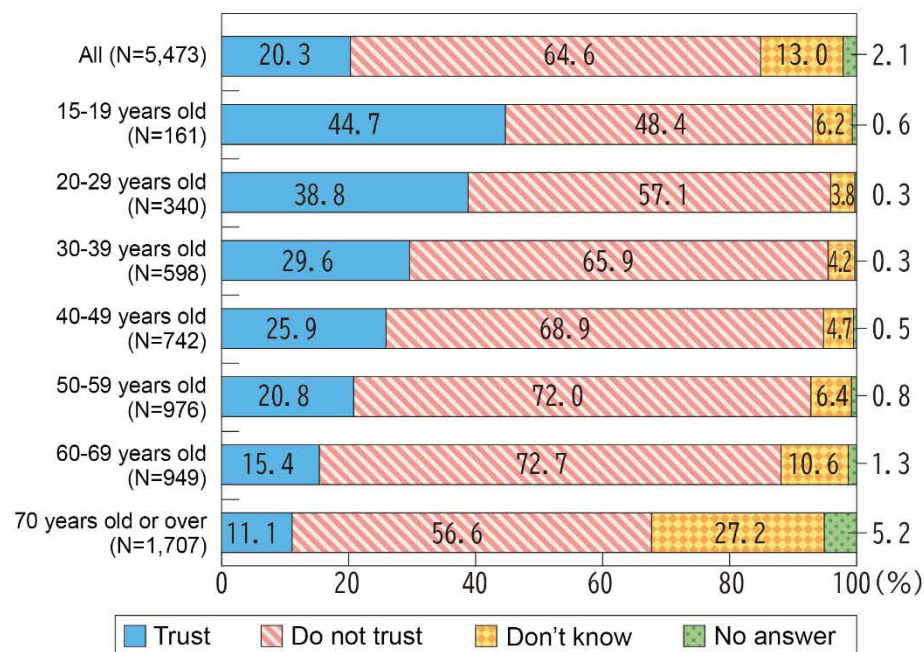
→ These findings suggest that, as it becomes easier for individuals to share information, consumers need to pay close attention to the source of information and the evidence on which it is based.

Diagram 2-23: Trust in information provided by third parties and businesses



- Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
 2. Responses to the question: "To what extent do you trust the following sources of information: posts and review articles by celebrities and influencers; information shared by third parties, such as reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations by ordinary consumers; and information provided by sellers of products and services?"
 3. "Trust" represents the combined percentage of respondents who answered "Trust completely" or "Trust to some extent" on the four-point scale. "Do not trust" represents the combined percentage of those who answered "Do not really trust" or "Hardly trust/Do not trust at all."
 4. N=5,473

Diagram 2-24: Trust in posts by celebrities and influencers, by age group



- Notes: 1. Prepared based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's Basic Survey on Consumer Life (FY2025).
 2. Responses to the question: "To what extent do you trust the following sources of information: posts and review articles by celebrities and influencers; information shared by third parties, such as reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations by ordinary consumers; and information provided by sellers of products and services?"

Part 2

Implementation of Consumer Policies

Implementation of Consumer Policies

- Pursuant to the provisions of the Basic Act on Consumer Policies, this report summarizes the implementation of the Government's consumer policies in FY2025.
- Specifically, in accordance with the 5th Basic Plan for Consumer Policy, it describes the consumer policy initiatives and achievements across its various areas, including legislative and regulatory reforms, enforcement activities under relevant laws, and consumer awareness-raising and education initiatives.

Section 1: Enhance Local Consumer Administration

- Support for local governments to enhance and strengthen local consumer administration, and other initiatives
- Establishment of community Watch-over Networks
- and other related initiatives

Section 2: Response to Current Issues in Consumer Lives

1. Addressing breakthroughs in digital technology

Promoting the use of digital technologies while preventing consumer harm, and other related initiatives

2. Addressing the progress of globalization in consumers' lives

Addressing problems arising from the increase in cross-border transactions, ensuring opportunities for consumers to make independent and rational choices, and other related initiatives

3. Addressing changes in social structures

Supporting consumers requiring special consideration, and other related initiatives

4. Addressing ways to contribute to realizing a better society and further international cooperation

- Promotion of consumer education
- Ethical consumption and consumer-oriented management
- Reduction of food loss and waste
- and other related initiatives

5. Addressing changes in consumer behavior when emergencies occur

Addressing opportunistic practices during disasters, and related initiatives

Section 3: Ensuring Consumer Safety and Opportunities for Independent and Rational Choices

1. Ensuring consumer safety

- Ensuring the safety and security of consumers
- Securing children's safety
- Ensuring food safety and hygiene

2. Ensuring consumers' opportunities for self-reliance and rational choice-making

- Combating fraudulent schemes
- Strengthening responses to food labelling issues
- and related initiatives

3. Preventing harm to consumers and providing redress

- Promoting greater use of the consumer organization collective litigation system
- Enhancing frameworks for dispute resolution

Section 4: Collaboration between Diverse Actors to Implement Consumer Policies