



## **SmartNews Survey: Over 60% in Japan Cite Mass Media as the "Most Frequently Used" Source for Political and Election News**

**TOKYO, JAPAN (June 10, 2025)** – SmartNews Media Research Institute (Director: Takeshi Yamawaki), an in-house think tank of SmartNews Inc. (Location: Shibuya-ku, Tokyo; CEO: Kaisei Hamamoto), whose mission is to deliver the world's quality information to the people who need it, has released the results of its "SmartNews, Media, Politics, and Public Opinion Survey" (SMPP Survey), which provides an overview of political and social divisions in Japan and how people interact with the media.

The SMPP survey is conducted every two years, and this is the second time the survey has been conducted, following the first in 2023. This survey was conducted by mail and was sent out on January 16, 2025, with valid responses collected by March 5, 2025.

Analysis of this survey, which has more than 60 questions, continues to be conducted by study group members (For the full list of the study group members, please see at the end of this press release). Additional results will continue to be released.

### **Key Highlights from the SMPP Survey 2025**

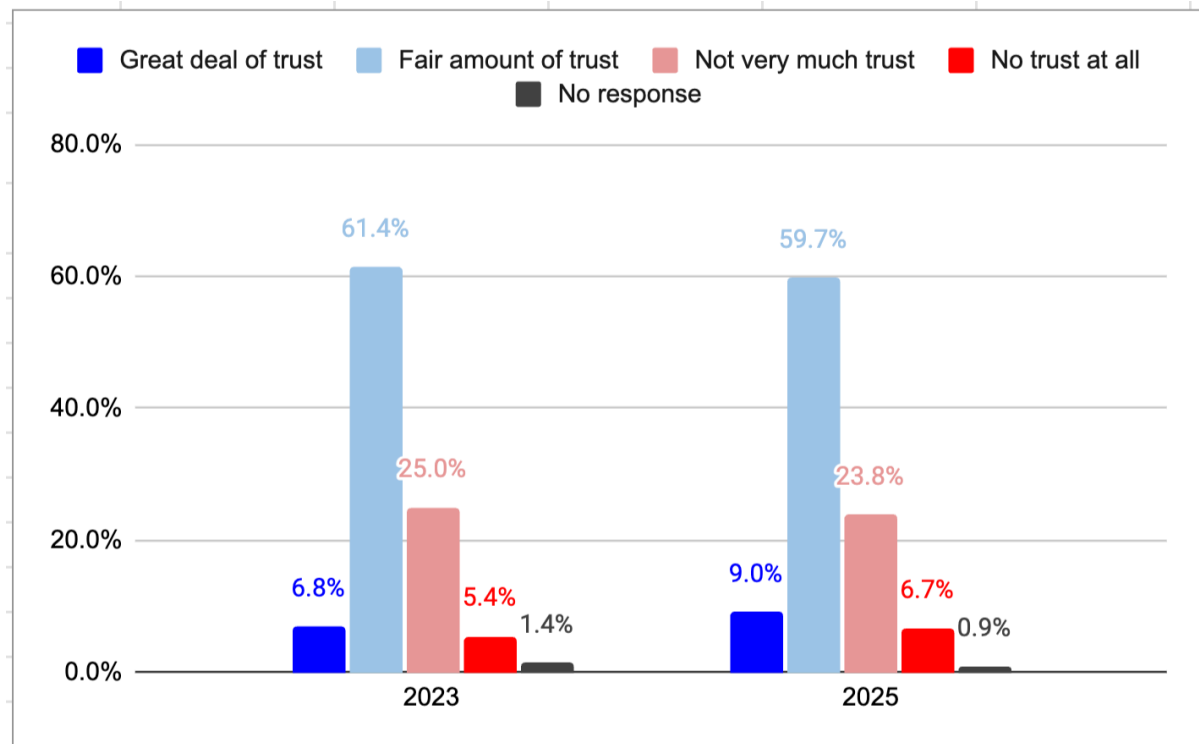
- The "trust in mass media" remained largely unchanged from the previous survey in 2023.
- Television (46.5%) was the "most used" method of obtaining election and political news, while social media (SNS, YouTube and other video posting sites, etc.) was used by 10.9% of respondents.
- With regard to the consumption tax, support for tax reduction has increased significantly since 2023, and those supporting the current tax rate (10% tax rate) or a tax hike fell below half (from 54.5% in the previous survey).
- In terms of favorability of political parties, the Democratic Party for the People (DPFP) increased significantly. However, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is well ahead of other parties, including the DPFP, with more than 40% of the respondents regarding perceived governing competence.

### **Trust in Mass Media**

The survey found 68.7% of respondents indicated they trust mass media such as television, newspapers, and radio (great deal + fair amount). In the previous survey (2023), the percentage was 68.2%.

Although the survey was conducted after public criticism of the mass media surrounding the 2024 Tokyo and Hyogo gubernatorial election, and scandals involving Japanese TV station employees allegedly involved in a dispute between a prominent celebrity and a woman, the level of trust in the mass media remained largely unchanged.

## Trust in mass media (SMPP 2023/2025)



Question: "How much trust and confidence do you have in the following media, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?" A) Mass media, such as newspapers, television, and radio \*Rounded to two decimal places

Kenichi Ikeda, professor at Doshisha University (co-chair of the study group) said:

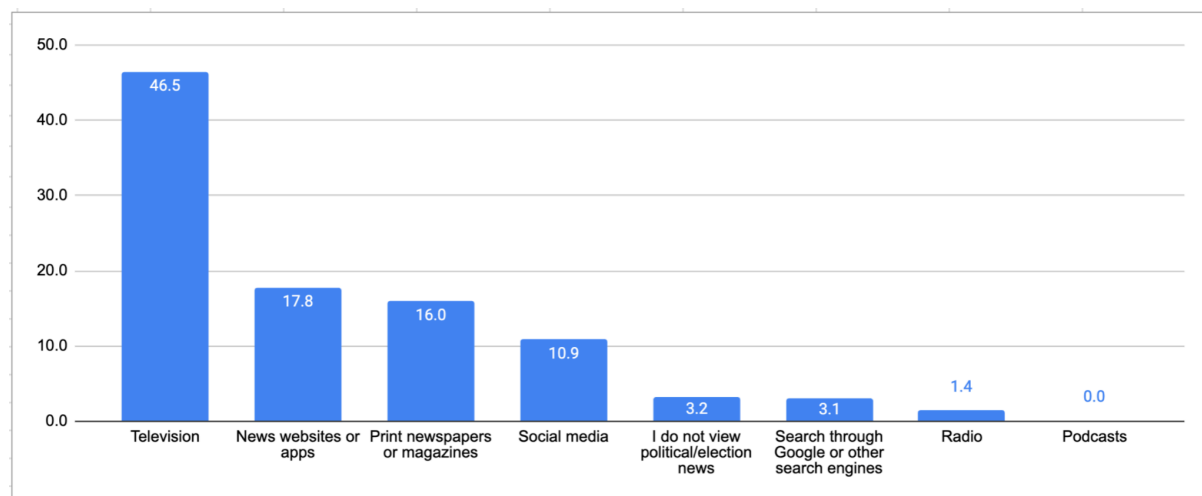
"In the United States, it is pointed out that the decline in trust in the mass media among conservatives is partly led by the increase in partisan broadcasting after the abolition of the fairness doctrine in the 1980s which deepened the conflict between liberal and conservative media, as well as Trump's broad attacks on the mass media in the 2016 election."

"On the other hand, Japan has not experienced intense criticism of the mass media. Although there has been criticism of the mass media over the Fuji TV issue and gubernatorial elections in 2024 and 2025, at this point, the majority of people do not think of it in terms of trust in the mass media as a whole, and this may contribute to the continued high level of trust in the mass media."

## Most Used Media for Political and Election News

Survey results showed 46.5% of respondents answered television as the most often used media or means to get news about elections and politics. This was followed by Internet news sites/news apps at 17.8% and (paper) newspapers/magazines at 16.0%. 63.9% of respondents selected mass media (TV, newspapers/magazines, and radio combined), while 10.9% selected social media.

## Most Used Media for Political and Election News



Question: "What is the media or means you most often use to get news about elections and politics? Please select only one."  
(Others and no answers are omitted from the chart) \*Rounded to two decimal places.

Atsuo Fujimura, Fellow, SmartNews Media Research Institute (study group member) said:

"Given the critical importance of breaking news in election and political coverage, it's quite natural that television remains a heavily used medium today. The fact that internet news sites and news apps have surpassed print newspapers and magazines is also unsurprising, considering that much of the content on these online platforms originates from traditional mass media sources."

"What's particularly noteworthy, however, is that social media – including social networking services and video-sharing platforms like YouTube – accounted for over 10% of election and political news consumption. While we need more detailed analysis, it's possible that certain demographic groups are rapidly shifting toward social media for political news, potentially far beyond that 10% threshold when broken down by age and media consumption patterns."

## Consumption Tax

The issue of consumption tax is a major focus of the upcoming Upper House election. In the previous survey (2023), 54.5% of respondents answered "maintain the consumption tax rate" or "support a consumption tax hike," but in the current survey (2025), it dropped below 40%, at 39.4%. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents who favor consumption tax reduction or repeal went from 40.4% to 54.1%. By age group, those in their 30s were the most likely to favor consumption tax cuts or repeal, at 60.2%.

By party affiliation, supporters of the Reiwa Shinsengumi (87.5%) and the DPFP (65.9%) were the most likely to support a reduction or repeal of the consumption tax. On the other hand, supporters of the LDP were the most likely to maintain or increase the consumption tax (57.2%).

#### Stance on consumption tax rate (SMPP 2023/2025)

	2023	2025	difference
Should be raised above 10%	5.1	2.6	-2.5
Should remain at 10%	49.4	36.8	-12.6
Should be lowered below 10%	27.3	37.2	9.9
Should be abolished	13.0	16.9	3.9
Not sure	4.8	5.6	0.8
No response	0.3	0.9	0.5
N	1902	2117	

Question: "What are your thoughts on the future consumption tax rate? Please select only one. "

\*Rounded to two decimal places.

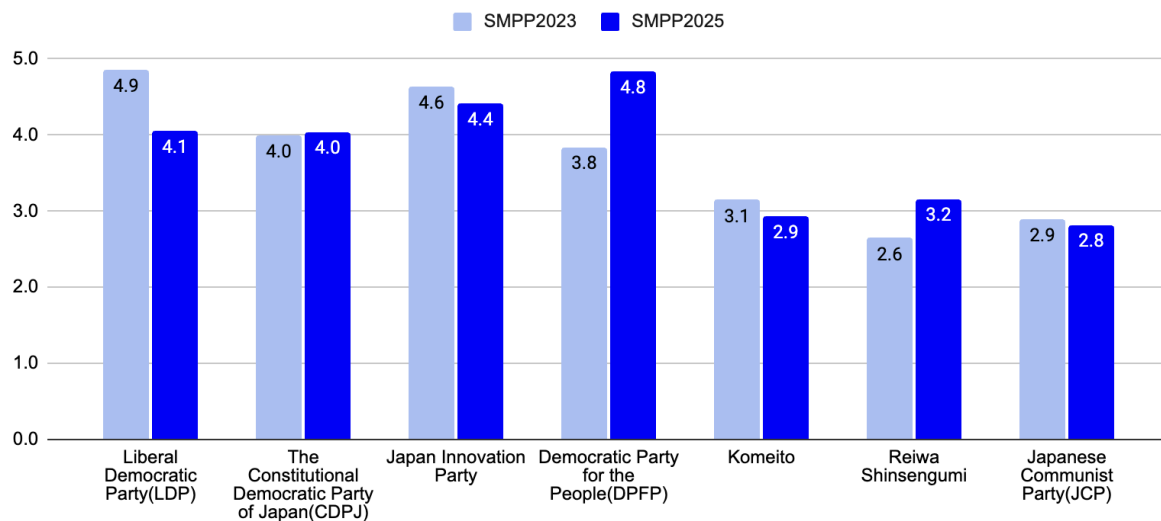
Masahisa Endo, Professor at Waseda University (study group member) said:

"In addition to the issue of a political funding scandal, the defeat of the LDP in the 2024 general election is believed to have been caused by economic hardships such as high prices. Even after that, as more and more people felt that their lives were being strained by the high cost of living, the consumption tax cut became a major political issue, and our survey revealed that the majority of voters demanded a cut in the consumption tax."

#### **Favorability and Perceived Governing Competence of Political Parties**

The survey asked the respondents about their favorability of each political party. The respondents were asked to rate their favorability on an 11-point scale from 0 (very much dislike) to 10 (very much like) (5 being in the middle), and the trend of the respondents' average showed that the favorability of the LDP has declined 0.8 points since the last survey in 2023. The two parties that saw significant increases in favorability were the DPFP (up 1.0 point) and the Reiwa Shinsengumi (up 0.6 point).

## Favorability of political parties (SMPP 2023/2025)



Question: "What is your opinion of the political parties listed below? 0 in this list is "Absolutely Unfavorable" and 10 is "Extremely Favorable." Please rate your favorability by selecting one for each." \*Rounded to two decimal places.

We also asked about views of each party's governing competence. (Asked to select a party with governing competence. Multiple answers allowed.) The percentage of respondents who chose the LDP decreased by 14 points from the previous survey, while the percentage of those who chose the DPFP and the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ) increased by 10 and 5 points, respectively. Those who believe that the LDP has governing competence remain far ahead of the other parties at over 40%, followed by the CDPJ (18.1%), the DPFP (14.4%), and the Japan Innovation Party (12.1%).

## Assessment of each party's governing competence (SMPP 2023/2025)

	2023	2025	Difference
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)	57.6%	43.3%	-14.3
The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ)	13.1%	18.1%	5.0
Japan Innovation Party	13.0%	12.1%	-0.9
Democratic Party for the People (DPFP)	4.2%	14.4%	10.2
Komeito	5.3%	4.5%	-0.7
Reiwa Shinsengumi		5.1%	—
Japanese Communist Party (JCP)	2.1%	2.5%	0.4
Total respondents	1901	2117	

Question: "Which party do you think has governing competence? Please list all of the parties that you think have governing competence." \*Rounded to two decimal places. \*Responses such as none in the list, do not know, do not want to answer, and no responses are omitted from the chart.

Yukio Maeda, professor at University of Tokyo (co-chair of the study group), said:

"The LDP's image seems to have been severely tarnished by the continuing media coverage of the former Abe faction's slush fund problem. One would have expected Prime Minister Ishiba to dispel the bad image, but the LDP's image has not improved, as evidenced by the fact that the LDP's seats in the lower house election were reduced significantly from before the election.

"On the other hand, the favorability rating of the DPFP increased because it succeeded in raising voters' expectations by setting an easy-to-understand policy goal of 'increasing take-home pay' in a difficult economic situation. However, it appears that favorability does not directly link to perceived governing ability. Although the LDP's rating of its perceived governing competence has dropped 14 points, it is still considerably higher than the other parties. Voters appear to be calmly evaluating each party's capabilities, recalling past performance."

### **Schedule for Future Announcements**

The next release of survey data, covering "News Avoidance Trends" and other topics is scheduled on June 26. Further release dates have not yet been determined at this stage.

#### **■ SmartNews, Media, Politics, and Public Opinion Survey 2025 - Survey Overview**

Survey period: January - March 2025

Survey Conducted by: Nippon Research Center, Ltd.

Method: Mail survey to voters aged 18-79

Mail survey: A stratified sampling based on region, gender, and age was conducted from registered respondents of the Trust Panel managed by the Nippon Research Center, targeting men and women aged 18 to 79 residing in Japan, using the population of the 2020 Census as a reference.

4,460 mailed; 2,117 responses (47.5% response rate)

Envelopes containing the survey were sent out on January 16, and responses received by March 5 were considered valid.

At the same time, a follow-up survey was conducted among respondents to SMPP 2023 (conducted in March 2023), targeting men and women aged 18-79, but the results presented here are only for the newly eligible respondents.

#### **■ SmartNews, Media, Politics, and Public Opinion Survey 2025 - Study Group**

##### **Members**

Co-Chairs:

Kenichi Ikeda, Professor, Graduate School of Media Studies, Faculty of Social Studies, Doshisha University

Yukio Maeda, Professor, Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, The University of Tokyo

Members:

Masahisa Endo, Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Waseda University

Shoko Omori, Associate Professor, Department of Media and Society, Faculty of Social Sciences, Hosei University

Fumiaki Kubo President, National Defense Academy of Japan

Tetsuro Kobayashi, Professor, School of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University

Kazutoshi Sasahara, Professor, Department of Innovation Science, School of Environmental and Society, Institute of Science Tokyo

Emi Nagasawa, Researcher, SmartNews Media Research Institute

Atsuo Fujimura, Fellow, SmartNews Media Research Institute

Takeshi Yamawaki, Director, SmartNews Media Research Institute

#### ■ About SmartNews Media Research Institute

SmartNews Media Research Institute was established in 2018. We conduct research, media literacy education, and public opinion surveys mainly on topics such as what an ideal form of news and media should be to benefit people and society.

<https://smartnews-smri.com/about/>

For more information on the findings and analysis of the SMPP Survey 2023, please refer to "Where is Japan's Divide: An Examination from the SmartNews / News, Media, Politics, and Public Opinion Survey," published by Keiso Shobo.

#### ■ About SmartNews, Inc.

Founded in 2012, SmartNews is a leading global information and news discovery company, dedicated to delivering quality information to the people who need it. SmartNews provides news that matters to millions of readers using powerful AI discovery, a team of award-winning journalists offering thoughtful curation, and deep partnerships with more than 3,000 trusted global publisher partners.

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