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School reform to enhance the well-being of children and teachers:
Perspectives and initiatives regarding "well-being" in education policy

Challenges and Future Directions in Japanese School Education: A Teacher Well-Being Perspective

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Teachers' well-being shaping educational and learning environments in schools

The reported association between teachers' well-being and student well-being

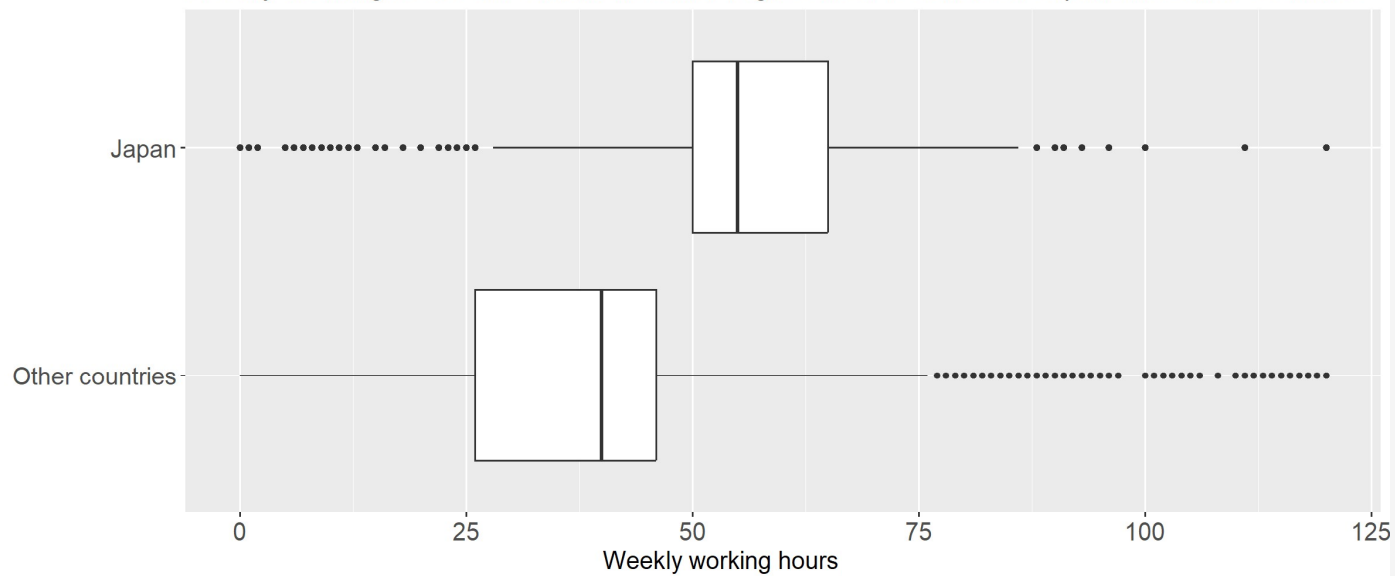
Harding et al. (2019)

- Higher levels of teachers' well-being were associated with higher student well-being and lower levels of psychological distress.
- Greater severity of teachers' depressive symptoms was negatively associated with student well-being and positively associated with psychological distress.

Long working hours of Japanese teachers

Comparison of average weekly working hours among junior high school teachers: Analysis of Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) Data

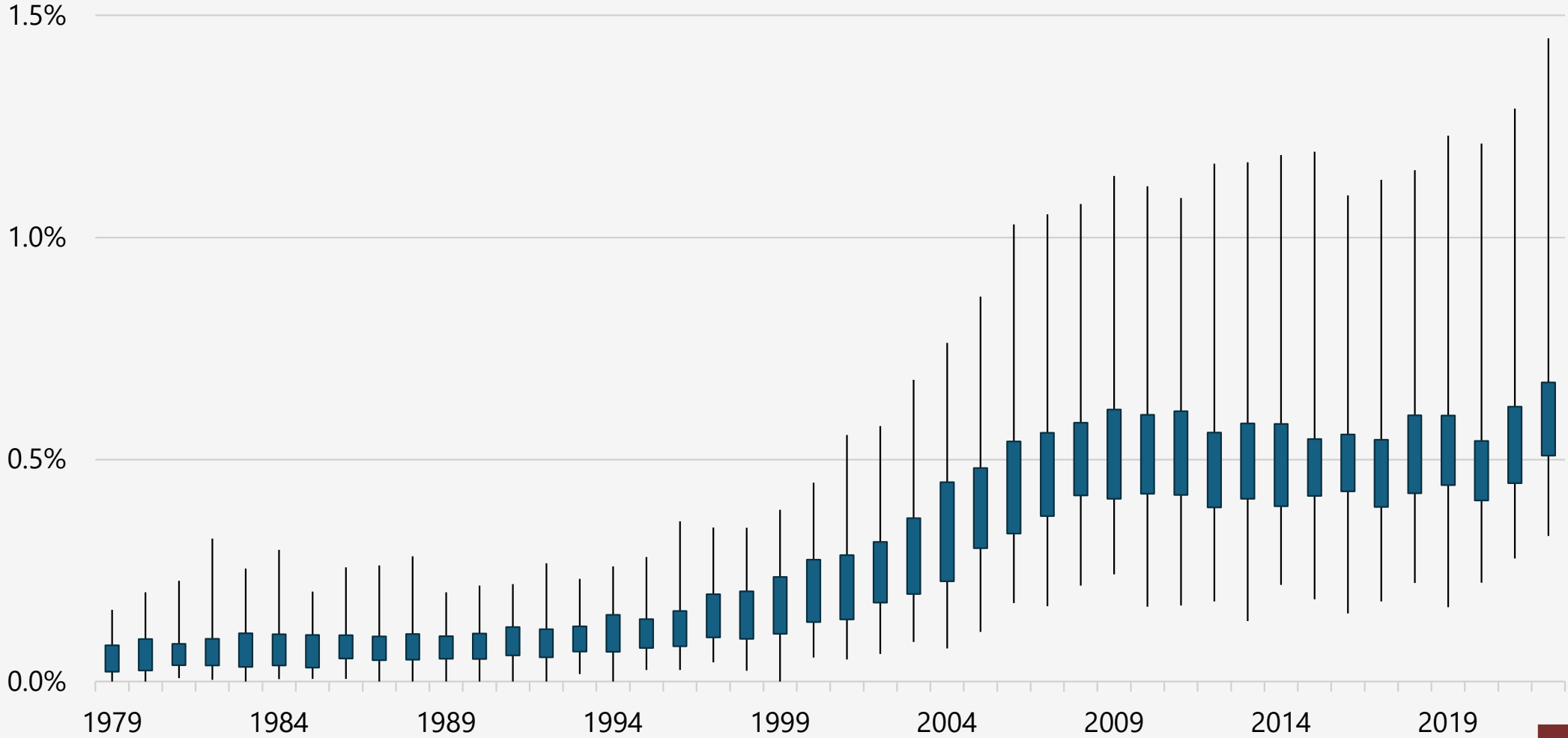
Weekly Working Hours of Permanent Junior High School Teachers in Japan and Other Countries



	N	Mean	S.D.
Other countries	97,266	36.864	17.118
Japan	1,728	55.505	15.165

Source: Prepared by the reporter

Sick leave due to mental disorders among public school teachers: Prefectural trends, 1979–2022

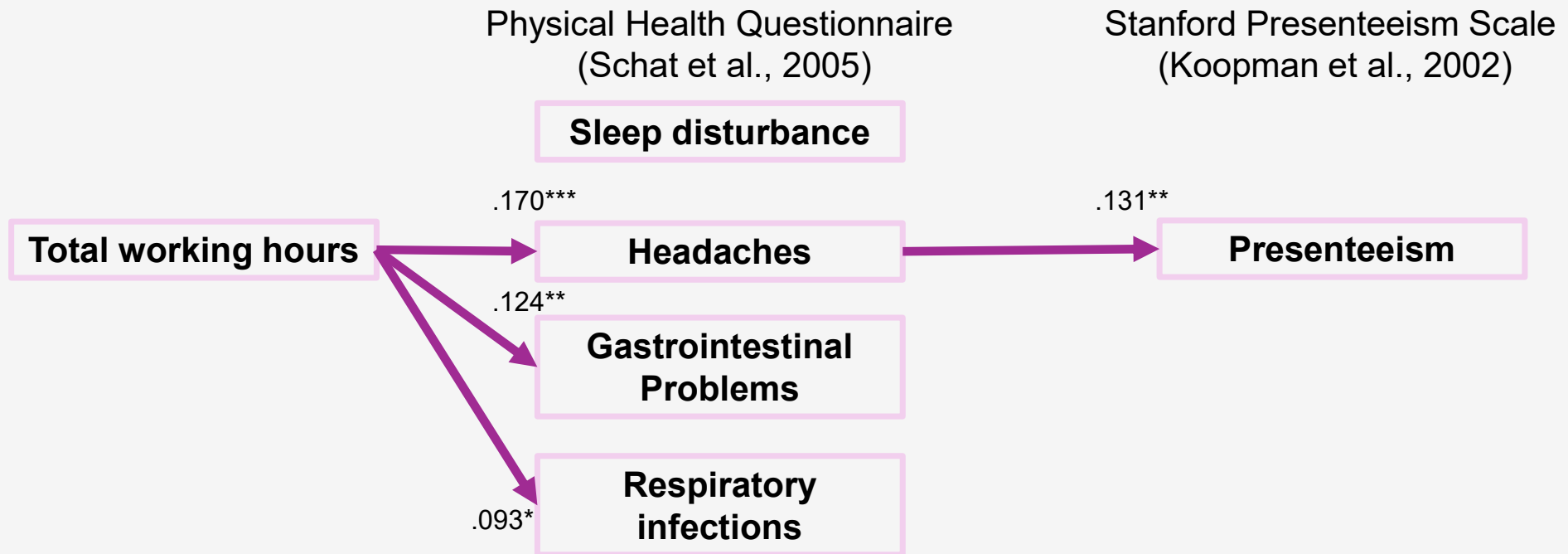


Source: Prepared by the reporter based on "Survey on Personnel Administration of Public School Staff" and the "School Basic Survey" conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) (annual editions)

Presenteeism

- The phenomenon of people, despite complaints and ill health that should prompt rest and absence from work, still turning up at their jobs (Aronsson, 2000: 503)
- The consequences of presenteeism (Skagen & Collins, 2016)
 - Decreased self-rated health
 - Worsened mental health and onset of burnout
 - Reduced work capacity and the occurrence of sick leave

Relationship between teachers' working hours, health and presenteeism



Source: Prepared by the reporter

Note: Results of path analysis based on a survey conducted by the reporter in November 2021. The survey targeted 1,520 teachers across 87 municipal elementary and junior high schools in X Prefecture (valid responses: 972 teachers from 86 elementary and junior high schools).

Factors contributing to the long working hours of Japanese teachers

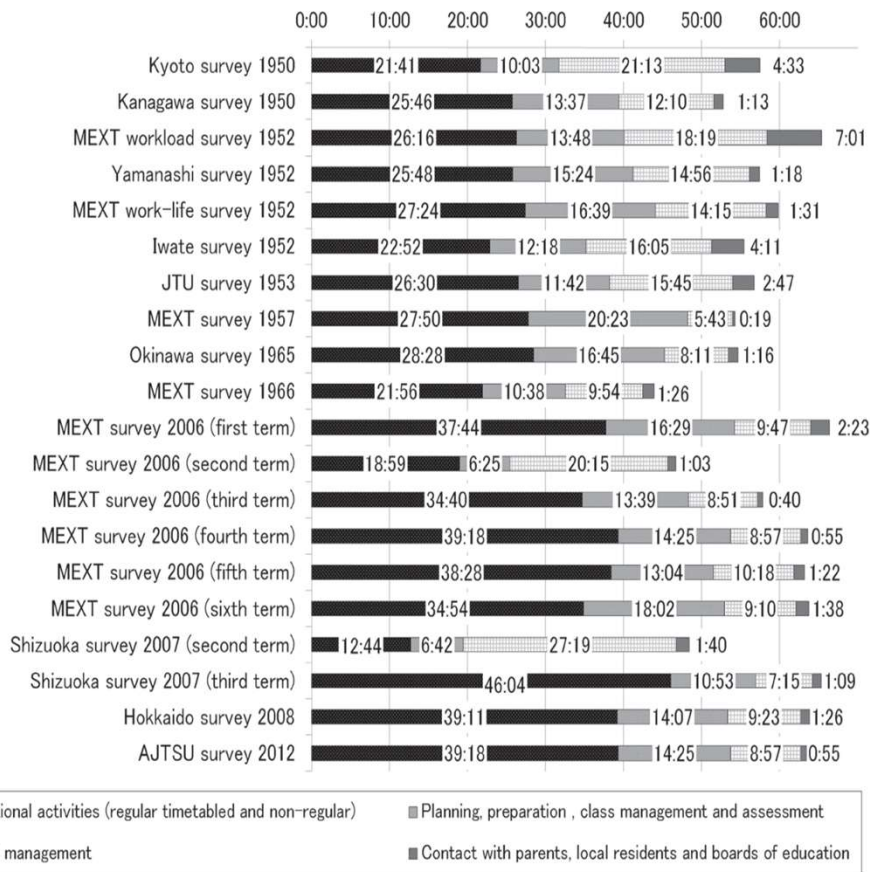


Figure 2 Total working hours/individual working hours for junior high school teachers (weekly average)

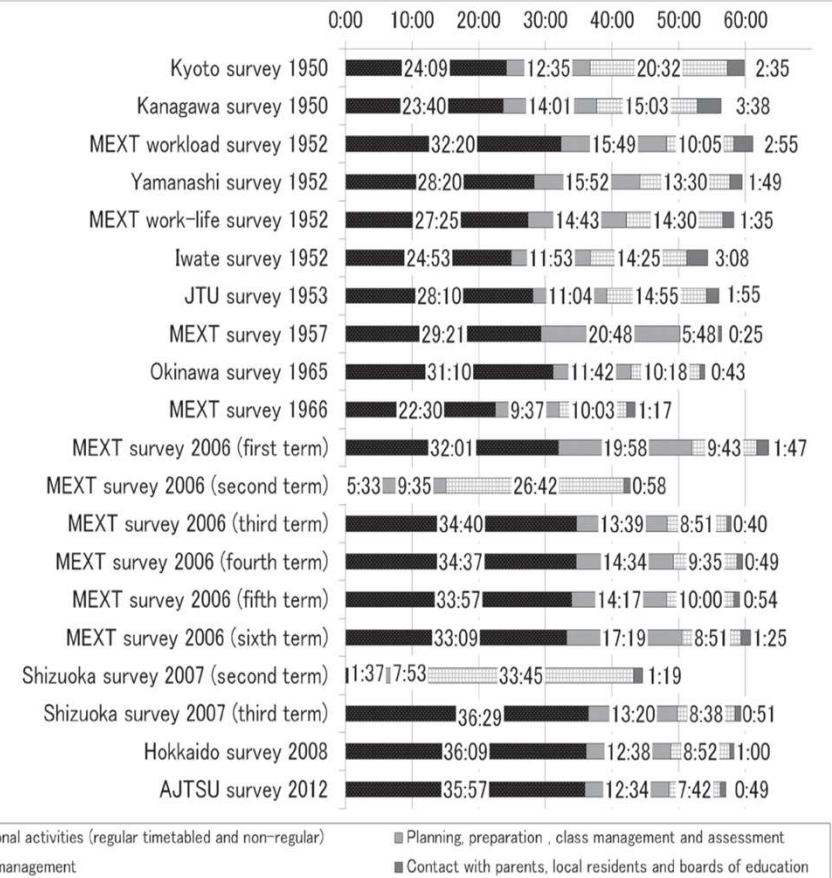


Figure 1 Total working hours/individual working hours for elementary school teachers (weekly average)

Source: Kanbayashi (2016: 113)

Factors contributing to the long working hours of Japanese teachers

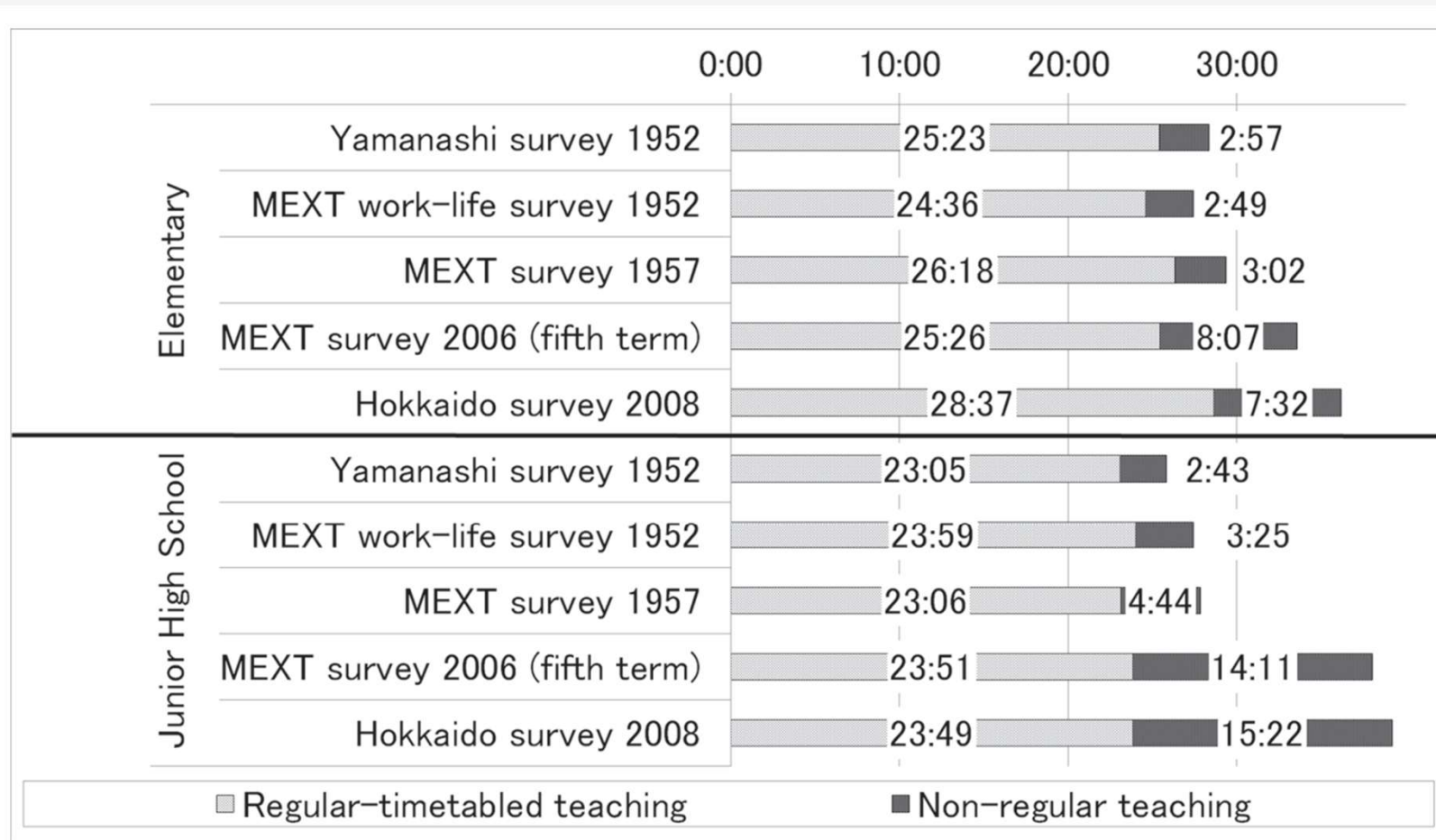


Figure 3 Individual working hours directly concerning educational activities (weekly average)

Source: Kanbayashi (2016: 116)

Summary

- Promoting teachers' well-being is important for enhancing students' well-being.
- Teachers' long working hours have been a serious problem in Japan. This problem worsens their physical health (particularly causing headaches) and leads to presenteeism, where teachers continue to work even when they should be resting or taking sick leave.
- As prior research suggests, presenteeism leads to reduced work capacity and the occurrence of sick leave. To ensure the quality of education and the safety of students, and to prevent teacher shortages, Japan must reduce teachers' working hours to address teacher presenteeism.
- Japanese teachers have been spending more time on non-regular teaching, such as student guidance and extracurricular club coaching. In the context of population decline, it is imperative for Japan to reconsider the structure of school education and clarify the roles teachers are expected to fulfill, taking into account the sustainability of the teaching workforce.

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