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To cite this article: Yoko Yamato & Wei Zhang (2017) Changing schooling, changing shadow: shapes and functions of *juku* in Japan, Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 37:3, 329-343, DOI: 10.1080/02188791.2017.1345719

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2017.1345719>



Published online: 06 Sep 2017.



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Changing schooling, changing shadow: shapes and functions of *juku* in Japan

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ABSTRACT

Private supplementary tutoring became a widespread phenomenon in Japan during the 1960s. Since then, institutions providing tutoring known as *juku* have provided a wide range of services to supplement mainstream education. During decades of development, the shapes and functions of *juku* have changed in response to changes in schooling. Government attitudes towards *juku* have also shifted from rejection to collaboration, partly because *juku* have become so entrenched in Japanese society and can no longer be excluded from public decision-making processes. Collaboration between schools and *juku* is becoming increasingly evident in a series of neoliberal policy choices and socio-demographic changes. Patterns underline a government move to mobilize profit-driven *juku* to serve the public good. The inclusion of *juku* in public schooling necessitates reconceptualization of the roles of *juku* in the educational landscape. This article presents a conceptual framework based on an overview of the changing relationships between *juku* and schooling. It also identifies challenges in the collaboration, and explores implications for future relationships between mainstream and shadow education.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 6 March 2017

Accepted 18 June 2017

KEYWORDS

Japan; private tutoring; shadow education; *juku*; history

Introduction

Historically, Japanese education has been praised as whole-child-oriented and balanced, especially at the primary level (see e.g., Lewis, 1995; Tsuneyoshi, 2001). The authorities have also stressed equity, removing barriers in the form of fees and entrance examinations for primary and lower-secondary schooling and supporting the dominance of the public sector. In 1975, for example, only 0.6% of primary schools and 5.1% of lower secondary schools were private (*Gakkou toukei*: Government Statistics, 1975). Especially in the early years following World War II, the government frowned on the existence and role of private schools.

However, private supplementary tutoring, primarily provided by individuals or tutoring enterprises referred to as *juku*, became a prominent phenomenon during the 1960s. In that era the curriculum of public schools was heavily packed and examination-oriented. *Juku* expanded to supplement mainstream public education and to prepare students for external examinations. This development was underpinned by Japan's economic boom, but was not welcomed by the authorities. During the 1970s, for example, *juku* were criticized for interfering with mainstream teaching and were called a “social vice” (Zenjokuren, 1988; cited in Hayasaka, 2013, p. 1).

Despite much negative commentary in the media and elsewhere, the number of *juku* increased steadily and their modes of operation evolved in response to curriculum changes in mainstream education. As *juku* operations expanded, during the 1980s consumer complaints, mainly on contractual matters, also increased. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) requested *juku* organizations to impose self-regulation, and many *juku* owners also felt a need to improve the reputation of the entire industry. These forces led to the formation of the Japan *Juku* Association (JJA) in 1988 with MITI recognition (Kaikura, 2012a; NIRA [National Institute for Research Advancement], 1996). This was a marked contrast to the initial years of *juku* development, when *juku* owners had campaigned to be approved as an incorporated association under the Ministry of Education (MOE) but had been rejected. During this period, many *juku* actively worked to ensure quality control. *Juku* gained official status as an industry but had to wait another decade for recognition by the MOE (Komiya, 2012b). An indication of the scale and role of *juku* is provided by 2010 statistics. A survey by the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (2010) showed a participation rate in *juku* of 47.7% for primary Year 6 pupils and 61.9% for secondary Year 3 students.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the public education system underwent a revolution with increasing penetration of market principles. In 2000 the position of school principal was opened to application from persons without working experience in schools, and parents were given more choice of schooling for their children (MOE, 2000). These changes expanded competition between public schools, which sought ways to differentiate themselves. Their strategies included partnerships with *juku* to provide tutoring on school premises after school hours (Fujiwara, 2008). Such arrangements sparked heated discussion among experts and parents on fairness in the public sector (Fujita, 2008; Yamada, 2013; Yuuki, 2009).

In parallel, national and local governments at various levels started to seek support from providers of private tutoring to improve public provision of formal schooling (Kuroishi & Takahashi, 2009). *Juku* services harnessed by these government actors included Saturday tutoring classes, in-service training of public school teachers, career guidance to students, and extra-curricular activities for public schools (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology [MEXT], 2015).

With such factors in mind, this paper examines the changing shapes and functions of *juku* and particularly their changing relationship with mainstream education. It commences with a review of the changing shapes and functions of *juku* in response to the evolution of mainstream education under different social historical contexts. It then discusses changing government attitudes to *juku* towards the end of the twentieth century, facilitated by neoliberal ideology, and their implications for the mainstream public education. The paper is primarily based on analysis of government documents and literature on both public and *juku*, supplemented by interviews with stakeholders in the government and the industry for better understanding of policies and practices.

Juku as the shadow of Japanese schooling

Private supplementary tutoring is widely known as shadow education (Bray, 2009, 2011; Bray & Lykins, 2012; Manzon & Areepattamannil, 2014). Much research on tutoring has taken the shadow metaphor for granted, but the present paper reiterates its value since its conceptualization of the relationship between tutoring and schooling can be pertinently applied to tutoring across time and space. As the shadow of mainstream education, tutoring only exists because of the existence of formal schooling; and its shape and functions change according to changes in the mainstream system.

Bray's (1999) book on shadow education identified three dimensions for definition and analysis (p. 20). First was the concern with "academic subjects" taught and tested in mainstream schools; second was "privateness", that is, the fee-paying basis which distinguishes the sector from lessons by relatives or teachers free of charge; and third was the dimension of "supplementation" of primary and secondary school education outside official hours. The above definition of tutoring well captured functions of *juku* up to the end of the twentieth century, since their services were profit-driven, supplemented

mainstream curriculum and/or catered to the admission requirements at critical transition points to various schools/higher education institutions.

However, recent decades have brought significant change in the policy discourse towards neoliberal conceptions of the nature of public goods (including education), and of appropriate mechanisms for their delivery. This change has included blurring of the boundaries between the private and public sectors (Bray, 2010; Zhang & Bray, 2017). Marketization and privatization of schooling has become a global phenomenon leading to increasing roles for private actors in delivering services in the traditional arena of public educational systems (Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio, & Guaqueta, 2009; Robertson, Mundy, Verger, & Menashy, 2012). The private actors in Japan not only include private schools but also tutoring providers. *Juku* have been increasingly brought into the public projection of education and community-building. The blurred boundaries between *juku* and schooling (and other public services) have expanded *juku* functions beyond the limits of the three dimensions identified by Bray (1999, p. 20).

Recent curricular reforms have explicitly encouraged collaboration between schools and *juku*, which has resulted in low-fee *juku* classes within schools. The practice was expected to serve the public good within the official school hours. More noticeable perhaps is the emergence of *mirai-juku* which have been established to extend opportunities for free tutoring to some children from low-income families. Unlike the traditional *juku*, *mirai-juku* are not purely private in nature but rather a product of public-private partnerships initiated and monitored by local governments. Providers of such services include volunteers, private sector operators (including the traditionally privately-run *juku*) and communities, with costs jointly covered by central and local governments.

Therefore, the current picture of shadow education in Japan is highly diversified. “Privateness” no longer applies to some of the new functions of *juku* that involve little or no fees. Also, some *juku* classes have been brought into the sunlight by schools fitting them into the official schedule, and these are more likely to complement rather than supplement public schooling. In addition to tutoring in academic subjects, *mirai-juku* and some traditional *juku* also provide social services beyond instruction in academic subjects. As such, based on a historical overview of how *juku* have shadowed the mainstream system and changed over time, this article draws a conceptual framework to reconsider the functions of *juku* in the current educational landscape.

Changing shapes and functions: *juku* during the twentieth century

The existence of *juku* alongside mainstream education had been noted by many observers of the new education system established after World War II (e.g., Harnisch, 1994; Komiyama, 2012a). According to the first MOE nationwide survey on *juku* attendance, in 1975 12.0% of primary school children and 38.0% of middle school students received private tutoring (NIRA, 1996, p. 22). Subsequent surveys in 1985 and 1993 showed steady increase of *juku* attendance, rising to 16.5% and 23.6% for primary school children, and 44.5% and 59.5% for middle school students (NIRA, 1996, p. 115 & p. 149). The MOE considered the widespread private supplementary tutoring an “intrusion of private industry into the public sector” (Maeya, 2008, p. 43). The patterns were called “*kyouikuno nijyuukouzou*” (double-layered education) (Yuuki, Sato, & Hashisako, 1987, p. 5) and “*koushi kongougata kyouikuhi futan-kouzou*” (public and private education cost burden system) (Shiraishi, 2000, p. 73; Suetomi, 2010, p. 2).

The government viewed the “double-layered education” as a problem because it affected the mainstream schooling and had implications for students who did not receive tutoring as well as those who did. Nevertheless, *juku* gained popularity and expanded. To secure further information, the National Institute of Educational Research (currently National Institute of Educational Policy Research [NIER]) conducted a detailed study of *juku* in and around Tokyo in 1984. The Institute sampled 101 *juku*, and published the findings in 1987 (Yuuki et al., 1987). The study examined private tutoring from the perspectives of parents, students, teachers, and tutors. Yuuki et al. noted that:

Since tutoring is guaranteed by Article 22 of the Constitution as a component of free market practices, the government cannot ban *juku* outright like attempts in South Korea. Likewise, families have the liberty to receive private forms of education, protected from government action. (p. 6)

The study classified *juku* into four major categories, namely *shingaku-juku* (providing admission-oriented tutoring, for example, preparation for secondary school or university entrance examinations), *hoshu-juku* (providing remedial tutoring), *sougou-juku* (providing comprehensive/integrated tutoring), and *kyuusai-juku* (preventing or rescuing drop-outs). Concerning the difference between public education and supplementary tutoring, the study noted that public schooling required educational accountability while private tutoring was considered a business contract.

Despite the lack of government support, the *juku* industry continued to grow in the following decade to the extent that the government could no longer ignore it. As a result, *juku* were officially recognized as part of the educational scene (NIRA, 1996). The change in official attitude contributed to further NIRA research in 1996 by a team of researchers, university professors, an education critic, a psychiatrist, and a counsellor. The study led to a report entitled *Japanese Education as Seen through its Cram Schools* (1996), which traced the development of *juku*. Table 1 reconstructs from the report ways in which *juku* were perceived to have expanded and changed in response to changes in mainstream education and the wider society.

Before the first *juku* expansion in the 1960s, many public middle schools held supplementary classes after school hours and as a result the demand for out-of-school tutoring was low. During the 1960s, upper secondary education was expanded and in 1965 for instance over 70% of middle-school graduates advanced to high school (Komiyama, 2012b, p. 280). The massification of upper secondary schooling encouraged more families to compete for high school admission. At the same time, the cohort of post-war baby boomers reached high-school age and further intensified the competition. Families were aware that earnings varied greatly depending on the education levels and degree types. To secure the highest degrees possible, many parents started to invest in tutoring to strengthen their children's learning at school. Demand for *juku* therefore increased, leading to the first *juku* boom. At that time public schooling was strong, and most *juku* concentrated on supplementing the school curriculum (NIRA, 1996, p. 20).

The Tokyo Municipal Government introduced the High School Grouping System in 1966 to promote equalization of public high schools. While the system to some extent reduced the gap between high-performing and low-performing high schools run by the municipal government, the reputation of elite municipal schools declined. In turn this pattern increased the demand for elite private and national schools in which the grouping policy did not apply (NIRA, 1996, p. 20). The *juku* sector responded with expanded preparation for the entrance examinations of these schools.

Under the "meritocratic curriculum" reform implemented in 1968, part of the mathematics materials previously covered in high school was moved to the primary and middle-school curriculum. This created challenges for both students and teachers, and dropout rates rose (Komiyama, 2012b, p. 281). *Juku* developed to rescue drop-outs and to provide remedial support. When the 1973 oil shocks swept most regions in the world, Japan's economic growth slowed and a substantial percentage of people in secondary industries moved into the tertiary industrial sector. Amidst these social changes, enterprises and highly educated individuals saw the *juku* industry as a promising field (Komiyama, 2012b, p. 282). Franchise chain *juku* were established by newcomers from other industries, targeting average-performing students and providing tutoring to supplement schooling. The rise of such mass-marketed *juku* prompted newspapers to run headlines such as "*Juku* in department stores" and "An electronic shop-run *juku*" (Iwase, 2010, p. 36). The high-school entry rate reached 90% in 1975. *Sougou-juku*, which both supplemented school education and trained students for entrance examinations, increased in number during this period (Komiyama, 2012b, p. 282).

During the late 1970s and 1980s, school bullying and truancy were recognized as serious problems in public schools. Private schools then attracted more attention from middle- and upper-class parents who perceived students in these schools to be higher achievers from the same socio-economic background and thus less likely to have behavioural problems. The entry of the second cohort of baby boomers into primary and middle school coincided with the popularity of private schools, creating a big market for *shingaku juku* that specialized in preparation for entrance examinations (Komiyama, 2012b, p. 283). Nevertheless, the media commonly criticized not only the tutoring providers but also

Table 1. Expansion and changes in *juku*, 1945 to 1990s.

Stages of <i>juku</i> development	Social background of the times	Changes in mainstream education/ curriculum reforms	Changes in <i>juku</i> : strategy, forms, modes of operation
"Germination"	Post-WWII ~ 1960s Rapid economic growth "standard deviation" ↓ Stratification of schools + competition in high-school entrance exam	New education system post-WWII New curriculum implemented 1958 "systematic curricular" • Double shifts schooling continued • Curriculum focus on experience • Exam-oriented teaching at school	• <i>Juku</i> for private junior high school preparation founded in '50s. • <i>Juku</i> are set up and run with founders' specific ideology in education • One-man operation, small-scale <i>juku</i>
"Growth"	1960s Nationwide standardized exam for junior high students conducted ('61~'66) ↓ Ranking of students and schools	• First cohort of baby boomers enter middle school • New curriculum, 1968 "Meritocratic curriculum" • Heavy contents create many drop-outs • Supplemental classes at public school were active ⇒ basically banned from '66 • Parents become economically affluent • Parents expect higher education than before	• Private junior high school gained popularity in Tokyo and Kinki area ⇒ primary school pupils receive private tutoring • Mainstream schools alone cannot cover all the material • Curriculum causes the need for tutoring
"Expansion"	1970s Oil shocks ↓ • Enterprises enter the <i>juku</i> industry as a promising field	• Drop-outs became a social problem ⇒ • New curriculum, 1977 "Human-centred/ Yutori curriculum"	• Supplementary/ prevention of drop-outs <i>juku</i> increased • Enterprises opened franchise chain <i>juku</i>, supplementing school education • Clear ranking of colleges, faculties
"Stabilization"	1979 • Introduction of Preliminary Standardized College Examination 1980s • Bulling in public middle schools pushed popularity of private schools • Younger age groups start attending <i>juku</i>	• New curriculum 1989 "New learning ability" • Diversified grading system introduced • Some <i>juku</i> founded mainstream private schools	Demand of data and preparation for differentiated entrance exams to private schools
Minor amendments from MOE	1990s	• 1992: 5-days-a-week school system experimentally introduced	MOE requested <i>juku</i> industry not to offer any more classes on Saturdays

Source: NIRA (National Institute for Research Advancement), 1996.

the parents who sent their children to *juku*. The tutees were called “*juku-steeped pupils*” (*juku-duke shougakusei*) (Iwase, 2010, p. 36).

Yet the late 1990s saw a shift in official and public opinions towards *juku*. This was evident in newspaper headlines when the MOE requested support from the *juku* industry for public schools. “Joy of learning in *juku*”, and “*Juku* owner appointed to school council”, were among examples (Iwase, 2010, p. 36). Elaborating, in 1992 schooling in some regions was changed from six to five days a week to reduce the study load. The five-days-a-week system had been implemented in schools in more regions by the late 1990s. The MOE recognized that support had to be sought from *juku* to ensure that the released Saturdays were spent on leisure and sports instead of tutoring. Therefore, the MOE requested *juku* not to increase tutoring classes in holidays. Some *juku* organized outdoor activities or nature scavenger hunts in response (NIRA, 1996). Having noted that these new functions were in line with government efforts, in 1999 the MOE recognized *juku* as an alternative educational platform for extra-curricular activities at the Life-Long Learning session of *Chuo Kyoiku Shingi Kai* (Central Council on Education) (Komiya, 2012b, p. 283).

The NIRA research concluded with five main recommendations to the government to reduce the burden on students: (1) revision of the school curriculum, (2) reconsideration of subject rating methods, (3) improved flexibility of system operation, (4) improved teacher working conditions and quality, and (5) opportunities for discussion between schools and *juku*. Following the report, a 2002 curriculum reform attempted to create a lighter and less dense curriculum, widely known as the *Yutori*-curriculum.¹

Changing government attitudes towards *juku* with new shapes and functions

In line with the recommendations of the NIRA report, the government embarked on negotiations with the *juku* industry for cooperation with mainstream schools. The shift was underpinned by growing acceptance of neoliberal principles. Further, an expanding number of disadvantaged children as a result of worsened social stratification and natural disasters highlighted the need for greater social support to this group of children. *Juku* were perceived as able to play a role in this respect too (Masuda, 1999; Sanuki, 2009).

Neoliberal changes and the 2002 *Yutori* curriculum

In 2000, the government introduced several amendments to the Ordinance for Enforcement of the School Educational Act (MOE, 2000). One change was easing restrictions on the public school zones, allowing parents freedom to choose among several public schools in their vicinities. While this did not have a major effect in rural areas, it increased disparities among schools in densely-populated areas because parents gravitated towards popular schools. Officials in Minato Ward of Tokyo Municipality took an innovative step that attracted much attention. They sought ways to attract students to the less popular schools, among which were *juku* classes in these schools outside official hours. When some parents claimed that this measure was discriminatory, all public schools in Minato Ward began to offer after-school classes provided by *juku* (Maeya, 2008).

While the case of Minato Ward was extreme, schools elsewhere also had to find new ways to attract students. One strategy involved hiring personnel from outside the system. The first school principal from a business background was appointed to a public school in Sugunami Ward in 2003. During his administration, a prestigious *juku* was invited to offer tutoring classes after school on the school premises at a discounted price (Fujiwara, 2008). The practice provoked much debate (Kaikura, 2012b, p. 397) as the classes were initially selective and thus excluded some students who wished to attend. However, the classes made the school popular among parents in the catchment area.

Another neoliberal change concerned the 2002 curriculum reform, which further relaxed an already-relaxed curriculum. In the late 1990s, *Yutori*-education implemented since the late 1970s was blamed for the decline in student academic achievement (Honda, 2002). Despite the criticism,

Table 2. Total teaching time at primary (6 years) and lower secondary public schools (3 years).

Curriculum	1961~	1971~	1980~	1992~	2002~	2011~
Primary45 min/class	5821	6135	5785	5785	5367	5645
Low. Sec50 min/class	3360	3535	3150	3150	2940	3045

Sources: MEXT, 2011, 2017a.

the 2002 reform further reduced the contents of the school curriculum. The basic idea was to nurture children's "*ikiru-chikara*" (zest for life), with an emphasis on lifelong learning skills. As shown in Table 2, this 2002 curriculum had the smallest number of teaching periods and reduced as much as 30% of the previously covered material (Fujita, 2006), leading to the least content in textbooks in the modern history of public school education. The curriculum reform brought diverse changes including in the basic structure of public education, and granted more freedom to individual schools in their operation (Abiko, 2011). While the teaching hours were reduced, a new subject called Integrated Studies (MEXT, 2008a, 2008b) challenged schools and teachers who were responsible for devising the context (Fujita, 2006; Nemoto, 2007). The 2002 curriculum reform brought a nationwide debate among educationists, teachers, academia, and parents (Terawaki, 2008). During this reform the five-school-days-a-week system which had been piloted in 1992 was implemented in all schools.

Changing official attitude towards the *juku* industry

When the five-days-a-week system was fully implemented nationwide during the *Yutori* reform, the MEXT requested *juku* to organize educational activities for children on weekends and during school holidays in order to provide them with learning opportunities different from those in the classroom. The participating *juku* were not allowed to charge fees for these activities. They considered it an opportunity to demonstrate that *juku* could make important contributions to education and society (Takada, 2008). A volunteer *juku* society was therefore established to facilitate collaboration among *juku* and help meet government objectives (All Japan Education Volunteers Society, 2017). The MEXT did not provide financial support for these activities but did allow them to use MEXT's name when promoting the activities (MEXT, 2013a).

Since 2000, Japan has participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) organized triennially by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). When national academic performance declined in the 2003 and 2006 scores compared with 2000 (MEXT, 2017b), the media blamed *Yutori* education again, citing it as further evidence in addition to the criticisms of the 1990s (Honda, 2002). In response, the government decided to amend the curriculum and ease restrictions on the amount of teaching materials (Toda, 2009). Schools were encouraged to expand the official curriculum, but teachers found the demands challenging. The workload of teachers in all levels of education has increased over the years (Benesse, 2016; MEXT, 2006–2017), obstructing teachers from spending adequate time with individual students.

To ease the burden on public school teachers, new partnerships with the *juku* industry were established. For instance, tutoring classes taught by *juku* tutors became evident in public schools (Hayasaka, 2011; Kuroishi & Takahashi, 2009), and the boundary between the public and the private was blurred further. Sakuma (2010) described the practice of public education supported by *juku* in rural areas as an example of "publicly-supported *Gakushu juku*" (Suetomi, 2007; cited in Sakuma, 2010, p. 139). Fees for such classes were set at low levels. The participating *juku* were willing to sacrifice the economic returns in part for recognition, reputation, and social capital with the public sector which contributed to their sustainable development. The national government amended the school ordinance in November 2013 to advocate active involvement of *juku* and community on Saturday classes (MEXT, 2013b).

Educational aid to disadvantaged children

In the 1960s, when the *juku* boom began, over 90% of the participants in annual national surveys on living conditions perceived themselves to be the middle class (Seron-chousa [National Survey on Living Conditions], 1970). This pattern partly shows that the post-war Japanese economic take-off was compatible with relatively low wage differentiation. However, social conditions changed in the 1990s when the economic bubble burst. Society became increasingly stratified, with substantial wage differences. By the mid-2000s, families in poverty were recognized as a social issue (Morimitsu, 2011). A 2006 OECD report on social problems indicated that Japan was the second worst among OECD countries after the USA in terms of relative child income poverty² (OECD, 2006).

Children of poor families are more likely to drop out of school due to a less privileged study environment (Abe, 2008). The information that one in six children lived below the poverty line spurred the educational authorities into action. Since in compulsory education grade repetition was not permitted, the gap between poorly-performing students and their peers widened as they progressed through the system. Remedial tutoring classes could help narrow the gap, but few students in this group could afford tutoring. Among educational experts there was heated discussion on whether to fund private tutoring with public funds for these students (Suetomi, 2010), and how effective this would be (Uzuki, 2015). Abe (2014) focused on agendas for the society and government to rescue children in poverty and revitalize the country.

Besides children in poverty, major disasters including the 2011 Tohoku earthquake displaced children and increased the risk of poor academic performance. To help children from this social group, the central government established *mirai-juku* ("*juku* for the future") in 2015, mainly for middle-school children. While the Primary and Secondary Education Bureau had authority over formal schooling, the social welfare-focused Lifelong Learning Bureau of the MEXT initiated *mirai-juku*. Public schools in each region were set as the centres for these *juku* (Chukyoshin, 2015). They were supported by public funds, with one third of the running costs covered by the central government and the rest covered by local governments.

The *mirai-juku* scheme does have predecessors. For example, a 2004 initiative aimed to "revitalize the local education power" (*chiiki kyouiku-ryoku saisei*). That movement started from "after school children's classrooms" (*houkago kodomo kyoushitsu*) aligned with goals of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, offering places for children of families lacking caretakers after school. The initiative further developed into a "plan to promote educational activities at schools on Saturdays" which mobilized local people and companies. Although the *mirai-juku* target children at risk in particular, their modes of operation and activities are left to local communities. Some offer target-specific tutoring; some provide not only supplementary tutoring but also counselling or fun activities. The number of regional centres that could hold *mirai-juku* in 2014 counts 3,746 places involving over 9,000 public primary and lower-secondary schools (about 30% of all public schools) covering almost the whole country (Chukyoshin, 2015). The government aims to expand *mirai-juku* from the 700 existing in 2015 to 5,000 by the end of 2031 (MEXT, 2015; interview; Japan For Sustainability, 2016).

Mirai-juku function as community services offered by both central and local governments to support children at risk. These *juku* recruit tutors from the local communities, including *juku* teachers, retired school teachers, and university students. They use school premises (outside official hours) and community-based educational facilities. The service is thus not a profit-based business but a welfare service for the community. However, as the instructors are volunteers, there have been large gaps in the quality and continuity of classes. A private *juku* tried to address the problem by offering heavily discounted e-learning content to be used in *mirai-juku* (Yunokawa, 2016). It received the "Social Problem Solution Award" in the Second Japan Venture Award 2016 (Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry [METI], 2016).

Conceptualizing *juku* in the current educational landscape

Much of the literature classifies *juku* by main function: *shingaku*, *hoshu*, *sougou*, *kyusai*, and *doriru* (drilling) (see e.g., Dierkes, 2013; Entrich, 2016; Roesgaard, 2006) although many other functions are identified. Roesgaard (2006, p. 184) recognized *juku*'s contribution to schooling in Japan, noting that "the public schools would not be able to function in their present manner without the *hoshu-juku* and their efforts in remedial education".

To understand more fully the roles of *juku* in the whole educational landscape, current relationships between mainstream schools and *juku* are illustrated by Figure 1. The figure incorporates three elements of Fishkin's Trilemma Theory (1983) to demonstrate challenges in mainstream education. According to Fishkin,

commitment to any two of these assumptions rules out the third. Attempting to maintain all three assumptions – the principle of merit, equality of life chances, and the autonomy of the family – would be like attempting to hold up a three-cornered stool when only two legs are available. No matter which two corners one chooses to hold up, lack of the third is enough to undermine the whole structure. (pp. 5–6)

As *juku* have been institutionalized and increasingly promoted in the public education agenda, mainstream education seems unable to strike a balance between all three corners without *juku*. Compared to schools, *juku* have greater liberty since financially-capable families can choose tutors, curricula, and points of entry and exit. While *juku* targeting elite students might meet the principle of merit, public schools are more concerned with equality of life chances. Shadow education may also play a role in the equality of life chances, since it possesses the potential to neutralize disadvantaged family background under certain conditions (Entrich, 2016).

Figure 1 classifies *juku* into three types based on their functions and the historical period during which they were initially established. "Type A" *juku* cover the bulk of the industry, and were in the market from the beginning of modern *juku* history. *Juku* in this category have constantly adapted to the needs of the students, and range from small tutoring centres to large franchises. Online video or e-learning classes can also be categorized as Type A. In recent years, small-scale provision has become popular, including one-to-one or one-to-two *juku* instruction. The institutions provide a variety of services, including entrance examination preparation, drop-out prevention, and provision of public open spaces for communities.

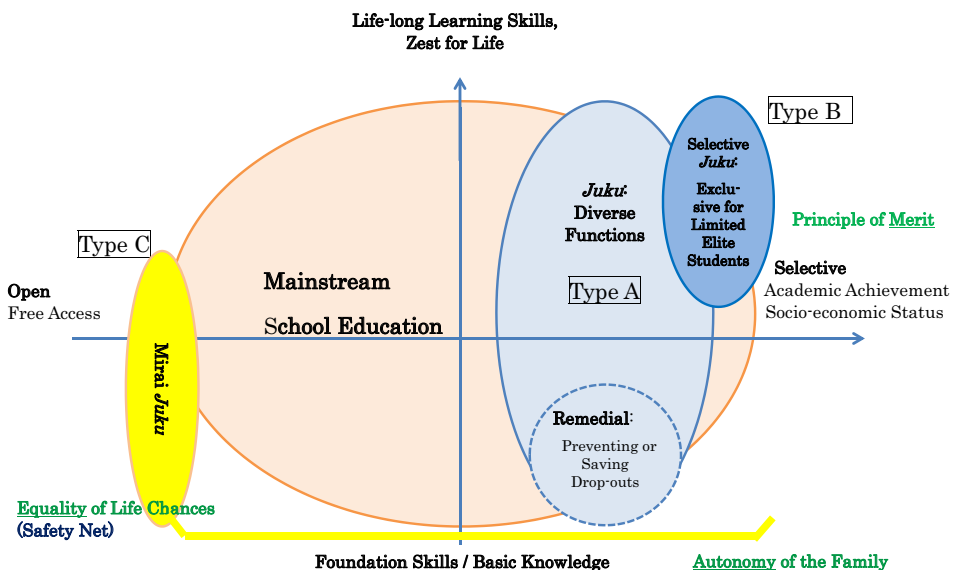


Figure 1. The current educational landscape in Japan.

"Type B" *juku* are few in number and mainly emerged in the 1980s in response to the curriculum cuts of the late 1970s. These *juku* serve the privileged students attending private junior and senior escalator high schools or top public schools. They target high-achieving students, and their curriculum extends even to university-level mathematics and English (Furukawa, 2015; Oota, 2016). More recently as globalization has reached the education sector, *juku* classes have been set up for students wishing to attend top universities overseas from the start rather than as exchange students of Japanese universities (Kimura, 2015). In other words, Type B *juku* aim to provide elitist education – a term deliberately avoided in public education.

"Type C" *juku* started to appear in the mid-2010s when children in poverty were coming to be seen as a serious social issue. Fee-free academic coaching has long existed for particular ethnic groups and for migrant children (Okano, 2016), but has been excluded from the focus of this paper as it targets specific minority groups. Type C includes the *mirai-juku* and fee-free programmes run by local governments with the help of community members and materials offered by *juku*. The category also includes volunteers who take care of children and access free online entrance examination preparatory courses. The purpose is to involve parents and community and other social support in educational development in addition to schools. It is underpinned by the official recognition of the role of parents and other social forces and the limitations of schooling in achieving the above three educational goals. Indeed, education is not equivalent to schooling. Parenting and community-based informal learning are also non-negligible forms of education. However, the existence of Type C *juku* should not become an excuse to allow officials to neglect improvements in public schooling. Type C *juku* are not profit-oriented and impose little financial burden on students and their families, but they consume huge public funding, involve for-profit *juku*, and feature new forms of partnerships between *juku* and the public sector. They underline the need to redefine tutoring and *juku* and to investigate closely the role and impact of tutoring providers in government initiatives.

Conclusion

Juku were born with the new post-World War II school system, and over the decades their shapes and functions have shifted in response to changes in the mainstream education system. Initially they were not welcomed by the government, being considered parasitic. However, as they expanded and deepened their relationships with society and schools, the authorities could no longer ignore them. Since the end of the twentieth century, government authorities have formed partnerships and have actively cooperated with *juku*. On the one hand, this action could be viewed as a choice out of no choice, since tutoring has become so entrenched that support from *juku* for educational reforms has become essential. On the other hand, the action indicates that neoliberal reforms encouraging outsourcing of public services have increased the legitimacy of government and schools to purchase services from *juku*. Government and school partnerships with *juku* claim to serve (or partially serve) the public good. They have also opened up new market opportunities for *juku* that seek social and cultural capital in addition to economic capital. Evolving patterns of partnerships require nuanced explanations.

One of the patterns involves Type A *juku* that commonly provide tutoring below the market price (Kuroishi & Takahashi, 2009). In order to meet the MEXT requirements for out-of-school educational activities on school holidays, *juku* need to go through the additional requirement of forming non-profit organizations (NPOs) under the MEXT to organize out-of-school educational activities (All Japan Education Volunteers Society, 2017; MEXT, 2013a). As long as the *juku* industry is a profit-driven business, working with the public sector for hardly any monetary gain is not sustainable. Most Type A *juku* that participate in collaborative activities do so for acknowledgement and public relations, partly to legitimize and promote their services. A few *juku* tutors working free of charge and interviewed by the authors indicated that they wanted to contribute as "educators". Compared to traditional *juku* classes that are only available to families who can afford the market price, such arrangements may expand education opportunities for children of lower-income families. However, in some cases only high achievers are selected to attend such academic classes, which are not equal in terms of academic need. Given that

higher academic achievements are usually correlated with higher socio-economic status (SES), these classes may still exclude many low SES families.

Another issue concerns student perspectives. In Hong Kong, some public schools have paid tutoring centres or their own teachers to offer remedial or advanced classes after school for free or at a very low fee to the students (Ngan, 2015). However, teachers have reported that some students have deemed outside tutoring classes more effective (Wang & Bray, 2016), even though they cost a lot more, and that the students are attracted by shortcuts for examinations rather than real teaching. Further, some students have been reluctant to attend remedial classes in order not to be labelled as low achievers. This leads to fundamental questions about the aims of education, the examination-oriented culture, and the labelling in the education system that cannot be addressed by these partnerships. Similar issues have arisen in Japan.

Another question concerns the nature of private (tutoring) in addition to private (schooling). Type B *juku* have few ties with the government and public schools, and focus more on relationships with the private schools and individual families (Furukawa, 2015). Some Type B *juku* offer intensive training for entrance examinations in private schools at a high market price. Some are invited to lead practice sessions for examinations. Some even send tutors to offer pedagogical training to private school teachers. Little research in Japan has looked into the impact of private school-*juku* partnerships. However research in Shanghai, China, shows that similar practices have undermined government efforts to equalize schools (Zhang & Bray, 2017). The Shanghai study found that some elite private schools established tutoring classes in collaboration with tutoring companies to secure the best possible student intake and to increase promotion rates of the high performers to elite institutions at the next stage of the education system. By doing so they tried to strengthen their elite status in competition with other schools, which as a result maintained inequalities among schools and reduced public confidence in government schools. Large tutoring companies also gained more legitimacy and reputation in sending tutees to elite schools, which in turn assisted those companies to become the most prominent market players.

The third component of the Japanese picture emerged from the government-funded *mirai-juku* scheme (Type C) launched in 2015. Since *mirai-juku* resulted from a government initiative, they have a partial public origin. The development parallels counterparts elsewhere (see e.g., Bray, 2009; Dawson, 2010), although it has distinctive characteristics insofar as it covers a wide range of services and involves a variety of stakeholders including central and local governments, schools, *juku*, NPOs, pre-service teachers, and other local volunteers. The selection of providers, their motives and roles, and the cost-effectiveness of their services deserve robust evaluation in further research. Lessons from state-sponsored initiatives in other countries may nevertheless be useful to inform, shape, and assist understanding of the challenges.

One parallel initiative is the South Korean government-funded After-school Programme launched in 2004. It focuses on both academic and non-academic subjects, especially for primary and secondary students who cannot afford commercial tutoring (Dawson, 2010; Lee, Lee, & Jang, 2010). Instructors may be both tutors and/or schoolteachers. In addition, the state has sponsored private tutoring through the Educational Broadcasting System (an educational television and radio network) and e-learning platforms. Dawson (2010) found that such programmes slightly reduced family expenditures on private tutoring, which had implications for the extent to which private tutoring maintained patterns of social reproduction.

Also deserving note is a pilot voucher scheme launched by the Australian government in 2004 to fund one-to-one tutoring in reading for students who had not met the Year 3 National Reading Benchmark in 2003 (Bray, 2009; Watson, 2008). The scheme did give participants opportunities to learn in environments that complemented their schooling. However, it encountered logistic challenges in securing enough tutors, and did not survive political shifts in the government. Better known are schemes in the USA associated with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. Bray (2009, pp. 40–41) summarized aspects of the experience in Chicago where in 2005 the authorities engaged 30 private for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises to provide services to 343 schools. The government also embarked on its own programme to support students. Challenges in implementation included accurate targeting of

students who really needed tutoring and could not themselves pay for it; shortcomings in evaluation and therefore fine-tuning of the schemes; and match between what the tutors could provide and what the students needed.

Of course every context is slightly (or greatly) different, and analysts must take account of political climates as well as logistic matters. As such, the Japanese experience cannot provide an exact parallel to patterns in China, South Korea, Australia, the USA, or other countries. Nevertheless, analysis of the Japanese case does add to broader understanding of the complexities of change. At the present time, *juku* largely remain in the shadow, existing only because the mainstream exists and changing when the mainstream changes; and *juku* cannot replace public education and provide equal opportunities for all. Some *juku* can cater for the demand by competitive families because schooling has already laid the solid foundation; and since *juku* have become an integral part of the educational landscape, mainstream and shadow actors may be able to complement each other. The partnerships across systems could be promising on the premise that actors in both systems act harmoniously for the common good. However, in practice private agendas on both sides might lead to manipulation and negative consequences. Moreover, if the public sector contracts out parts of its own responsibilities to *juku*, problems in the public system might be neglected and perpetuated.

The conceptual diagram proposed in this article provides an overview for further review of the nature of tutoring and its development in a society where shadow education is deeply rooted and in which the boundaries between the shadow and mainstream systems are blurred. Partnerships between *juku* and the public sector have parallels elsewhere despite the unique trajectories in Japan (Bray, 2009; Zhang & Yamato, 2017). The nature of these partnerships is likely to evolve further in the future. To inform policy-making and steer directions, empirical studies are desirable on modes of collaboration, internal power dynamics, and impact on the quality and equity of education.

Notes

1. *Yutori* education actually started in the late 1970s when the content of the curriculum was gradually reduced. However, the 2002 reform was more drastic than earlier initiatives and is thus widely considered the main component of the *Yutori* curriculum.
2. The rate was defined as “the proportion of children (0-to-17 year olds) with an equivalised post-tax-and-transfer income of less than 50% of the national annual median equivalised post-tax-and-transfer income” (OECD, 2016, p. 1).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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