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An Investigation into the Diversity of *Juku* Roles  
within Japanese Education

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December 2018

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## **Orthography**

The Japanese words used in this thesis are all romanised following a modified Hepburn system and are displayed in italics. Long marks over vowels such as “ō” or “ū” denote vowel sounds in Japanese that are extended. For commonly used place names such as Tōkyō or Kyōto long marks are omitted and no italics are used. Also, Japanese person names are not displayed in italics.

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## Introduction

Education landscapes in various national contexts have their own characteristics. For Japan, the country's post-war education system is characterised by a single-track schooling system often referred to as 6-3-3-4 system, meaning six years of primary and three years of junior high school followed by non-compulsory high school education and four years of university. Weaved into these structural characteristics of the education system is a system of entrance exams that are located at central transition points on the schooling ladder. Over Japan's post-war education history, such discourses as examination taking competition (*juken kyōsō*) and examination taking hell (*juken jigoku*) have appeared in relation to this system of entrance examinations and received both domestic as well as overseas attention (for example Aspinall 2005, Cutts 1997).

A phenomenon that has come to be strongly associated with this examination system is the area of private out-of-school education services known as *juku* and *yobikō*<sup>1</sup> that constitute the focus of this thesis. Despite Japan's declining birth rates and the peak of entrance examination competition having passed in the early 1990s, the scale of the *juku* market has remained stable over the last ten years at more than 900 billion Japanese Yen (Yano Research Institute, 2014).

Nowadays, *juku* are an established part of the Japanese education landscape and they have been taken up in public, official and scholarly discourses on education throughout the post-war years. Over the last two decades, within the scholarly literature, *juku* have been increasingly discussed as 'shadow education', which refers to paid-for educational ventures provided

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<sup>1</sup> *Yobikō* provide services specialised on preparation for university entrance examinations. Over the years however, distinctions between *juku* and *yobikō* have become more blurred due to sector internal changes that will be taken up in this thesis. Here, the term *juku* will be used as the over-spanning category to also refer to *yobikō* services. Where necessary, further specifications will be made.

outside formal schooling. Their continued and universal presence in Japanese education makes them more than just providers of educational services in the shadow of formal schooling. While the connection between entrance examinations and *juku* remains strong especially for entrance into top-tier schools, reasons for their continued relevance in Japanese education are more diverse.

This thesis examines the diversity of roles that *juku* fulfil within Japanese education. It makes a phenomenological investigation into the *juku* sector by analysing post-war *juku* developments and relating these to post-war developments in educational policy making and formal education. The methodology consists of a literature review of studies on *juku* and shadow education, an analysis of official statistics and policy documents related to education, as well as of interview data collected among *juku* representatives.

*Juku* are most strongly associated with cramming for examinations both in the public/media discourse and in research. Several post-war developments deserve attention in understanding this linkage. First, within the first three post-war decades, an increasing number of students went on to higher formal schooling levels. By the mid 1970s, post-compulsory high school advancement rates had reached the 90% mark. Growing demand for higher levels of education was enabled by greater parental monetary leeway made possible by Japan's period of high economic growth (1954-73). Second, employment practices of large-scale companies with the most sought-after jobs guaranteeing lifetime employment focused on recruiting the graduates of a set of elite universities. Even though only a fraction of graduates would actually ever come to enjoy the benefits of such employment, this was the ambitious focus of many students and their parents. Entrance examinations created bottlenecks for the wave of students and served as important gateways up the educational ladder within an employment structure favouring credentials from certain universities (*gakureki shugi*).

Further, educational discourses throughout post-war Japan have focused heavily on scholastic ability (*gakuryoku*), and more specifically concerns over a decline in students' scholastic ability levels (*gakuryoku teika*). Regardless of whether these concerns are justified or not, they are tied up with changes in the official Course of Study (*gakushū shidō yōryō*), which all schools have to follow and which is revised every ten years.

Course of Study revisions have always reflected the political and socio-economic climate of their day. After Japan had lost the Pacific War and was placed under US occupation, the education system was restructured based on democratic principles and the multi-track pre-war system benefiting elites abolished. With the end of the Occupation and Japan becoming an economic powerhouse in the world, policies shifted to address the demands of business circles for workers equipped with malleable basic scholastic ability that could be formed to fit a company's needs. This led away from the child-centred approach introduced during the Occupation toward a subject-centred curricular structure, stating in detail subject content for each grade year. After Japan's period of high economic growth had ended, late 1970s and subsequent revisions were moving toward reducing the study and hour content in response to school-internal problems that came to be related to excessive learning, such as bullying, school violence, and suicide. In the 1980s and 1990s, the economic-political climate became increasingly neoliberal, with an emphasis on competitive market principles. For school education, the 1989 revisions emphasised the individual student's abilities and aptitude and defined a new outlook on scholastic ability (*shin gakuryoku kan*), which placed importance on developing students' motivation to study. However, within the realm of school education, neoliberal emphasis on competitive principles and promotion of individualistic education became tied up, thereby creating a specific contradiction: On the one hand, official Course of Study documents promoted the idea of individualism, on the other hand, the school system continued to hinge upon entrance exams that by their very nature are selective and (re-)produce hierarchy. This hierarchy is a

hierarchy of conformity of students who have undergone the same intensive period of preparation for exams that test knowledge in a highly standardized fashion. Clearly, within such a system, a focus on individual abilities could easily turn out a waste of time if not catered towards exams.

The criticisms directed at these developments addressed such issues as the widening of the gap between high and low achievers and students with rich or poor family backgrounds. Here, *juku* are frequently regarded as a method of extra educational investment to gain an advantage in entrance examination competition. The argument is that since *juku* services need to be purchased, students from family households who can afford to send their child to *juku* stand a greater chance within the competitive race.

Even before the introduction of neoliberal principles into school education, *juku*, and particularly large-scale *juku*, had been gaining attention from the public and educators as institutions of excessive examination preparation. They thereby came to be regarded in the public and scholarly discourses as contributing to the exacerbation of examination competition as exemplified in the expression 'examination taking hell' (*juken jigoku*).

The focus on examination preparation is also considered to undermine school education with students in their *juku* lessons advancing faster than what is currently taught in school. For highly ambitious students who want to enter certain elite schools, the 'real' study takes place at *juku*.

So far the most obvious link between *juku* and examinations. However, this link merely covers one dimension to the functioning of *juku* within Japanese education. *Juku* roles are more diverse and this is reflected in the different types of *juku* that are referred to in the literature (for example Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010; Komiyama 1993, 2000; Roesgaard 2006). At one end are the *shingaku juku*, which have the main goal to get their students into top schools. At the other are remedial *juku* (*hoshū juku*, *kyūsai juku*), which are concerned with helping students keep up with school studies. The stronger the remedial function of a

*juku*, the broader the educational outlook and thereby the diversity of roles taken up.

In 1999, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) acknowledged *juku* as educational institutions under its Lifelong Learning Bureau. The reasons for this acknowledgement are complex and will be analysed in this thesis. Here it shall suffice to say that at least as an official stance, *juku* were not acknowledged in their examination preparing function, but for their potential to contribute to community-based learning. Clearly, the question is as to what extent *juku* can and do fulfil functions that go beyond examination preparation.

Another term that is frequently used in the academic literature on *juku* is the concept of shadow education. The term refers to private, out-of-school educational services that provide instruction in academic subjects. While the concept of shadow education, or the idea of *juku* as existing in the shadow of formal education, has been used in studies on *juku* in Japan at least since the 1970s, the concept gained international momentum with a 1999 UNESCO report by Mark Bray. This report defined some broad parameters of shadow education and gave an overview of private, out-of-school education services around the world.

The convenience of the term shadow education is obvious, given the private, unaccredited nature of these services. But even Bray has pointed to conceptual and methodological difficulties in using the concept. This stands true especially for Japan, where out-of-school education services in the form of *juku* have reached levels of sophistication leading to a blurring of lines between formal schooling and *juku*. The metaphor of a shadow is flawed as the existence of out-of-school services inevitably exerts influence on formal schooling. These services therefore not only shadow formal education but also shape developments in schooling. Moreover, large-scale *juku* companies have already ventured into accredited schooling by forming collaborations with regular schools (Takahama 2015). On the one hand, researchers have theorised such

developments as the further institutionalisation of Japanese shadow education (Mori & Baker 2010). Given these recent trends, on the other hand, it is necessary to ask what aspects of the Japanese *juku* landscape can (still) be considered shadow education, or whether there are other ways to conceptualise the relational standing of *juku* within Japanese education.

## Structure

The thesis is split up into two main parts: Part I provides an overview of the central features of Japanese education, *juku*, the research literature on *juku*, and presents the research questions and methodology. Chapter 1 lays out the characteristics of Japanese formal schooling, such as the overall schooling structure, entrance examinations, and the official Course of Study (sub-chapter 1.1). Then the *juku* landscape's major features will be broadly outlined to show the scale of the sector in contemporary Japanese society (sub-chapter 1.2). The last sub-chapter (1.3) explains the main tendencies in *juku* research and positions the contribution of this thesis in the research landscape on *juku*.

Chapter 2 presents the research questions to be addressed and the methodology as well as theoretical perspective employed. The methodology consists of an analysis of educational policy documents, related works on formal schooling in Japan, studies on *juku*, as well as interview data collected among *juku* stakeholders to identify the roles of *juku* and their transformation within Japanese education.

Part II constitutes the analysis of *juku* within Japanese education. Chapter 3 will analyse the major developments of post-war formal schooling, as well as its central characteristics and issues. This chapter provides the context for the developments in the *juku* sector, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

The main post-war developments of the *juku* sector are the focus of Chapter 4. The chapter carries together the existing data on the sector's growth throughout the post-war years and discusses these developments within the

changes that occurred within formal schooling as discussed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 5 reviews the research literature on *juku*. It will clarify the research interests that have guided previous studies and what we have come to understand of the *juku* sector through them. The review starts out with carrying together studies on shadow education examining the ways in which this concept has been applied to the Japanese context. Then other studies, which do not use the idea of shadow education, are grouped together according to what constitutes the focus of these studies, especially issues raised regarding *juku*'s influence on entrance examination preparation (sub-chapter 5.2), the gap society (sub-chapter 5.3), as well as the theorisation of a double structure in Japanese education and the diversity of *juku* types (sub-chapter 5.4). The review shows that *juku* are frequently conceptualised as shadowing formal schooling, with their educational content being defined by what is being taught in school. Their functions therefore have been predominantly conceptualised in relation to formal school education and entrance exams as serving the purpose of improving scholastic ability (*gakuryoku kōjō*) (sub-chapter 5.5).

Picking up the findings from the literature review, chapter 6 examines the collected interview data for the diversity of *juku* roles. The data analysis presented here shows the spectrum of functions that *juku* fulfil, giving evidence to the diversity of *juku* roles that go beyond a narrow focus on the improvement of scholastic ability relevant to academic knowledge necessary for entrance examinations. Rather, *juku* take up functions that relate not only to formal schooling but also functions central to students' broader socialisation.

Carrying the findings of the analysis of formal schooling developments and educational policy documents literature review, and empirical data together the conclusion (chapter 7) discusses the diversity of *juku* roles. The major formal schooling/educational policy developments as well as sector-internal changes will be recapitulated to clarify how these developments have impacted *juku* functions. The overall analysis shows that the potential of *juku* to take up a

variety of educational roles is more important than ever given that the official discourse on education promotes neoliberal ideas, such as the marketisation of education, an emphasis on competition, and self- (or family) responsibility for a child's education. It also concludes that *juku* are not shadow education in the traditional sense of shadowing the formal education system and merely being defined by what is being taught in schools and the entrance examination system.

Finally, the limitations of this thesis will be pointed out and an outlook given as to future research on *juku*. This last section makes a call for further empirical research at *juku* of a variety of scale and target audience, as well as data collection among other stakeholders in education, including students, parents, teachers, and policy-makers.



## Part I Overview and analytical focus

Part I of this thesis will provide the background to Japanese education in general (sub-chapter 1.1) and the *juku* landscape in particular (sub-chapter 1.2). It will also broadly outline the research tendencies on *juku* (sub-chapter 1.3). The second chapter presents the central questions addressed and the methodology used for analysis.

### 1. The background: Japanese education and *juku*

#### 1.1 Characteristics of Japanese education

The education system in post-war Japan was restructured under the influence of the occupation forces resulting in the Fundamental Law of Education (*Kyōiku Kihon Hō*) issued in March of 1947. Together with the new constitution, it presented a cut with the nationalist and militarist ideology of pre- and war period Japan to include democratic principles (Okano & Tsuchiya 1999: 30-33). As Okano & Tsuchiya point out, the Fundamental Law of Education was “like the educational constitution [...]. All legislation related to education now had to conform to the Law” (1999: 33). Within the Law, Article 26 guaranteed everyone “the right to receive education as a fundamental human right” (ibid.). The Law was revised in 2006 in order to fit the context of contemporary society (MEXT 2007). Parts of this revision will be taken up again in chapter 3 as to what understanding of education is being defined and the implications these carry in analysing current and future *juku* roles.

In terms of structure, the schooling system that was set up was re-organised from a pre-war multi-track system (Okano & Tsuchiya 1999: 30), to a single-track 6-3-3-4 system (see figure 1). Compulsory education now encompassed elementary schools and the newly established junior high schools. Beyond compulsory education were set high school and university.

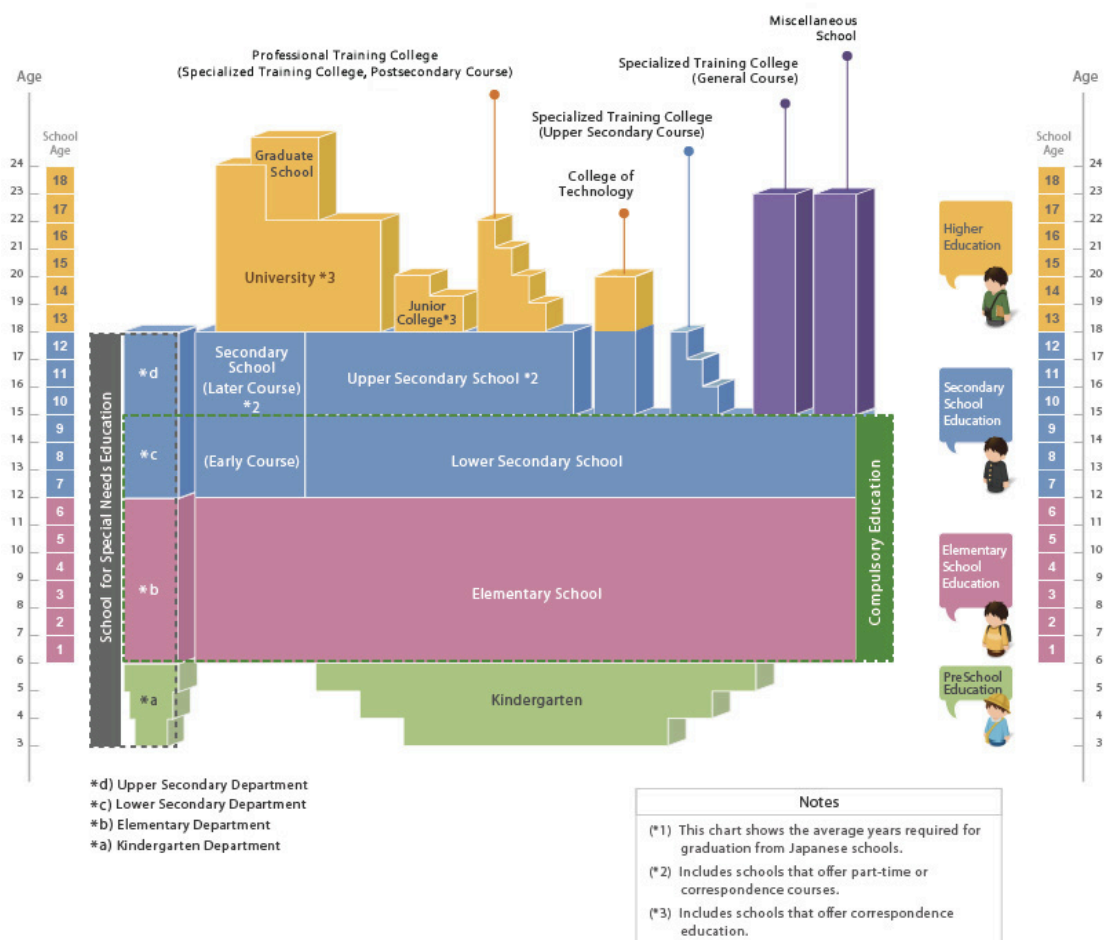


Figure 1. The current Japanese schooling system (source: MEXT, n.d.).

In this thesis, what is referred to as formal schooling will encompass accredited schools, which fulfil the MEXT standards for the establishment of schools as laid out in the School Education Act (*gakkō kyōiku hō*). Broadly categorised, the formal schooling landscape from the primary to tertiary levels is split up into national (*kokuritsu*), public (*kōritsu*), and private (*shiritsu*) schools. National schools are established either by national university corporations<sup>2</sup> (*kokuritsu daigaku hōjin*), or the National Institute of Technology (*dokuritsu gyōsei hōjin kokuritsu kōtō senmon gakkō kikō*), public schools by local governments, and private schools by private education corporations. Among the three categories, only public schools are managed by the local education boards (*kyōiku iinkai*) in

<sup>2</sup> Since 2004, state and public universities have undergone corporatisation.

their respective prefecture/city, in such matters as the selection of textbooks, setting curriculum details, and the appointment and training of teachers.

Schooling level	School type	Student numbers
Elementary school	national	40,268
	public	6,425,754
	private	77,082
Junior high school	national	31,026
	public	3,190,799
	private	243,390
High school	national	8,623
	public	2,268,162
	private	1,042,329
Integrated school	national	3,142
	public	21,466
	private	7,709

*Table 1. Distribution of student numbers by school type and schooling level 2015 (source: Japanese Research Institute for Private Education 2016).*

As can be seen from table 1 most students attend public schools, with the share of students attending private schools growing especially at the high school level. The table also shows the attendance numbers of students at so-called integrated schools (*chūkō ikkan kō*<sup>3</sup>). Until the late 1990s, this integrated school type was dominated by private schools that used a school-internal escalator system that did not require entrance examinations at the transition between junior high and high school. In 1998, the establishment of public integrated

<sup>3</sup> The official Japanese term for these integrated schools is *chūtō kyōiku gakkō*. In Japanese, however, they are more often referred to as *chūkō ikkan kō*, which literally translates to 'junior high/high school integrated schools'.

schools became possible after an amendment to the School Education Act, resulting in a steep increase in their numbers from three in 2000 to 96 in 2010 (Yokota, 2013: 155).

The establishment of such schools in the public school sector has been successful if judged by their reputation as *shingakkō*, or academic schools that produce high rates of graduates entering prestigious universities. Unlike public junior high schools, these integrated schools set entrance examinations at the entry into junior high. This comparatively new school type, therefore, has brought with it a shift in 'crucial' examination taking in a student's school career at a younger age.

The dominance of public schools in primary and secondary education is reversed at the tertiary level of education. In the post-war restructuring of Japanese education, pre-war elite institutions, comprised of the imperial universities of Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Tohoku, Kyushu, Hokkaido and Nagoya that were changed into national universities, pre-war technical colleges (*kōsen*) and teachers' colleges were upgraded to universities as well. Figure 2 gives an overview of the development of university numbers in post-war Japan.

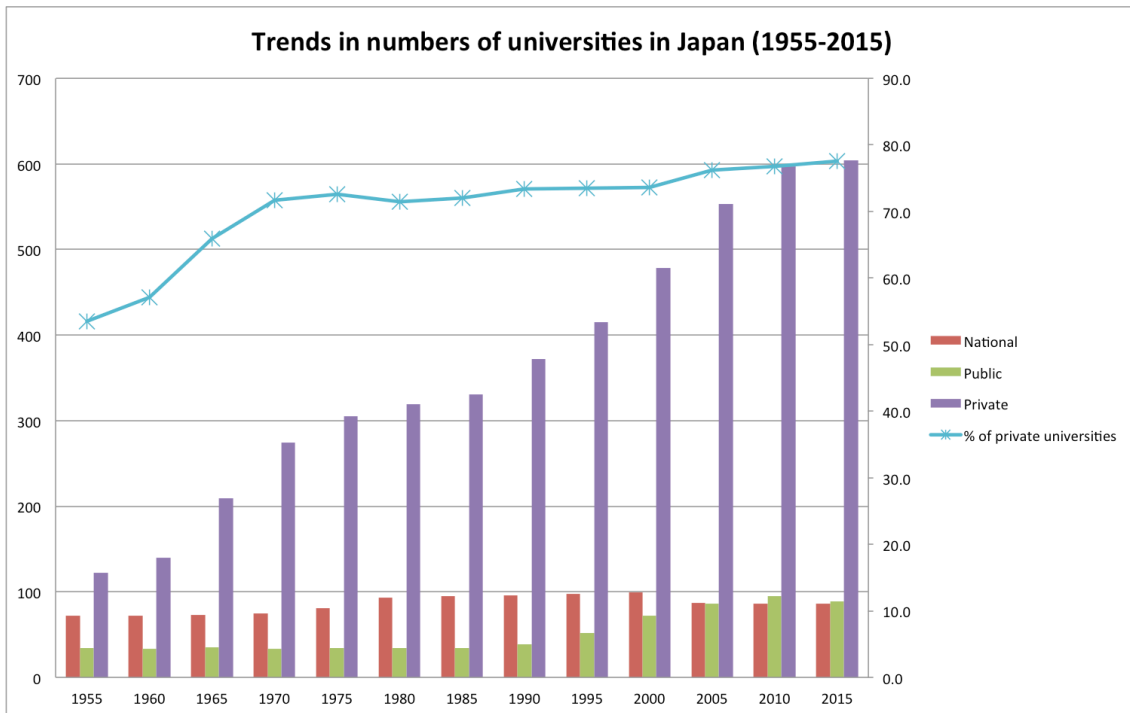


Figure 2. Trends in numbers of universities in Japan 1955-2015 (source: Gakkō Kihon Chōsa, Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).

As can be seen from the graph, expansion at the higher education level relied considerably on private institutions. Private university numbers showed a weak increase between the mid-1970s to the latter half of the 1980s. Nakazawa points out that even though the higher education advancement rate had reached the 50% mark in 1978, it remained at a standstill throughout the 1980s (2014: 4). This was due to stricter policies aimed at regulating the establishment of private universities. These were loosened in the mid 1980s in anticipation of an expected increase in the 18-year old population by the end of the 1980s with the second babyboomer generation (born between 1971-74) moving through formal schooling.

The current system of university entrance examinations consists of a variety of admission methods as given in table 2.

Entrance Examination Method	Method Outline
General Entrance Examination (Ippan Nyushi)	Scholastic ability test conducted by individual universities
Center Exam (Sentaa Shiken)	Set by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations; applicants for public and national universities are required to take this exam if they choose to take the general examinations of individual universities; the Center Exam can also be utilized by private universities
AO (Admission Office) Entrance Exam	Comprehensive evaluation of the applicant's scholastic aptitude, willingness to study, and sense of purpose based on a detailed screening process of submitted application documents and interviews
Entrance Examination by Recommendation for designated schools	Assessment conducted via study reports and interviews of applications recommended by the school principals of university designated high schools
Open Entrance Examination by Recommendation	Not limited to university designated high schools, but requires the recommendation of the school principal
Entrance Examination by Self-Recommendation	No school principal recommendation needed
Entrance Examination for Returnees	For returnees who have spent two or more years in an overseas secondary education institution
Entrance Examination for Working Persons	For persons who upon graduation from high school entered the workforce

*Table 2. Main types of university entrance examination methods (source: Sakurada 2013: 23).*

To what extent these different admission methods are employed depend on the university. National universities, however, continue to rely heavily on examinations testing students' scholastic ability based on supposedly objective mark-sheet tests. Especially examination preparation for the center exam and the general entrance exam of individual universities is strongly associated with the *juku/yobikō* sector's expertise in teaching problem-solving techniques, its use of mock examinations (*mogi shiken*), and the collection and analysis of exam results utilised as prediction tools for a student's chance at passing. Changing this focus on the one-dimensional assessment of examinees' abilities is currently high on the priority list of educational policy makers. The newest reform attempts are aimed at improving the high school-university transition (*kōdai setsuzoku shisutemu kaikaku*), which includes a major overhauling of the university entrance examination system with the purpose of moving away from memory-based testing to the assessment of a variety of student abilities.

This transition reform recognises the need for the alignment of curricular content in formal schooling, entrance exams, and university education. The reform therefore addresses the issue of frequent misalignment between what students learn at school, and what knowledge is required of them for entrance exams. There are various reasons for this misalignment: Entrance examinations into public schools are required to keep the tested content within what is stipulated by the official Course of Study. However, while all MEXT-accredited schools are required to set their curricula according to the CoS, gaps between set CoS standards and what is actually taught and understood by students are inevitable. Moreover, private schools have greater freedom in setting their examination content, and especially private *shingakkō* have made it their custom to greatly exceed the ‘minimum standard’ of the CoS in setting their entrance exam content.

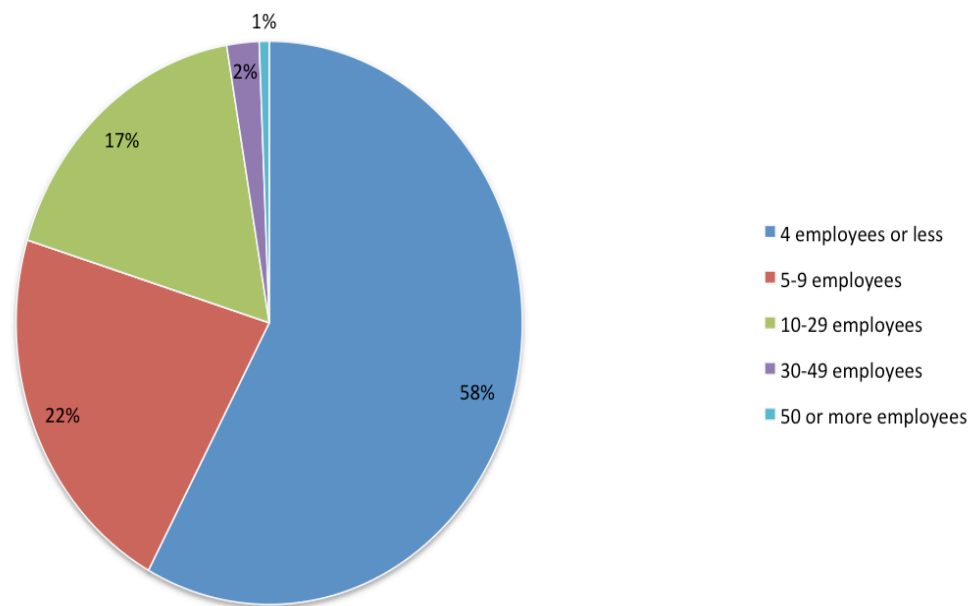
The CoS, therefore, is a major defining element of Japanese formal schooling. Changes to the CoS are made about every ten years and mirror political and economic concerns over what skills and knowledge should be fostered through school education and have not gone without contention in the public discourse. Chapter 3 will further examine the CoS revisions and clarify the changes in the expected skills and knowledge of students as expressed through a re-definition of scholastic ability (*gakuryoku*).

## 1.2 The *juku* landscape

Over the post-war years, the *juku* sector has grown into a major education industry and firmly established itself in the Japanese education landscape. This sub-section will present data on the scale of *juku* enterprises and will give initial insights into the diversity of *juku*.

In 2012, the overall number of *juku* was at 49,319 schools, with a total number of 337,436 employees (Japanese Government Statistics Department 2016). Taking a closer look at the scale of these *juku* enterprises, more than half (58%) are small-scale with four or less employees (figure 3). Focusing on

employment distribution by *juku* scale, of the 337,436 persons employed in the *juku* sector in 2012, 42% (142,705) were working at *juku* with 10-29 employees, and 40% (132,220) at *juku* with up to nine employees (figure 4). This breakdown offers interesting insights, as the high share of small-scale *juku* is indicative of a landscape of *juku* that operate locally and with personnel constraints.



*Figure 3. Scale of juku enterprises in 2012 (based on employee numbers). (source: 2014 Economic Census Activity Survey, Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).*



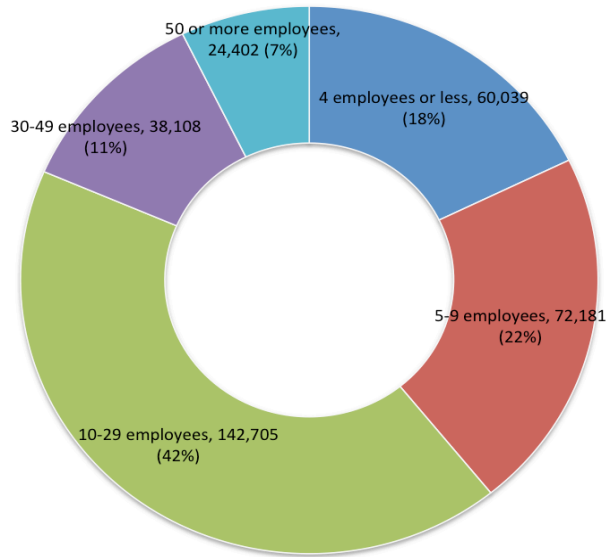


Figure 4. Employee distribution by juku scale in 2012 (source: 2014 Economic Census Activity Survey, Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).

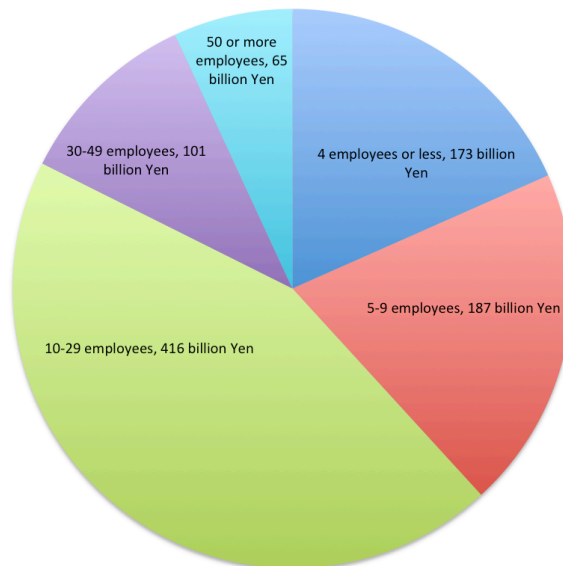


Figure 5. Sales volume per juku scale in 2012. (source: 2014 Economic Census Activity Survey, Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).

These numbers show that most *juku* operate as small- to mid-scale businesses. Of the 940 billion overall *juku* sector sales volume in 2012, 82% was generated by *juku* with up to 29 employees (figure 5). As figure 5 shows, *juku* with 10-29 employees have produced 416 billion (44%) in sales. But what deserves even greater attention is the share of *juku* with only up to 9 employees, as these *juku* are responsible for 38% of the overall sales volume. Therefore, not only in total numbers, but also in terms of overall economic relevance for the sector, small- to mid-scale *juku* play an important part.

These statistical figures clarify the need for paying greater attention to especially the smaller *juku* as there appears to be a market for educational needs that smaller businesses are able to cater to and maintain a market niche in. Still, it also has to be pointed out that market monopolisation is well under way. First, out of the 49,319 *juku*, 20,703 (42%) are part of franchises. So even though there is a considerable number of small-scale *juku*, those operating as franchises are less independent and more likely to depend on the franchiser in such aspects as teaching materials and personnel decisions. Second, these franchising companies are part of a quickly changing *juku* market dominated by mergers and acquisitions (M&A). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to lay out the complexities of the market trends of which company bought and/or acquired how many shares of another. But it is important to keep this trend in mind as franchising and M&A are useful tools utilised by *juku* companies in a competitive market as a survival strategy.

Overall *juku* attendance rates are hard to measure since investment into these services is the voluntary and private decision of a family. The data provided by MEXT and the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) in their annual Survey report on the nationwide state of scholastic ability and learning (*zenkoku gakuryoku/gakushū jōkyō chōsa hōkokusho*) give an idea of the scale of *juku* attendance among elementary school 6<sup>th</sup> graders and junior high school 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Figures 6 & 7 show the development of average *juku*

attendance rates for both student groups.

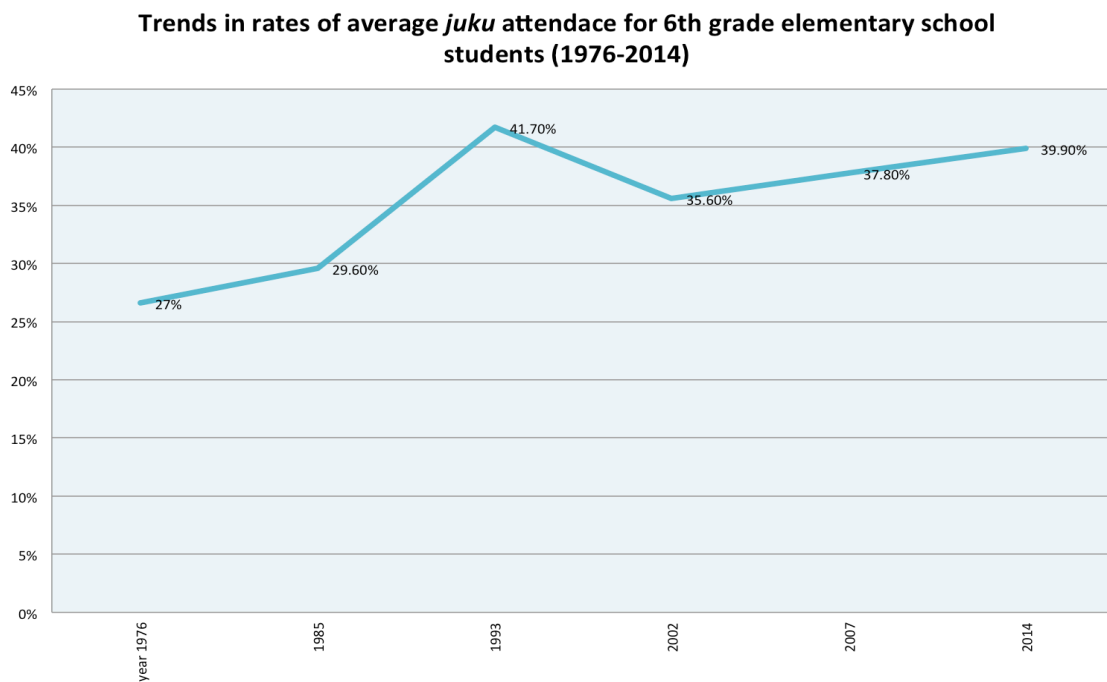


Figure 6. Development of average *juku* attendance rates for 6<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school students (sources: MEXT 2008, 2014a; MEXT & NIER 2014).

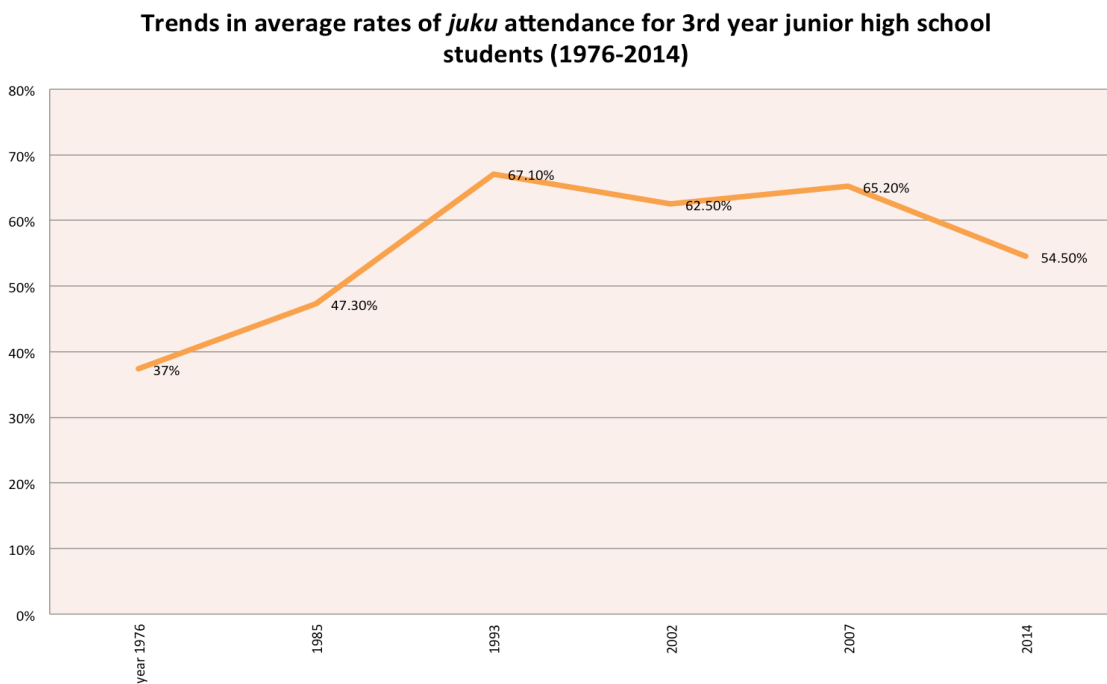


Figure 7. Development of average *juku* attendance rates for 3<sup>rd</sup> year junior high school students (sources: MEXT 2008, 2014a; MEXT & NIER 2014).

The above *juku* attendance rates show that *juku* have become an almost 'natural' part of students' schooling experience at various levels in their schooling careers. Low birth rates and the expanding private and/or integrated school sector have led the *juku* market to target younger age groups. A further analysis of the transformations that the *juku* landscape has undergone throughout Japan's post-war years will be discussed in chapter 4.

### 1.3 Research on *juku*

The data provided in sub-chapter 1.2 have shown the scale of a considerable education industry that is not part of the accredited realm of formal schooling. Given the *juku* sector's scale, *juku* have received attention both in the public and academic discourse. There is no lack of especially journalistic materials on the sector (for example Chiba 2014, Kawakami 2012). These often serve promotion purposes and are therefore not subject to the analysis here. The review will also include *yobikō*, as some of the major players in this industry are companies that started out as pure university entrance preparatory schools and now have developed a variety of supplementary education services.

While the literature on *juku* is diverse, research on the sector has been limited. Research conducted directly at *juku* cannot be made out until the mid 1980s. Other studies, especially in the fields of education and sociology have addressed the various effects of *juku*. A detailed review of relevant *juku* studies will be conducted in chapter 5. This sub-chapter will give an overview of the existing research body on the sector to clarify the research tendencies.

A major trend among the studies that either directly make *juku* the target of their observations or address *juku* indirectly in the context of educational issues that constitute the respective studies' focus is the discussion of *juku* in relation to entrance examinations. This is the most obvious and least surprising tendency but should still be made explicit here, especially as this thesis focuses on an analysis of the diversification of *juku* roles. The strong

connection between *juku* and entrance examinations continues up to the present, but the nature of this connection has undergone changes and is very much dependent on the changes taking place in formal schooling and the entrance examination system. Put differently, both formal schooling and entrance examinations frame what is taught at and expected of *juku*.

The studies focusing on *juku* in relation to entrance examinations primarily problematise *juku*, or more specifically *yobikō* attendance at the high school and post-high school level with entrance examination competition into university (Sekiguchi 1956, Zeng 1999). Less attention has been given to the pressures of entrance examination competition at the primary schooling level for entrance examinations at the junior high level (Iwase 2005a/b, 2006, 2009, 2010; Tsuneyoshi 2013). This is understandable as preparatory education for university entrance exams has a longer history in post-war Japan than the comparatively recent spread of integrated schools with the accompanying need for early examination preparation.

Closely associated with the thematisation of *juku* and the system of entrance examinations is a focus on *juku* attendance and the actual effects on students' scholastic ability (*gakuryoku*). Studies with this focus are located in the field of sociology and analyse statistical data collected for students' academic performance at school together with additional information on use of out-of-school education services such as *juku* and home tutoring, educational aspirations and students' socio-economic background (Seiyama 1981, Seiyama & Noguchi 1984).

Since the 2000s discussions of social and educational inequalities are taken up frequently in public discourses. In Japan, these discussions surrounding inequalities refer to Japanese society as a 'gap society' (*kakusa shakai*). Kariya & Yamaguchi (2013) have pointed out the difficulty of translating the term *kakusa*. While the authors concede that the term lacks clarity, the authors understand *kakusa shakai* as a society characterised by inequality (*fubyōdō*) (2013: 4). The term 'gap society' is used here to imply the widening

socio-economic and educational chasm dividing social strata, as well as the difficulty of social upward mobility in contemporary Japanese society.

Within this context, studies that focus on *juku* discuss them as one option for a family's educational investment strategy. Here, *juku* are problematised as educational services that help to maintain and strengthen inequalities, advantaging those families and students with sufficient monetary leeway (Sugasawa 2006, Mimizuka 2007). The studies also give an idea of the increasing institutionalisation of *juku* as a 'normal' part of students' educational careers by providing insights into previous parental generation use of *juku* services (Katase & Hirasawa 2008).

With both parents and students sharing the experience of *juku* attendance, *juku* have established their position besides formal schooling. The next major grouping of studies pays attention to this fact. These studies conceptualise a double structure in Japanese education (Rohlen 1980) and put the focus on sector internal diversity (Komiyama 1993, 2000; Roesgaard 2006; Yūki et al. 1987). For the variety of *juku*, sub-categories are defined based on whether *juku* primarily specialise in examination preparation or remedial instruction to help students keep up with school content. In contextualising this diversity, reference is made to developments in formal schooling, policy developments, and society (Komiyama 1993, 2000; Roesgaard 2006). The studies thereby contribute to considering *juku* functions in connection to a broader set of educational needs created by shortcomings in the formal schooling system.

The last major group of studies employ the concept of shadow education to discuss *juku* in Japanese education (Baker et al. 2001, Baker & LeTendre 2005, Mori & Baker 2010, Stevenson & Baker 1992). Research interests in this group take into consideration the preparatory and remedial functions of *juku* with a focus on the effect of *juku* attendance on the improvement of scholastic ability employing statistical data (Baker et al. 2001, Baker & LeTendre 2005, Entrich 2014, Stevenson & Baker 1992). With the

exception of the research by Mori & Baker (2010), this set of studies therefore continues in the tradition of the earlier mentioned studies on *juku* attendance effects on scholastic ability, but subsumes *juku* and other out-of-school educational services under the term shadow education.

This short overview of research tendencies on *juku* shows that greater attention has been given to how *juku* may or may not affect students' scholastic ability levels, and this predominantly in connection to entrance exams. Different *juku* types and functions have been categorised, but research that contextualises *juku* within developments in the broader education landscape over the post-war years is rare (Komiya 1993, 2000; Mori & Baker 2010; Roesgaard 2006). This thesis will add to these studies by further clarifying *juku* developments and roles within Japanese education. Chapter 2 will lay out the research questions and methodology.

## 2. Research questions and methodology

This chapter will give an overview of the main research questions and the methodology with which to address these. Since the purpose of this thesis is to add to the current research literature on *juku* developments and provide an updated analysis of *juku's* current position within Japanese education the methodology employed consists first of all of an analysis of official documents, studies and statistics on post-war Japanese education and the *juku* sector to set the background and context of major developments. Second, a review of literature clarifies what kind of insights research has given so far into the *juku* sector, what understandings of *juku* underlie these studies, and also identifies knowledge gaps. Finally, interview data was collected among *juku* stakeholders to analyse how they view their roles and what needs they fulfil within education.

The main research questions are as follows:

- 1 What are the major developments in education during post-war Japan?
- 2 What are the major developments in the *juku* sector during post-war Japan?
- 3 How are these developments in both sectors related?
- 4 What does the research landscape on *juku* look like?
- 5 What is the current state of *juku*?
- 6 How useful are the definitional categories applied to *juku* so far?
- 7 Why are *juku* (still) relevant?
- 8 Can the *juku* sector be considered as shadow education?

Chapters 3 and 4 address questions 1~3 and rely on both official statistics and studies on the development of Japanese education and *juku*. This will be followed by a review of *juku* literature to clarify what research has been done so far (question 4). Questions 5~8 will be addressed and discussed in chapters 6 and 7, relying on the analysis of interviews conducted with *juku* representatives and relating these findings back to the existing body of literature and



developments determined in the previous chapters.

## 2.1 Methodology

For the investigation of *juku* roles in Japanese education, the thesis relies on the analysis of academic studies on education and *juku*, publicly available statistics, as well as data collection through fieldwork for which semi-structured interviews were conducted. The literature review is based on a collection of studies on *juku* in both Japanese and English that have been published in the post-war period up until 2014.

For the literature review on *juku*, materials were first searched in the database for Japanese articles CiNii. This database was chosen as it allows for literature search of the main Japanese databases such as the National Diet Library (*Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan*), academic societies and the bulletins and repositories of Japanese universities. In addition, search was conducted in the Discovery Service database of Osaka University allowing for a comprehensive search of the university's databases of affiliated libraries, magazines and journals. This also allowed search for English literature. Table 3 gives an overview over the terms used for the literature search:

CiNii database search terms
<i>juku</i> , <i>gakushū juku</i> (academic <i>juku</i> ), <i>hoshū juku</i> (remedial <i>juku</i> ), <i>shingaku juku</i> (preparatory <i>juku</i> )
<i>Yobikō</i>
<i>gakkō gai kyōiku</i> (out-of-school education)
Supplementary education
<i>juken</i> (examination-taking), <i>juken benkyō</i> (studying for exams), <i>juken kyōsō</i> (examination-taking competition), <i>juken jigoku</i> (examination hell), <i>chūgaku juken</i> (junior high school entrance examination taking), <i>kōkō juken</i> (high school entrance examination taking), <i>daigaku juken</i> (university entrance examination taking)
<i>kyōiku tōhi</i> (educational investment)
Shadow education

Table 3. Overview of search terms.

Publication dates for the literature search were set for Japan's entire post-war period. For the literature review, only those articles and books were analysed that focus on topics of one or more of the search terms of table 3 for post-war Japan. The collected materials were analysed for what constitutes the research interests/foci, the educational issues that are addressed, how *juku* are conceptualised within them, as well as the contributions and limitations. Also, further literature was extracted from the collected materials' list of references. The literature from these reference lists was selected based on whether the referenced materials were thematising one or more of the keywords used for the literature search. As with the materials of the previous round of literature collection, these were analysed for the research questions laid out above.

The analysis of major post-war developments in education and *juku* (questions 1~3) relies on official policy documents and reports on education and *juku* as

well as literature on educational issues. Relevant materials were selected based on the issues in education addressed in the research body on *juku*. These materials provide the information necessary to contextualise the analysis of *juku* developments during the post-war years, the interview data, and the *juku* research literature.

The purpose of the interview data is to investigate the variety of *juku* types and functions. In order to collect data on *juku* variety, interviews with *juku* representatives and teachers were conducted. The empirical data collection of this thesis employs the same method of data collection as Roesgaard (2006), who conducted an analysis of different types of *juku* specialising in instruction of elementary school students. It, however, expands the analysis of *juku* variety to the junior and high school levels and provides an update on the variety of *juku*. The investigation of the current state of *juku* variety and functions will thereby answer questions 5-8.

For the interview survey, data was collected via semi-structured interviews with *juku* principals and teachers in the northern part of Osaka at each respective *juku* in either the teachers' office or the classrooms with the interviews lasting from 30 minutes to two hours and taped with a digital tape recorder. The time period of data collection was between autumn 2013 until autumn 2015. The interviews were conducted loosely based on a list of interview questions partially developed along Roesgaard's variable catalogue (table 4).

	<i>Shingaku juku</i>	<i>Hoshū juku</i>	<i>Kyōsai juku</i>	<i>Doriru juku</i>
<b>Atmosphere</b>	Competitive/stimulating	Relaxing/supportive	Nurturing/supportive	Relaxing (often home study)
<b>Focus of course</b>	Entrance exams	Catching up and school tests	Basic learning	Basic skills
<b>Relation to school</b>	None	Follow pace of classes, relations often close	Very little or none	None
<b>Students</b>	High performers	Average performers	Poor performers	All levels
<b>Teaching material</b>	Own texts	Homemade, commercial or school texts	Homemade, commercial or school texts	Own texts
<b>Size</b>	> 200 students, some franchise	< 200 students	< 100 students	Thousands
<b>Admission</b>	Entrance exam or test	Physical limits only	Physical limits only	No limits
<b>Advertising</b>	Commercial, <i>gōkakaritsu</i>	Word of mouth, pedagogy	Word of mouth, pedagogy	Commercial, in some cases pedagogy

Table 4. Roesgaard's (2006) catalogue of variables for *juku* categorisation.

Of course, it needs to be pointed out that these *juku* types are merely 'ideal types' (Roesgaard 2006: 50). This means that most *juku* will show a combination of the characteristics laid out in Roesgaard's catalogue of variables. Given that the above *juku* categories are ideal types, Roesgaard places the categorised *juku* on a continuum. The continuum visualises not only the spectrum of

scholastic ability levels that these *juku* cater to, it is also meant to imply that individual *juku* placed along this continuum might well be located between two (or more) categories.

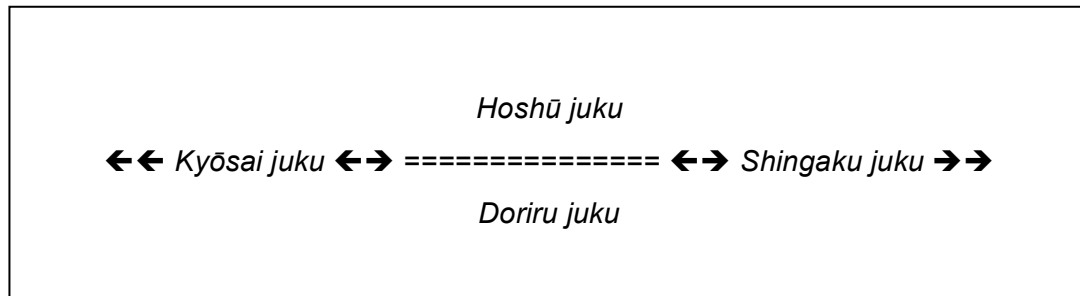


Figure 8. Roesgaard's (2006) *juku* continuum.

The major *juku* categories extracted in table, Roesgaard's structural variables as well as the *juku* continuum will serve as a blueprint for analysing the *juku* for which data was collected. The application of these *juku* categories to the data will allow an investigation into their empirical usefulness for *juku* that specialise in junior high and high school students. It also provides for an opportunity to discuss aspects of *juku* that are not captured by the existing catalogue of categories.

For the data collection among *juku* stakeholders, a set of interview questions was created. Questions were put together in four groupings that served the purpose of inquiring about each *juku's* general information, and questions about students, parents, and schools (see table 5). Since it was the purpose to allow for enough freedom in the interviewees' answers, the actual interviews did not strictly follow the order of the interview questions as laid out in table 5. Also, interviewees were asked for further interviews to further elaborate on comments given in previous interviews to allow for the collection of more in-depth data.

### **General information**

- ✧ How long does your *juku* exist?
- ✧ What age groups does your *juku* specialise on?
- ✧ How would you categorise your *juku*?
- ✧ How would you describe the academic levels of your students (academic high or low performers)?
- ✧ What is the average attendance rate of students at your *juku*?
- ✧ Teachers: mainly full-time or part-timers?
- ✧ How would you describe the region's characteristics?
- ✧ As an overall tendency, what are the challenges students face for each of the subjects instructed?
- ✧ In the case of *juku* already existing for longer: what changes have you perceived in the needs of students and parents?
- ✧ At what point in a student's schooling career do you think it is best for a student to attend *juku*? (Is it necessary?)
- ✧ What are your quality standards for teaching and how do you assure that these are maintained?
- ✧ Are there any 'educational ideals' that the *juku* overall (and/or the interviewee) bases teaching on?

### **About students**

- ✧ How do you try to motivate students for their studies?
- ✧ What are the expectations towards students nowadays (school, parents, *juku*)?
- ✧ What function do *juku* fulfil for students (ex.: place to study, socialising space, consultation etc)?

### **About parents**

- ✧ What expectations do parents carry to *juku*?
- ✧ In relation to the above: What functions do you *juku* fulfil for parents?

### **About school**

- ✧ How would you describe the relation between school and *juku* (in general and for your own *juku*)?
- ✧ How do schools perceive *juku*?
- ✧ Are there any functions that *juku* take over from schools?

*Table 5. List of interview questions.*

Only after the interviewees were explained the purpose of the research and had given written consent, which included the option to withdraw from the research at any time (see Ethical considerations further down), were the interviews initiated and taped with a digital recorder.

After data collection, interviews were transcribed, data was sorted and analysed in two steps. First, data was sorted according to Roesgaard's variables catalogue. In a second step, a thematic analysis for recurrent themes across the individual interviews was conducted. This latter approach was chosen to approach the data with as much openness as possible to identify interviewees' unique views and perceptions after which those themes relevant to the research interest were extracted (Hycner 1985).

Sampling procedures followed were theoretical or purposive as they "...assume that to explain real phenomena requires more than a faithful abstracted rendering of events and experiences. It requires direct engagement between theory and empirical accounts in an interpretative and inductive strategy of sampling" (Emmel 2013: 45). Accordingly, the three guiding principles of this approach also form this research's procedure characteristics:

First, interplay between theory and data collection, reflecting the researchers' concerns that there should always be a close relationship between theory and data collected. Secondly, decisions about who to sample as an ongoing process throughout the research, allowing researchers to change direction as the research progresses [...]. Finally, analysis of data and revision of the understanding of the phenomenon as a process that continues throughout the project rather than occurring as a discrete phase, generally after all data is collected.

Emmel 2013: 53.

The *juku* categories and variables that Roesgaard offers had been developed for an analysis of the junior high school entrance examination level. However, the

literature review process of this research has revealed an apparent difficulty to merely restrict the sample to this level of schooling. Therefore, in order to investigate the variety of the *juku* landscape, the target scope was broadened to include *juku* that offer educational services aimed at elementary to high school students.

## 2.2 Theoretical framing for analysis: determining the manifest and latent functions of *juku*

The above catalogue of *juku* categories developed by Roesgaard offers an initial distinction between different functions that *juku* fulfil. The analysis of *juku* functions provided in this thesis will add another theoretical layer to the investigation into different *juku* functions by distinguishing between the *intended* functions of main stakeholders in Japanese education and their *unintended* functions as both play out on the ground level. This theoretical distinction relies on Robert Merton's distinction between manifest and latent functions of social behaviours and institutions.

The distinction between manifest and latent functions derives from the acknowledgement of a difference between “those objective consequences for a specified unit (person, subgroup, social or cultural system) which contribute to its adjustment or adaption and were so intended [...] [and] unintended and unrecognized consequences of the same order” (Merton 2016: 69). Given this distinction, we may ask: What are the manifest and latent functions of schools, families, and *juku* and other related institutions in education, such as MEXT and the system of entrance examinations?

Throughout the analysis of this thesis this theoretical distinction will be applied to investigating the functions of *juku* within Japanese education. Also, such distinction will serve useful in analysing educational policy developments, their intent and actual consequences for the educational landscape within which *juku* operate. The thesis has limitations in conducting such analysis for all stakeholders involved as this would require an expanded historical examination



into how both manifest and latent functions for each of these actor have changed. The contribution of the analysis is, however, its clarification of some important functions fulfilled by *juku* and how manifest and latent functions of family and schools are now carried out by *juku*.

### 2.3 Ethical considerations and limitations

#### *Ethical considerations*

Ethics approval was obtained by the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Osaka University before the initiation of data collection. Before starting the interviews, the purpose of the research was explained and written consent (two consent forms signed by the researcher and the interviewee, with a copy each) was obtained. The consent form explicitly stated that the interviewees were able to withdraw from the research at any time and that their data would not be used in case of withdrawal. For privacy reasons, the names of the interviewees and the names of their *juku* are anonymised and are referred to by the same alphabet letter as their *juku* in the analysis of the following chapter.

#### *Limitations*

Before entering the analysis of the interview data, a few limitations regarding perspective and scope need to be pointed out. First, in terms of schooling levels, the discussion is merely focused on *juku* ventures at the elementary to high school levels. Second, even though collecting data on all the major stakeholders would offer a more comprehensive picture, the data are limited to in-depth interviews with *juku* representatives and teachers. Third, in terms of geographical range, the data were collected in the densely populated Kansai area. Accordingly, no conclusions or hypothetical assumptions can be made on less populated areas.

## **Part 2 Analysis of *juku* roles within Japanese education**

### **3. Formal schooling: characteristics and issues**

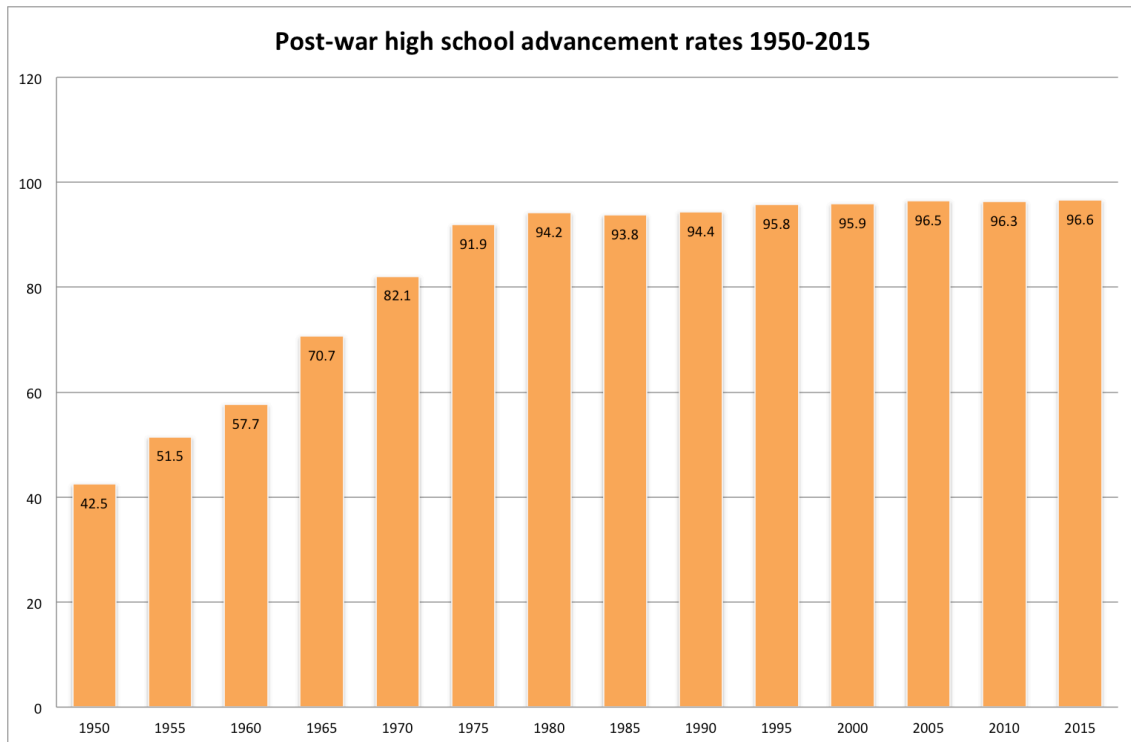
Chapter 3 focuses on post-war developments in Japanese formal schooling and discusses some central characteristics and issues that will relate to the analysis of *juku* roles within Japanese education. The chapter provides a discussion of important features of Japan's formal schooling landscape, which constitute the context to the developments in the *juku* sector analysed in the next chapter. Sub-chapter 3.1 lays out the characteristics of Japanese formal schooling by giving an overview of the expansion of participation in higher, non-compulsory levels of education (3.1.1) and discussing Japanese meritocracy in relation to this expansion (3.1.2). Then as a cut-off point, neoliberal reform trends since the 1980s will be focused on as the dominant political discourse which has led to far reaching changes in formal schooling (3.1.3). Sub-chapter 3.2 extracts the main points of the revisions of the Course of study showing the transformations of the understanding of knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire through schooling. It will be shown that more recent revisions have shifted the understanding of desired knowledge and skills and this has increased concerns over widening the gap in achievement among students. This then ties in with the final sub-chapter (3.3), which discusses the current discourse on the gap society and growing concerns over inequalities in education.

#### **3.1 Formal Schooling**

##### **3.1.1 Expansion of participation in formal schooling**

The restructuring of the post-war system of formal schooling into a single-track 6-3-3-4 system set compulsory education to encompass elementary to junior high school. This meant that greater numbers of students were not only required to attend junior high schools but were also eligible to move on to high school upon graduation. Despite the restructuring process facing major difficulties due

to severe economic and material limitations in the early post-war years (Okano & Tsuchiya 1999), high school advancement rates steadily increased reaching near universal attendance rate levels by the mid 1970s (figure 9).



*Figure 9. Development of post-war high school advancement rates 1950-2015 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2015).*

Figure 9 shows the development of advancement rates on to high school for post-war Japan. During Japan's period of high economic growth (1954-73) high school advancement rates continued on a steep rise reaching 90% by the end of this period (Nakazawa 2014). The increase took up momentum with the first generation of babyboomers (born between 1947-49) finishing junior high school and moving on to high school, causing the rates of those students advancing on to high school to increase from 64% in 1962 to reach the 70% mark in 1965. This educational expansion since the 1960s at the upper secondary level relied to a certain extent on private high schools for which attendance rates have

maintained at around 30% over the post-war years (Aizawa et al. 2009). In the decades to come, private schools turned into an attractive option for families as an alternative to public schools.

In the 1980s when Japan entered the period referred to as “bubble economy” (1986-1991) parents gained greater monetary leeway to invest into their children’s education. According to Akabayashi, the share of private junior high school students among the overall number of junior high students rose especially in the latter half of this decade (2010: 291/292). Figures 10 & 11 show the trends in numbers of students enrolled in private junior high and private high schools since the 1980s:

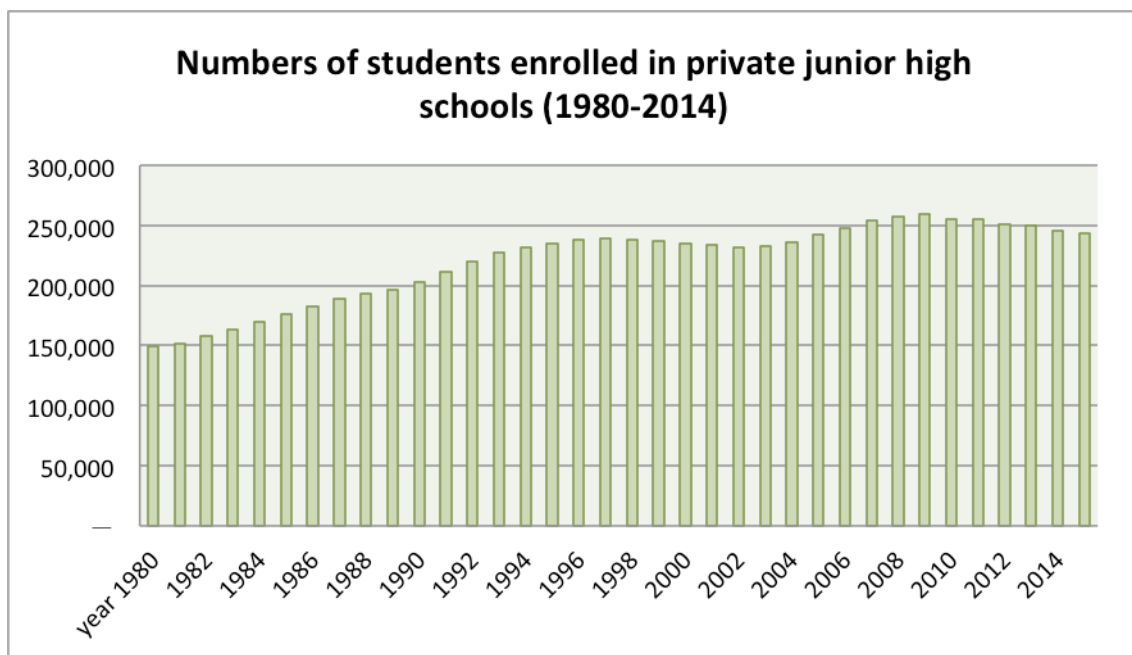
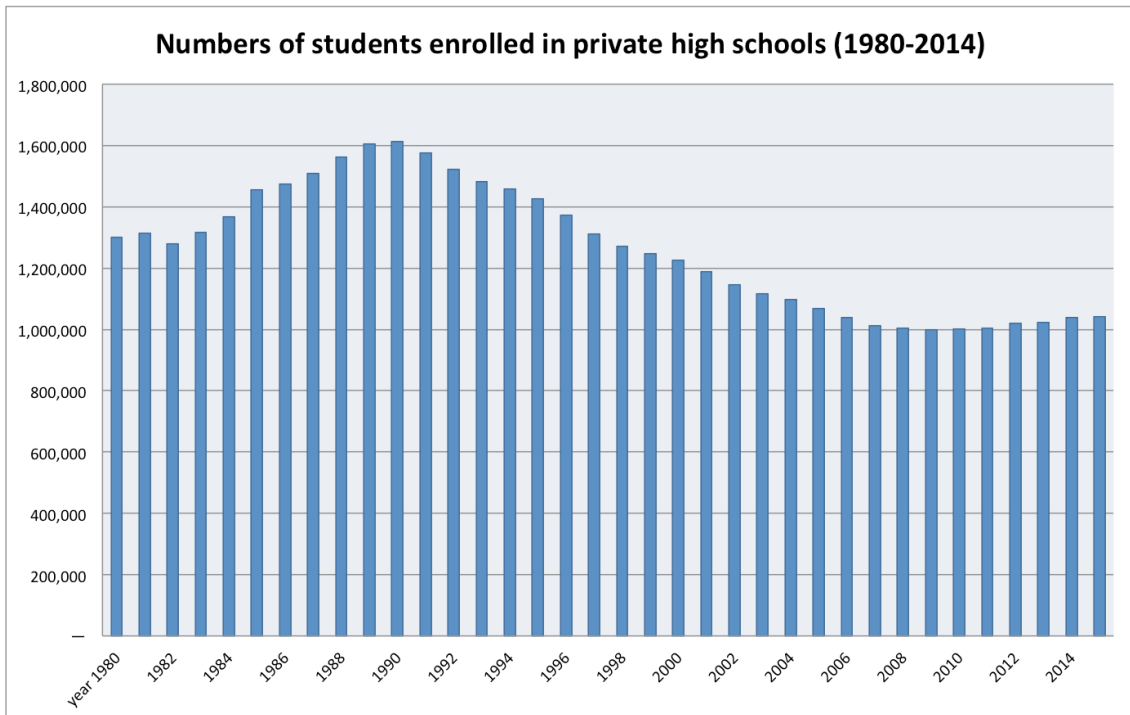


Figure 10. Trends in numbers of students enrolled in private junior high schools 1980-2014 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2015).



*Figure 11. Trends in numbers of students enrolled in private high schools 1980-2014 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2015).*

As can be seen from figures 10 and 11, private junior high and private high school student enrolment numbers increased throughout the 1980s. The decline in student numbers at private high schools since the early 1990s is due to declining birth rates and the second babyboomer generation (born between 1971-74) having passed through high school. But these numbers need to be put into perspective by taking into account regional differences since private schools tend to concentrate in urban areas where the share of the student population attending private schools is higher than the national average. Yet, the above figures give evidence to the existence of a private school sector that caters to a significant proportion of the Japanese student population. The importance of the private schooling sector is even more significant in post-secondary education.

At the level of tertiary education, university attendance rates have reached the 50% mark in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as shown in

figure 12.

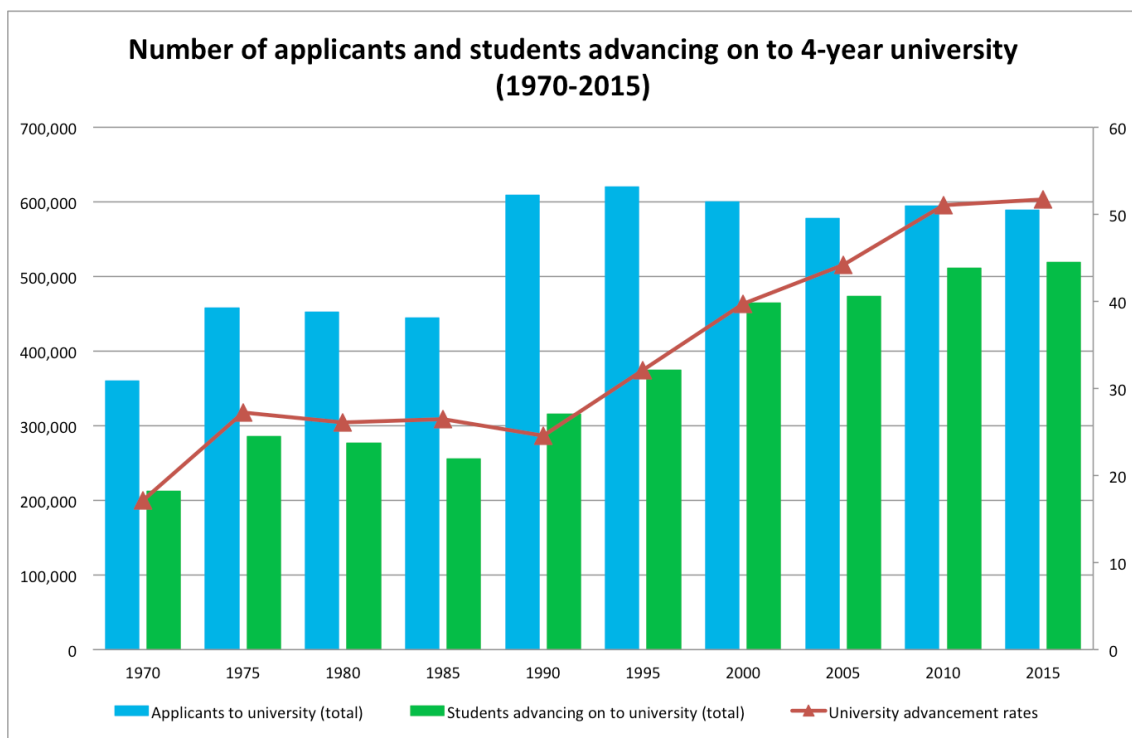


Figure 12. Trends in numbers of applicants and students advancing on to 4-year universities 1970-2015 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).

Advancement rates on to four-year universities had been stagnating from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, but started to show a steep increase afterwards. Entrance examination competition was fiercest in the early 1990s when the second babyboomer generation population was moving through high school and the peak in the 18-year old population reached in 1992 (MEXT 2003). Since then, the era of universal university entrance (*daigaku zennyū jidai*) was predicted to arrive in 2007 (Nakai 2007: 12), meaning that there would be as many university places available as there would be students eligible to advance on to university.

Lower-tier private universities have entered a period of increasingly fierce competition for students due to the decline in the 18-year old population. This competition was further intensified with the increasing establishment of

four-year private universities. From 1992 to 2006, 184 private four-year universities were established, of which 110 were former two-year colleges (Nakai 2007: 19). In the same period, the share of private universities not meeting their student quota increased from around seven percent in 1992 to 40 percent in 2006 (Nakai 2007: 17). At the other end of the university spectrum, national and top private universities have maintained their position and competition to get into these schools remains high.

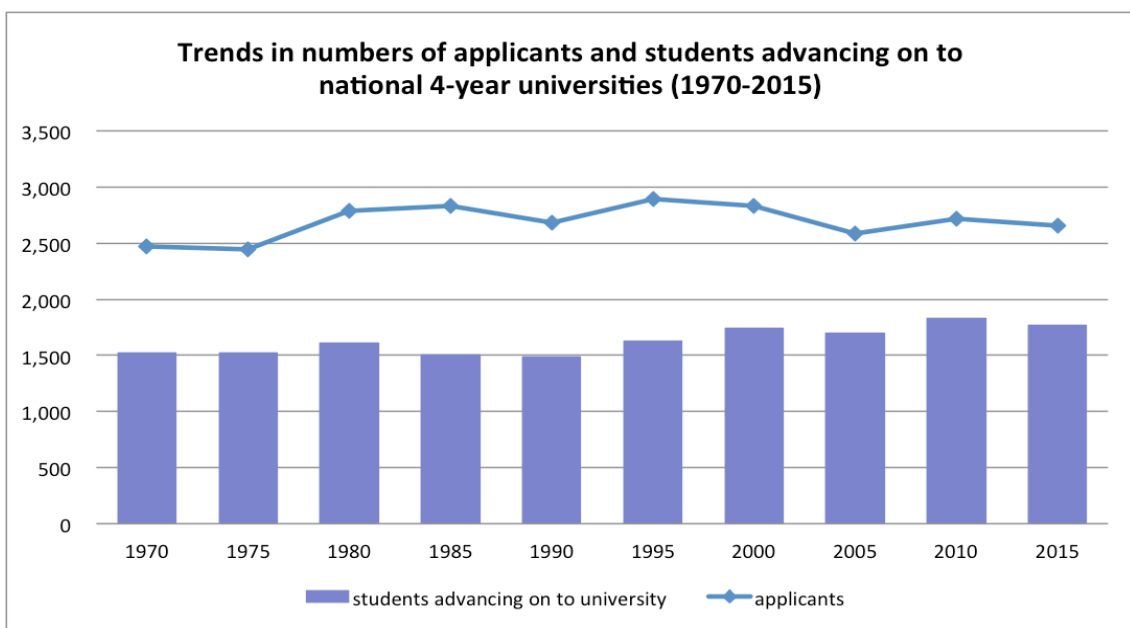


Figure 13. Trends in numbers of applicants and students advancing on to national 4-year universities 1970-2015 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).

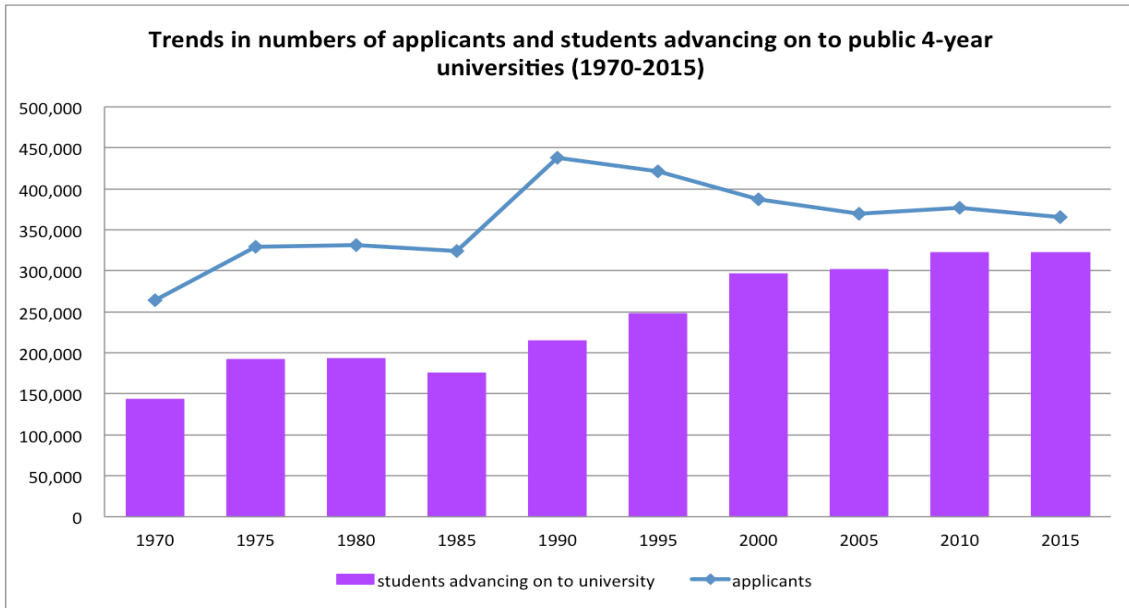


Figure 14. Trends in numbers of applicants and students advancing on to public 4-year universities 1970-2015 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).

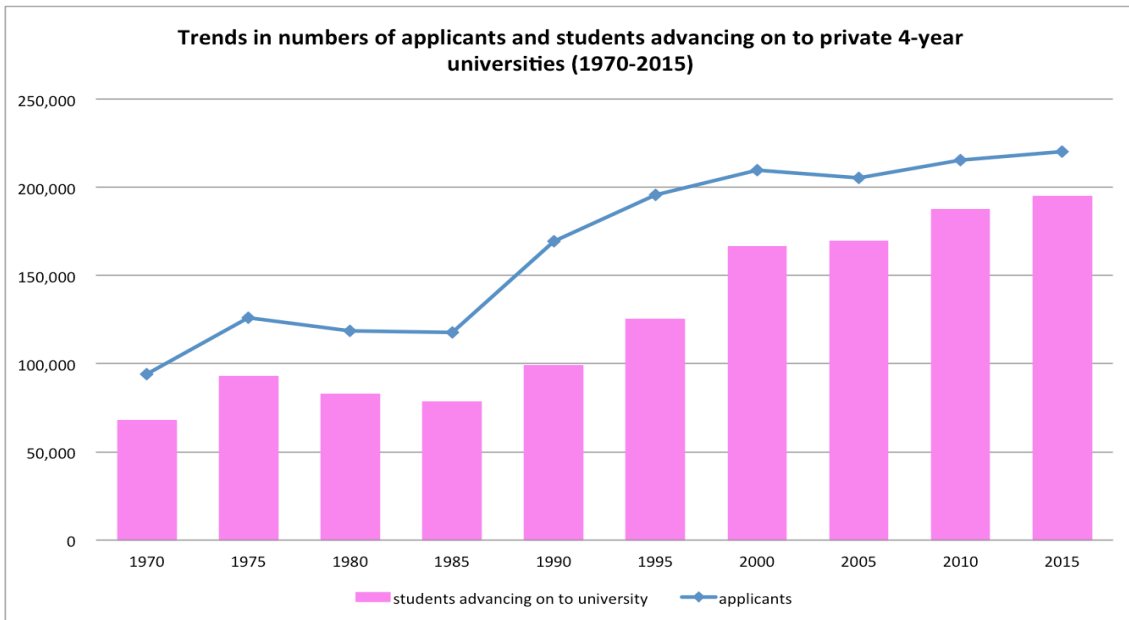


Figure 15. Trends in numbers of applicants and students advancing on to private 4-year universities 1970-2015 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).



Figures 13 to 15 give an overview of the development of applicant numbers to national, public and private four-year universities as well as the actual numbers of students entering. Taking aside top public and private universities, the chance of entering a public or private university for applicants has increased since the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet as can be seen from figure 12, university entrance rates seem to have reached a ceiling at around 50% since 2010. Why are numbers stagnating? While there are no easy answers, this phenomenon can be explained by looking at the development of Japan's meritocratic system, official policy discourses on education, and actual policy reforms conducted over the last 20-30 years.

### 3.1.2 Japanese meritocracy

In Japan, the high value attached to degrees, especially of prestigious institutions, is referred to as *gakureki shugi* (credentialism). In the public discourse, the emphasis on attaining certain degrees has been considered as a major cause for the examination hell (*juken jigoku*) and its accompanying phenomena of long study hours and cramming at *juku* and *yobikō*. Societal emphasis on credentials is both considered as reinforcing the system of entrance examinations and as being reinforced by this system. Here, we find a particular tension between ideas of egalitarian competition and the exacerbation of competition.

In *Taishū Kyōiku Shakai no Yukue* first published in 1995, Takehiko Kariya has analysed the post-war formation of Japanese mass education society (*taishū kyōiku shakai*). Kariya develops the argument that the formation of a mass education society took place in the decades of the 1950s to 1970s. The formation of this society was characterised by mass participation in education, the pursuit of perfunctory equality, the creation of a credentialist elite that is not defined by an obvious cultural identity, and a belief in the egalitarian nature of education that overlooks inequalities (Kariya 2009a: 199).

Kariya argues that the formation of this mass education society has made a contribution to Japan's economic growth by fostering workers who believe in meritocratic principles and are cooperative, enabling good relations between workers and the smooth running of companies' inner organisation (2009a: 200). Furthermore, it has contributed to the creation of a class-like order within society, in which people believe that their performance at school will decide their future, as well as the legitimisation of this order, by creating a psychological foundation among people upon which inequalities created through schooling are accepted (2009a: 201).

This is not to say that inequalities do not exist and exert influence on students' schooling careers. The point is that such inequalities are less likely to be thematised within a mass education society, especially as the content studied at school and the knowledge tested in examinations appear to be neutral and to not favour any particular social group (2009a: 203).

If credentials are thought to be the one decisive factor deciding a person's future, the road to achieving these must appear to display the greatest possible objectivity and must be open to participation for anyone who wishes to participate. At the same time, this system forms one of the main pillars for excessive entrance examination competition, which underwent increasing criticism after the high economic growth period had ended. The end of this period has marked a new phase for Japanese society and consequently for how the meritocratic education system came to be viewed. Kariya (2018) refers to the new period that Japan had entered from thereon as the post-catch up phase of Japanese society<sup>4</sup>. By the mid-1970s, Japan had reached equal standing with the economic powerhouses of the world. Together with the end of high economic growth, however, Japan was facing the task of redefining itself as a shaping

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<sup>4</sup> Kariya sets Japan's catch-up phase from the beginning of Meiji until the end of the high economic growth period. This catch-up phase was characterised by Japan's need to achieve equal developmental standing with Western countries since the opening up of Japan with the Meiji Restoration.

force in the global economy. For many in industry and politics, for Japan to maintain its competitive edge, Japan's meritocratic schooling system was increasingly seen to be an out-dated mechanism to foster and select future talented human resources. According to Kariya "right after the government recognised that Japan's catch-up had been completed in the late 1970s or early 1980s, they began arguing publically that meritocratic education in the catch-up period had become problematic" (2018: 297). From this period onward, neoliberal reforms in education came to be framed within the narrative of individualisation and creativity.

### 3.1.3 Neoliberalism in education

During the last three decades Japanese education and policy developments have been characterised by a shift toward neoliberal reforms. This shift can be traced back to the Ad Hoc Council on Education established in 1984 under the Nakasone Cabinet. The then government positioned the reform proposals that the Council was to issue during the three years of its existence (1984-87) as the 'Third Education Reform' of Japanese education, since the Meiji opening of Japan, and the post-war restructuring of Japanese education.

According to Shimahara "the educational reform movement of the 1980s [was] promoted by Japan's political concern with industrial development in the next several decades" (1995: 272). The government established the Ad Hoc Council seeing the need to advance major reforms in the education system to fit the country's changing employment structure, which was shifting from secondary to tertiary industry employment. Some scholars have pointed to one of the major purposes of the proposals to address the need for educational reform to foster human resources that could ensure Japan's leading position in the information and knowledge age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Shimahara 1995). These reform attempts were to be the first steps toward neoliberal reforms that led to major structural reforms under the Koizumi cabinet in the early 2000s (Saitō 2011).

Neoliberal thinking in policy reform puts an emphasis on the introduction of market principles and competition in previously tightly government controlled areas of public services and state-run enterprises. In the realm of education, neoliberal reforms have been criticised for providing the conditions under which greater educational inequalities could grow (Saitō 2011, Shimizu 2015). The Ad Hoc Council on Education and its reform proposals reflected the shift in what Japanese industry circles deemed necessary as human resources for Japan's industry and businesses to thrive and maintain future competitiveness. While Japan had relied on considerable manpower during the economic boom years, a changing industry landscape and employment patterns from the mid 1970s onward led to a discourse shift among Japanese businesses as to what type of future workers they would require: Japanese businesses in the economic boom years up to the early 1970s had strong demands for their employees to be equipped with a set of fundamental skills and knowledge, which influenced the Course of Study (CoS) leading to what was referred to in the public as *tsumekomī kyōiku*. With a gradual shift toward neoliberal restructuring of the economy after the 1973 oil shock, business circles started to change their demands toward formal education. Now, rather than having the entire student population be equipped with the same skills and knowledge, Japanese businesses started demanding greater diversification of students through the schooling process, fostering talented human resources that would constitute the country's future elite on the one hand, and the 'average' rest on the other.

It would take until the late 1990s and early 2000s under the cabinet of Junichi Koizumi for major parts of Japan's public services to undergo restructuring through neoliberal reforms. In education a major, albeit controversial, step toward achieving diversification and establishing the concepts of individualisation and creativity within the school curricula was made with the Course of Study revisions in the late 1990s to early 2000s.

### 3.2 The Course of Study (*Gakushū Shidō Yōryō*)

The official Course of Study (CoS) sets the content taught and studied at MEXT-accredited schools. In the case of public schools, the CoS also defines the content of what the schools are allowed to test in their entrance exams. Undergoing revision every ten years, changes to the CoS deliver insights into the expectations of leading circles in politics and industry toward school education as to what skills, knowledge, and even character traits students are supposed to acquire.

In the following, a brief overview of the post-war revisions of the CoS will be given. This sub-chapter will not lay out the full details of each revision. Rather, the analysis of the trajectory of the CoS will focus on understanding the movement toward attempting to establish a – in the words of Kariya – post-catch up schooling landscape that ironically borrows from discourses of Western neoliberal ideas of marketisation in education, the need for so-called ‘higher-level’ thinking skills, and this framed within concepts of individualisation and creativity. Focusing on changes to the CoS is relevant to discussing *juku* in the next chapter: CoS revisions form an important backdrop against which developments in the *juku* sector have taken place, and how, in the search for a post-catch up phase educational system, *juku* have come to reposition themselves in accordance to new market demands.

#### 3.2.1 The establishment of the Course of Study

The CoS was first issued in 1947 and was to act as a guideline for teachers as to what content they should cover during classes. Okano & Tsuchiya point out that the first CoS “was not a requirement imposed from above. Teachers were expected to arrange the curriculum to suit the realities of the local community and its children” (1999: 35). This guideline-nature was obvious from the fact that it included the word “draft” (*shian*) in its title. The flexibility that had characterised the first CoS draft was however lost with the next revisions. In 1958, the Course of Study Draft was renamed officially to the Course of Study and became legally

binding in nature for schools as to their curricula (Kobayashi 1986, Kodama 2013). In an amendment to the Ordinance for Enforcement of the School Education Act (*Gakkō Kyōikuhō Shikō Kisoku*) conducted before these revisions, the CoS was clearly defined as the standard for the curriculum (MEXT 2011a). Tables 6 to 8 give an overview of changes in subjects taught at different school levels and the changes in class hours that accompanied each revision.

	1947	1951*	1958	1968	1977	1989	1998	2008
Japanese	1260-1365	/	1603	1603	1532	1601	1377	1461
Social Studies	980-1050	/	663	663	558	420	345	365
Mathematics	805-910	/	1047	1047	1011	1011	869	1011
Science	525-595	/	628	628	558	420	350	405
Music	420-525	/	452	452	418	358	358	358
Life Studies	/	/	/	/	/	207	207	207
Arts & Craft	525-630	/	452	452	418	418	358	358
Home Economics	210	/	140	140	140	140	115	115
Physical Education	630	/	630	630	627	627	540	597
Independent Studies	210-420	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Moral Education	/	/	209	209	209	209	209	209
Special educational activities	/	/	/	/	314	314	209	209
Integrated Studies	/	/	/	/	/	/	430	280
<b>Overall</b>	5565-5915	5780	5821	5821	5785	5785	5367	5645

\* no concrete study hours given for each subject; distribution of study hours only given in %.

*Table 6. Development of overall class hours in elementary school as set in the Course of Study 1947-2008 (source: National Institute for Educational Policy Research 2014).*

		1947	1951	1958	1969	1977	1989	1998	2008
Compulsory subjects	Japanese	525	490-770	490	525	455	455	350	385
	Calligraphy	70	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Social studies	455	455-805	455	455	385	350-385	295	350
	Japanese history	105	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Mathematics	420	305-525	385	420	385	385	315	385
	Science	420	385-525	420	420	350	315-350	290	385
	Music	210	210-315	175	175	175	140-175	115	115
	Arts & Craft	210	210-315	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Art	/	/	140	175	175	140-175	115	115
	Physical Education	315	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Health & Physical Education	/	315-525	315	375	315	315-350	270	315
	Vocational subjects	420	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Vocational subjects/home economics	/	315-420	315	/	/	/	/	/
	Technical arts/Home economics	/	/	/	315	245	210-245	175	175
	Foreign language	/	/	/	/	/	/	315	420
	<b>Overall (compulsory)</b>		<b>3150</b>	<b>2730-3045</b>	<b>2695</b>	<b>2860</b>	<b>2485</b>	<b>2310-2520</b>	<b>2240</b>
Electives	Foreign language	105-420	420-630	315	/	/	/	/	/
	Mathematics	/	/	70	/	/	/	/	/
	Music	/	/	105	/	/	/	/	/
	Art	/	/	105	/	/	/	/	/
	Calligraphy	35	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Vocational subjects	105-420	/	210	/	/	/	/	/
	Vocational subjects/home economics	/	315-420	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Moral Education	/	/	105	105	105	105	105	105
	Independent Studies	105-420	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Other subjects	/	105-630	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Electives	/	/	/	420	350	315-630	155-280	/
Special educational activities		/	210-525	105	150	210	105-210	105	105
Integrated studies		/	/	/	/	/	/	210-335	190
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3150-3570</b>	<b>3150</b>	<b>3360</b>	<b>3535</b>	<b>3150</b>	<b>3150</b>	<b>2940</b>	<b>3045</b>

*Table 7. Development of class hours in junior high school as set in the Course of Study 1947-2008 (source: National Institute for Educational Policy Research 2014).*

	1948 <sup>1</sup>	1951	1960	1970	1978	1989	1999	2009
Japanese	9	9	12	9	4	4	2	4
Social studies	10	10	13	10	4			
Mathematics	5	5	9	6	4	4	2	3
Science	5	5	12	6	4	4	4	4
Physical Education	9							
Health & Physical Education		9	11 (9) <sup>2</sup>	13 (9)	13 (9)	11	9	9
Geography & History						4	4	4
Civics						4	4	2
Art			2	3	3	3	2	2
Home economics			4	4	4	4	2	2
Informatics							2	2
Foreign language			9				2	3
Integrated studies								3
Compulsory credits (overall)	38	38	68 (70)	47	32	38	31	38
Credits required for graduation	85	85	85	85	80	80	74	74

Development of required credits per subject as stipulated in the Course of Study revisions for regular high school track, 1948-2009. Table adapted from Kimura (2015). For subjects that the Course of Study states a credit range, minimum credits are displayed.

<sup>1</sup> The first high school Course of Study was announced in 1947 but revised in 1948. The 1948 revision was to form the basis for the curriculum formation of the new high schools (see Mizuhara 2016:112).

<sup>2</sup> Red numbers refer to required credits for female students.

*Table 8. Development of subject credit requirements for regular track high school as set in the Course of Study 1948-2009 (sources: Kimura 2015, Mizuhara 2016, National Institute for Educational Policy Research 2014).*

As can be seen, the 1958 revisions set concrete numbers for the minimum hours of each subject. Since then, the CoS continues to define curricular content at accredited schools, even though only public high schools need to stay within the confines of the CoS content for their entrance examinations. Private schools, on the other hand, can exceed the CoS in their examination content. At least for public schools, therefore, it would appear that students on the public school



track do not require some additional tutoring outside their regular school life. However, it needs to be kept in mind that post-war educational expansion faced considerable financial and capacity constraints, while having to face growing demand for post-compulsory high school education, particularly demand for *academic* track high schools (*futsūka kōkō*). This has led to mass participation for competition for higher levels of schooling and credentials within a single-track system as a main feature of post-war education.

Also, with each revision to the CoS schools have to follow and make according changes to their curricula. The following revisions in 1968 increased the content and compulsory hours at junior high level with the purpose of modernising educational contents (*kyōiku naiyō no gendaika*) in order to be able to respond to the increasing amount of knowledge and technologies produced in the contemporary world (MEXT 2011b, Mizuhara 2016). But following these revisions, the phenomena of *ochikobore*, i.e. students who have fallen behind in class, gained public attention. The increase in *ochikobore* was seen to be caused by crammed school curricula referred to negatively as *tsumekomi kyōiku*. Curricular content that was introduced with the 1968 revisions was taught in schools during the 1970s, which coincided with the end of the high economic growth phase. By the end of that phase, many families had been able to accumulate enough savings to invest more into their children's education. And within a context of the massification of high school education, stagnating economic growth, and the accompanying practice of companies to reduce their intake of new employees and limit their hiring strategies to graduates from certain elite universities (Mainichi Shinbun 1977), parental concerns over their child not being able to keep up with school classes grew. For parents, this fear of having their child fall behind was even more concerning when considering the growing competition to enter university and the large numbers of *rōnin* this competition had produced: While in 1960 around 90,000 students had failed entrance exams, this number had more than doubled to 190,000 in 1975 (Niwa 2006: 19). In consequence, parents were willing to spend their savings on their

children's education as a way to secure future advantage for them. It was this combination of factors that contributed to a diversification of *juku* providers who saw business opportunities in the *juken* industry to be discussed in the next chapter.

### 3.2.2 *Yutori* turn

The next revisions were made in 1977 and introduced the idea of *yutori* into the educational policy discourse, thereby presenting a turn away from the 1968 revisions. Importance was now put on students' personal development (*ningensei*), leading a fulfilled school life with enough leeway (*yutori no aru jūjitsu shita gakkō seikatsu*), and the provision of an education that corresponds to students' individuality and abilities (*kosei ya nōryoku ni ōjita kyōiku*) (Okugawa 2007: 54). In consequence, class hours in compulsory subjects at the elementary school and junior high levels as well as required credits in compulsory subjects at the high school level were reduced. The 1977 revisions thereby represent an important shift towards the later heavily criticised *yutori* approach in education.

Why this shift? The period of the late 1970s and early 1980s in which these revisions were conducted corresponds to Kariya's post-catch up phase. What marks the beginning of this phase is the increasing doubt in the mass-participation meritocratic education system that had so far served to advance post-war Japan's growth (Kariya 2018). Japan's economy was changing and so did employment opportunities and patterns for many. Within a post-catch up society, Japanese businesses and policymakers considered mass participation in the meritocratic education race an out-dated model that would not ensure Japan's future competitiveness. The *yutori* shift, therefore, needs to be understood within the earlier mentioned business circle demand for the fostering of a select handful of highly trained elites and the remaining workforce.

The revisions a decade later put even greater focus on students' individuality and abilities. The 1989 revisions stated the purpose of fostering

within students self-motivated study behaviour (*mizukara manabu iyoku*) and the ability to subjectively respond to changes in society (*shakai no henka ni shutaiteki ni taiō dekiru nōryoku*), as well as to provide education that leverages students' individuality (*kosei o ikasu kyōiku*) (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 1989).

But why this emphasis on individualisation? The decade of the 1980s was marked by the educational reform recommendations put forth by the Ad Hoc Council. In the early debates within the Council much discussion centred around liberalisation (*jiyūka*), surrounding such issues as the establishment of new schools and free school choice. But the debate was split within the Council and the idea of liberalisation especially at the compulsory schooling level was not well received among the public. As a consequence, the Council shifted its tone and put an emphasis on employing such keywords as flexibility (in upper secondary and higher education) and individualism (Harada 1990, Tokuhisa 2012).

Another example of the influence of the Ad Hoc Council on later CoS revisions is the introduction of the five-day school week, which was partially introduced with the 1989 revisions (once per month from 1992; twice per month from 1995). The five-day school week fit within the educational policy direction of establishing *yutori* education into schools. But in fact it was part of a wider political agenda of the government and also the Japan's Teachers' Union (JTU). In 1986 Prime Minister Nakasone's private advisory council issued recommendations to increase domestic demand (Nozaki 2006, Tokuhisa 2012). Among the recommendations was a decrease of income tax and working hours, as well as the implementation of a five-day workweek. These same points featured in the Ad Hoc Council's second report only a few weeks later (Tokuhisa 2012). *Yutori* and the five-day school week played into the hands of the JTU, which had wanted to see the introduction of the five-day school week since the early 1970s. With the *yutori* discourse taking hold within educational policies, the JTU made use of this discourse to justify their goal of improving teachers' labour

conditions (Tokuhiisa 2012). The *yutori* revisions, therefore, had the support of major stakeholders of policymakers, business circles, and the teachers' union.

Once Japan's economic bubble burst in the early 1990s, educational policies took up the principle of liberalisation, which had been a contested idea just a decade earlier, within a context of economic recession and the need to cut public costs (Saitō 2011). Now ideas of individuality and self-responsibility had become firmly established central features of the educational policy discourse. In fact, from the 1990s onwards, several ideas put forth by business circles were to be taken up in educational policies in the years to come. These included the understanding of schools as providing the minimum, or 'basic' education for all students, the establishment of integrated schools, and the free choice for families to choose from educational offers provided by private educational institutions such as culture schools and *juku* (Saitō 2011).

The five-day school week was fully introduced with the 1998 revisions. But these revisions came to be heavily criticised in the public. This criticism was based on concerns over a decline in students' scholastic ability levels (*gakuryoku teika*). These concerns were fuelled at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s by media reports and scholarly publications seeing a decline in university students' scholastic ability, a widening gap in scholastic abilities between students with different class background, and the 2000 PISA results which showed average results for Japanese students in literacy (Ichikawa 2007, Kodama 2013, Nishimura 1999, Toda 2009).

The revisions came to be known as *yutori kyōiku* (pressure-free education), a term used rather negatively and strongly associated with *gakuryoku teika*. But what effect did this discourse on *gakuryoku teika* have? It first of all contributed to growing parental concerns over and loss of faith in public schooling, and this especially in urban areas with higher private school density. For example, from 1998 to 2008 the Tokyo Metropolitan Area saw an increase in junior high school entrance examination taking from 12.8% to 20.6% (Yokota 2013: 59). The *yutori* reforms thereby played into the hands of private schools,

which started feeding on those insecurities by promoting the private school track as a guard against *gakuryoku teika*. In addition, many of these private schools are integrated 6-year schools (*chukō ikkan kō*), combining the junior high and high school levels. And unlike entrance into public junior high schools, these usually require the taking of entrance examinations. This, in turn, has fuelled *juken* preparation at the elementary school level, which was even further encouraged with the establishment of public integrated schools (see figure 16).

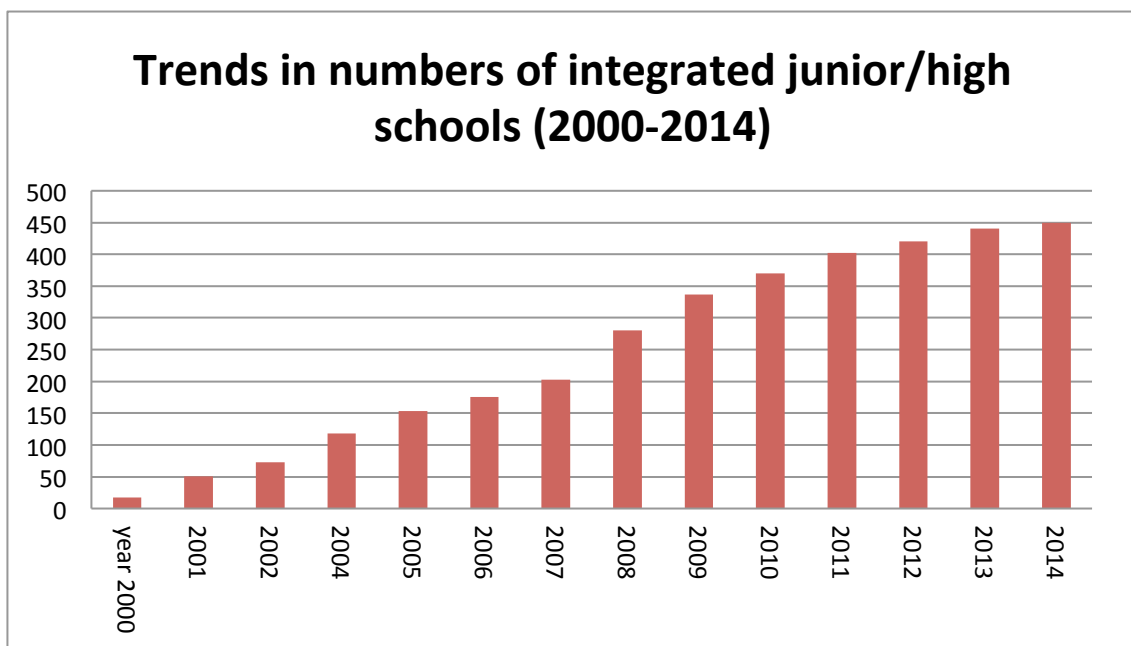


Figure 16. Trends in numbers of integrated junior/high schools 2000-2014 (source: MEXT 2014b).

Figure 16 shows the number of public integrated schools and the steep increase in their numbers in the 2000s. In line with educational reforms, the purpose of their establishment was to serve diversification in education and provide an educational setting within which students' creativity can be fostered. The idea was that by having a six-year institutional setting without the need for high school entrance examination preparation, students would experience *yutori* in their school studies. Despite differences in what and how public and private

integrated schools can conduct their entrance screenings, the existence of these integrated schools (and the often good performance of their students in entering elite universities) has pushed down the period of high stakes testing (Tsuneyoshi 2013) to younger students.

The obsession with *gakuryoku* as exemplified in the *gakuryoku teika* discourse is a pathology caused by the importance given to and excessive competition in entrance exams. But the *gakuryoku* necessary for *juken* throughout most of the post-war years had been very different from what policymakers now envisioned *gakuryoku* to be in the post-catch up phase. Also, the 1998 revisions failed to fully flesh out the idea of *yutori* and how this was to contribute to the development of students. For example, 30% cuts were made to academic subjects and integrated studies were introduced. But the introduction of this new subject was poorly thought out as to how it would fit within the overall curricular structure and how it could benefit students' learning.

The negative public response to and criticism directed at the 1998 revisions, led to the 2008 revisions, which were intended to correct the course and focus on cultivating within students solid scholastic ability (*tashikana gakuryoku*).

### 3.2.3 In search for post-*yutori*

*Tashikana gakuryoku* was first introduced with the partial CoS revision in 2003 in order to reaffirm the purpose of the 1998 revisions. The lead-up to the following CoS revisions in 2008 is important in so far as it marked a shift from a “dominant reform discourse of the late 1980s and 1990s [which had been] forward-looking, seeking to make changes in order to meet future challenges, these new discourses [on problems in education, such as lack of discipline, classroom collapse, and declining academic attainment levels – author’s note] were basically conservative, seeking to defend or return to the practices that had [...] served postwar Japan well” (Cave 2016: 22). The conservative National Commission on Education Reform (*Kyōiku Kaikaku Kokumin Kaigi*) established

in 2000 “advocated better moral education and community service for all schoolchildren [...] and led ultimately to a highly controversial revision of the fundamental law of education” (ibid). This revision of the Fundamental Law of Education (*Kyōiku Kihon Hō*) happened in 2006 and contained a new section on education in the family:

### Article 10

Mothers, fathers, and other guardians, having the primary responsibility for their children’s education, shall endeavour to teach them the habits necessary for life, encourage a spirit of independence, and nurture the balanced development of their bodies and minds.

(2) The national and local governments shall endeavour to take necessary measures supporting education in the family, by providing guardians with opportunities to learn, relevant information, and other means, while respecting family autonomy in education.

Fundamental Law of Education 2006 (MEXT n.d.)<sup>5</sup>.

(emphasis added)

The revision was an important element to “the conservative discourse that de-socializes recent ‘educational problems’ that resulted from structural changes in the economy and culture, reducing them to simply reflections of children’s mental and psychological problems and parental negligence’ (Takayama &

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<sup>5</sup> This translation was taken from the MEXT homepage. The original passage states as follows:

第十条 父母その他の保護者は、子の教育について第一義的責任を有するものであって、生活のために必要な習慣を身に付けさせるとともに、自立心を育成し、心身の調和のとれた発達を図るよう努めるものとする。

2 国及び地方公共団体は、家庭教育の自主性を尊重しつつ、保護者に対する学習の機会及び情報の提供その他の家庭教育を支援するために必要な施策を講ずるよう努めなければならない。

MEXT 2006.

Apple 2008: 293). Since the Fundamental Law of Education provides the interpretative framework for all laws in education (Cave 2016), the above addition not only underlines the primary responsibility of families for children’s education, but also family autonomy in education. Both points are essential additions that serve the type of knowledge and skills the coming revision was to set out for students to acquire.

In explaining the concept of *ikiru chikara*, or the strength to live, *tashikana gakuryoku* was given as one of its three dimensions, along with a rich human nature (*yutakana ningensei*), and a healthy body (*kenkō, tairyoku*) (Mizuhara 2016, Toda 2009). Figure 17 offers an English translation of the image used by MEXT to explain *tashikana gakuryoku*:

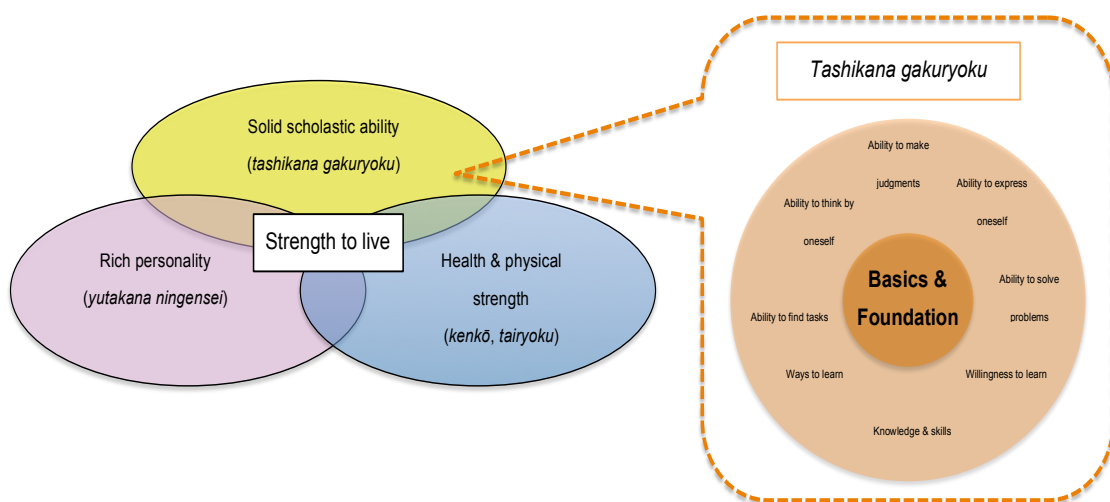


Figure 17. Strength to live (*ikiru chikara*) & solid scholastic ability (*tashikana gakuryoku*) (source: MEXT 2003).

This definition of *gakuryoku* expands on previous understandings of *gakuryoku*. In its 2014 Verdict, the Central Council on Education makes an interesting statement with regards to *gakuryoku*, which reflects a central issue of the Course of Study changes throughout post-war Japan:



[F]or a long time throughout post-war Japan, discussions of [...] ‘*gakuryoku*’ have been unfolding between education [that puts emphasis on] ‘learning and doing by oneself’ [*jibun de kangae jibun de jikkō suru*], and education [that puts emphasis on] injecting systematic knowledge [*taikeitekina chishiki o chūnyū suru*]. Even in past revisions of the Course of Study, discussions have centred around this dichotomy between ‘*yutori*’ and ‘*tsumekomī*’.

MEXT, Central Council on Education, 2014d: 2.

In order to overcome this dichotomy, the Verdict states the importance of fostering solid scholastic ability (*tashikana gakuryoku*). It is noteworthy that the elements of *tashikana gakuryoku* are character traits and learning *habits* that students can only foster through learning and socialising in a variety of educational settings: possessing *tashikana gakuryoku* means having learned how to learn within a global, highly fluid context as conceptualised by policy discourse. But in addressing the question as to where *tashikana gakuryoku* should be fostered, the trend in educational reforms over the last 20 years seems to indicate the move away from school education shouldering most of the responsibility.

In a way, the move away from the old *gakuryoku* to the new *gakuryoku* together with an emphasis on diversification of educational choices and individualisation has increased the potential for inequalities in education: “The continuous curricula and pedagogical reforms toward individualization of learning, which were implemented in under-resourced circumstances, have expanded the gaps in student academic achievements both in conventional test scores and in new skills such as problem-solving and communications demanded in the new curricula” (Kariya 2018: 304). This quote from Kariya calls into attention the widening gap in academic performance between students. Whether a student falls on the high performing or the academically underachieving side of this gap has come increasingly to depend on one’s family

background, i.e. whether one's parents have the financial means and cultural capital to foster the qualities that are described with the concepts of *ikiru chikara* and *tashikana gakuryoku*.

### 3.3 The gap society and education

This leads us to the discourse of the gap society (*kakusa shakai*), which took hold in the late 1990s (Kikkawa 2017). This discourse is based on the perception that Japanese society has become divided between upper and lower social strata and the gap between both widening, which has led to social class reproduction and inequalities. These differences are also seen to be apparent in inter-generational transmission of life aspirations, but also insecurities, views on child-rearing and educational strategies (Kikkawa 2017: 56/57).

In education, research has addressed social class differences in students' performance at school, their study behaviour and likelihood of attending *juku*. Kariya provides evidence that students of parents with higher academic backgrounds were more likely to understand school classes, were more actively engaged in integrated study projects, and spent more time studying outside of school, including being more likely to go to *juku* (2009b: 15-32).

As can be seen from these results, the introduction of integrated studies benefits those students with family backgrounds that encourage them to study and acquire a certain amount of disciplined study behaviour. Kariya has also observed that since *juken* pressure into universities has gotten less since the 1990s, gaps between students' study effort (measured by proxy of study time) have increased compared to the late 1970s, with students of parents with university degrees studying longer than students of parents with lower educational backgrounds (2009b: 78-82). Similar results are presented in a more recent study by Nakanishi (2015) who found that students with university-educated parents had higher scholastic ability levels than students of parents with no university education.

The relevance of this trend is important to point out especially since university advancement rates have hit a ceiling at 50%. Kikkawa (2017) has observed that Japanese society is divided along a segmentation line dividing those with and without university education (*gakureki bundan shakai*) and both groups having few contact points with each other: “This segmentation line greatly influences persons’ job chances and risks, their wealth or poverty, strategies during child rearing, cultural activities, leisure time, consumption behaviours, political inclinations, or how they view class distinctions, as well as hopes and motivations”<sup>6</sup> (52).

Given this divide, conducting a closer investigation of *juku* and what roles they fulfil in Japanese education gains new relevance. As seen, recent reforms in education have shifted away from discourses on the ‘old’ *gakuryoku* to the fostering of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. In combination with greater marketisation in education, which has encouraged parents to act as customers engaged in finding and purchasing the best educational option for their child – the shift from meritocracy to a ‘parentocracy’ in Japanese education (Shimizu 2015) –, the Japanese education landscape has been undergoing significant changes.

How has the *juku* sector changed throughout the post-war years and how are these changes related to the developments laid out in this chapter? The next chapter will address this question. Major developments and overall trends for the sector will be taken up to show how the *juku* sector has undergone transformation and adapted to needs created by changes in formal schooling and the system of entrance exams.

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<sup>6</sup> Translation from Japanese by the author.

#### 4. Developments in the post-war *juku* landscape

This chapter will provide an analysis of post-war *juku* developments. These developments will be contextualised within the post-war developments in the educational landscape discussed in the previous chapter. In tracing post-war *juku* developments, this chapter will rely partially on a study by Iwase (2006) to refer to major turning points in the developments of the sector. It will extend on Iwase's post-war period division but will put the focus on developments of the *juku* sector within the context of changing educational policy and socio-economic developments<sup>7</sup>.

Within the chapter, post-war *juku* sector developments are discussed in three periods. Sector developments up to the early 1970s constitute the first period (sub-chapter 4.1). For this period, *juku* will be discussed within the context of expanding post-war formal schooling as well as high school and university entrance competition during Japan's period of high economic growth.

The end of Japan's high economic growth period after the 1973 oil crisis marks the beginning of the second period (mid-1970s~1990), corresponding to the end of Japan's catch-up phase discussed in chapter 3. This period was characterised by the expansion of the *juku* sector, which was caused by the emergence of new *juku* providers. The *juku* sector's market expansion continued throughout the 1980s to the early 1990s. In this decade, the private school boom allowed the sector to expand services to younger students in addition to increased university entrance competition.

The third period begins after the bursting of Japan's bubble economy in the early 1990s and the passing of the peak in university entrance competition (sub-chapter 4.3). Demographic changes leading to a shrinking school-aged population meant a restructuring of the *juku* landscape with big *juku* companies

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<sup>7</sup> Iwase's study (2006) has a special focus on the *juku*'s social meanings and how these have changed over the post-war years. The study therefore has no explicit focus on sector internal changes but mainly addresses external perceptions of the sector over the years.

consolidating their position on the education market. At the end of this decade, the Japanese Ministry for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology acknowledged *juku* as education institutions for the first time. This official recognition in 1999 has led to increased cooperation between *juku* and formal schools.

#### 4.1 *Juku* developments up to the early 1970s

For the 1950s and 1960s, official data and studies that provide insights into *juku* developments during the 1950s and 60s are sparse. The analysis of *juku* developments therefore has to rely on the information given in the available literature.

*Juku* and *yobikō* had already been catering to demand for extra tutoring created by the modern schooling system established in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This new schooling system was built on meritocratic principles to serve as a pipeline for channelling the country's most talented students into the limited institutions of higher learning with the purpose of educating these young men to serve as leading figures in government and research for the advancement of Japan's modernisation. Despite Japan's schooling system having undergone major restructuring after WWII, the meritocratic and competitive nature of schooling remained intact especially at the higher education levels where entrance exams continued to be employed to select students. However, two major differences in the post-war schooling landscape led to new developments in the *juku* sector, that is the expansion of compulsory education to nine years and the restructuring of schooling into a single-track system. Had pre-war entrance examination competition been just a phenomenon limited to the elite, the post-war restructuring provided the foundation for mass participation in this competition.

For this first period, *juku* use at the secondary schooling level was remedial in nature (Komiyama 2000). The role of *juku* was therefore to provide classes that would help students keep up with what was taught at schools. Komiyama places

this development within the context of Japan's period of high economic growth and the first baby boomer generation 'flooding' into upper secondary schooling (2000: 105-107), even though he does not provide data that would verify his argument of a tendency toward remedial *juku* use. However, this claim appears reasonable if taking into consideration that during this period high schools and junior high schools conducted after-school supplementary classes (*hoshū jugyō*). Shimizu (1957) gives some extreme examples of schools providing more than 13 hours of supplementary classes per week, which he refers to as the *yobikō*-isation of schools (1957: 44-51). Such supplementary classes were common until the late 1960s, meaning that students had the option of preparatory studies for *juken* at their schools.

In comparison to such *juken* focused supplementary lessons at schools, the role of *juku* in the 1950s and 1960s, therefore, appears to have been more supportive to school education. Iwase points out that *juku* up until the 1960s referred to themselves as 'shadow flowers' defining their function as 'merely supporting school education, accepting the general social understanding that school is at the centre and neither being in opposition nor in cooperation with school.'<sup>8</sup> (2006: 122). And Rohlen mentions that these *juku* were usually small in scale and run '...as local and rather casual businesses staffed by very young or older men or by women who formerly were teachers' (1980: 215). But already in the 1960s, the *juku* landscape was beginning to change.

While such 'traditional' *juku* continued to exist throughout the 1960s and remained relatively unnoticed in the shadows, this period also saw the emergence of so-called 'mammoth' *juku* that offered large classes and instruction in examination relevant knowledge. The development of examination preparation oriented *juku* constituted a shift in the *juku* landscape away from the small-scale 'traditional' *juku* to a form of *juku* specialising in mass instruction and entrance examination preparation that came to dominate the *juku* sector and

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<sup>8</sup> All quotations from Japanese sources have been translated by the author.

draw most of the public attention for the next decades to come.

At the transition point between high school and university, preparatory schools, or *yobikō*, were the first to receive public attention in the 1950s. *Yobikō* specialise in offering preparatory courses for university entrance examinations for *rōninsei*<sup>9</sup>, or students who have graduated from high school and failed to pass the entrance examination of the university they want to enter. With the expansion of the *juku* market throughout the post-war years, some of these *yobikō*, such as Yoyogi Seminar, Sundai Yobiko and Kawai have developed into nationwide operating business and diversified their services.

As early as the first half of the 1950s, the number of students wishing to enter university grew rapidly (Surugadai Gakuen 70 Year History 1988: 87/88). Even though state universities were established in each prefecture during the late 1940s, demand for university places exceeded supply (Nakai 2007: 204). For example, in 1955 around 710,000 students graduated from high school compared to merely 170,000 places available at four-year universities and two-year colleges (Shimizu 1957: 19).

Of course not all high school graduates aspired to move on to university in these early post-war years. Until 1960, university advancement rates were at a mere ten percent. However, students with high aspirations, who aimed for top-level (mostly former imperial universities) institutions, were raising entrance examination competition (Surugadai Gakuen 70 Year History 1988:87/88). According to Sundai's 70-year overview of the school's historic development, it was during this same period that the number of *yobikō* started to increase in larger cities, especially in Tokyo (ibid.).

Table 9 gives an overview over some of the *yobikō* that have been founded in Tokyo during the 1950s and 1960s:

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<sup>9</sup> Referred to as *rōnin*. Originally meaning a samurai without a master, the term has come to be used to refer to students that graduated from high school but failed to pass the entrance exams into their desired university.

<b>Yobikō</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>
<i>Yoyogi Gakuin</i>	1950
<i>Hitotsubashi Sōkei Gaigo</i>	1951
<i>Kanda Yobi Gakkō</i>	1952
<i>Chiyoda Yobikō</i>	1953
<i>Tokyo Gakuin</i>	1954
<i>Keiseikai Keisei Yobikō</i>	1956
<i>Eishin Yobikō</i>	1956
<i>Yoyogi Seminar</i>	1957
<i>Waseda Yobikō</i>	1957
<i>Musashi Yobikō</i>	1960
<i>Yoyogi Yobikō</i>	1962
<i>Chūō Seminar</i>	1966

*Table 9. Yobikō founded in Tokyo during the 1950s & 1960s according to Nashimoto (2006: 32).*

The blooming of *yobikō* in Tokyo during this period implies the existence of a large enough and growing market catering to examinees. During the 1950s, Tokyo was the major location attracting examinees from all around the country with 35% of 4-year universities and 30% of 2-year colleges being located there. Shimizu estimates that during these years, more than half of the nation's examinees took examinations in Tokyo (1957: 26). Already during the first 15 post-war years, higher education was increasingly seen as means to gain advantage on the job market upon graduation, with a clear hierarchy that established former imperial universities at the top and therefore most advantageous for future job prospective (Shimizu 1957: 27/28).

How much competition to get into national universities had increased can be seen in the annual increase of the share of *rōnin* who passed the entrance examination into national universities. According to Shimizu, this share



grew from 33% in 1953, to 43% in 1955 and 48% in 1957 (1957: 31). *Yobikō* proliferated under such conditions as they not only provided a space to prepare solely for the examination but also supervision for planned-through study habits as well as the newest information on examination taking. For those students aiming at getting into prestigious universities, *yobikō* attendance had become an established means on their way to higher education (1957: 37). Such fierce entrance examination competition to get into universities started to receive greater public and especially media attention with terms such as ‘examination hell’ (*juken jigoku*) taking hold and *yobikō* being one of the phenomena associated with it (1957: 39/40).

#### 4.2 The *juku* industry (mid 1970s~1990s)

The advent of the mammoth *juku* was only the beginning of an increased trend towards the creation of a *juku* industry running on profit-oriented business principles. According to Mainichi Shinbun (1977), with changes in the economy, specifically the oil crisis of 1973, which marked an end to Japan’s period of high economic growth (*kōdō keizai seichōki*), the *juku* sector started to enter a boom phase. In 1977, the Mainichi Shinbun referred to this as *ranjuku* period (*ranjuku jidai*) – a play on words as the word *ranjuku* can mean both something being over-mature as well as refer to a disturbing overflow of *juku*.

The greatest characteristic of this *ranjuku* period was the expansion of the *juku* market through the diversification of *juku* providers that formerly had no connection to the educational realm. Japan’s high economic growth period had ended and with the country entering economic recession, companies that started to run deficits such as real estate agents saw new business opportunities in the *juku* sector. In addition, *juku* franchises appeared during the first half of this decade, which allowed housewives and salarymen to run their own *juku* business (Iwase 2006, Mainichi Shinbun 1977). It was during this period when Japan had fully developed into a mass education society that *juku* became a mass phenomenon as well and transforming into an industry.

The first official Ministry of Education survey on children's out-of-school learning activities published in 1977 provided information on when the sample of over 1000 *juku* had been established, revealing that 35.6% of *juku* had been established between 1971-1975 (Rohlen 1980). The survey found that "[d]uring the 1970s, [...] the trend was toward larger organizations. A few big corporations, some with little experience in education, like a movie company and a department store, entered the *juku* field" (Rohlen 1980: 213). It also gave evidence to the extent to which *juku* usage had spread in Japanese education: Not only did this survey show that the average *juku* attendance rate for elementary to junior high school students was at around 20.2% (Mainichi Shinbun 1977: 3), but it also showed that 17.2% of *juku* teachers were school teachers (Iwase 2006: 123). The findings of this survey therefore gave evidence not only to the quantitative increase in *juku* providers, how widespread *juku* attendance was among students, but also how *juku* were increasingly (mis)used as a business opportunity and a source for additional income for school teachers, thereby undermining the ideal front of public education.

Komiyama (1993) observes the socio-economic changes that have led to the proliferation of *juku* during this period. First, in terms of economic development, by the time Japan had reached the 1970s, the country had experienced a long period of economic growth, which was eventually accompanied by a transition from secondary industry to tertiary industry employment. Second, Japanese society was undergoing rapid transformations due to technological advancements. Komiyama sees these transformations as the main reason for a loss of faith in public education due to its inability to keep up with these changes, but also a decline in the ability of families to educate their children to be able to cope within such societal change (1993: 126/127). These factors served as the socio-economic conditions that allowed *juku* to develop into the industry as it took shape during the 1970s.

Other researchers have argued the 1968-70 CoS revisions to have contributed to the growth of the *juku* sector (for example Nozaki 2006). As

reviewed in the previous chapter, the 1968 revisions were later to be referred to as *tsumekomi kyōiku* because they led to an increase in study content and compulsory hours at the junior high level. Irrespective of whether these revisions were responsible for students not being able to keep up with school classes (*ochikobore*), the phenomenon did receive public attention in the 1970s. This was supported by surveys such as the National Federation of Educational Policy Research Institutes (*Zenkoku Kyōiku Kenkyūjo Renmei*) in 1971, which showed that more than half of elementary school teachers and 80% of junior high school teachers perceived that more than half of the students in their class did not understand what was taught (Nozaki 2006: 159).

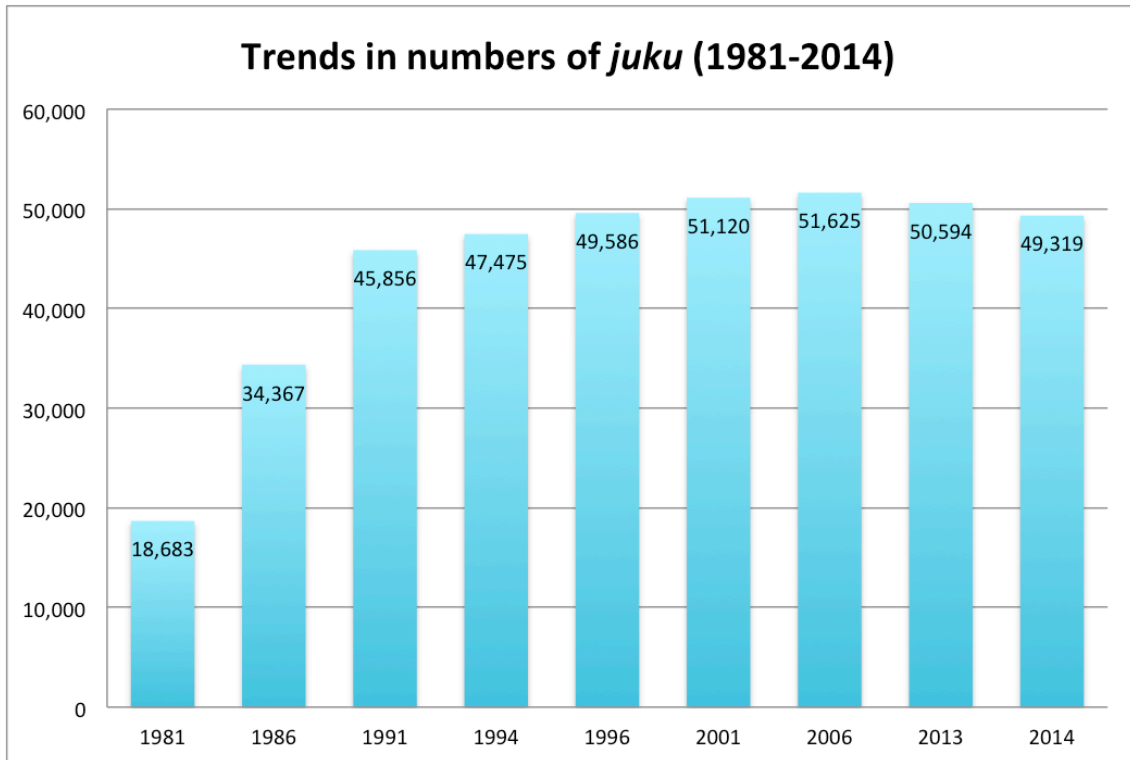
Such were the economic and educational circumstances, which provided the context in which newcomers to the *juku* sector were able to plan on parental insecurities (Mainichi Shinbun 1977: 1). With more disposable income and Japan having grown into a consumer society, parents were now even more willing to invest in additional educational spending in order to enable their children to get university education that might allow them to gain better chances on the job market (Komiyama 1993, Nozaki 2006).

Also, by the time Japan had reached the 1970s, most students were likely to move on to high school. The massification of high school education meant that now greater numbers of students would be eligible for tertiary education. With the existence of a large pool of high school graduates, preparatory schools thrived growing into nationwide operating businesses (Kimura 1999). A central factor that played into the nationwide preparatory school expansion was the introduction of the first nationwide common primary examination (*kyōtsū ichiji shiken*) in 1979. The introduction of this examination created new insecurities both among students and their parents as well as high schools (Kimura 1999). These new needs presented an opportunity for large-scale preparatory education businesses to recognise their potential as information gathering and processing institutions by conducting their own nationwide mock examinations the year before the common examination was

introduced and collecting data on students' own scorings (*jikō saiten*) after taking the common examination (Kimura 1999: 87/88).

The *juken* business of *yobikō* was to further bloom during the 1980s. Decreasing employment rates after high school, especially at large-scale companies were accompanied by an increase in those high school graduates wanting to move on to higher education. While the rate of those wishing to move on to university was at 44.2% in 1974, this rate had sharply increased by 1976 to 47.7% (Inui 1990: 250). However, regulations on the private university sector put a halt to the private university sector growth upon which the expansion of tertiary education had been depending so far. University advancement rates had reached a peak with 38% in 1975, but levelled off until the early 1990s, hovering between 36%-38% (Niwa 2006: 18). These developments created beneficial circumstances for the business of university entrance examination preparation at *yobikō*, but also brought *yobikō* into the public discourse on excessive entrance examination competition.

*Juku* targeting students on the lower levels of education further increased in numbers during this decade. Figure 18 shows the development of *juku* numbers since the 1980s and as can be seen, their numbers more than doubled for this period.



*Figure 18. Development of juku numbers 1981-2013 (graph developed based on data from the Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016; Ministry of Economic Trade and Industry 2014; Toho Area Research Institute ‘Fukushima no Shinro’ August 2008; Komiyama 2000).*

An element that literature on *juku* posits as contributing to the sector’s growth is Japan entering the period referred to as “bubble economy” (1986-1991) that gave many families more monetary leeway to invest in out-of-school education services (Komiyama 2000, Ōta 2014).

In addition to these beneficial economic circumstances, demographic developments, concretely the second babyboomer generation moving through formal schooling levels, contributed to the sector being able to access a bigger target population. Further, school violence in public junior high schools was given more attention and considered a social problem leading to a boom in private junior high schools (Ichikawa 2007, Komiyama 2000, Yokota 2013).

Increased private school attendance suggests greater parental

willingness to make the necessary educational investments. These investments are made in the form of high private school fees, but also in the form of *juku* fees. Especially the latter become more important as entrance into private junior high schools requires the taking of entrance examinations at the elementary school level.

Looking at actual *juku* attendance rates throughout the 1980s, *juku* attendance for elementary and junior high school students continued to increase so that by 1993 almost 24% of elementary school and 60% of junior high school students were attending *juku* (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 1993; Ōta 2014). At the same time, the increased attendance rates during the 1980s made *juku* the focus of large-scale studies (for example Yūki et al. 1987) leading to a more differentiated view on *juku* roles. Greater distinction between preparatory and remedial study oriented *juku* was made since it was found that half of those students going to *juku* attended them for remedial purposes to keep up with school studies (Yūki et al. 1987: 5). This suggests that significant *juku* usage for remedial purposes is likely to have played a major part in the sector's growth. It is also in line with what was suggested in other studies as to the use of *juku* in the previous two decades (Iwase 2006, Komiyama 2000, Rohlen 1980). The significance of remedial use is a point that will be taken up again in the analysis of the literature on *juku* (chapter 5) and the evidence found through interviews with *juku* stakeholders (chapter 6).

While the 1980s allowed the *juku* sector to continue in its overall growth backed up by Japan's bubble economy, the sector was about to experience a major turning point in the 1990s with the bursting of the bubble and the reaching of a peak in entrance examination competition as the second babyboomer generation finished high school. With the peak in university entrance examination competition having passed and the period of universal university entrance (*daigaku zennyū jidai*) predicted to come, the sector had to undergo restructuring to adapt to changing demographics by expanding their target groups and diversifying their educational services. Some of the most successful

companies have maintained a strong hold on top sales. By 1994, *juku* companies such as With Us (then Dai Ichi Kyōken), Nagase, Eikoh and Up had established themselves as stock corporations and maintaining large sales in the *juku* market over the next two decades (see table 10).

<b>Corporation</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>2015</b>
Eikoh Co., Ltd.	17,2 billion Yen	42,1 billion Yen
With Us Co., Ltd.	6,3 billion Yen	14,3 billion Yen
Nagase Co., Ltd.	13 billion Yen	39,8 billion Yen
Up Co., Ltd.	2.7 billion Yen	8,7 billion Yen
Gakkyūsha Co., Ltd.	5,3 billion Yen	8,6 billion Yen

*Table 10. List of juku corporations' sales in 1994 and 2015 (sources: Yano Research Institute 1995; www.jyukunavi.jp).*

As far as *juken* studies are concerned, the adaption to changing demographics meant greater orientation towards younger students at the elementary school level. Figure 6 in chapter 1 shows that *juku* attendance rates especially at the elementary school 6<sup>th</sup> grade level have been increasing since the mid-1970s with a drop only occurring after 1993. The increasing number of integrated schools over the last ten years from 2004 to 2014 corresponds with a steep increase in the numbers of elementary school students attending *juku*. Targeting younger (especially elementary school) students has provided the sector with terrain for profitable market expansion. Especially in the metropolitan area of Tokyo, which is characterised by an established elite private school landscape, new battleground of competition for junior high school entrance examination preparation (*chūgaku juken*) has opened up.

Examination-taking at a younger age is undoubtedly accompanied by considerable time and money investment by families (Tsuneyoshi 2013). But intensive examination preparation during elementary school years especially in

urban regions with high private/integrated school density, are only a concern for a small percentage of the overall schooling population. The national attendance rate levels in combination with the remedial use suggested by the existing literature indicate that the majority of *juku* operate in the middle ground between excessive *juken* preparation and serving as safe places for students with serious behavioral issues, such as cases of social (*hikikomori*), or school withdrawal (*tōkō kyōhi*).

#### 4.3 *Juku* as a collaborative option for formal schooling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

The potential of *juku* to fulfil educational roles was recognised by MEXT in 1999. In part, this was as proactive measure: The newest round of CoS revisions came to be known as the full introduction of *yutori* education and even before their implementation from 2002 received negative attention within discussions surrounding *gakuryoku teika*. It is within this context that concerns over possible greater *juku* attendance led MEXT to acknowledge *juku* as educational institutions, however in a supportive role that would complement schools with concerns made explicit over the negative effects of *juken* preparation (Mori & Baker 2010, Roesgaard 2006).

*Juku* gained recognition under MEXT's Lifelong Learning Division after the 1999 report of its Council on Lifelong Learning, and MEXT appealed to *juku* representatives in a meeting held in February 2002 to create opportunities for activities that are not offered in school (Iwase 2006: 128). Iwase posits this as a turn towards coexistence between formal schooling and *juku*: The idea was to have public schools invite *juku* teachers to teach, have *juku* representatives give talks to public school principals on *gakuryoku teika*, and use *juku* materials in schools (ibid.). As Iwase puts it, this marked the beginning of a 'new *juku* reality' (ibid.) that was carried to the sector bringing about closer – or rather more open – relationships between *juku* and schools.

Another reason, and probably the more important one, is the neoliberal climate in the political arena, which succeeded in pushing for a variety of reforms



under Prime Minister Koizumi in the late 1990s and 2000s. In the realm of education, reform attempts were aimed at overhauling the post-war education system that had catered to a company-centred society defined by lifetime employment and a system of promotion by seniority (Kodama 2013: 21). As discussed in chapter 3, reforms moving towards greater liberalisation and individualisation (Akabayashi 2010) had already been attempted since the 1980s and in the recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Council on Education's last report of 1987 academic *juku* had been acknowledged as private sector institutions with new educational potentials (Nozaki 2006: 160/161). However, the set of *yutori* reforms conducted a decade later underwent public critique even before their implementation in the form of discourses on *gakuryoku teika*. Within this context *juku* acknowledgement in their potential as educational institutions was a half-hearted exercise at best giving the appearance of concerns over increased *juku* attendance but this within an educational *landscape that now officially encouraged market behaviour among all stakeholders* involved.

In addition, the greater focus on lifelong learning opened up the discussion of all the places that learning in society occurs and where new potential may be found. As Roesgaard mentions, “[t]he term ‘community’ [*chiiki*] recurs in the official discourse and the *juku* are exhorted to fulfil a role within the local community as well as in relation to schools” (2006: 148). But the Council on Lifelong Learning also recommended a “co-operative model for lifelong learning and community building to the *shingaku juku*. They suggest a role division between school and *juku*, with the *juku* doing the ‘fun stuff’, while schools toil on with the routine teaching, i.e. more advanced experimental teaching is proposed for the *shingaku juku*, while the schools would be confined to teaching the basics for the masses” (ibid.). Obviously such role conceptualisation for *shingaku juku* fits in with educational reform trends moving towards stressing greater diversification within school education and individual responsibility and also the understanding of the CoS merely representing the ‘minimum standard’ of what

schools are meant to teach. But such suggestions for the division of teaching labour between schools and *juku* also means an official endorsement of educational markets where customers may purchase enrichment services.

The developments analysed in this chapter have shown the changes within the *juku* sector both in terms of scale, target groups, and positioning with (expected) roles in education at large. The following table sums up the developments for the sector throughout the periods discussed in this chapter:

Period	Major Developments
<i>Juku</i> developments ~ early 1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Massification of high school attendance (1<sup>st</sup> babyboomer generation entering high school early to mid-1960s)</li> <li>● University entrance examination competition causes increased establishment of <i>yobikō</i> in metropolitan areas</li> <li>● Junior high/high school entrance examination focused <i>juku</i> still rare; <i>juku</i> attendance for remedial purposes</li> <li>● Appearance of 'mammoth' <i>juku</i> specialising in mass instruction-style examination preparation at schooling levels below high school-university transition</li> </ul>
The <i>juku</i> industry (mid 1970s ~ 1990s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1973 oil crisis marks end to Japan's period of high economic growth; labour market restructuring</li> <li>● Formation of <i>juku</i> market with a diversity of providers; franchising</li> <li>● <i>Juku</i> attendance mostly for remedial purposes (public attention given to <i>ochikobore</i>)</li> <li>● High school advancement rates reaching 90% in 1974</li> <li>● 1979: 1<sup>st</sup> Nationwide Common Primary Examination</li> <li>● <i>Yobikō</i> develop into nationwide operating businesses</li> <li>● <i>Juku</i> market expansion during bubble economy</li> <li>● Private school boom opening up new market potentials for <i>juku</i> (1<sup>st</sup> <i>chūgaku juken</i> boom during bubble economy years)</li> <li>● University Advancement rates levelling off, remaining at 36-38%</li> <li>● Ad Hoc Council on Education report (1987) acknowledges <i>juku</i> for their educational potential</li> <li>● Peak in university entrance examination competition reached in early 1990s (period of universal university entrance predicted until 2007)</li> <li>● <i>Juku</i> sector restructuring within context of declining school-aged population and bursting of bubble economy</li> </ul>
1999-: <i>juku</i> as collaborative option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1998 Course of Study revisions receive negative public attention within public discourses on <i>gakuryoku teika</i></li> <li>● 2<sup>nd</sup> <i>chūgaku juken</i> boom taking off during first decade of 2000s → crucial <i>juken</i> preparation shifting to elementary school level</li> <li>● 1999: first official MEXT acknowledgement of <i>juku</i> as private educational institutions </li> </ul>

Table 11. Overview of post-war *juku* developments.

The overview of major *juku* developments throughout the post-war years has shown that up until the 1960s only *yobikō* at the transition point between upper secondary and tertiary education received attention for their preparatory role and were problematised as contributing to examination hell. Once advancement on to non-compulsory high school education had reached universal levels in the 1970s, however, *juku* catering to lower schooling levels followed in their expansion. The diversity of providers without education backgrounds increased, and so did public attention as to the problematic nature of the existence of *juku*. The public discourse on the proliferation of *juku* during those years put the blame on *tsumekomī kyōiku* – seen as a direct consequence of the 1968 CoS revisions – and the pathological symptoms such as *ochikobore* that were thought to have followed in its wake. *Juku* were then problematised as a questionable option for parents to guard against or remedy those problems school education had created. By the 1980s, *juku* attendance had become a normality among a significant share of elementary and junior high students and the sector continued to flourish during the bubble years and the peak in university entrance examination competition ahead. Once this peak had passed in the early 1990s, the sector underwent restructuring, and especially larger *juku* corporations further diversified their educational services and or expanded their target groups. Educational policy shifts in favour of greater marketisation in education eventually led to an ambivalent official acknowledgement of *juku* at the end of the 1990s, propelled both by fears over increased *juku* attendance with the new CoS revision and hopes for their potential in serving educational roles in communities. Since then, *juku* have developed into a collaborative option for schools, both private and public, even though this trend is still under-researched.

Having given an overview of major *juku* developments in post-war Japan, the question arises as to what effects *juku* have had and continue to have on Japanese education. As a first step in providing an answer the existing body of

research on *juku* will be reviewed next.

## 5. Shedding light on the *juku* 'shadow'

Chapter 4 has shown how the *juku* sector developed into a major, pervasive part of post-war Japanese education. It will now be necessary to focus attention on what kind of research interests have been carried to the sector. This review will clarify how *juku* have been conceptualised in previous research and what we have come to understand of *juku* based on the findings of these studies. For this purpose, the following questions are addressed:

- ✧ How has the *juku* sector been conceptualised in the research literature?
- ✧ What research interests/focuses have been carried to the field? What educational issues are addressed?
- ✧ Within what socio-economic, political and educational contexts can these research interests and conceptualisations be placed?
- ✧ What is the contribution of these studies to the research body on *juku*?
- ✧ Are there any elements of the *juku* sector that have not been given/or insufficiently been given attention to?

The first sub-section will provide an analysis of the larger overall theoretical framework within which *juku* have been predominantly investigated in previous studies. From there, the research literature will be divided for specific research focuses, such as entrance examination competition and scholastic ability improvement (5.2), *juku* within the gap society (5.3), as well as the double structure of education and the diversity of *juku* types (5.4). The analysis of the different studies will then be carried together to discuss what the existing body of literature has contributed to our understanding of what functions *juku* fulfil (5.5).

### 5.1 Conceptualising *juku* as shadow education – an overview

At the most basic level, private out-of-school educational services such as *juku* that are not accredited and thereby do not belong to formal schooling are not a

phenomenon unique to Japan. These services have been gaining increasing attention around the world (for example Dolly 1992, Entrich 2012, McLean 2009, Mori 2007) and are often subsumed under the term 'shadow education', implying the close, dependent nature of their relationship with the official, accredited realm of schooling (Bray 1999).

Since the early 1990s, the term shadow education has gained increasing popularity and has received greater international scholarly attention since Mark Bray's 1999 UNESCO report on worldwide shadow education trends. In the report, Bray uses three parameters to define shadow education services: matter of supplementation, dimension of privateness and levels (of schooling) (1999: 20-22). As for the matter of supplementation, shadow education focuses on instruction in academic subjects that are already taught in school. The dimension of privateness means that shadow education "is primarily concerned with tutoring provided by private entrepreneurs and individuals for profit-making purposes" (1999: 20). The third parameter limits shadow education to the primary and secondary schooling levels.

Internationally, this term has been used to analyse a broad variety of tutoring services within different national contexts as well as in cross-national comparison (Baker & LeTendre 2005; Bray 1999, 2010; Bray & Lykins 2012; Entrich 2012, 2014; Mori & Baker 2010). However, even though the metaphor of a shadow seems to fit the description of services that are not located within monitored and accredited education, the convenience of the term complicates a clearer understanding of what services are referred to. This has been already pointed out by Bray himself who has emphasised the necessity of clear terminology and methodological strengthening in this research field (2010).

For the Japanese context, analogies to *juku* leading their existence in the shadows of formal schooling had been existing even before the 'shadow education boom' on the international stage (Iwase 2006, Fukaya 1977, Niwa 2006). But research that has more consistently employed the term and built upon previous research on shadow education, particularly for the Japanese

context, is comparatively new. In the following, this string of research will be reviewed to clarify how shadow education has been studied for Japan and what findings have been made.

The first study with a particular focus on Japan to make explicit use of the term shadow education and centre its data analysis around this concept was conducted by Stevenson & Baker (1992). Their study focuses on the upper secondary schooling level and shadow education activities within the context of university entrance examination preparation. Shadow education in their study encompasses practice examinations (*mogi shiken*), correspondence courses (*tsūshin tensaku*), private tutors (*katei kyōshi*), private after-school classes (*juku*) and full-time preparation following from high school (*rōnin*) (1992: 1644-1645). The pervasiveness, determinants, and consequences of these activities are analysed from data of a nationwide representative longitudinal study of high school seniors (base year 1980). The researchers place their analysis of shadow education within a broader discussion of allocation of students through formal education and determine a predominantly proactive use of shadow education services, that help already privileged students to further their chances within the educational allocation process. Stevenson & Baker's analytical angle is indicative of the direction in which subsequent research on Japanese shadow education was to develop, i.e. the use of quantitative data to analyse overall national and international trends in shadow education use (modal use of shadow education).

A mere proactive use of shadow education in Japan made out by Stevenson & Baker was not found in a later study by Baker et al. (2001). Here, the researchers come to different results in their analysis of cross-national TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) data (1994-95; target subjects: seventh & eight graders). In this study, the researchers examine the prevalence of shadow education across nations. Their findings show that shadow education was in extensive use across all of the 41 nations in TIMSS, but that shadow education exerted no influence on national levels of



mathematics achievement. Further, the analysis lays open that in terms of modal use of shadow education, the tendency in most nations (31 countries) was towards remedial use, with “nations such as Greece, Hong Kong, and Japan, which have been widely cited as producing widespread enrichment-oriented shadow education, show significant levels of remedial use” (2001: 8). Also, contrary to Stevenson & Baker (1992) (and also Bray in his 1999 report) who presumed that the existence of high stakes tests serves as one of the conditions for the flourishing of shadow education, Baker et al. find no positive association between both.

The main contribution of Baker et al.’s study is the finding of significant remedial use of shadow education and that “lower public educational expenditures and less than full enrollments at the seventh and eighth grades lead to more use of shadow education” (2001: 11). This is an important finding since shadow education use had so far been largely theorised to be an enrichment activity, especially in the case of Japan. For Japan, the researchers determine a mix of both remedial and enrichment shadow education use: “[...] Japan’s system of rich mixes of both remedial and enhancement shadow education is less common and grew out of unique historical conditions of an under-supply of academic track high schools in the 1970s coupled with the inability of the government to reform an entrance examination system to a highly hierarchical set of Japanese universities” (2001: 14). In comparing the findings of a significant remedial use of shadow education in Japan to Stevenson & Baker’s findings of largely enrichment use some caution is necessary, since both studies focus on different schooling levels, use different data sets for analysis, and do not refer to the same set of shadow education services<sup>10</sup>. Still these studies established a macro-level focus on national trends in shadow education, which was to be taken up in subsequent research.

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<sup>10</sup> The TIMSS data used in Baker et al.’s study for shadow education activities was based on the following question: “During the week, how much time before or after school do you usually spend taking extra lessons/cram school in mathematics?” (2001: 5).

More recent studies on the use of shadow education continue the focus on international test data such as the OECD's PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study (Entrich 2014, Southgate 2009). As with Stevenson & Baker (1992) and Baker et al. (2001), these studies analyse the results of large-scale (inter-)national test data sets in order to determine the national modal uses of shadow education. These investigations of the modal use of shadow education are framed within broader issues of social inequalities and social reproduction.

For example, Southgate (2009) takes up Baker et al.'s (2001) finding of predominantly remedial shadow education use across nations from their analysis of the 1994-95 TIMSS data in her cross-national analysis of 2003 PISA data to investigate determinants of shadow education. In her analysis, Southgate splits up levels of investigation into the macro-level by addressing the question whether a national modal strategy of shadow education exists, and the micro-level by taking a look at individual and family level predictors of shadow education use (gender, SES, social and cultural capital) (2009: 29/30).

At the macro-level, the findings of this study show that the modal use of shadow education in nations depends on the form of shadow education that is used. Making a distinction between tutoring and outside of school classes (2009: 79), Southgate finds that while outside of school classes are used for enrichment purposes, tutoring is used for remedial purposes, with the "majority of sampled nations [using] shadow education for remediation" (2009: 161).

On the individual/family level, Southgate comes to the conclusion that the socioeconomic status of families is less of a predictor of shadow education use. In the case of Japan, for which the researcher makes out an enrichment modal use of shadow education in the form of out-of-school classes, social reproduction shows not to be a predictive factor of shadow education, that is higher family socio-economic status (SES) is not associated with an increase in the probability of shadow education use (2009: 89/90). Rather the results of the analysis suggest a positive correlation between higher levels of family cultural

capital and an increased use of shadow education. In particular, Southgate discusses the family habitus as a predictor of shadow education usage:

Families that value education are more likely to make this investment than are families with little knowledge of education. Families that surround themselves with artifacts of culture, in keeping with the dominant society's culture, are much more likely to buy more schooling for their children. [...] Engaging in shadow education [...] is not only about raising test scores or passing college entrance examinations; it is also about creating a culture that is separate and above that of the students who do not take extra schooling outside formal school.

Southgate 2009: 165-169.

Southgate's contribution to the study of shadow education lies in her conducting an analysis for two different types of shadow education, that is home tutoring (remedial modal use) and outside of school classes (enrichment modal use). Also, her data analysis reveals the importance of the value families attach to education and how this serves as an important factor in the investment into shadow education services. But the PISA data of her analysis do not allow any deeper level investigation of shadow education's contribution to establishing a distinguishing 'culture' of students who receive shadow education and those who do not within a landscape of mass schooling.

Another study providing an analysis of shadow education modal use was conducted by Entrich (2014), who compares shadow education activities in Germany and Japan. With the objective of investigating the connection between students' school performance and use of shadow education, Entrich takes up 2009 PISA data for analysis in order to gain national level insights. In addition, a particular focus of Entrich's analysis is dedicated to social inequalities and educational attainment.

Entrich finds that shadow education is a decisive determinant for higher

achievement scores in PISA, and that Japan's modal use of shadow education has moved from a mixed to an enrichment system (2014: 95). His analysis also determines regional differences as to the influence of students' family background<sup>11</sup>, showing that enrichment lessons are more effective in highly populated cities compared to less populated areas:

Our findings implicate that an out-of-school education system of predominantly enrichment character which is close-knit to the level of stratification of the high school system as found in large Japanese cities intensifies the impact social origin has on educational outcomes and results in increasing educational disparities.

Entrich 2014: 96.

Entrich's observations clearly point to a connection between issues of educational inequality and shadow education that has shifted towards enrichment purposes. However, the author also points out the limitations of the 2009 PISA data, which does not allow for a clear distinction of out-of-school lessons taken in the private or public sector and whether these had been paid for (2014: 83). In addition, Entrich shows that some of the questions on shadow education did not receive proper translation into Japanese suggesting that students might have had problems in understanding what was asked of them (2014: 84).

Entrich's study is the most recent analysis of cross-national data on shadow education and provides some new insights into possible new modal use patterns of shadow education, particularly for Japan. His analysis also adds to the literature on *juku* with a special focus on social and educational inequalities and reproduction mechanisms indicating shadow education use as a possibly

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<sup>11</sup> Measured as economic, social, and cultural status (ESCS). The variables that make up this index include highest parental education in years, highest parental occupation, number of home possessions (Entrich 2014: 82).

contributing factor to the exacerbation of these inequalities.

A major contribution of the research on shadow education reviewed lies in the clarification of the scale and pervasiveness of shadow education. But the focus on investigating national modal use trends of shadow education has not produced easily comparable results. The international data sets used for analysis differ with regards to schooling levels, definitions of shadow education and are limited to specific school subjects. However, within this grouping of shadow education research, attempts are made to theorise the pervasiveness of shadow education through a neo-institutional lens (Baker et al. 2001, Baker & LeTendre 2005, Mori & Baker 2010).

The starting point for this theoretical perspective is the observation that mass schooling has become the world norm:

At the core of the spread of mass schooling is a set of fundamental ideas [...] For instance, the ideas that all children should be educated; that the nation has an interest in this and should furnish funds; that education is for the collective good; that children should start early and receive continuous instruction for a relatively large number of years; that tradition of statuses such as race, gender, religion, or language should not be barriers to mass schooling; and that academic cognitive skills are useful to all children are institutional foundations that underpin and give modern schooling widespread meaning in society. Adding to these powerful ideas is the rise of the exclusive currency of the educational credential, required to hold almost any position in labor markets all over the world.

Baker & LeTendre 2005: 7/8.

Within this global landscape of mass schooling, shadow education is theorised as a consequence of the spread of mass schooling and as an expression of

institutional change: “[A]s a particular institutional pattern deepens and spreads, it creates wider consequences that in turn have an impact on the original pattern” (Baker & LeTendre 2005: 12), to the point that shadow education itself becomes an “institutionalized component of mass education that grows and expands” (2005: 69) with “the potential to change the governance structure of education by introducing private services to a wider host of families and students, hence merging families, mass schooling, and private educational resources into new institutional arrangements” (2005: 70).

How these developments have played out for a concrete national context is discussed by Mori & Baker (2010) in their historical analysis of shadow education developments in Japan. In their analysis, the authors employ a neo-institutional<sup>12</sup> perspective to show that shadow education has developed its own institutional power and is now itself a constructing force of education. The neo-institutional perspective that the authors employ is supposed to add a new way of conceptualising shadow education to the two main ways in which it has been conceptualised and discussed so far, namely as a technical functional process that views shadow education as a “preparer for society” (2010: 39), and as a conflict process in which shadow education serves as a “reproducer of society” (ibid.).

[T]he neo-institutional perspective expands on both of these [functions -*author’s note*] and sees shadow education not just as a narrow supplement to learning or as only a form of family-financed educational opportunity. [...] Instead, there is a symbiotic relationship between the schooled society and shadow education; as the former intensifies, the

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<sup>12</sup> Mori & Baker do not further elaborate on the differences between ‘traditional’ institutional theory and the newer institutionalism for their analysis. However, according to Meyer & Rowan, this “newer institutionalism” (2006: 6) takes into more explicit account the social constructedness of institutions, the relation between institutions, states and markets as well as historical contexts, issues of power and change (2006: 6-10).

logic of the latter expands and heads toward a universal practice [and] is developed into a robust social institution along with the institutional development of education in general.

Mori & Baker 2010: 40/41.

How this transformation into a “robust social institution” takes place is then exemplified by the Japanese case of shadow education via a historical analysis of its development from early modern nationalism (1872-1945), during which shadow education served the reproduction of elites, to national democracy (1945-1980) with shadow education being mainly examination-driven due to close linkages between elite universities and privileged positions in society, and eventually to a period of global universalism (1990-), during which shadow education serves a variety of purposes providing customised learning opportunities (2010: 45).

In terms of the turn towards global universalism, the researchers make out a shift in the functions of shadow education during a time in the late 1980s when education around the world started to move into a phase of growing homogenisation: “[A]s Japan joined in on the worldwide expansion of tertiary education, and made reforms toward the emerging global model of schooling for lifelong human development in stead of personnel allocation and elite production, its shadow education industry significantly changed in this direction too” (2010: 46). In their conclusion, Mori & Baker argue that Japanese shadow education has already started to move out of the shadows and is in the process of becoming a “legitimate part of education itself” (ibid.).

This line of argument suggests a redistribution of educational functions through new institutional arrangements between schools, family, community, and shadow education. However, Mori & Baker merely provide a theoretical framing for what they analyse to be general macro-level trends of shadow education developments in Japan. They do not further investigate the nature of these proposed new institutional arrangements, i.e. they do not provide an

analysis of concrete examples that can be found at the ground level, nor do they take into account the costs involved in using shadow education services and how this might contribute to educational and social inequalities.

As can be seen, research that conceptualises out-of-school education services as shadow education consists mainly of studies based on quantitative data analysis of international survey data. In comparing overall national tendencies (Baker et al. 2001, Baker & LeTendre 2005, Entrich 2014, Southgate 2009), the concept of shadow education allows these studies to subsume a variety of services under one over-spanning category. Both preparatory and remedial functions (referred to as the modal use of shadow education) are taken into account, but remain largely within the discourse over the improvement of academic performance. Possible expanded functions of shadow education are, however, suggested within the broader neo-institutional theorisation of shadow education developments (Baker et al. 2001, Baker & LeTendre 2005, Mori & Baker 2010), indicating the change in the institution of schooling and a redistribution of educational functions. Given the trends theorised by Mori & Baker for shadow education developments in Japan, the question arises as to how *juku* have been problematised within other research literature. Also, do the research interests and findings match the Japanese shadow education trends made out by Mori & Baker?

The following sub-chapters will review the research trends on *juku* throughout the post-war years by splitting the existing body of research up into studies that focus on investigating *juku* in relation to entrance examination competition and the improvement of scholastic ability (sub-chapter 5.2), research that investigates the effects of *juku* use within growing concerns over growing inequalities within Japanese society (5.3), and research that conceptualises *juku* as forming a double structure with formal schooling (5.4).



## 5.2 Entrance examination competition

According to Mori & Baker's categorisation of trends in the development of the shadow education sector in Japan, the post-war period up to the 1980s was characterised by its function of preparation for entrance examinations. The research literature for this period and research that discusses *juku* within this time frame has given attention to this function (Iwase 2006, Kimura 1999, Rohlen 1980, Sekiguchi 1956).

One of the earliest studies concentrates on the level of university entrance exams and therefore *yobikō*. In a 1956 article by Sekiguchi simply entitled 'Yobikō', which was published in the *Japanese Journal of Educational Sociology*, the researcher provides a discussion of *yobikō* based on data collected among preparatory schools in Tokyo. The study serves the purpose of giving a general overview of the development of *yobikō* and *yobikō* students during a time when new *yobikō* started to be founded (especially in the metropolitan area of Tokyo) and attract increasing numbers of students. Sekiguchi sees a main reason for the thriving of *yobikō* in quality differences among universities despite their post-war quantitative expansion, leading high school graduates to focus on entrance into few top institutions (1956: 71). In this context, Sekiguchi discusses *yobikō* as parasites that feed on the formal schooling system thereby exacerbating competition (1956: 73).

It has to be mentioned that *yobikō* are not a post-war phenomenon<sup>13</sup> and that their pre-war function was to prepare a predominantly urban elite of young men for entrance preparations into higher levels of schooling. Interestingly, Sekiguchi notes the changing character of *yobikō* education during these early post-war years, drawing attention to the new compensatory (*hoshū*)

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<sup>13</sup> There are several works dedicated to often very detailed historical analyses and portrayals of preparatory education either outside of the formal schooling framework or located within (so-called *hoshūka*) by for example Yamada (2009) or Yoshino (1998, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2008). These pieces of work are not included given the limitation of this thesis to the post World War II context.

role of the *yobikō* helping students who lack the ability (*jitsuryoku*) to enter university (1956: 78). The author thereby addresses the changes in the *yobikō* target population within a formal schooling context that now enabled broader (though during the 1950s clearly still limited in numbers) strata with increasingly diverse schooling backgrounds to access higher levels of schooling.

The importance of exams in allocating students within a schooling system that had reached mass participation levels by the 1970s has meant greater focus on the negative effects of entrance exam competition. *Juku* and *yobikō* were considered to be a major culprit that contributed to exacerbating this competition. In consequence, much research continues to be concerned with *juku*'s preparatory function and its effects (Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010; Russell 1998; Saeki 1997; Tsukada 1991; Tsuneyoshi 2013; Zeng 1999).

At the transition point between high school and university, the first study to employ participant observation at *yobikō* was conducted by Mamoru Tsukada (1991). In 'Yobiko Life', the author observes the process of how *yobikō* students come to terms with their position in the competition to get into university<sup>14</sup>. *Yobikō* students received scholarly attention by for example Sugiyama & Shibata (1989) and Sugiyama (1991), who presented everyday life circumstances of *rōnin* in order to shed some light on this social phenomenon. The study by Tsukada, however, offers deeper insights into *yobikō* and particularly *rōnin* life, providing a rich depiction of the process of how *yobikō* students renegotiate their goals throughout the course of one academic year (1985-86) and how they come to terms with the eventual results. His study therefore presents an analysis of the educational and social stratification process as it occurs through the institutional setting of the *yobikō*.

Tsukada asserts that the 'hierarchical structure' (1991: 104) of the education system has 'institutionalized the ranking system of education' (ibid.)

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<sup>14</sup> Tsukada's publication is based on his dissertation submitted at the University of Hawaii in 1988. The study was published in Japanese in 1999 under the title '*Rōninsei on soshioroji – ichinen no yobikō seikatsu*' [The sociology of *rōnin* – one year of *yobikō* life].

creating a 'tracking system through which individual students learn to rank themselves in educational competition' (1991: 105). Within this setting, *yobikō* serve as institutions through which *rōnin* are socialised towards fine-tuning their aspirations to the hierarchical structure of universities, which eventually mediates the macro-level social stratification of broader Japanese society.

The analysis of rich data collected from an insider-perspective has until then been unprecedented in the field. What is particularly interesting about Tsukada's perspective is that *yobikō* are not viewed as a negative phenomenon that *undermine* the educational structure but rather as institutions that help *maintain* a historically grown hierarchical system and thereby contribute to the promotion of system conformity by mediating macro-level structures to the micro-level.

The importance of a system of entrance examinations for the existence of the *juku* industry is thematised in a comparative study by Zeng (1999). In his analysis of the entrance examination systems of Japan, Korea and Taiwan, Zeng (1999) takes up the cram school industry in these three countries making an inquiry into the roles that this industry plays within the respective three societal settings (1999: 5).

For the Japanese context, Zeng collected data at two major *juku* (Yoyogi and Kawai) in Tokyo during the early 1990s<sup>15</sup>. In his analysis of teaching and learning at *juku*, he clarifies that "*juku* lectures are not designed to make knowledge digestible so that it can be crammed into students' brains. The lecture is intended to help students to crack difficulties in problem solving" (1999: 194), thereby acquiring the skill to rationalise their preparatory studies for effective time use.

Zeng argues that "exams are the only cause and *raison d'être* of the vast cram industry" (1999: 202). He presumes the high value put on education and the expectation of meritocratic reward for one's efforts in the examination

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<sup>15</sup> Zeng does not provide the exact time frame of his data collection.

preparation as essential for the existence of the cram school world in the three countries. Since Zeng's focus is on various issues surrounding entrance examinations, this view on *juku* is not surprising, especially since his exploration of the *juku* industry is limited to the investigation of entrance exams for elite universities. For the case of Japan, his data collection therefore is not only limited to two cases of large-scale *juku* companies but also restricted to classes on the "elite track" (1999: 330), where competition is fiercest.

In another study, Kimura (1999) addresses the role that large-scale nationwide operating *juku* or *yobikō* have been playing in the high school to university transition. In providing a brief historic overview of the development of the three large-scale *yobikō* Sundai, Kawai and Yoyogi, Kimura describes the establishment of *yobikō*, tracing back their origins to the Meiji period. This is followed by an analysis of the development of *yobikō* for post-war Japan by relying on compilations of historical accounts of the above *yobikō* and official statistical data on formal schooling such as high school and university advancement rates as well as *rōnin* numbers. The study shows that a combination of the growing demand for higher education and the introduction of the first common preliminary examination (*kyōtsū ichiji shiken*) has allowed these *yobikō* to undergo nationwide expansion. These *yobikō* developed elaborate information networks to gather and process university entrance examination information and created their own mock examinations based on this information.

Kimura analyses the post-war development of the three *yobikō* within the context of entrance examination reforms. The diversification of entrance procedures addressed here took place in the face of a declining 18-year old population. The reforms were also an attempt to alleviate the situation of examination competition and university hierarchy, to which large-scale *yobikō* as major examination information providers had considerably contributed to. Kimura's observations are important because they lay out the significant role that nationwide operating *yobikō* have played within the examination system,

acknowledging the potential that this industry has in continuing to shape the university entrance landscape.

Beyond the high school to university transition level, research has paid attention to the type of learning that *juku* instil within students (Russell 1998, Saeki 1997). These studies see the learning patterns taught at *juku* as serving the purposes of examination taking.

For example, Russell (1998) focuses on the Kumon method, a supplementary learning system for especially elementary school students. The Kumon approach was developed in the 1950s by Takeshi Kumon, a mathematics teacher. Originally developed to learn basic mathematics principles, the method is also available in other main subjects such as English or Japanese (or any other language depending on the country the approach is used). Central to this approach are the worksheets. The problems on the worksheets are carefully sequenced from simple to difficult. A student works on a fixed set of worksheets every day, and hands them in to his Kumon teacher. Only if the student reaches a perfect score is he able to progress on to the next set of worksheets. The method has come to be a worldwide success and at the time of Russell's investigation in 1993, 350 000 children in 27 countries (70 000 in the US) were enrolled in Kumon math (1998: 250).

Russell gives an overview over the Kumon philosophy and investigates the reasons for the method's success. By briefly presenting the method's use in the US, she also offers a comparison between how two cultural contexts (US and Japan) differ in their assumptions as to "how learning should take place" (ibid.).

Russell identifies several reasons for Kumon's success in Japan:

- (1) The Japanese mothers who use it have a positive image of the method;
- (2) many children seem to enjoy doing it;
- (3) it is convenient for families;
- (4) society places high value on education, and
- (5) Kumon

is seen as a viable after-school program which propels children beyond grade-level work and prepares them successfully for competitive entrance examination.

Russell 1998: 258.

For the US example, Russell points out the general “resistance to intensive competition” (1998: 269), while within the Japanese context she identifies the “value of “doing” as part of knowing” (1998: 268), where students are guided and an understanding of concepts follows later. Also, while US students tend to be content with using the method to catch up at school, Kumon is used as a method to get beyond what is taught at the students current age level (1998: 266).

Her discussion of the Kumon method clarifies the emphasis put on “overlearning” (1998: 251), meaning that children “must practice computation until finding solutions becomes automatic” (ibid.). This “principle of automaticity” (ibid.) becomes especially important within a competitive entrance examination system, in which being one step ahead of what is being studied and the speed of problem solving are essential factors potentially contributing to a student’s success.

Competition forms a central element to the examination taking experience for students and is therefore also taken up in relation to learning experiences at *juku*. Cognitive psychologist Yutaka Saeki has described the learning patterns that are instilled in students in the process of learning for entrance examinations as an automisation of thinking processes leading to the rote memorisation of patterns along the lines of ‘if~ then~’ (1997: 106). He also argues that this form of learning with an emphasis on ‘how to do things’ (*yarikata*) (1997: 130) is culturally ingrained within Japanese society. This view is close to what Russell has discussed for the Kumon method. It also refers back to the rationalising effort in preparatory studies at *juku* pointed out by Zeng. Russell’s, Zeng’s and Saeki’s discussions of *juku* in relation to entrance examination competition therefore point to a particular way of learning taking

place at *juku* that is “guided” (Russell 1998: 268) and places greater importance on quick pattern recognition and memorisation over conceptual understanding.

The type of learning encouraged in *juku* has also raised questions as to whether *juku* attendance does actually improve students’ scholastic ability (*gakuryoku*). Research focusing on the effects of out-of-school education services (mainly in the form of *juku* attendance or home tutoring) on students’ scholastic ability levels was conducted by Seiyama (1981) and Seiyama & Noguchi (1984). These effects are investigated as part of the testing of the hypothesis that students’ socio-economic background exerts influence on investment in out-of-school education services, which leads to higher scholastic ability (out-of-school education investment hypothesis - (*gakkō gai kyōiku tōshi kasetu*)).

Focusing on the analysis of high school student data in Sapporo, the researchers do not confirm the hypothesis. Rather, the studies show that students with higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to take out-of-school lessons, but this does not have a strong effect on their scholastic ability levels. In discussing his findings, Seiyama makes a distinction between the growth of a student’s abilities (*nōryoku*) and his academic performance (*gakuryoku*), with the former being formed within a longer, continuous learning process that supports sustained good academic performance (1981: 207-209). *Juku* and home tutoring, however, are not able to provide students with opportunities to let their abilities develop beyond what they are acquiring at school (*ibid.*), with investment into these services merely having a superficial (short-term) positive effect on students’ scholastic abilities, which gets lost after investment is stopped. Also, with regards to students’ socio-economic backgrounds, Seiyama & Noguchi (1984) found a positive correlation between students’ socio-economic background and the rank of their high school. As a result, Seiyama & Noguchi see other mechanisms at work, suggesting ‘traditional class differences’ (1984: 123) and cultural factors that influence academic performance and inhibit lower income families to aspire to higher

educational careers and eventual credentials.

Seiyama's (1981) and Seiyama & Noguchi's (1984) findings are limited in their analysis of data collected in one city and therefore are not representative of the whole of Japan. But these studies serve as early examples of growing concerns that out-of-school education services can possibly contribute to inequalities among students. Interestingly, the researchers' results do not indicate that investment into these services leads students with higher socio-economic backgrounds to gain a significant advantage in their performance at school. Still, the findings indicate that out-of-school education may serve as an investment on behalf of families who can afford them to function as a tool for educational distinction, even though the actual benefits for scholastic ability improvement may be less pronounced.

This function of educational distinction in combination with actual necessity for out-of-school entrance examination preparation is explicit at the transition point from elementary to lower secondary schooling. Reviewing the literature, there has been a major shift in the level of schooling for which investigations of *juku's* preparatory function are made. Until the 1990s, university entrance examination competition at the high school to post-high school level constituted the main focus of studies (Kimura 1999, Sekiguchi 1956, Tsukada 1991, Zeng 1999). Entering the 2000s, the observation level in the research literature had shifted to the lower levels of schooling, particularly the elementary school level (Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010; Tsuneyoshi 2013).

In the 2000s, research interests shifted toward entrance preparation at the elementary school level. Tsuneyoshi (2013) has argued that the period of high stakes testing has moved to lower schooling levels, especially in urban areas with ample private school choice. Her observations of excessive entrance examination competition in metropolitan Tokyo show the amount of time and money invested by families living in an urban surrounding characterised by a highly competitive private school entrance examination preparation market.



How elementary school students experience this process of examination preparation at *juku* is taken up by a set of micro-level studies conducted by Iwase (2005a/b, 2009, 2010). Her participant observations in two different types of *juku* settings (a large-scale *shingaku juku* and a small-scale *sōgō juku*, or comprehensive *juku* combining both remedial and enrichment studies, that cooperates with a large-scale *juku* in terms of *juken* preparation) provides an analysis of the mechanisms through which an examination taking framework<sup>16</sup> is established (*juken taisei no seiritsu*) within the context of *juku*. Iwase attempts to clarify how elementary school students try to make sense of their *juken* learning experience and how they actively participate in establishing this examination-taking framework. This framework does not just consist of examination-relevant knowledge but also encompasses the acquisition of a certain attitude and directedness toward examination taking. Her analytical perspective tries to move away from viewing the preparatory process as mere internalisation with students possessing agency within the *juken* learning experience. But her analysis is not able to address issues of power relations within the institutionalised setting of *juku* and tends to insufficiently address the directedness towards *juken* that overall dominates the (inter-)actions.

As can be seen with the studies reviewed in this sub-section, the strong connection between entrance examinations and the *juku* sector has produced research literature with much attention given to *juken* preparation competition at two important points of transition: high school to university, and elementary school to junior high school. This shift in research attention matches demographic trends with a declining 18-year old population since the mid-1990s and the boom in private and integrated schools especially since the late 1990s and 2000s, which necessitated *juken* preparation to move to younger aged

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<sup>16</sup> This framework is established differently for the two types of *juku* in Iwase's study: While at the *shingaku juku*, this happens inductively, the *sōgō juku* presents a deductive approach (2010: 229/230).

students. Four main functions of the *juku* industry are determined: *juku* in their legitimisation function of educational stratification (Tsukada 1991), *juku* in their *juken* studies rationalising function (Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010; Russell 1998; Saeki 1997; Zeng 1999), *juku* as entrance examination related information gatherer and provider (Kimura 1999), and *juku* as a tool for educational distinction (Tsuneyoshi 2013, Seiyama 1981, Seiyama & Noguchi 1984). Especially the latter function is discussed within concerns over socio-economic inequalities and their expression in education.

### 5.3 *Juku* within the gap society

Since the 2000s, issues of social and educational inequalities have featured more prominently in the public discourse and *juku* continue to be a part of this discussion (for example Hirst 2013, Okada 2012, Yamamoto & Brinton 2010). As the education sector underwent increasing liberalisation since the 1980s (Okada 2012, Okano & Tsuchiya 1999) and neoliberal reforms realised in the decades to come, debates on the 'gap society' have been growing louder. The discourse on educational inequalities within this gap society frames several of the newer studies on *juku*.

One such study was conducted by Sugasawa (2006), who provided an analysis of students who took the high school equivalence examination (*daigaku nyūgaku shikaku kentei*, or *daiken*) and their social class origin. He carried out a paper questionnaire (conducted in 2004) at the branch schools (Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka) of a *yobikō* specialising in the high school equivalence examination (*daiken yobikō*). Sugasawa then compared the data to a different 1997 study, which focused on third year high schools students in the southeast of Hyogo prefecture in order determine possible social class differences between high school students and students taking the high school equivalence examination.

The findings of Sugasawa's study show that the students preparing at the *yobikō* for taking the *daiken* were more likely to come from families in which

both parents have high academic backgrounds (university degree) and are working in higher position white-collar jobs compared to the high school students of the 1997 survey. It is necessary to point out that caution should be given to the data that Sugasawa employs for comparison and that the *yobikō* at which data was collected is quite costly<sup>17</sup>. Still, the study addresses issues of educational inequalities that are reproduced between different social strata with private education services contributing to solidifying these inequalities by providing services that can only be purchased by families with the according financial possibilities.

In the discussion of his findings, Sugasawa criticises the current system of high school equivalence exams as not providing everyone an equal chance to earn the qualification, which would enable them to progress on to higher education institutions. Rather, it functions as a 'safety net' for the privileged (2004: 50), which is secured by the existence of *yobikō* classes that specialise in this exam. Sugasawa does not provide any further proof for his claim that the *daiken* only serves as a safety net for the privileged. However, through his observations we gain some insights into how the existence of private education services might contribute to the solidification of class differences within an educational policy context that has come to value the principle of 'equality of free choice' (Okada 2012: 21).

A study that is in line with the function of educational distinction was conducted by Mimizuka (2007). His analysis investigates regional differences in scholastic achievement levels in mathematics among elementary school students using data from a longitudinal study for one urban and one smaller town area. Mimizuka finds that social class influences students' scholastic achievement levels in the urban area with a higher density of private junior high schools, but not in the more rural area with no such alternatives. The researcher

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<sup>17</sup> Sugasawa mentions annual costs of around 800, 000 Yen for classes at the *yobikō* he conducted research at (2006: 51).

theorises that the availability of private alternatives determines these differences: In areas with private school options parental income, their educational aspirations, and family expenditure on out-of-school education (in the form of *juken* & *hoshū juku*) determine a student's scholastic ability (2007: 33). Mimizuka's findings provide us with evidence of educational inequalities that are realised through parental investment strategies for distinction and this early on in their child's schooling career.

Investments into educational services are also part of the analysis in another study by Katase & Hirasawa (2008). The researchers analysed data from the 2005 Social Stratification and Mobility (SSM) survey, conducting regression analyses for four age cohorts (pre-war cohort: 1935-45; 1<sup>st</sup> post-war cohort: 1946-60; 2<sup>nd</sup> post-war cohort: 1961-70; 3<sup>rd</sup> post-war cohort: 1971-85). The purpose was to investigate whether and to what extent the number of siblings influenced the experience of out-of-school education (*juku*, *yobikō*, home tutoring, correspondence courses) and educational achievement as well as how parents' own experience of out-of-school education influenced their investment into out-of-school education.

In their analysis they found that sibling numbers as well as prior parental experiences of out-of-school educational activities were exerting influence on parents' intention to invest into these services (*tōshi shikō*): Having more siblings had a negative effect on out-of-school education experience and parents' own experience of out-of-school education had a positive effect on their intention to invest. The researchers also show that what determined actual investment in out-of-school education was a family's household income. As for the effect of out-of-school education on academic performance (3<sup>rd</sup> year junior high school) and educational achievement (length of schooling), Katase & Hirasawa found that the effects of out-of-school education services differ for different age cohorts. Their analysis reveals that effects were positive on students' academic performance and length of schooling during periods of educational expansion of tertiary education in the 1960s and 1990s. For the 2<sup>nd</sup>

post-war age cohort, however, they found no positive correlation between out-of-school education and academic performance. This cohort was attending school during the 1980s when educational policies restricted university capacity numbers (2008: 46). Still, use of these services was positively associated with male students' educational achievement.

The researchers offer no further interpretation as to why and how restrictive policies on tertiary education during the period this 2<sup>nd</sup> post-war age cohort moved through school are related to their findings: Why is it that for this generation, experience of out-of-school education has no positive effect on their achievements in 3<sup>rd</sup> year junior high but is still positively associated with students' length of schooling? Are there further factors for example to be made out in students' family background that influence their eventual educational achievement? Unfortunately, the study does not provide further investigation.

Still, one of the major findings of Katase & Hirasawa's study is that the effect of out-of-school education on both academic performance and educational achievement was strongest for the youngest cohort born between 1971-58, especially in the case of male students. These results lead the researchers to express concerns over the strengthening of reproduction mechanisms through education via parental investment strategies in out-of-school education services within a current context of greater marketisation of education.

Upon entering the 2000s, discussions of *juku* have come to be increasingly linked to issues of inequality. With growing public and scholarly attention given to social inequalities and the public good of education being re-defined as a private good that allows parents to invest and have their child gain a head-start into society (Shimizu 2015), research focus on *juku* is starting to gain new levels relevance. These studies connect in terms of research interest with the studies by Seiyama (1981) and Seiyama & Noguchi (1984) and they call into awareness the importance of household income in purchasing these out-of-school services, as well as the possible consequences of exacerbating inequalities since

customer behaviour and marketisation in education are now actively encouraged.

There are, however, severe limitations to comparison as regards data used, target populations, location, and definitions of out-of school education. This is also the main reason why some studies have found *juku* attendance to form an important element for higher student scholastic ability levels (Mimizuka 2007), while other studies merely determine short-term positive effects (Seiyama 1981, Seiyama & Noguchi 1984), or make out different effects for different age cohorts (Katase & Hirasawa 2008).

Also, these quantitative data analyses fail to refer to the existing body of *juku* literature available and have a one-dimensional focus on *juku* and out-of-school services in general in relation to the improvement of scholastic ability that is necessary within the system of entrance exams. In some cases this is not surprising as some of the data comes from large-scale surveys, which often provide no distinction for different functions of out-of-school education. Consequently they do not allow more precise and detailed observations of the roles that *juku* play and influences they exert in shaping inequalities. Research that has made distinctions for different types of *juku* and in some cases gone beyond a focus on improvement of exam-relevant scholastic ability constitutes the last major grouping.

#### 5.4 The double structure of education and the diversity of *juku* types

The next group of studies investigates the *juku* sector in its diversity. Many of these have an educational focus and position *juku* within a relational double structure of Japanese education. But what does this double structure consist of? As the review in this sub-section will show, the double structure mainly refers to *juku* running as a parallel system to formal schooling. However, the functions that are discussed within the literature sometimes relate to broader functions of socialisation towards the larger socio-cultural context.

One of the earliest discussions of *juku* as parallel institutions to formal

schools was conducted by Fukaya (1977, 1985). In his 1977 study, Fukaya collected data through interviews with elementary school children at different schools around the country. Focusing on one class in four schools in different areas and paying attention to the characteristics of the schools and local area, the researcher inquired about what the children had been doing the previous day via interviews. His findings show local variation in the extent of *juku* attendance and patterns of use.

In two areas (Kanto metropolitan region and Osaka), more than half of students in each observed class were attending *juku*. Major features for these two schools were the existence of famous private schools in one area (Kanto metropolitan region), and alternative approaches, such as the school not issuing report cards and limiting tests to a minimum (Osaka). In both cases, but for different reasons, parents felt the need to send their children to *juku* for either the purpose of *juken* preparation or to find compensatory measures for the lack of study at school. In the other two surveyed schools, *juku* attendance was less than 20% in a Kyoto school, and no *juku* attendance in a rural school in Gifu. However, despite no *juku* attendance, Fukaya found that students from the Gifu school studied long hours and that the school had a focus on improving students' scholastic abilities. In the Kyoto school, students were required to do an additional one and a half hour of study at school, which, according to Fukaya, has had the effect of reducing *juku* attendance in academic subjects. Still, the researcher also found that more than 70% of this class attended *keiko juku* that do not directly cater to improvement in academic school subjects. Interestingly, for the Gifu school, Fukaya found several cases of students who do make use of out-of-school services such as home tutoring and the purchasing of *juken* related materials, which leads him to the conclusion that students in this area would attend *juku* if they were to exist in their area (1977: 59).

Fukaya's study serves as an important contribution to the literature on *juku* as it shows how *juku* are utilised given specific local circumstances, and how their functions differ from either being preparatory oriented (*shingaku juku*)

to remedial in use (*hoshū juku*), and also beyond instruction in academic subjects in the form of *keiko juku*, which the researcher still sees as contributing to students' scholastic performance. Also, despite a small sample size, his study shows the significant use of *juku* at the elementary school level, where the tendency of instruction is toward ensuring the minimum level of scholastic ability. Ensuring this minimum level means that the task of fulfilling parents' and students' needs for further ability improvement is outsourced to *juku*, leading to an emerging pattern of formal schools serving as places of basic education (*kyōtsū kyōiku*) and supplementary education through which a student can receive individualised education (*kobetsu kyōiku*) (Fukaya 1977: 63).

Fukaya takes up this double structure again in his book '*Kodokuka suru kodomotachi*' [Children in increasing solitude] (1985). The book lays out the social context and the way especially elementary school children were growing up during the late 1970s to early 1980s. Among the aspects that Fukaya discusses here, *juku* reliance is taken up within the context of increasing value put on students' academic performance as capital to advance on to 'good' schools that would eventually lead to attendance of 'good' universities. Here, the author suggests that especially lack of trust in schools is leading parents and students to rely on *juku*. Particularly, Fukaya ascribes this lack of trust to the emphasis put on minimising any displays of differences in academic performance among students in schools and considers this as a major factor spurring *juku* attendance (1985: 138-140). Fukaya argues that this has led to a double structure in which schools present the official, public values (*tatema*), as expressed in an overemphasis on egalitarian values regards students' academic performances and abilities, and *juku* presenting the 'real' state (*honne*) of differences between students in terms of study progress and academic performance (1985: 140).

Fukaya's observations on the *juku* sector rely on interview data collected among students, statistical data, and on a discussion of current educational trends and therefore present no analysis of data collected at *juku*.



But the perspective of a *tatemae-honne* divide that leads to the existence of an educational double structure provides an alternative framework within which *juku* functions can be discussed.

The same idea of a double structure based on a division between *tatemae* and *honne* is employed by Rohlen (1980). In his cultural-anthropological observations on the '*juku* phenomenon', Rohlen does not make reference to Fukaya, but similar to him develops his discussion of the *juku* landscape along a public-private dialectic in which formal schooling represents the official, idealistic front of public values (*tatemae*), while *juku* represent the reality of a hierarchical society. Rohlen's observations portray the specific socialisation role that *juku* are equipped with within this dialectic relationship: "Commuting between school and *juku* provides the child a fine opportunity to experience some of the contradictions of contemporary Japanese culture [...] [T]he hard work of studying for exams teaches children a capacity for compliance to institutionalized demands, to social context and to "the facts of life" understood as a balancing of *tatemae* and *honne*" (1980: 236).

In his observations, he makes a distinction between so-called 'average' *juku* that are small-scale and of remedial character, and 'model' *juku* characterised by large student numbers, employing up-to-date teaching materials and techniques in order to get students to move ahead quickly in their studies (thereby also labelled as 'express' *juku* by Rohlen). Here, Rohlen's post-war historical contextualisation of *juku* developments deserves extraction as his analysis explains the interrelated development and transformation of the *juku* landscape and socio-economic changes. Aspects that he addresses are increases in disposable income, advancement rates on to higher schooling levels and greater parental expectations towards educational investment. He also discusses reforms that have occurred within formal schooling, including increases in curriculum content during the late 1960s, local reforms to end the dominance of exam preparation in public schooling, as well as a redistricting of public schools – *gakkō gunsei* – in Tokyo leading to a rush on to private high

schools. According to Rohlen, these socio-economic and educational policy changes are some of the major factors, which have contributed to the existence of different *juku* types.

Rohlen's observations and his discussion of *juku* needs to be considered as a seminal piece of work in the field of scholarly approaches to the topic of *juku* as it is the first work that provided a more contextualised look at *juku*. It thereby allows a deepening of our understanding of the development of the *juku* landscape up to the late 1970s and a clearer picture of how the *juku* landscape interrelates with other aspects of Japanese society, that are both culturally as well as socio-economically defined. Still, despite acknowledging different types of *juku*, their functions are placed within his analytical point of view of Japanese society's middle class aspirations with *juku* being an expression of these ambitions (1980: 238). It is here that he also points to the beginning stages of *juku* stratification between 'low' and 'good' quality *juku*, even though he does not define these differences. Rohlen's assumption is that parents who are able to buy better quality *juku* education therefore are able to purchase greater educational advantages. But this assumption remains untested as he does not provide evidence for this connection. Moreover, Rohlen admits to his own bias as a foreign researcher:

It is difficult for me personally to find much virtue in *juku* and the parental attitudes they reflect. *Juku*, to me, represent an impoverished view of the individual and society. Seeing exams as somehow measuring the most important qualities of a person is about as narrow and faded an approach to education as is offered to young people anywhere. University exams are at the heart of the problem. Yet *juku* epitomize this world view. I see them as one of the most exaggerated forms of the "ant hill" aspect of Japanese contemporary society. *Juku* help train the worker ant.

Rohlen 1980: 241.

This view places *juku* entirely within an understanding of the hierarchical structure of Japanese society as mediated through examinations. In this way, Rohlen's conceptualisation of a double structure remains narrow and attaches a negative label to *juku* in general.

In the 1980s, students' out-of-school learning activities had reached levels that strongly suggested their importance in students' schooling lives. A 1985 survey by the Ministry of Education among elementary and junior high school students showed that at both levels of schooling *juku* attendance taken together was at an average of around 28% (Adachi 1986: 104). With *juku* attendance being a reality for a significant amount of students, this 'double structure' of education became the focus of a study conducted by Yūki et al. (1987).

Yūki et al. present a fact-finding survey on *juku*, which is located within various discourses that surrounded *juku* at the time (e.g. *juku's* negative influence on children's development and on school education, financial burden on families caused by *juku* attendance, exacerbation of entrance examination competition). It is the first larger scale study (Kanto area around Tokyo) on *juku* to collect information among main stakeholders such as elementary and junior high school students, parents, school teachers as well as *juku* representatives/teachers in order to grasp *juku's* role within the Japanese schooling context. Another important contribution lies in the fact that the study acknowledges the complexity within the *juku* landscape and makes an explicit distinction between different types of *juku* and their functions in relation to formal schooling by categorising *juku* up into the following categories: *shingaku juku* (for preparatory/enrichment purposes), *hoshū juku* (remedial purposes), *sōgō juku* (offering both preparatory and remedial courses) and *ochikobore kyūsai juku* (for students who have severe problems following school classes or other behavioural problems such as school refusal) (1987: 19/20).

Based on this distinction, Yūki et al.'s analysis also makes an inquiry

into the *juku* perceptions of schoolteachers, parents and students, allowing for a more detailed and differentiated look at stakeholder perceptions of both school and *juku*. The comparison between school and *juku* teacher perceptions and parental evaluation of school and *juku* revealed considerable differences for the different type of *juku*. For example, *kyūsai juku* teachers and parents whose children attended *kyūsai juku* were more critical of school studies and instruction than *shingaku juku* teachers and parents whose child attended a *shingaku juku* (1987: 283-284). Also, Yūki et al. found that *shingaku juku* students enjoyed school more than *juku*, while *kyūsai juku* attending students regarded *juku* as more fun (1987: 295). Overall the researchers conclude that different role expectations towards school and *juku* can be taken from the stakeholder views (1987: 298), with *juku* answering to those educational needs (whether this may be for preparatory or remedial purposes) that school is not able to answer.

Yūki et al.'s survey makes a major contribution to uncovering some of the reasons for the existence of the double structure and delivers an analysis of the perceived roles of *juku* and school among main stakeholders. The double structure perspective that is carried throughout this study is highly important as the *juku* discussion presented within it is strongly connected to issues related to school education at the time: not only such aspects as students who cannot keep up with school classes (*ochikobore*) but also the lack of an education that caters to each individual student's needs. The results of their analysis lead Yūki et al. to confirm that *juku* are an established existence that have gained acceptance especially among parents, but which at the same time raises questions as to the social and educational responsibilities that *juku* are to carry within this context (1987: 306).

Entering the 1990s, while scholarly focus on the negative effects of *juku* and *yobikō* usage continued (for *juku/yobikō* usage in a particular school context for example Ueno & Masaki 1991), *juku*, and here especially non-*shingaku juku* types, were gradually considered as central places in which children's

socialisation takes place (for example Ikemi 1990). Adding to the discussion on *juku* functions, education commentator Hirohito Komiyama (1993) focuses on *juku*'s potential roles within his analysis of meritocracy in Japanese society. As a major characteristic of Japanese meritocracy, Komiyama identifies the Japanese education system as putting more value on results rather than process, on 'knowing how to do things' (*dekiru*) rather than 'understanding' (*wakaru*) which he relates to the importance of entrance exams and *juken* competition (1993: 1-4). But at the point of writing his book in the early 1990s, the author sees this Japanese meritocratic system as having arrived at a turning point, assuming that an individual's actual qualifications and skills rather than his or her credentials will gain greater importance for job prospects (1993: 79).

It is here that he makes a distinction between different types of *juku*: *shingaku juku* (preparatory orientation), *hoshū juku* (remedial purpose), *sōgō juku* (offering both preparatory and remedial courses), *kyūsai juku* (targeting students with more serious problems keeping up with school classes or with behavioural problems) (1993: 83-86). Through this differentiation of *juku* types, Komiyama argues that particularly *shingaku juku* cater to the current meritocratic system, but that especially owner-operated small scale *juku*, often in the form of *hoshū* or *sōgō juku*, have the potential to take on more social responsibility towards providing whole person education (*zenjin kyōiku*) (1993: 137, 156/157). Here, he sees the potential for the expansion of *juku* roles to support the education of the next generation – roles that are not confined simply to the improvement of scholastic ability and eventual examination preparation.

Komiyama takes up this potential again in '*Juku – gakkō surimuka jidai o mae ni*' [*Juku*: in the face of a period of school downsizing] (2000) within the context of the then upcoming 2002 Course of Study revisions that saw the country-wide full implementation of the five-day school week as well as the cut-down in school class hours and study content. The author considers the 2002 Course of Study revisions as an attempt to return more responsibility for children's education back to both the family and broader community and *juku*

being able to play a role within this redistribution of educational responsibility. Taking up the *juku* categorisation he laid out in his 1993 book, he argues that especially small owner-operated *juku* (*kojin juku*) possess the potential to take on some of the functions of school and serve as places that support the whole development of students.

Komiyama adds a new perspective to the body of literature on *juku* as he presents a view of advocacy for *juku* and school to coexist with each other and even cooperate thereby opening up the discussion on how to tap into their educational potential. This stance toward *juku* also captures the trend that was gradually developing towards acknowledging the existence of *juku* within education. However, Komiyama's work is not a fully fleshed out investigation into how a collaborative model with *juku* could be developed and stops at a very general level acknowledging *juku*'s broader educational potential.

A study that partially builds on Komiyama's *juku* categorisation was conducted by Roesgaard entitled '*Japanese education and the cram school business – functions, challenges and perspectives of the juku*' (2006). Roesgaard provides a typology of *juku* and examines their relationship to the regular school system and MEXT. Since she attempts to offer a more detailed categorisation of *juku*, Roesgaard demonstrates their diversity. At the same time, by focusing on the relationship of *juku* to the regular school system and MEXT, she contextualises them within the broader education and educational policy context. Methodologically, Roesgaard has conducted her empirical research (period of data collection: 1996-2003) at the micro-level through *juku* visits in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area and semi-structured interviews with *juku* representatives, amassing data on key stakeholder self-characterisations of their *juku*.

Based on these findings and building on previous studies, Roesgaard introduces variables that are employable in categorising *juku* according to the relational triangle of *juku*, schools and MEXT that is the central concern in her study. However, given the study's geographic limitation the author admits to

possible regional differences. Moreover, even though this study is relevant for proper categorisation and contextualisation of *juku*, the focus of interest is limited to the junior high school entrance examination level. As such, it offers a fragment in the broader picture of the *juku* sector, which provides educational services to different students from different schooling levels.

Similar to Komiyama's work from the year 2000, Roesgaard's study needs to be considered within the context of the 2002 CoS revisions that were afterwards seen as the full implementation of what has been termed *yutori kyōiku*, or pressure-free education. As mentioned, with the introduction of these curricular revisions, *juku* received official recognition as educational institutions that have the potential to contribute to community-based learning. Within this period of official acknowledgement, Roesgaard's perspective towards and discussion of *juku* needs to be considered as seminal in scholarly discussions on *juku* as it presents an important step towards an analytical perspective that delivers a more differentiated view of the sector and the various functions that different types of *juku* fulfil.

Since the official recognition of *juku* in their educational potential at the end of the 1990s, *juku* have come to receive greater acknowledgement and started to be used as an option for collaboration with schools. A brief research paper focusing on collaborative attempts between schools and *juku* was conducted by Kuroishi & Takahashi 2009. The researchers analysed current school-*juku* collaborations by conducting interviews (interview period: 2007-2008) with main stakeholders such as researchers, *juku* and school representatives as well as parents. Though the sample of interviewees is rather small and the sample of *juku* interviewees coming from large-scale *juku*, the researchers list several examples of collaborative efforts between formal schools and *juku*, such as supplementary classes held by *juku* teachers, support for schools in recruiting students, teacher training and dispatching of teachers, provision of tests and teaching materials and school management consultations (2009: 5-9).

A major shortcoming of this study is that it does not investigate or discuss existing or potential collaborative efforts for different *juku* types. Also, the researchers define the *juku* sector as providing services aimed at improving students' scholastic ability (2009: 4), and thereby remain at a narrow understanding of *juku* functions. Based on this understanding, Kuroishi & Takahashi identify several potential *juku*-school collaborations. These include further enabling exchanges between school and *juku* teachers, possibilities for *juku* teachers to become school teachers throughout their teaching careers, contributions that *juku* can make to school management (for example the *juku* introducing potential candidates as private school principals) and cooperation in terms of student guidance. Overall, the study only offers some examples as well as suggestions as to possible future *juku*-school collaborations and does not discuss potential consequences of such collaborative models.

This last grouping of *juku* literature distinguishes itself from the other groupings of *juku* research in that it offers more detailed categorisations of *juku*. The double structure analogy used by Fukaya (1977, 1985), Rohlen (1980) and Yūki et al. (1987) derives from diagnosing an ideal front of education, which is represented by schools. This ideal front is theorised as being disconnected from parental expectations and student needs for individual guidance for both preparatory and remedial instruction purposes, based on which data is collected for different *juku* types (Yūki et al.1987). Another important feature of the literature reviewed in this grouping is the outlook on collaborative potential between *juku* and schools, particularly among later studies (Komiya 1993, 2000; Kuroishi & Takahashi 2009). But even though the studies touch upon the relation between *juku* and schools in this double structure, the nature of this relation is not analysed in further detail.

The contributions and limitations of the reviewed research and conceptualisations used within them will be the focus of the discussion in the



final sub-chapter. It will show that a qualitative re-investigation into *juku* roles is necessary in order to update our understanding as to why *juku* continue to remain relevant and are an established part of Japanese education.

## 5.5 Discussion

The review of the body of literature has identified four fields of research interests that have framed analysis and discussion of *juku*: shadow education (5.1), examination preparation and improvement of scholastic ability (5.2), the gap society (5.3), as well as the double structure of education and the diversity of *juku* types (5.4). This last sub-chapter will look at what the existing research literature has conceptualised in terms of *juku* roles (5.5.1) and synthesises the main findings of each of the four fields of research (5.5.2).

### 5.5.1 Extraction of *juku* types from previous research

The literature review has revealed that broad distinctions between remedial (*hoshū*) and enrichment/preparatory (*shingaku*) purposes for *juku* have been made since the 1970s. However, attempts at defining *juku* in a more differentiated manner were only to be seen during the late 1980s (Yūki et al. 1987). Later research has not always made explicit reference to these distinctions and analysis for these different types, or cross-reference to existing definitions has only been done for Roesgaard's (2006) study by referring to Komiyama (2000). An overview of the most commonly used *juku* categories in the existing body of literature is given below:

Type of <i>juku</i>	Definition (according to existing body of research)
<i>gakushū juku</i>	serves as the over-spanning category for <i>juku</i> specialising in instruction of academic school subjects that are relevant for entrance exams
<i>shingaku juku, juken juku</i> (Mimizuka 2007)	<i>juku</i> specialising on preparatory education for entrance examinations; according to Roesgaard (2006) targeting academically better performing students
<i>hoshū juku</i>	offer remedial teaching for school subjects
<i>kyōsai juku</i> (Roesgaard 2006), <i>kyūsai/kyōiku rinen juku</i> (Komiyaama 1995, 2000)	target academically weaker performers than the average <i>hoshū juku</i> students; often take in students with behavioural problems or other problems like school phobia (Komiyaama 1993, 2000; Roesgaard 2006)
<i>sōgō juku</i>	so-called comprehensive <i>juku</i> ; definitions vary considerably but generally <i>juku</i> that encompass both remedial and enrichment/preparatory education services (Iwase 2009, 2010; Komiyaama 1995, 2000; Roesgaard 2006)
<i>doriru juku</i>	according to Roesgaard (2006) <i>juku</i> that specialise in drilling basic skills in academic subjects using exercise sheets

*Table 12. Overview of most common juku types according to existing literature.*

The extraction of *juku* types and types of instruction conducted at *juku* from the existing literature shows that the breadth of *juku* variety has at least been addressed. But even though conceptual distinctions have been made, only some functions have been investigated by previous research. Here, it will be useful to compare these different types with the functions primarily addressed in the reviewed studies:

Thematic groupings of research literature	Functions within each grouping	Juku types	Reviewed research literature
Shadow education	Improvement of scholastic ability	<i>shingaku/juken juku</i> , <i>hoshū juku</i>	Baker et al. (2001), Entrich (2014), Southgate (2009), Stevenson & Baker (1992)
	Lifelong human development	No explicit definition	Mori & Baker (2010)
Examination preparation	Educational stratification	<i>yobikō</i>	Tsukada (1991)
	<i>Juken</i> studies rationalisation, <i>juken</i> studies learning patterns	<i>sōgō juku</i> , <i>shingaku juku</i> , <i>yobikō</i> , <i>doriru juku</i>	Zeng (1999), Russell (1998), Saeki (1997), Iwase (2005a/b, 2009, 2010)
	Information gatherer & provider	<i>juku</i> , <i>yobikō</i>	Kimura (1999)
	Educational distinction	<i>gakushū juku</i>	Seiyama (1981), Seiyama & Noguchi (1984), Tsuneyoshi (2013)
Gap society	Educational investment strategy	<i>juku</i> , <i>yobikō</i>	Mimizuka (2007), Katase & Hirasawa (2008)
Double structure and diversity of <i>juku</i> types	Socialisation within hierarchical society	<i>shingaku juku</i> , <i>hoshū juku</i> ,	Fukaya (1977, 1985), Rohlen (1980)
	Improvement of scholastic ability (distinction between remedial and enrichment)	<i>shingaku juku</i> , <i>hoshū juku</i> , <i>doriru juku</i> , <i>kyūsai juku</i> , <i>kyōsai juku</i> , <i>kyōiku rinen juku</i>	Komiyama (1993, 2000), Ikemi (1990), Roesgaard (2006), Yuki et al. (1987), Kuroishi & Takahashi (2009)

Table 13. Overview of main research groupings and juku types addressed.

The table shows that for the majority of studies, research focus has been on the improvement of students' scholastic ability and this in strong connection to the purpose of entrance exam preparation. Where other functions beyond scholastic ability improvement for entrance exam preparation, such as students' socialisation, are addressed, they are often framed within this overall purpose

(Tsukada 1991; Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010). But what have we come to understand of the effects of *juku* on students and Japanese education? A discussion of the main findings and limitations of the existing body of research literature will follow next.

### 5.5.2 Main findings and limitations

This chapter has started out with a review of research employing the idea of shadow education to out-of-school education in Japan. Most of the studies in this grouping rely on the analysis of quantitative data to determine for what purposes shadow education is predominantly used (Baker et al. 2001, Entrich 2014, Southgate 2009, Stevenson & Baker 1992). This is referred to as the so-called modal use of shadow education. Newer studies in this line of research make reference to previous investigations into dominant patterns of modal use, but use different data sets for their analysis.

For example, the first study to determine a proactive (enrichment) modal use of shadow education in Japan was conducted by Stevenson & Baker (1992), who used data from a nationwide representative longitudinal study of high school students. But the next study by Baker et al. (2001) to investigate the modal use of shadow education employs cross-national test data in the form of TIMSS whose target population consisted of junior high school level (seventh & eighth grade) students. Here, the researchers find significant levels of remedial use for Japan.

The most recent studies to analyse the modal use employ PISA data (target population: 15-year olds) (Entrich 2014, Southgate 2009). Both Southgate (2009) and Entrich (2014) diagnose Japanese shadow education as being predominantly enrichment in nature. In addition, both researchers frame their analysis within issues of social reproduction and inequalities. However, only Entrich's investigation gives a better understanding as to how inequalities may be exacerbated through the use of shadow education since his analysis shows that shadow education use appears to be more effective in urban areas and

students' academic performance depending on their family background.

Given the use of different data sets, comparisons of results are difficult to make. Entrich's claim of a shift from a mixed modal use to an enrichment use in Japan relies on his comparison to the results of his 2009 PISA data analysis to Baker et al.'s (2001) TIMSS 1995 data. And even though the researcher admits that his analysis is not likely to produce the same findings as Baker et al.'s study, Entrich concludes the above modal shift. While Entrich's findings are a contribution to the effects of shadow education use, this claim of a shift in modal use needs to be considered with care and requires more comparable evidence.

Also, the questionnaire sections of TIMSS 1995 and PISA 2009 employ different questions for investigating shadow education use, and only the PISA survey made an inquiry as to how students used shadow education. The TIMSS survey offers no data on this modal use, so that Baker et al. had to rely on an analysis of the relationship between shadow education use and individual students' mathematics performance (2001: 5).

Still, a major contribution of these studies is that they attempt to account for different shadow education purposes with regards to improvement of scholastic ability. In this respect, they are more differentiated in their analysis compared to the studies reviewed in sub-chapter 5.2. The studies that base their analysis on quantitative data in this grouping (Seiyama 1981, Seiyama & Noguchi 1984) are merely concerned with the question as to whether use of *juku* or home tutoring improves students' scholastic abilities (*gakuryoku kōjō*) and do not distinguish between remedial or enrichment purposes.

The remaining studies in this grouping base their analysis on qualitative data and historical documents, *juku* sector materials and official statistics (Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010; Russell 1998; Saeki 1997; Sekiguchi 1956; Tsukada 1991; Tsuneyoshi 2013; Zeng 1999). Their focus is clearly set on preparation for entrance examinations, but determine different functions for *juku*, such as serving as a mechanism for legitimising educational stratification (Tsukada 1991), the rationalisation of *juken* studies (Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010; Russell

1998; Saeki 1997; Zeng 1999), as well as fulfilling a role as examination-related information gatherers and providers (Kimura 1999). For all these functions, the actual effect of *juku* attendance (improvement of scholastic ability and better chances to enter higher ranked schools) is not discussed. Only Seiyama (1981) and Seiyama & Noguchi (1984) have this focus, but do not find a strong effect of *juku* use on scholastic ability improvement. They do, however, also find that students of families with higher socio-economic status are more likely to take out-of-school lessons and therefore are in line with the third grouping of studies that discuss *juku* within growing concerns over educational/social inequalities.

The studies by Katase & Hirasawa (2008) and Mimizuka (2007) both discuss investment into out-of-school education within the growing marketisation of education and encouragement of greater family/parental school choice in the last two decades. Though the level of observation differs (Mimizuka focuses on the elementary school level, while Katase & Hirasawa analyse data for both elementary and junior high school levels), both studies show the importance of family income: Mimizuka (2007) finds that in the observed metropolitan area parental income and investment into *juku* attendance (particularly what Mimizuka refers to as *juken juku*) had a positive effect on students' scholastic abilities. Katase & Hirasawa (2008) clarify that a family's household income determines whether they are more likely to purchase out-of-school education, and that the effect of such investment on academic achievement and overall educational achievement (length of schooling) was strongest for the youngest observed age cohort (born between 1971-85). Another study by Sugawara (2006) has focused on the transition level between secondary and tertiary schooling levels and identified the use of *yobikō* specialising in preparing students for the high school equivalence examination as a safety net mechanism of families with higher education and occupation backgrounds.

Do such findings of the research literature indicate that *juku* and other out-of-school education services function to widen the gap in educational achievement between students of higher and lower socio-economic

backgrounds? A lot depends on locality, but the studies by Mimizuka (2007) and Entrich (2014) suggest that this is indeed the case in urban areas with a broad range of private school options and fierce competition to get into the best schools, particularly at the junior high school level (Tsuneyoshi 2013).

Over the last two decades, *juku* attendance at the elementary school level has been the focus of several important studies on the *juku* sector (Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010; Roesgaard 2006; Tsuneyoshi 2013). Tsuneyoshi (2013) has argued that the period of high-stakes testing has shifted down the schooling ladder to entry into junior high schools. Studies focusing on this level of entrance examination-taking were conducted during a boom period in junior high exam-taking during the 2000s, which was seen to be caused by the 2002 CoS revisions and educational policy reforms leading up to this period. The studies conducted at this level discuss the costs in time, money and effort in junior high examination-taking (Tsuneyoshi 2013), present an analysis of how elementary school students prepare for such examination-taking (Iwase 2005a/b, 2009, 2010), and analyse different types of *juku* providers who aim their services at elementary school students (Roesgaard 2006).

Roesgaard's (2006) analysis of different *juku* providers is placed within the reforms in education as they took place during her data collection (1996-2003). The researcher connects the different *juku* types to current educational policy developments and discourses which condition formal schooling, discussing them in relation to lifelong learning and community building, the implementation of the five-day school week, and equal access to education (2006: 145). And even though the researcher devotes a large part of her analysis to different *juku* types, Roesgaard's overall discussion presents concerns over the development of a schooling landscape that is more diversified but caters in terms of quality to those who can afford to take advantage of private school options and *juku* attendance.

Concerns over inequalities growing within a political climate that allows market principles and individual self-responsibility to feature centrally in

educational policy discourse and reforms since the late 1990s have given new relevance to research on *juku* and the possible and/or actual roles they play in exacerbating such inequalities. The official recognition of *juku* by MEXT during this same period marks the acknowledgement of the new institutional arrangements as proposed by Mori & Baker (2010). But their neo-institutional perspective on shadow education forming a symbiotic relationship with the schooled society appears overly positive if the discourse of the gap society (*kakusa shakai*) is taken into account.

Four decades ago, Fukaya (1977, 1985) and Rohlen (1980) pointed to Japanese education's double structure, which manifested itself along a *honne-tatema*e divide. The whole conceptualisation of this double structure rested on the idea that egalitarian values were represented within formal schooling (*tatema*e) and that *juku* represented the actual hierarchical nature of Japanese society (*honne*). *Juku* here were thought to provide more individualised education but in relation to preparation for entrance exams, which embodied the hierarchical structure of society (Rohlen 1980). Given the policy development over the last two to three decades, however, parental choice in education is now actively encouraged. Roesgaard has suggested that *hoshū juku* have the potential to form a balance with school, family and community, but also pointed out that especially *shingaku juku* could contribute to a role division between school and *juku*, with schools providing basic learning and *juku* offering additional education (2006: 148-150). These more recent developments seem to suggest that the double structure of education is changing and newer studies have shown the collaborative efforts between schools and *juku* (Kuroishi & Takahashi 2009). But in investigating the roles of *juku*, the main focus has remained with the improvement of *gakuryoku* and not much attention or research has been devoted to investigating their latent functions within education. Exploring these other functions will add to our understanding as to why *juku* continue to be relevant in Japanese education. Such investigation into additional functions is all the more necessary given that educational policies



have encouraged not only greater marketisation and diversification in education, but also shifted the discourse on students' desired abilities of which the old *gakuryoku* is just one element.

In the following, empirical evidence collected through interviews with *juku* stakeholders will be analysed with the purpose of re-investigating and providing an updated view of *juku* roles.

## 6. *Juku* diversity for a local context

This chapter will present an analysis of data collected at *juku* in order to examine the current variety of the *juku* landscape as it presents itself for a particular local context. The chapter will start out with a contextualisation of the empirical data, giving a brief overview of the local schooling landscape (6.1.1), as well as the specificities of the entrance examination system of the locality where data was collected (6.1.2). Sub-chapters 6.2 to 6.4 provide the analysis of the interview data collected among *juku* stakeholders. The observations made through the analysis are then carried together in the final sub-chapter (6.5).

### 6.1 Contextualising the empirical data & limitations

#### 6.1.1 The local schooling landscape

In the following, a brief overview of the formal schooling landscape of the prefecture of Osaka will be given. Also, since entrance examinations into public high schools are set on the prefectural level by local education boards, the current characteristics and changes to the entrance examinations as they underwent during data collection will be provided in detail.

The prefecture Osaka, located in the Kansai region in western Japan, is a densely populated metropolitan area. The formal schooling landscape consists mainly of public schools, even though there is also a range of private schools. In 2014, there were 465 public, 66 private and three national junior high schools in the prefecture of Osaka (MEXT 2014c). The high school landscape consisted of 137 public, and 95 private high schools as well as one national high school<sup>18</sup> (MEXT 2014c). As of February 2014, nine of these schools were integrated schools (MEXT 2014b). Figure 19 shows the trends in student numbers for the prefecture Osaka since the late 1970s.

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<sup>18</sup> Excluding correspondence and credit-based high schools.

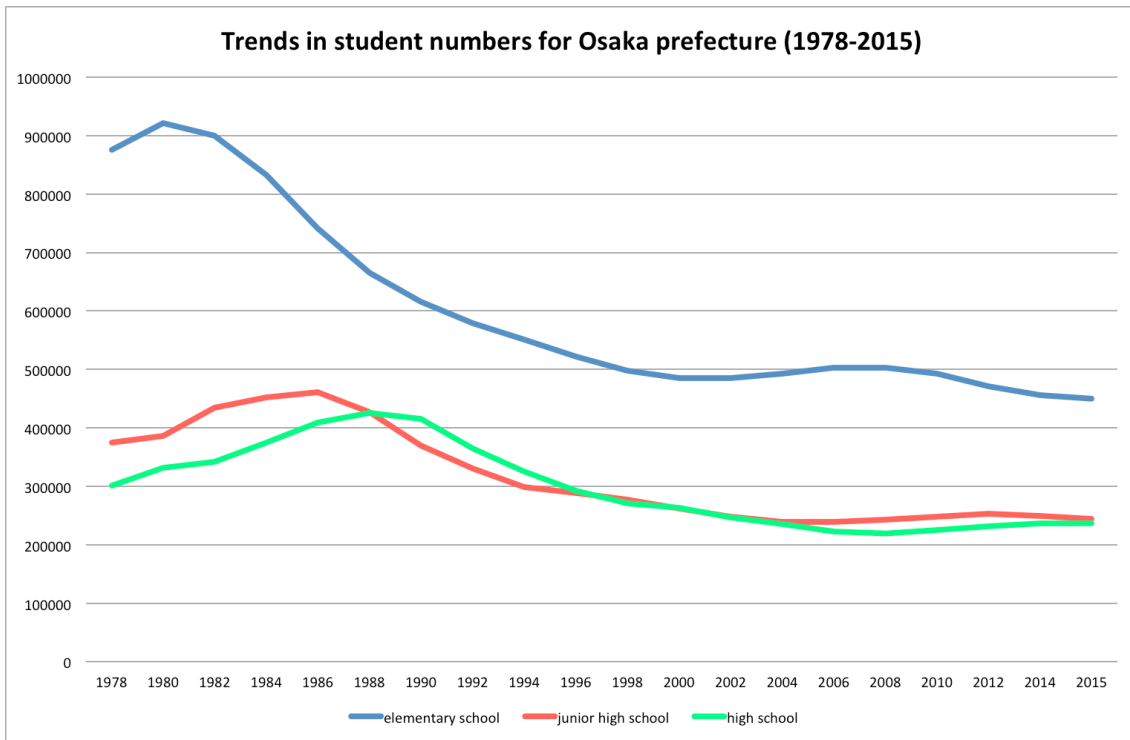


Figure 19. Trends in student numbers for Osaka prefecture 1978-2015 (source: Basic School Survey (Gakkō Kihon Chōsa), Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat, 2016).

The numbers show a considerable decrease in the number of school-aged children. For the elementary school level, student numbers displayed a large drop from the early 1980s. Junior high school and high school student numbers followed this decline trend since the mid-1980s and early 1990s, respectively. The decrease in student numbers, though in recent years not as drastic as in the previous decades, affects schools and school closures take place at an annual pace. For Osaka, the education board for the prefecture in 2014 issued a statement that due to declining student numbers seven schools would have to be closed down by 2018 (Sankei News 2014). Schools, therefore, are facing the need to find ways of survival and attract students for further existence.

Competition for students has been increasing for public schools in recent years. For example, the High School Tuition Support Fund, which had started nationwide in 2010 in order to reduce the burden of school fees for public

schools on families' household budgets was expanded to private schools in the prefecture from 2011. In combination with the abolishment of the 7:3 distribution of student intake between public and private schools in the same year, the number of public schools not meeting their student capacity intake (*teiin ware*) had increased rapidly from only seven in 2010 to 49 in 2011 (Osaka Prefectural Government, n.d.).

Data collection was conducted in the northern part of Osaka prefecture in a suburban, mainly residential area, which is characterised by a higher proportion of higher income households and a high turnover rate of families that have moved there due to a parent's job transfer. For this region, most of the top high schools<sup>19</sup> are prefectural and located at the top of the hierarchy of the whole of Osaka prefecture (Kōkō Hensachi Net 2016). Since the regional schooling landscape is dominated by public schools in both absolute numbers and also in terms of scholastic ability necessary to enter, several important details and occurring changes to the system of entrance examinations into public high schools will be given next.

### 6.1.2 Entrance examinations into public high schools

For Osaka prefecture, Tsuda (2014) has pointed out that the prefecture's system of high school entrance examinations has been displaying some unique features, such as the continued maintenance of large school districts compared to other prefectures, the assessment of students in school reports (*chōsasho*) based on relative assessment (*sōtai hyōka*), no recommendation-based entrance examinations, as well as the conducting of first term exams (*zenki shiken*) for special screening (*tokubetsu senbatsu*) in February and second term (*kōki*

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<sup>19</sup> Though one should employ great care in using *hensachi*, the standard deviation score, as a single measure for the 'excellence' of a school, what is meant here as 'top high schools' refers to the *hensachi* score that is predicted to be necessary to pass a school's entrance exams. The score's easy applicability in ranking both schools and students is one of the reasons why it remains an important measure in the *juku* sector.

*shiken*) exams for regular screening (*ippan senbatsu*) in March.

In order to reform the system of high school entrance exams in the prefecture, the Osaka Prefectural Educational Board has been working on gradually introducing a new entrance examination system from 2016. In November 2014, the Board issued the Policy on the Improvement of the Applicant Screening System into Public High Schools of Osaka Prefecture (Osakafu Kōritsu Kōtō Gakkō Nyūgakusha Senbatsu Seido Kaizen Hōshin).

A feature of this set of reforms is to allow for each public school's educational ideals and student image to be included in the school's admission policies to be reflected in the screening of applicants (Tsuda 2014). As part of the changes to the screening of applicants, school reports that provide an overview of the student's academic performance, behaviour towards his/her studies and general conduct during junior high school will be gradually included in the assessment process. During data collection these reforms were in the process of being introduced and to be fully implemented by 2018. Table 14 offers a brief overview of the weighting of the school report during the transition period:

- 1 Introduction of assessment in accordance with goals (so-called absolute assessment) from the 2016 applicant screening onwards.
- 2 Target school years for assessment are to be all school years with greater value put on the grading of year 3.  
 2016 screening: utilisation of year 3 grading only  
 2017 screening: utilisation of year 3 and year 2 grading <year 3 : year 2 = 3 : 1>  
 from 2018 screening onwards: utilisation of grading of all three years <year 3 : year 2 : year 1 = 3 : 1 : 1>
- 3 Items should include a 'study record for each subject' (grading) as well as a 'record of activities/conduct'.
- 4 With regards to the ratio of the grades of the academic achievement test and the grading of the study report, high schools are to choose from five patterns from 3 : 7 ~ 7 : 3 and apply to the Education Board.
- 5 The grading of all nine subjects is to be treated equally.

Table 14. Overview of study report (*chōsasho*) utilisation in applicant screenings for public schools in Osaka prefecture (source: Osaka Prefectural Government, n.d.).

In taking a closer look at the intended utilisation of the study report two points deserve attention: first, the screening process will include an assessment of all three years of junior high school; second, a new column in which a student's activities and conduct are to be comprehensively recorded will be added. According to the Education Board of Osaka, the latter takes the form of a 'record of activities/conduct', which provides an assessment of the whole spectrum of a student's educational activities. This will include the regular academic subjects, integrated study time, special activities, club activities and everyday school life (Education Board of Osaka 2014).

The characteristics and on-going changes of the local schooling landscape and system of entrance examinations provide the background to the

following analysis of the interview data collected among *juku* representatives. They will be taken up again in the discussion of *juku* roles and potential future roles.

## 6.2 Between *hoshū* and *shingaku*

The *juku* sampled for this study provide classes for students at all levels of formal schooling from elementary to high school, including preparations for university entrance exams. In terms of scale, the sample contains both nationwide or regionally operating *juku* chains, as well as owner-operated small-scale *juku*. Most of the interviewees were the head teachers at their respective *juku*, except for *juku* D for which interviews were conducted with a teacher who was fulltime employed there. Table 15 gives an overview over the *juku* in this research.

	<b>Student target groups</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Instruction tendency</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>
<b>Juku A</b>	elementary to high school 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	Kansai chain	preparatory	regional division head
<b>Juku B</b>	elementary to high school	nationwide	remedial to preparatory	head teacher
<b>Juku C</b>	elementary to high school	nationwide	remedial to preparatory	head teacher
<b>Juku D</b>	elementary to high school	owner-operated	remedial to preparatory	teacher
<b>Juku E</b>	elementary 4 <sup>th</sup> grade to junior high school 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	owner-operated	preparatory	head teacher
<b>Juku F</b>	elementary to junior high school	owner-operated	remedial to preparatory	head teacher
<b>Juku G</b>	elementary to high school	Kansai chain	preparatory	head teacher
<b>Juku H</b>	elementary to high school	nationwide (mainly branch schools in Kanto region)	remedial to preparatory	head teacher
<b>Juku I</b>	elementary to high school	Kansai chain (some branch schools in Kanto region)	remedial to preparatory	head teacher

*Table 15. Juku overview.*



This analysis is dedicated to the investigation of *juku* variety as it presents itself for a particular context, that is the northern, suburban part of Osaka prefecture and explore the functions and survival strategies of *juku* in their specific locality. In order to do so, the above *juku* will be analysed with Roesgaard's *juku* categorisations and variables as a reference point. Additionally, the interviews were analysed for themes that were recurrent during interview sessions and across the different interviews conducted. The extracted themes were carried back to the interviewees for verification to ensure their relevance.

As can be seen from table 15 most interviewees considered the instruction at their *juku* to be covering the range of remedial to preparatory instruction. In consequence, most interviewees found it difficult to offer a clear categorisation of their *juku*.

While most *juku* in the sample were classified as both preparatory (*shingaku juku*) and remedial (*hoshū juku*), the representatives of A, E and G categorised their school as preparatory only. Here it is worth mentioning that these three *juku* provide only group instruction. The representatives of *juku* A and E said that this style is beneficial for students who want to get into top level schools, as studying with others raises their “competitive consciousness” (*kyōsō ishiki*):

It is important for children to be aware of other children in their surrounding, to observe well and think about what they themselves should do. I think this is also part of education – to compete with others.

(Interview with Mr E<sup>20</sup> October 1 2013)

Here, the interviewees employed a particular narrative of having to put in an effort, or what Hirst (2013) has called “*ganbari*-ism.

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<sup>20</sup> Interviews with all *juku* were conducted in Japanese except the interview with *juku* D's teacher Mr D was done in English. All translations were done by the author.

We have the *juku* system. And this system is a hurdle that children have to overcome [...] And we are teaching them how to do that. But it's not just about passing. It's about taking the challenge, like for example enduring something, setting one's studies first, taking up the challenge and having to pass that hurdle. That's because if you run away, you will probably do the same when the next [challenge] appears in the future. That's why we let them face that hurdle so that they don't run away, in order for them to overcome it.

(Interview with Mr A, April 15 2014)

For the three interviewees who categorised their *juku* as preparatory, *ganbari*-ism constitutes a central principle for studying towards entrance exams as the next quote by head teacher of *juku* G shows.

I feel like in recent years an increasing number of students just say that they would like to get into university but we have to push them saying things like "Then work hard for it!" [...] In a year there are then kids that, despite performing poorly on the mock exams for say for instance national or public schools, work really hard and in the end manage to pass. But there are also kids that if just a small thing goes wrong, they immediately give up.

(Interview with Mr G, September 30 2013)

So far, the three *juku* that were categorised as preparatory fit well with this category. However, taking a closer look at their services, we see that even *juku* A, E and G have to find ways to deal with a lack in their students' scholastic abilities and occasionally resort to more remedial instruction. For example, at small-scale *juku* E, which has been operating in the same community for twenty years, the head teacher gave the following comment.

Even though we conduct instruction ahead of the formal school curriculum, it sometimes happens that the children feel tired or cannot follow what is being taught [in our classes] and when that happens we offer support. We do this by conducting individual instruction besides our normal classes or offer remedial classes if there are more kids who can't keep up. But primarily we offer classes that are ahead of the school curriculum.

(Interview with Mr E, October 1 2013)

So, despite mainly defining itself as *shingaku juku* specialising in entrance examination preparation, this school attempts to answer students' current study needs where necessary. Apart from conducting remedial classes, *juku E* does so by employing in-class tutors to help students whenever required. In contrast, *juku A* employs an entirely different strategy. Mr A explains that

[...] those students with [insufficient] academic abilities are rejected when trying to enter. So while I think that there are indeed students that have no idea, that are helpless, we in our *juku* for instance, since we specialise in group instruction, are not able to take care of them [...]. We tell these students that it's better to enter a *kobetsu shidō juku* where they are thoroughly looked after one-on-one.

(Interview with Mr A, April 15 2014)

It should be added that the chain *juku A* belongs to offers group and individual instruction as separate brands, thereby splitting up its preparatory and remedial courses and catering to differing needs.

The interviewees of all *juku* other than A, E and G said that they provide remedial as well as preparatory/enrichment services. Among these, *juku F*, which at the point of the first interview had been established only two years

earlier, presented a different image from the dominant (*shingaku*) *juku* image. The head teacher of *juku* F said the following:

Back then we were only running a dance studio here. But there were really a lot of cases when the junior high and elementary school students who attended the dancing classes said that they would have to stop because they don't have enough time for their studies and they would go to *juku*. That's why we decided to set up our own *juku* nearby and build up a system which supports both. That's why we're currently running both.

(Interview with Ms F, October 21 2013)

Inquiring about how Ms F would describe her *juku* with respect to student support, she mentioned that most students come in for homework support or self-study and that they are free to do so any time. Accordingly, she categorised *juku* F as mainly a *hoshū juku* with its main role being to help students keep up with school lessons but also taking into account the student's grade level at school.

In terms of our elementary school and junior high school classrooms, it's split up. For our elementary school students we mainly have an elementary school classroom to which students can come in groups whenever they like, do their homework and go back home. So they can come any time during our opening hours and a teacher is always there to watch them. When we're asked to do their homework with them or do some prints, we do that with them. Well, but even though we also have elementary school students, we mainly have junior high students and for them we conduct individual instruction – one teacher, two students – so for those children, I would say it's both *hoshū* and *shingaku*.

(Interview with Ms F, October 21 2013)

Ms F also made it a point that she remains in close contact with parents – especially mothers – keeping them up-to-date about their children’s study and general behaviour. She also inquires about how students are doing at home. Since this “care” aspect plays such a central role in *juku* F<sup>21</sup>, Ms F said that she also keeps an eye on her students’ general manners like greeting and having a proper study posture (*benkyō no shisei*). In order to create a common space that also serves communication purposes between students, they are free to drop in any time and not split up according to age. The spatial arrangement is centred around a “living space” (*seikatsu supeesu*) encouraging them to study together.

The representative of *juku* D, another small-scale *juku*, gave the following reason why his school, which was established in the area more than 30 years ago, is both *hoshū* and *shingaku juku*:

Especially for the junior high school students, we have to follow what school does because every term exam is very important for getting into high school. No matter how smart someone is, if they get bad scores at school, they cannot get a great report and that’s about 40 to 50% for getting into high school. So that’s why we do the same textbook and if you call this *hoshū juku* it may be but it’s necessary so, I bet all the *juku* do the same things.

(Interview with teacher D, September 5 2014)

This teacher refers to the structural characteristics of the education system, particularly the entrance exams, which play into how interviewees categorise their *juku* services. Obviously, the schooling level of the students needs to be taken into account for a solid classification. This is a factor that Roesgaard (2006) does not take up, as her study focuses on the elementary school level

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<sup>21</sup> Roesgaard (2006: 44) refers to this as a *juku*’s “caretaker” role, but leaves it out of her considerations as it is a hard to measure variable.

and junior high school exams.

### 6.3 Beyond improving scholastic ability

Another reason why *juku* D falls into both *shingaku* and *hoshū juku* categories is that it runs both group classes and one-on-one instruction. By employing such strategies, small-scale *juku* try to appeal to prospective customers by promoting alternative approaches. Likewise, *juku* F considered taking care of their students in other aspects of life as a central feature of their programme. It seems that this “care” aspect is turning into an important factor for both small-scale *juku* as well as bigger chains.

This becomes obvious for *juku* that specialise in *kobetsu shidō*. Since this instruction style has become an increasing trend in the *juku* sector, it is necessary to turn our attention to this particular form, which provides for highly individualised instruction services. The two nationwide operating *juku* in the sample, *juku* B and *juku* C as well as *juku* I that belongs to a regional Kansai chain are examples of large-scale *kobetsu shidō juku*. They cover the whole spectrum from remedial to preparatory for elementary, junior high and high school students. Here, too, a tendency can be made out for remedial classes to be provided to younger students, while students in junior high school and high school focus on exam preparation. The individualised services that *kobetsu shidō* offer can be seen as a new dimension to Roesgaard’s previously mentioned “caretaker” aspect. For the *kobetsu shidō juku* in this sample, this applies to both in study and more general guidance.

Concerning study guidance, the head teacher of *juku* B explained that his chain employs a detailed diagnostic tool to measure students’ study levels based on which individualised lesson plans are set up. The importance of this tool was explained as follows:

Even if we ask the students directly, many don’t know their own weaknesses. That’s why we use a system which other *juku* don’t have,

through which we show our students their current academic achievement level in graph form. For example in the case of third year students, we let them take a test for first and second year students and after having found out what they know and don't know we show them their level of academic achievement in visual form.

(Interview with Mr B, June 17 2014)

Obviously, this *juku* attracts students by providing a step-by-step curriculum customised for each student. This also exemplifies that this type of *juku* not only serves purposes of academic performance improvement but also of diagnosing weaknesses that require to be worked on in achieving a student's goal.

The other *kobetsu shidō juku*, C, also provides individualised study guidance based on students' study level and progress. However, what was prominent in the interviews with the head teacher was the overall concern for the student and the student's family environment. The head teacher mentioned that especially mothers of their students would come in wanting to talk about their worries regarding how to interact with their child when it comes to studying.

I think there's something really characteristic about *kobetsu [shidō]*. In talking to the mothers, consultation often just ends with consulting on the mothers' worries. Of course, from woman to woman, mothers say things like "Sensei, my husband says this, my child says that – I can't stand it anymore." But listening to them, I also think that as a mum they also could do better, which is why I tell them "Praise your child." "Your child has been able to do this and that at *juku*. Isn't that great!" I tell the many positive things and have them try to praise their child when they get back home but it's quite difficult educating mothers.

(Interview with Ms C, April 14 2014)

*Juku C* seems to function as a sort of in-between space for students that bridges

their everyday school lives with their home. As Ms C further said, it is their goal to have their students leave *juku* C in a good mood at the end of the day. This is in stark contrast to a comment by the head teacher of *shingaku juku* E, who held that *juku* had not properly fulfilled their role if students were not tired after class. Another contrast to the group-instruction-based *shingaku juku*, is that all three *kobetsu shidō juku* in the sample have a particular space arrangement in common. They offer individualised instruction in small booths, thereby shutting out any other influences on the students' learning activities. In inquiring about the merits and demerits of individual and group instruction, the head teacher of *juku* I gave the opinion that the option of *kobetsu shidō* allows for a choosing between different instruction options according to a student's character.

It's hard to say which one is better and it depends on the child's character. In the end, for children who are strong-minded it's more effective for them to study with others but say for instance for a child that goes to *juku* far from where he lives, they might not want to study with people they know [...] In that case it is better to conduct individual instruction.

(Interview with Mr I, October 8 2013)

While *kobetsu shidō juku* interviewees clearly saw the benefits of this type of *juku* in the capacity to cater to individual needs by providing customised instruction services, *kobetsu shidō* was criticised by the representative of a long standing *juku* in the area for employing mainly university students.

What we do here is group [instruction]. I personally am against *kobetsu shidō*. That's why we don't do that here. That's my policy. It's my opinion that teachers who look after children are supposed to carry responsibility. That's because they're children, the precious treasures of parents. I think [the idea that] some unknown university student – still a student – takes full care [of students] is strange. They haven't even entered society as a



full member yet! They still don't carry much social responsibility and I am concerned about such kids teaching these precious children as main [teachers at *juku*]. That's why at my [*juku*] it is only our personnel that mainly teach children. That is taking care of the children. Our personnel taking care [of students] means that we as [*juku* E] take full responsibility. Of course, we also use part-time workers. But we only use part-time workers during class when we teach and students do not understand something. [...] But in the case of *kobetsu shidō* their part-timers are the main [teachers] and I have my doubts about that.

(Interview with Mr E, February 14 2014)

Within the sample, *kobetsu shidō juku* not only received critique from the representative of a longstanding *juku* but also from the relatively newly established *juku* F, at which the head teacher gave the following reason for establishing the *juku* in the above depicted style of providing a homely atmosphere:

I have one more personal reason [for opening up this *juku*]. There are so many *kobetsu shidō juku* out there. And most of them employ university students as teachers – university students, graduate students. Of course, some of them take it seriously, but a lot of them just work as *juku* teachers because it pays well. They look at their phones during class, don't take care of their students, or say things that hurt students. To be honest, some of our students have changed *juku* because this happened to them at their previous *juku*.

(Interview with Ms F, October 21 2013)

Individualised instruction raises the need for more *juku* teachers and on the market for *kobetsu shidō*, a major source for this (wo)manpower is found in university students. Though the above quote shows that this is being viewed

critically by some of the interviewees, *kobetsu shidō* has been displaying a considerable market share over the years. The market share within the *juku* and *yobikō* market of *kobetsu shidō* has been continuously increasing and was at almost 45% in 2013, thereby driving the growth of the *juku* and *yobikō* market sector. Even though this growth trend for *kobetsu* has come to a standstill for 2013 (see Meikoh 2015 & Yano Research Institute 2014), there appears to be an obvious need for individual instruction.

While long-established *juku* E continues to mainly rely on group instruction<sup>22</sup>, the other long-established *juku* in this sample, *juku* D, has made adjustments during its more than 30 years of operation. Ten years ago they introduced *kobetsu shidō* besides their group classes in order to be able to compete within this strong market for individualised instruction. This trend towards *kobetsu shidō* needs to be taken into account in grasping the current *juku* landscape and the functions they fulfil. We may assume that *kobetsu shidō* enables *juku* to strengthen their role as “caretakers” not only for academic studies but in terms of a whole-person development approach.

Clearly, taking care of students beyond mere scholastic ability improvement is at the foundation of how most of the *juku* in the sample try to distinguish their services. The head teacher of *juku* H said the following:

Of course it's important that we improve students' grades and have them become smart. But I also want them to grow as a person. Besides subjects such as Japanese, math, science, and social studies, we also see to it that students change some of their behaviour in their everyday life. It's a very simple thing, but we for example tell them to put their shoes into their shoe box. You will find this a lot with children that don't do well in their studies.

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<sup>22</sup> As another strategy for dealing with individual student needs, *juku* E has students come earlier before class or stay up to one hour longer after classes have finished in order to answer or clarify students' questions.

(Interview with Mr H, April 14 2014)

*Juku H* is part of a Kanto-based *juku* chain that has started to expand to other parts of Japan. Obviously, in entering another already highly competitive *juku* market in Osaka, educating students in common manners constitutes another way in which *juku* may appeal their services to potential customers. The analysis has shown that this tendency is stronger for those *juku* that state remedial instruction as a central feature of their services.

The data provided so far show that *juku* employ different strategies to attract new customers. While some *juku* like *shingaku juku A*, *E* and *G* emphasised that they continue to specialise in group-oriented high-level instruction to get their students into the top-level public schools of the region, they both accommodate for remedial needs as well. Long-established *juku D* introduced one-on-one classes several years ago, while newly founded *juku F* tries to compete for students by providing for a homely atmosphere offering to take care of the students beyond improving their academic performance. Similarly *juku H*, which, as a part of a Kanto-based chain tries to gain territory in the Kansai region, makes it a point to educate students in their common manners as a foundation upon which good study manners may be fostered. This was also seen in *kobetsu shidō juku C*, which aims at friendship-like relations with its students and considers advice to parents important<sup>23</sup>.

#### 6.4 Relation to formal schools

The interviewees of all the *juku* said that teachers of both private and public schools would visit their *juku* to ask them to recommend their school to the *juku's* students as a possible option. For several years now, an increasing number of

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<sup>23</sup> This tendency could not be made out in *juku B*. Still, these are examples of branch schools of nationwide operating chains. Though we might expect a certain level of consistency in terms of diagnostic approaches and instruction materials, each branch school is likely to possess its own characteristics, which depend to a great extent on the responsible school's head teacher.

formal schools are facing the problem of making their student quota. It is here that *juku* serve as potential feeders.

I think the boundaries between public and private schools have disappeared [in terms of approaching *juku*] as apparently public schools also want students. If they're not able to gather students their school will get closed, so in order for their school to survive they're trying to get students in. And for that they need more students to take their entrance exams, which is why they go around trying to promote their school.

(Interview with Mr E, November 7 2014)

This quote shows that recent demographic changes force both *juku* and formal schools to find new ways to secure their survival. It has already been pointed out that in even such a densely populated prefecture such as Osaka, schools face the dangers of closure due to a lack in student numbers. The above development in the relation between *juku* and formal schools mirrors the difficult situation of many schools. It also serves as evidence of the recognition *juku* have gained over the recent years.

How much of a development this is can be exemplified by generational differences of schoolteachers that several of the interviewees pointed out. For example, the representative of *juku* A had the following to say about the extent of acknowledgement of *juku* by schoolteachers:

I think it depends on the teacher. For example my generation who are now around 40 have experience of going to *juku* as a kid. That's why [this generation] also does not have anything against *juku* [...]. But if you go one generation up, there are also teachers that for example utterly dislike *hensachi* and who feel that *juku* are bad. I think it's also split up for teachers nowadays. Among some of the teachers I know, some have experience as *juku* teachers and still have a connection to *juku* and have

an understanding of *juku* as well as come to *juku* [for information] since *juku* do have more information on different things. And there are also teachers that come to seek out this information at *juku*.

(Interview with Mr A, April 15 2014)

According to this comment, younger schoolteachers are more likely to take into positive account the existence of *juku* partially because they attended *juku* themselves when they were still at school and/or because they have experience of teaching as *juku* teachers as university students. These experiences seem to lower the threshold between formal schools and *juku* by schoolteachers acknowledging the expertise and information that *juku* are able to provide.

Similarly, the representative of *juku* E while referring to generational differences pointed out the potential dependency that the existence of *juku* creates:

I think that gradually *juku* have received recognition and that among schoolteachers some reliance on *juku* has come up. I think mechanisms are taking hold along the lines of [teachers thinking] that they do not have to do so much firm teaching, thinking to themselves “Oh well, since most of these kids go to *juku*, they will probably learn it there” and use the time for something else. [...] I am also talking to public school teachers and you can broadly split them up in two groups: those that are protective over *juku* and those that think *juku* are unnecessary. Among the latter you will find especially older teachers that have not had [the experience of attending *juku*]. And they criticise *juku* for constantly being ahead of teaching and when they actually teach at school, students are no longer interested. It’s nothing new to them. That’s why *juku* are unnecessary. Teachers saying that they want to teach at school. In the case of teachers that have been to *juku*, they feel that *juku* are really necessary. In reality, these teachers [...] are influenced in their teaching remembering that “Oh,

I also studied this at *juku* once.” But also with the older generation teachers who say *juku* are unnecessary and pretend as if they totally ignore *juku*, in their real actions – probably thinking that *honke* is unnecessary – are thinking that students are probably studying this at *juku* that’s why it’s probably ok to start from here. It seems that there is a partial reliance on *juku*.

(Interview with Mr E, February 14 2014)

According to this comment, the existence of *juku* enables the earlier mentioned ‘division of labour’ between school and *juku* teachers allowing for a situation in which school teachers are relieved of some of their workload. This may be considered as what Iwase (2010) has referred to as an outsourcing of school functions to *juku*, however the portrayal presented in Mr E’s comment renders the situation more difficult in cases where this division of labour is implicit. This tendency is obviously more prominent for public or affiliated (*fuzoku*) schools:

At the moment, *juku* attendance rates [for students from] affiliated schools are extremely high. I think that most of the students are attending. The reason for this is that affiliated schools are really high-level schools. They’re high-level but they are state schools. That’s to say that compared to private high schools, private junior high and high schools, their service isn’t that good. In the case of private schools, they do a lot of stuff that’s *juku*-like – holding remedial and Saturday classes. State schools don’t do that at all. Still, they’re doing some high level studies and students have a hard time following. Since they don’t even provide remedial lessons, most [students] attend *juku*. And schools are probably very much aware of this – also the teachers. But among the teachers there are many narrow-minded persons thinking that if students where to study at school that would suffice.

(Interview with Mr E, June 10 2014)

In terms of more open, straightforward collaboration between formal schools and *juku*, collaborations have taken on various forms as pointed out by Iwase (2006) and Kuroishi & Takahashi (2009). A concrete expression of these collaborative attempts were also pointed out by the representative of *juku* E:

Private schools are overwhelmingly more positive [about *juku* collaborations]. For example, one private school close by that does that a lot, like inviting *juku* teachers during the summer break and having them hold lectures. This school has completely acknowledged *juku* asking professional teachers from *juku* to come and teach in addition to their own teachers. There are lots of opportunities like these. Until now private schools had a monopoly over this but recently public schools have also started – inviting *juku* teachers and having them do lectures.

(Interview with Mr E, February 14 2014)

Obviously, open collaborations between *juku* and schools are becoming more common. The question that this poses though is what the implications of these collaborations are. Taken from an institutional perspective along the lines of Mori & Baker (2010), the above may be considered as the further incorporation of *juku* into the formal schooling system. However, this further incorporation also has its consequences and one may ask the question whether further incorporation does not actually lead to fortify the existing public education structures that rely heavily on the private sector to work.

As seen, in taking a closer look at the *juku* interviewees' views on their *juku*'s roles, their opinions on students, parents and school, we not only gain a vivid picture of the diversity of *juku* but also of some of the elements that play into this diversity by *juku* attempting to customise their services to needs that are a combination of both academic and more personal, 'care' oriented needs.

## 6.5 Summary

The analysis has shown the variety of *juku* for a particular local context. Though the collected data are limited to a certain locality and can only present the views of *juku* stakeholders, the analysis provides an updated view on *juku* and will add to a discussion of *juku*'s roles in Japanese education.

For the existing *juku* categories, the study has shown the need for taking into consideration additional variables when discussing these *juku* categories for a broader range of schooling levels. An additional need for updating Roesgaard's variables catalogue arises from the existence of a large *kobetsu shidō* market. As explained in chapter 2, Roesgaard (2006) has placed the *juku* categories along a *juku* continuum (see figure 8). It was pointed out that the spectrum of this continuum represents the different scholastic ability levels that these different *juku* types cater to.

When applied to *juku* that cater to junior high and high school students, these *juku* categories become problematic as distinctions between remedial and preparatory instruction become more difficult. Most obviously this is due to the fact that junior high and high school students will eventually face entrance examinations. In addition, as seen with the entrance exam system into public high schools in Osaka, performance at junior high school is factored into the assessment process into public high schools. For the concrete locality of this study, where top schools are mainly public, this complicates a clear definition of what may be considered as remedial and what as preparatory instruction.

The analysis has revealed how *kobetsu shidō* is viewed by representatives of *juku* with or without *kobetsu shidō* services. As seen, cases are made for and against this type of instruction. While these are the opinions of the individual interviewees, they most immediately refer to students' changing study needs. Here individualised instruction is contrasted with group instruction, which is seen as symbolising the type of study necessary for competitive entrance examination preparation. However, conducting *kobetsu shidō* and



adding the element of care to their services is also a strategy for some *juku* to ensure their survival.

The relation to schools was also analysed and revealed several aspects of dependency on *juku* on behalf of schools. This was most obvious in the attempts at 'recruiting' potential future students from *juku* by visiting *juku* and promoting their school. Another important aspect of the relation between schools and *juku* discussed by the interviewees is the generational differences between schoolteachers in their perceptions of *juku*. As shown, prior *juku* experience was considered to have an often positive influence on younger schoolteachers' perceptions of *juku*. As the students they teach also attend *juku*, *juku* become a shared experience for both students and teachers. In this way, the shared *juku* experience becomes an institutionalised educational experience spanning generations. However, this relation can also turn problematic if it is considered as an implicit division of labour by schoolteachers as to what they need to teach.

*Juku* have been strongly associated with exams and the main purpose of improving scholastic ability. But the analysis presented here casts doubt on the idea that *juku* would disappear if the system of entrance exams were not to exist any longer, or move away from old conceptualisations of *gakuryoku*. Taking on other, possibly more subtle functions from school and family, which are harder to measure as particular outcomes will become increasingly important for *juku*. The concluding chapter will carry these different functions of *juku* together by discussing them within the network of education at the ground-level between schools, parents, students, and the community, as well as relating their *functions* back to the level of policy discourses and policy-making.

## 7. Conclusion: The manifest and latent functions of *juku* within Japanese education

The final chapter carries together the findings of the analysis of formal schooling and *juku* developments, the literature review, and the empirical data to discuss the diversity of *juku* roles. It provides a synthesised discussion of the reasons found for why *juku* continue to stay relevant within Japanese education and why a major reason for their continued relevance is not captured by analysing *juku* as shadow education. To further support the discussion, additional data will be included to round out the conclusion.

### 7.1 Changes in role-taking

The transformations the *juku* sector underwent throughout the post-war years reflect changes in the educational and broader socio-economic landscape. Up until the 1960s, the literature reviewed considered *juku* to be acting in the shadows of formal schooling (Iwase 2006) serving as a support to school studies. Due to gaps in the literature and lack of official data on *juku*, the nature of this supporting role to formal schooling cannot be determined. But a definite quantitative change within the sector occurred in the 1970s with the diversification of *juku* providers. This increase and diversification of *juku*, also referred to as *ranjuku jidai*, was diagnosed to be a pathological phenomenon of its time with diverse providers catering to the needs of parents worried about their child's future and public obsession with *tsumekomi kyōiku* and the purportedly associated appearance of *ochikobore* (Mainichi Shinbun 1977, Nozaki 2006).

As the *juku* sector expanded, observers of education diagnosed Japanese education to have a double structure (Fukaya 1977, 1985; Rohlen 1980; Yūki et al. 1987). These previous conceptualisations of *juku* forming a double structure with formal schooling theorised that *juku* represented the *honno* of the

hierarchical structure of Japanese society. Where the double structure was acknowledged to have other functions, in the form of *kyūsai juku* (Yūki et al. 1987), the existence of *juku* itself was still considered a pathology of Japanese education – an expression of the problems of and lack of trust in Japanese education (Yūki et al. 1987). But how may we re-conceptualise and update this double structure based on the findings of this thesis? In the following, the findings of the analysis of previous chapters will be synthesised and *juku* functions will be discussed as an outcome of socio-economic change, related changes in family structures, and educational policy reforms.

How can we theorise the functions *juku* started to fulfil as they began to form an industry in the 1970s? The analysis has shown that the dominant discourse on *juku* and for what purposes they are utilised both in the public and in the research literature has been on *gakuryoku*. In distinguishing between manifest and latent functions, the improvement of scholastic ability (whether remedial or preparatory) is the intended, manifest function of *juku* as they developed during the 1970s. But in determining the latent functions of *juku*, Komiyama's (2000) observations prove useful.

Komiyama has approached the reasons for the existence of *juku* within Japanese education from observing the educational capacities (*kyōikuryoku*) of the family, community, and schools. By the time Japan's high economic growth period had come to a close in the first half of the 1970s, Japan had developed into an industrialised nation. The average Japanese now had greater disposable income, which led to a fully-grown consumer and information society. An increasing number of families started living as nuclear families and the father/husband providing for his family by working a salaried job. As a consequence, the environment of children growing up in such salaryman households had drastically changed from previous generations which had been more embedded in their local communities and children being an active member supporting the family farming or crafting activities. According to Komiyama,

these relatively new socio-economic circumstances have made child-rearing a difficult task for many (2000: 21/22).

From these observations, we may extract two latent functions of *juku*: *juku* as a form of educational consumption practice for families, and *juku* serving to compensate for nuclear families' weakened child-rearing ability. The following quote from one stakeholder gives evidence to *juku* being utilised as an educational consumption practice:

When Japan was still doing well during the bubble years, families still had money. And children play, right? So parents would tell their children "Go to *juku*, instead of sitting around the house!" [...] There was a time when *juku* were used like a day care centre. Back then, *juku* made a lot of money. When I was still a university student, I was working part-time at a *juku*. So many students were crammed into one classroom! Since there was a lack of teachers and I had heard that part-time jobs at *juku* paid well, I went for an interview saying "I would like to work at your *juku*." So I was told "Ok, then try holding a class so that I can see how much you can raise your voice." And I started holding the class, remembering when I was still in school, thinking of what kind of classes I had. And after 10, 15 seconds I was told "That's enough. So can you start from today?" And that day, I started teaching.

(Interview with Mr E, February 14 2014)

This shows that *juku* during Japan's bubble years were used as 'care centres' by parents who could afford to send their children to *juku* without necessarily being concerned over the educational services provided there.

The latter function of compensating family education has also been found in the interview data: Interviewees mentioned that they go beyond instruction in academic subjects and teach students basic manners, study behaviour and serve as caretakers, as well as providing counselling to parents,

particularly mothers. The analysis of interview data has found that the caretaker function is important in the daily running of the *juku* with some interviewees describing their *juku* as another place-to-be (*ibasho*) for students beside school, family, and their regular peer group.

What functions are taken over from school? It can be argued that the *juku* sector started taking over functions from schools since the *yutori* turn of the late 1970s marking the beginning of what Kariya (2018) refers to as Japan's post-catch up phase. Educational reforms and reform attempts since then have been criticised among educational scholars and labelled as 'reforms for the sake of reforming' (Fujita 2013), causing more damage and confusion at the ground level of schools than actual improvement. The most symbolic representation of education reforms under neoliberal thought was the *yutori* discourse. As mentioned in chapter 3, introducing *yutori* into the curriculum was meant to provide students the opportunity to develop their individual strengths and pursue their interests. The official reasoning behind taking this reform course was that Japanese school education was not giving students room to develop their individuality and that this had caused a variety of school-related problems such as violence in school, bullying, and school refusal (Fujita 2013: 6). But the subsequent reduction in study content and the introduction of integrated study time with the 2002 CoS revisions was a poorly planned out measure to achieve such individualism.

The literature on *juku* has problematised *yutori* and the educational reforms moving towards greater choice and individualisation (Komiya 2000, Roesgaard 2006, Tsuneyoshi 2013). The reforms had the (unintended) consequence of creating a renewed boom in junior high entrance exam taking during the 2000s (Yokota 2013) at which level more recent literature posits high-stakes testing into prestigious, often private, escalator schools, and for which *juken* preparation is almost obligatory to stand a chance in passing (Tsuneyoshi 2013).

The extent of investment into supplementary education services at the

elementary school level in recent years becomes obvious if compared to household expenditure on such services for different schooling levels:

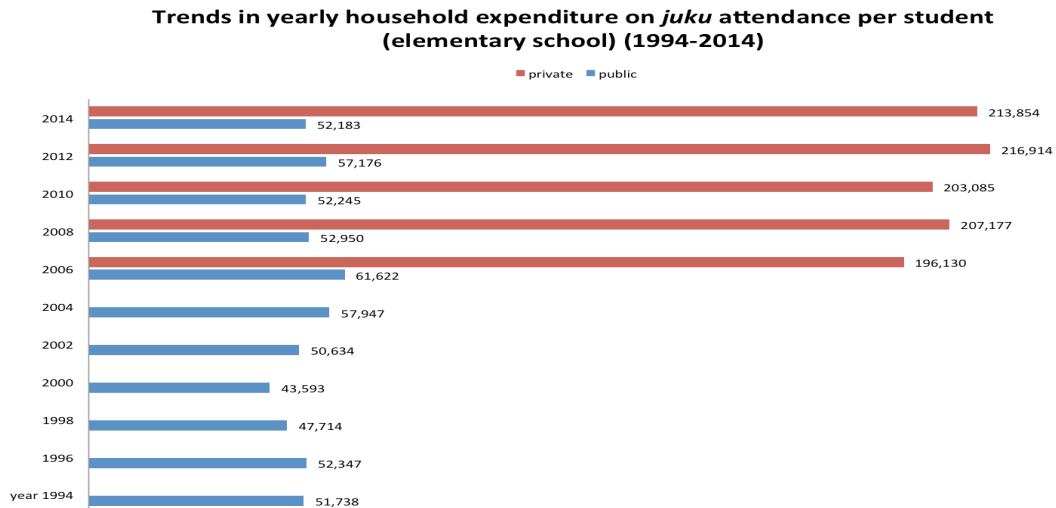


Figure 20. Yearly household expenditure on *juku* attendance for elementary school student 1994-2014 (unit: Yen; from 1994-2004 no numbers available for private elementary schools) (source: Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat 2015).

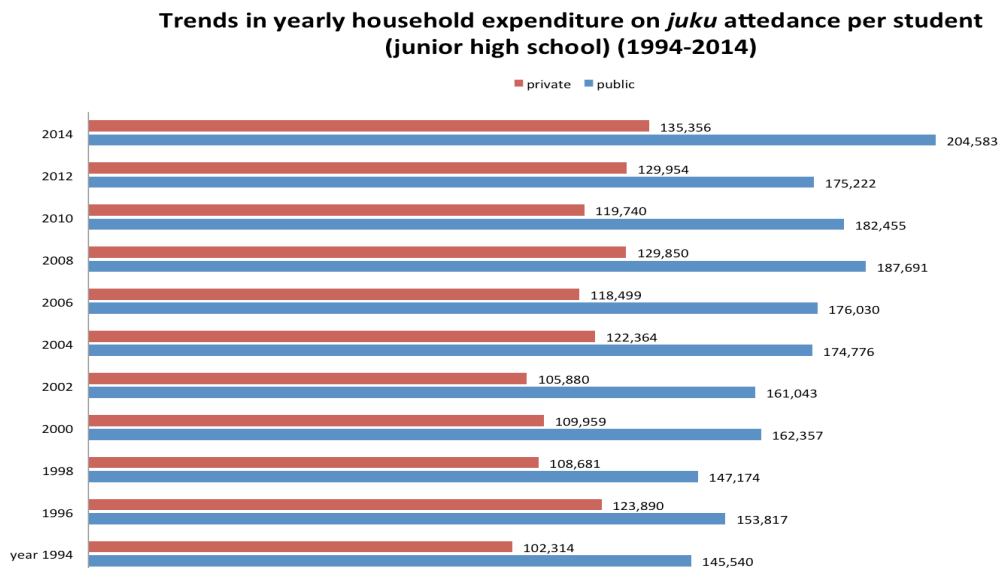
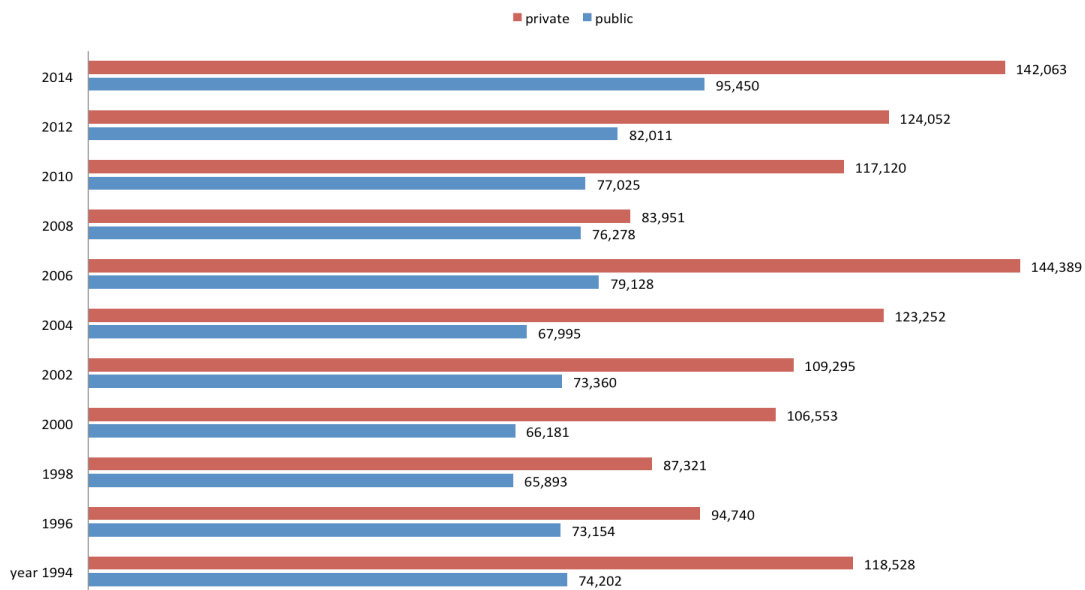


Figure 21. Yearly household expenditure on *juku* attendance for junior high school student 1994-2014 (unit: Yen) (source: Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat 2015).

**Trends in yearly household expenditure on *juku* attendance per student (high school) (1994-2014)**



*Figure 22. Yearly household expenditure on *juku* attendance for high school student 1994-2014 (unit: Yen) (source: Japanese Government Statistics Department Online Database, e-stat 2015).*

Figures 20 to 22 show how much a Japanese household spends on average on *juku* attendance for different schooling levels for both public and private school tracks. Two major points deserve attention: first, yearly expenditure on *juku* is – on average – highest for private elementary school students; second, even though average expenditure is reversed at the junior high school level with greater household expenditure for students on the public school track, this trend is reversed again at the high school level. This means that students on the private school track tend to spend considerably more on *juku* attendance than their public school counterparts.

This gap in expenditure between the public and private school track is even bigger if overall educational expenditure is compared. The figures below show the development of educational expenditure for different schooling levels and school types (public or private) from the 2014 MEXT Survey on Expenditure

on Children's Studies (*Kodomo no Gashūhi Chōsa*).

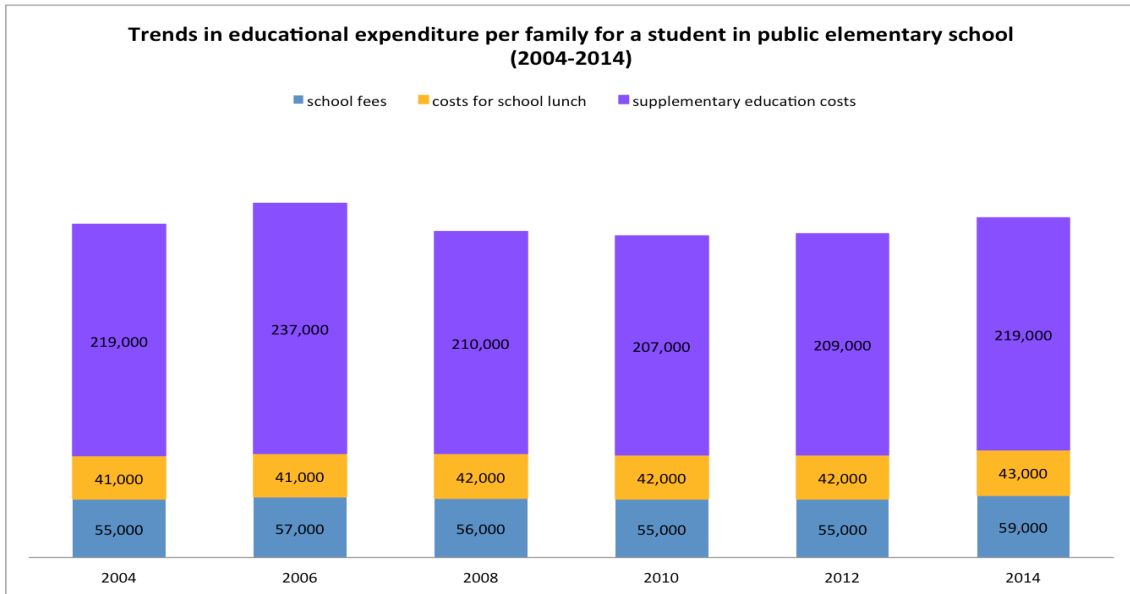


Figure 23. Trends in educational expenditure per family for a student in public elementary school 2004-2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children's studies], MEXT, 2015).

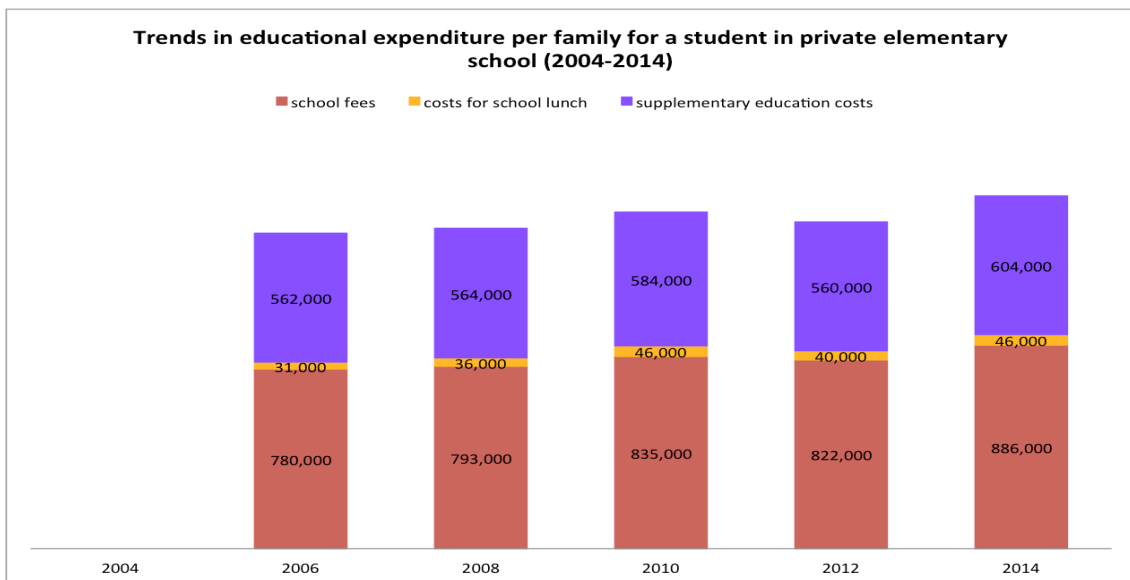


Figure 24. Trends in educational expenditure per family for a student in private elementary school, 2004-2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children's studies], MEXT, 2015).



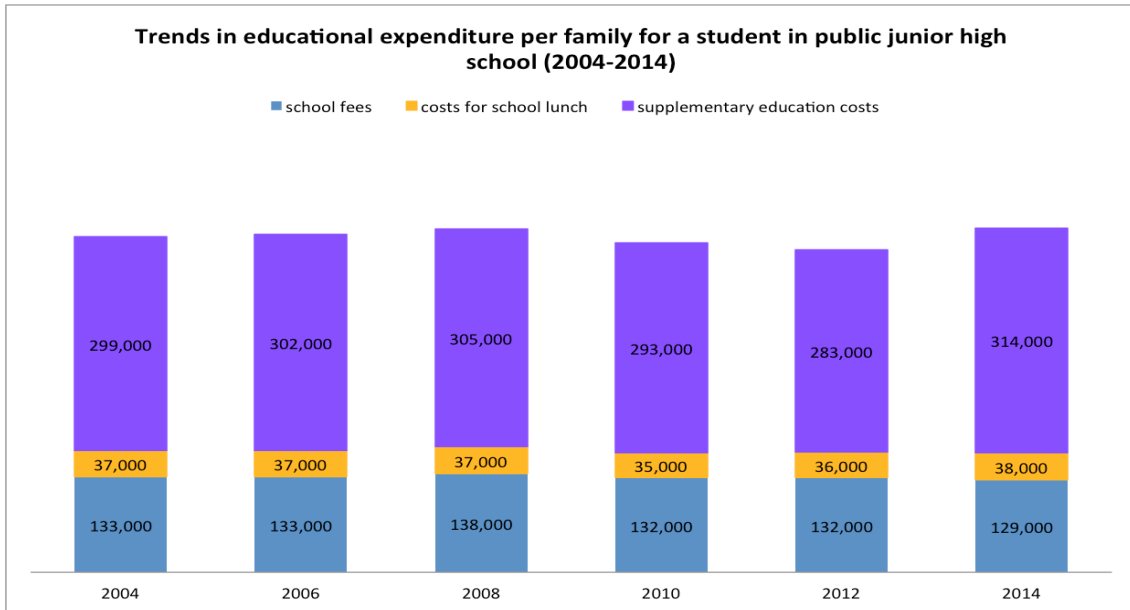


Figure 25. Trends in educational expenditure per family for a student in public junior high school 2004-2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children's studies], MEXT, 2015).

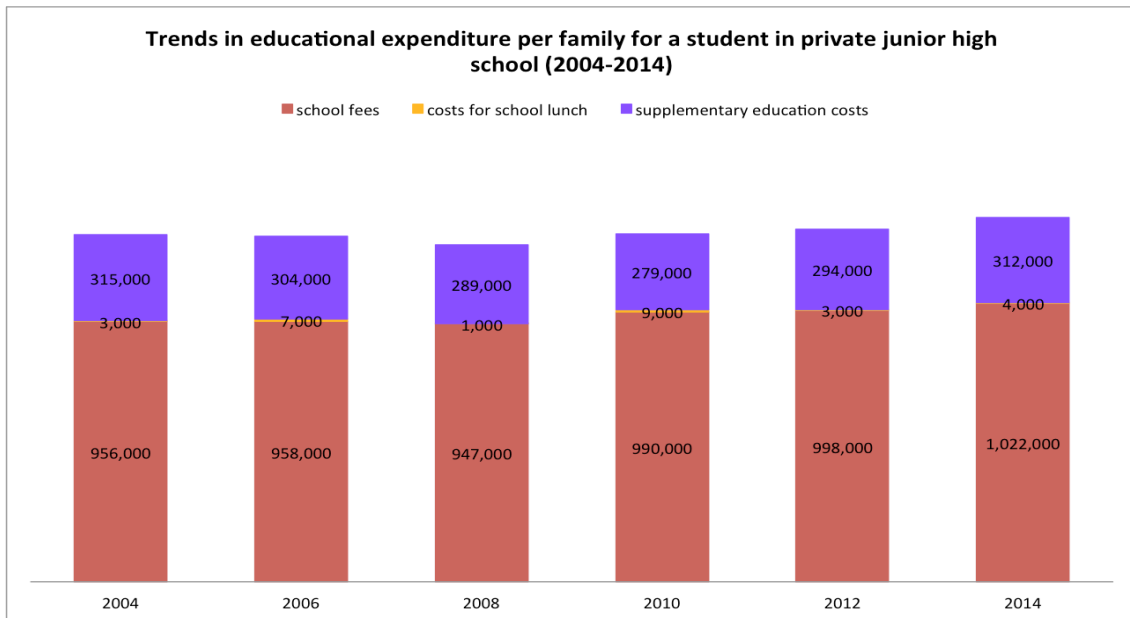


Figure 26. Trends in educational expenditure per family for a student in private junior high school 2004-2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children's studies], MEXT, 2015).

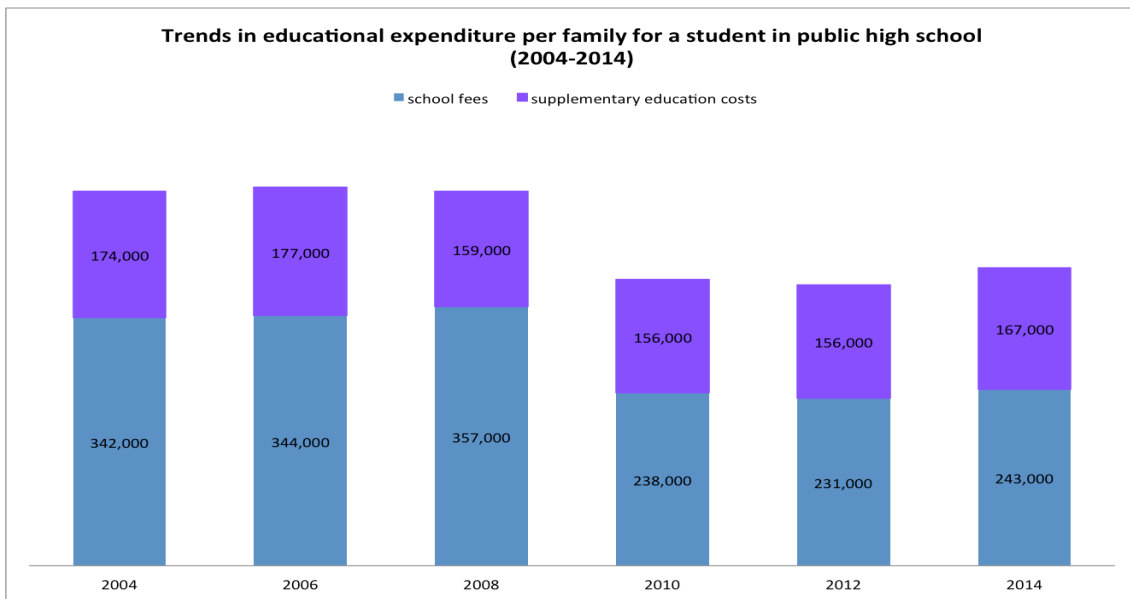


Figure 27. Trends in educational expenditure per family for a student in public high school 2004-2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children’s studies], MEXT, 2015).

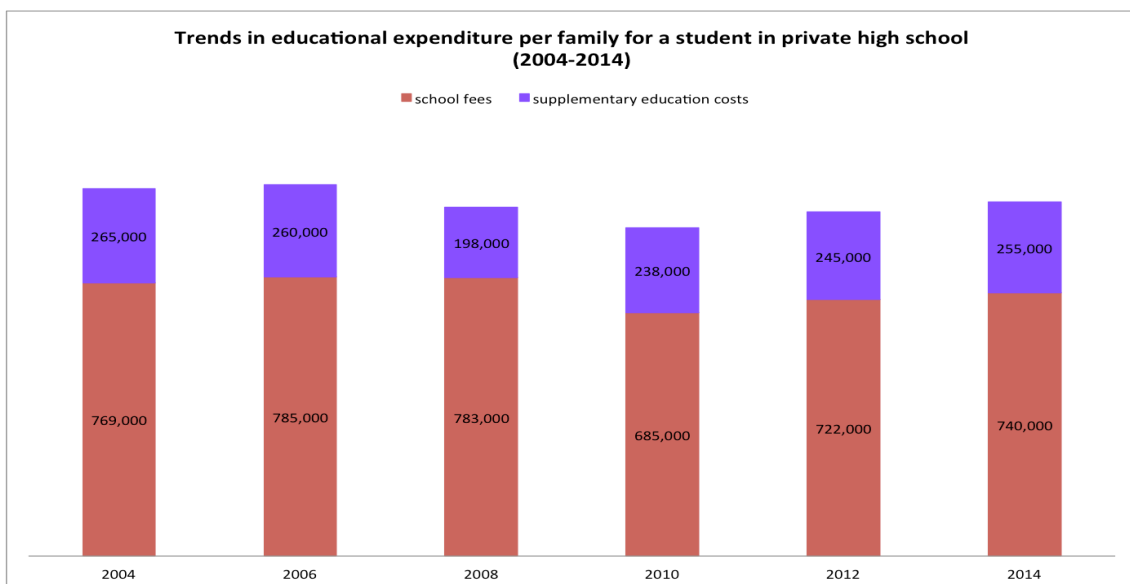


Figure 28. Trends in educational expenditure per family for a student in private high school 2004-2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children’s studies], MEXT, 2015).

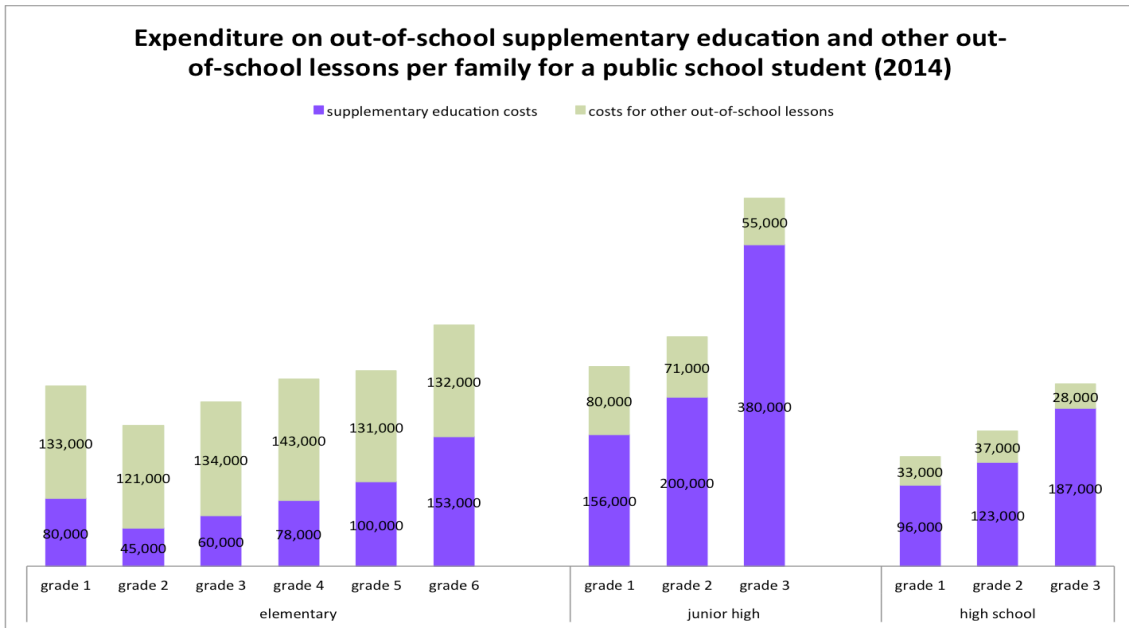


Figure 29. Expenditure on out-of-school supplementary education and other out-of-school lessons per family for a public school student in 2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children’s studies], MEXT 2015).

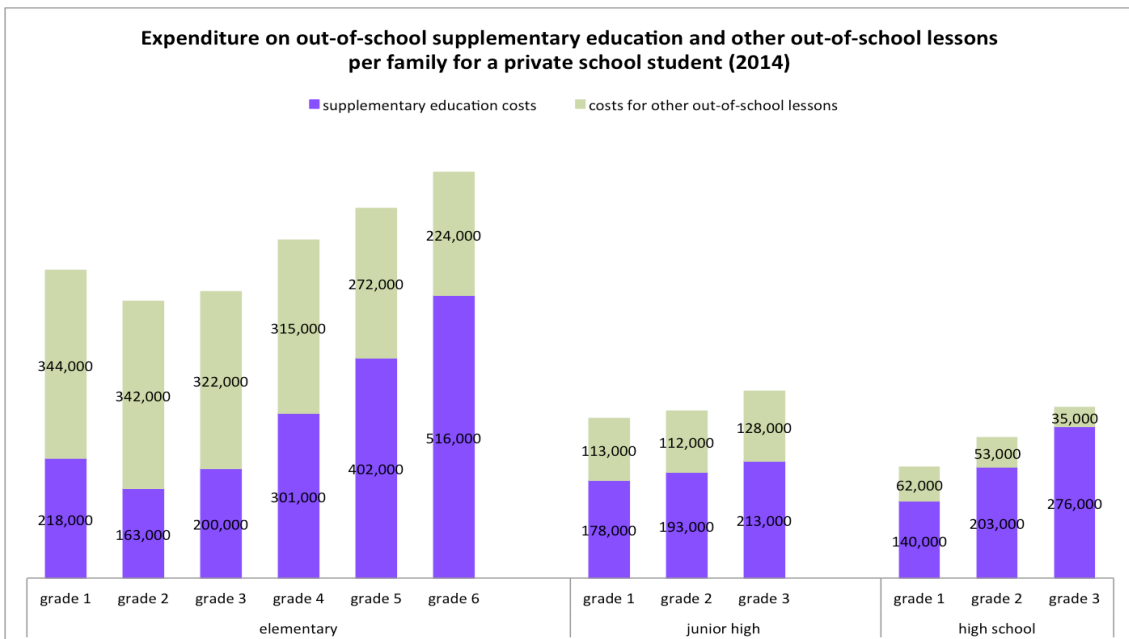


Figure 30. Expenditure on out-of-school supplementary education and other out-of-school lessons per family for a private school student in 2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children’s studies], MEXT 2015).

Figures 23 to 30 show that supplementary education expenditures (*hojō gakushūhi*)<sup>24</sup> are by far the highest for elementary school students on the private track. These numbers indicate parental willingness to make investments early on in their child’s educational career. Of course, only those households with sufficient means are able to and do invest into such supplementary services. This has been confirmed in previous research (Katase & Hirasawa 2008, Mimizuka 2007, Sugasawa 2006), but is also obvious from official statistics by MEXT:

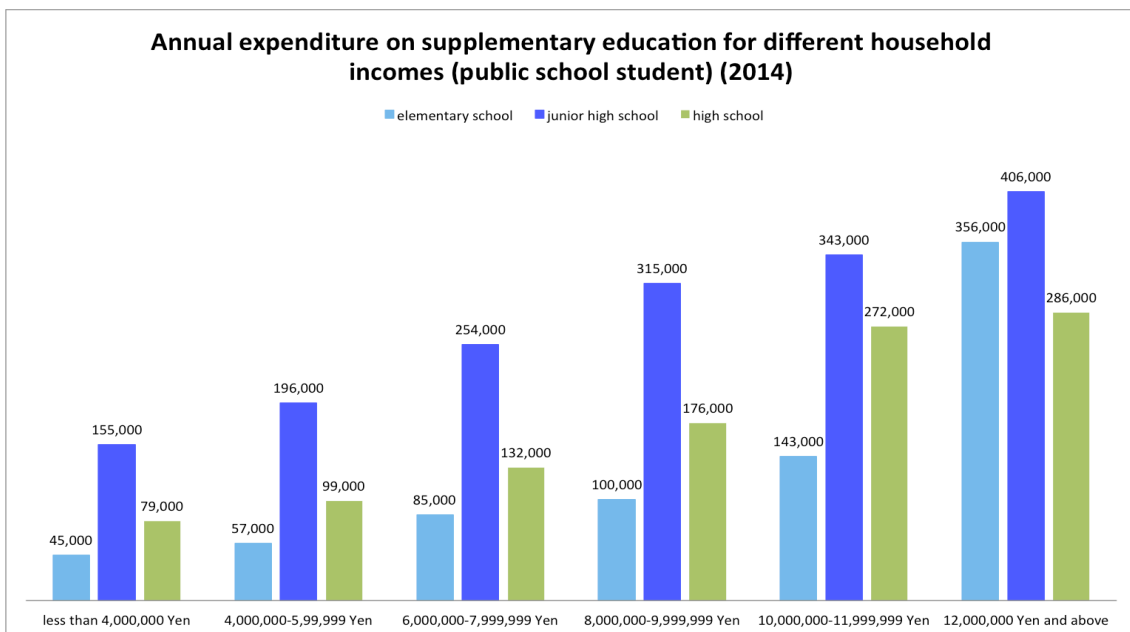


Figure 31. Annual expenditure on supplementary education for different household incomes for a public school student in 2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children’s studies], MEXT 2015).

<sup>24</sup> This includes the purchase of goods such as books, home tutoring, correspondence courses and *juku* attendance.

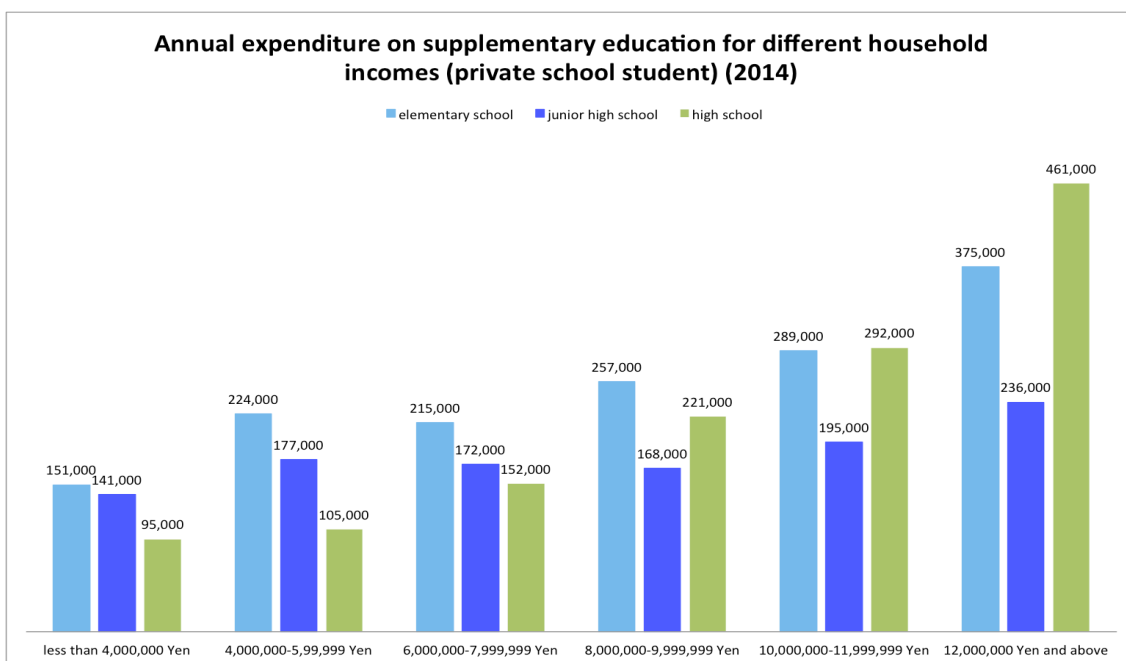


Figure 32. Annual expenditure on supplementary education for different household incomes for a private school student in 2014 (source: Heisei 26 nendo kodomo no gakushūhi chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [Results from the Heisei 26 survey on expenditure on children’s studies], MEXT 2015).

Figures 31 and 32 offer a comparison of family expenditure on supplementary education for different income levels with a student being either on the private or public school track. It can be seen that the higher a family’s annual household, the more is spent on supplementary education and this trend is the same for both public and private school tracks. The extent of financial investment in supplementary education for students on the private school track and for different income levels shown in these figures cast doubt on the effectiveness of current or future state and prefectural-level measures to support low-income households with tuition fees for private schools.

Moreover, besides lowering the level of high-stakes testing over the last two decades, introducing *yutori* into schools has had other unintended consequences. While integrated studies and the type of learning and teaching it required were easier to implement at the elementary school level where

integrated learning approaches have already been a central feature, junior high and high school teachers, who consider themselves as specialists in their respective subjects, faced greater difficulties in designing classes for this new subject (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi 2005). An interviewee from the sampled *juku* touched upon *yutori*, and how poorly it was conceived for schools:

I think that *yutori*'s purpose was mainly for giving students a chance to know why they are learning and then how education benefits you and how it connects to your future. So that, I mean, giving them classes to think about it, giving them ideas and sometimes inviting guests telling them about their business or how it is related to what they learned when they were still in high school. So that they can get motivated. 'Okay, fine, let's learn chemistry. Maybe I can be like him. I have to get that basic knowledge while I'm in high school.' Those are the kinds of things that school can do.

And we are too small to do that. That's why so we can teach them and we are specialists to let them enter the universities. That's what we can do. But nowadays I think it's school and *juku* are doing almost the same thing. Just teaching, teaching to pass the exams but students are at a loss because they don't know why they are learning and why they have to be so hassled for studying. Of course, they're like 18, they have so many other things they want to do other than studying but why studying has to be the priority...those kind of things.

(Interview with Mr D, September 5 2014)

The quote shows the problematic nature of the *yutori* concept and the contradictions and unintended consequences the reforms have produced for schools and *juku*: Even though schools were meant to utilise the additional time freed up through *yutori* to allow students to make experiences that might connect to their future, schools have not necessarily provided such opportunities

for students. Instead, some schools have used integrated studies for *juken* studies (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi 2005), thereby overlapping with *juku*'s manifest function.

Several other important latent functions of *juku* in to formal schools can be determined: many years of demographic decline among younger age cohorts and greater parental/student choice have placed schools in competition with each other. This has meant that especially public schools need to market themselves and be more responsive to parent and student 'customers'. The interview data has provided evidence that schools are relying on *juku* for teaching extra classes but are also utilised as a source for prospective students. Here, *juku* serve to function as professional education service providers, possessing know-how in school management, marketing, and effective teaching methods.

In addition, the prevalence of *juku* attendance since the 1970s has meant that a large share of younger schoolteachers has had the experience of attending *juku* at one point in their own schooling career. The interview data has shown that this is likely to have lowered the barriers between schoolteachers and *juku*. These findings are in line with a 2013 survey by NIER, which has investigated public and private junior high school principals' attitudes towards collaborations with *juku*. The results for public school principals is given below:

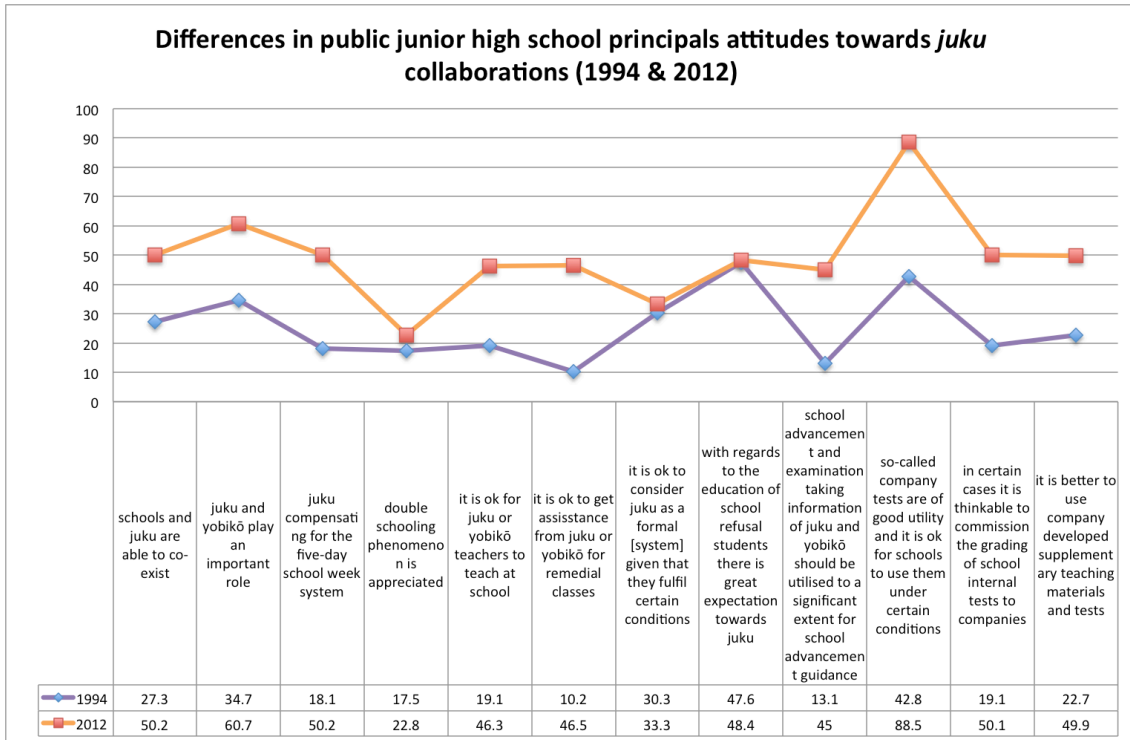


Figure 33. Differences in public junior high school principals' attitudes toward *juku* collaborations 1994 & 2012 (source: NIER 2013).

Figure 33 shows how attitudes towards *juku* have changed toward greater appreciation among public school principals over less than a decade. The most interesting result from this survey is the extent to which *juku* company-developed tests are apparently much more accepted than a decade earlier when such tests were banned from junior high schools (Nozaki 2006, Watanabe 2013). The survey therefore gives interesting insights into how official policy discourse affects the (public) attitudes among public schoolteachers. Still, the fact that *juku* have continued to consistently attract students throughout the decades has also created the danger of schoolteachers depending on *juku* for additional teaching, both for remedial and enrichment purposes – a latent function of implicit outsourcing of teaching.



## 7.2 Why are *juku* still (and will continue to stay) relevant?

A central question posed in this thesis was whether *juku* can be considered as shadow education. Given the functions *juku* fulfil within Japanese education, the answer is no. Especially as the sector developed as an industry since the 1970s and Japan searching for its way in the new post-catch-up phase, are explicitly or implicitly relied upon by all stakeholders in Japanese education.

The latent function of *juku* serving as a caretaker and other social compensatory roles allow *juku* to be one of the connecting nodes in local contexts. The discourse over greater individuality, however poorly conceived by policy-makers in Japan (Cave 2016), and the growing isolation among members of society, as well as of nuclear families from their extended family networks confer upon *juku* one of their most important latent functions.

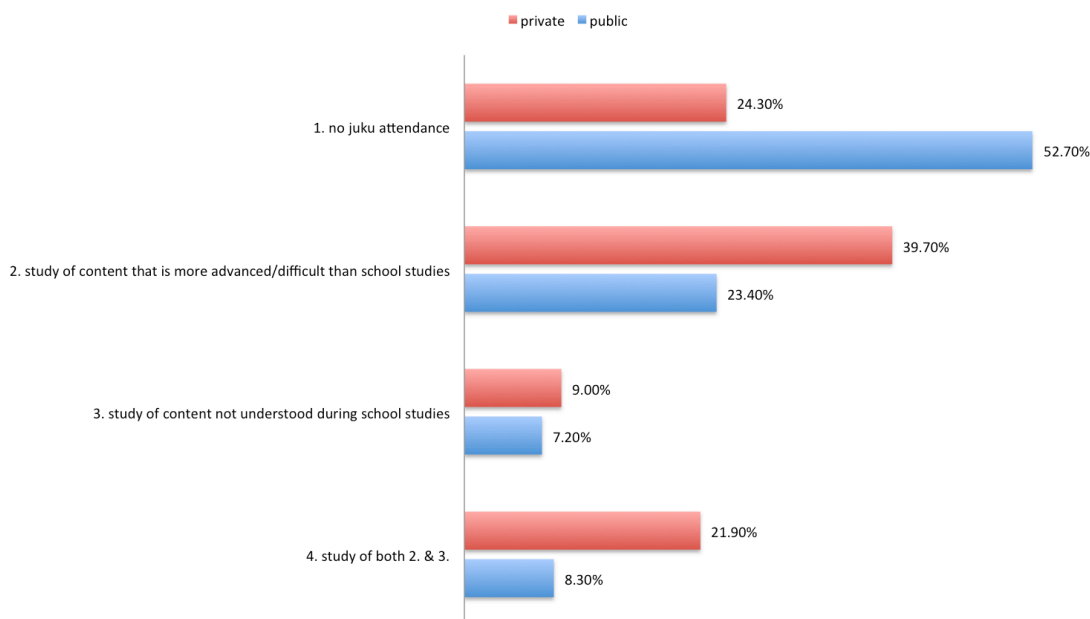
Komiyama (1993, 2000) has argued that changing family structures were accompanied by a loss in the ability of families but also local communities to educate children. This, in turn, has increased parental expectations toward schools' educational role. But it is a well-known fact that Japanese classes tend to be large with schoolteachers working on tight schedules, facing not only the responsibility of preparing and teaching classes, but also having to spend long hours on administrative paper work and other responsibilities such as club activities and school events (Komiyama 2000, Saitō 2011). And where parental and student expectations are not met, *juku* provide another option. Here we can observe a shift in expectations by focusing on the comparatively newer trend toward *kobetsu shidō*. While *ganbari*-ism (Hirst 2013) and an internalisation of Japan's hierarchical social structure (Rohlen 1980, Tsukada 1991) were problematised in earlier research, *kobetsu shidō* answers other needs that are related to an individualised society. As the interviews with *juku* stakeholders have shown, the proliferation of *kobetsu shidō* was critically viewed upon by some *juku* interviewees, especially since *kobetsu shidō* teachers are often university students. But the fact that *kobetsu shidō* is a popular option indicates

that students require a different type of motivational setting, compared to the competitive and hierarchical structure that is promoted by group instruction oriented *juku*. The ethos of *gabari*-ism is still evoked in *juku* but the current *juku* landscape is now a mixture of both.

Japanese education is still grappling with its own model of education and the challenges of coordinating and mediating between main stakeholders on the levels of policy, supply, and demand (Yonezawa et al. 2018). And surprisingly, *juku* are often just a mere footnote when Japanese education's characteristics and issues are taken stock of.

A lot of public attention and research has had an obsession with *juku* in relation to entrance exams and improving academic performance. Concerns over excessive entrance examination preparation especially in younger years are justified and at this level *juku* may well function to exacerbate inequalities. But the majority of students going to *juku* do not experience such extreme cases of *juken* preparation. The National Survey on the Current State of Scholastic Ability and Learning (*Zenkoku Gakuryoku/Gakushū Jōkyō Chōsa*), conducted annually by MEXT and the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) among elementary school 6<sup>th</sup> grade and junior high 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students since 2007, has shown that in 2015 not only the majority of private elementary 6<sup>th</sup> graders used supplementary education, but also that almost 40% of them studied more advanced content (figure 34).

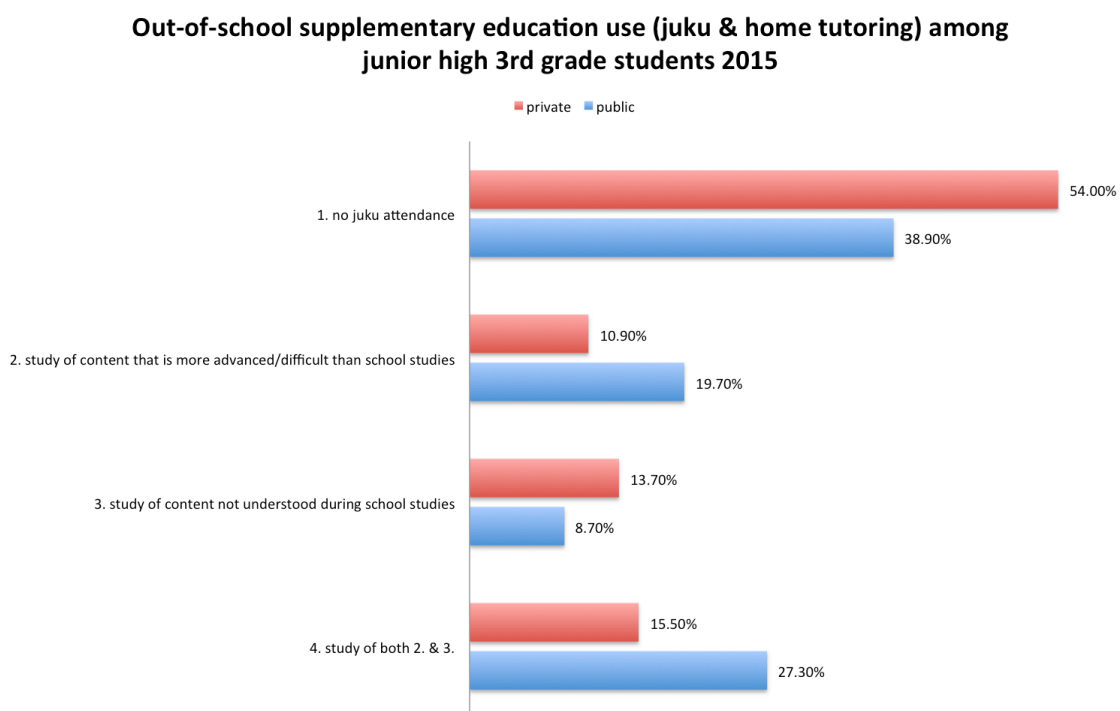
**Out-of-school supplementary education use (juku & home tutoring) among elementary school 6th grade students 2015**



*Figure 34. Juku and home tutoring use among 6<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school students in 2015 (source: Heisei 27 nendo zenkoku gakuryoku/gakushū jōkyō chōsa chosa kekka shiryō (zenkokuban/shōgakkō) [Heisei 27 survey on the nationwide state of scholastic ability and learning – survey result materials (nationwide edition/elementary school)], MEXT & NIER 2015a).*

This appears to confirm the importance of early preparation for junior high entrance exams. At the junior high school level, however, share of supplementary education use and the nature of this use show a different picture (figure ). Here, the survey finds that 38.9% of public junior high school 3<sup>rd</sup>-year students did not make use of out-of-school supplementary education either in the form of *juku* or home tutoring. But it also provides evidence to the fact that at this level of schooling *juku* are used for a variety of purposes, from catching up on what is being taught at school, to more advanced studies. For public school junior high 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, the survey findings indicate that a clear distinction between remedial (content not understood at school) and preparatory (content which is more advanced) use of *juku* and home tutoring cannot be made for

about a third of students using these services (figure 35).



*Figure 35. Juku and home tutoring use among 3<sup>rd</sup> grade junior high school students in 2015 (source: Heisei 27 nendo zenkoku gakuryoku/gakushū jōkyō chōsa chosa kekka shiryō (zenkokuban/chūgakkō) [Heisei 27 survey on the nationwide state of scholastic ability and learning – survey result materials (nationwide edition/junior high school)], MEXT & NIER 2015b).*

With the exception of certain localities and schooling levels, discussing *juku* within examination hell is out-dated. Recent research has found that despite Japanese students performing well in international tests, they actually spend less time studying than some of their East Asian counterparts, or even some Western countries (Komatsu & Rappeley 2018). This is not to say that students no longer study for exams or catch-up with school content in *juku*. But the importance of *juku*'s manifest function of improving scholastic ability needs to be put in relation with their latent functions to understand why they remain relevant

in Japanese education. A final quote from one experienced *juku* teacher interviewed makes a point in case:

*Juku* are a unique part of Japanese culture. *Juku* have their origin in Japan's local communities. And when one understands Japanese people, one is also likely to understand why such people would do things the way they do. It becomes self-evident. Japanese value their local contexts, their communities. People who said "I'll take care of your child" made the start. And what we do is really the same as back then. It is a bit like us saying "Anyone having problems with their studies?", "You don't have anyone to look after your child? We'll take care of him." It's different from countries overseas where people might think "We raise our child ourselves at home." In Japan, there is still this idea of having someone else take care [of one's child], even though this has become less so compared to the old days.

(Interview with Mr E, June 10 2014)

The quote touches upon the local embeddedness of *juku* and the caretaker role they fulfil. Especially if a *juku* has deep roots in a certain community, it will have significant knowledge of the local community and schooling landscape and is likely to have not only the trust of parents but in some cases also schools. The problem is that *juku* still cost money and not every family can afford them.

When the *juku* industry developed in the 1970s, most Japanese had started to think of themselves as middle-class, since most people's living standards had improved compared to their parents' generation and *juku* were one of the consumption choices families could now afford. But since Japan has shifted toward a gap society over the last two to three decades, *juku* may serve as a mechanism to maintain the gap between the so-called 'winners' and 'losers' of society, and this not by merely improving the academic performance of students

from privileged backgrounds but also through their latent functions. In fact, we can already see this tendency in metropolitan areas where students' *'juku-reki'* (Ōta 2016) has become just as important as the school or university they will enter. The significance of such developments should not be underestimated: If patterns develop where students at a school have been to the same *juku*, their friendships will have been formed before entry, so that *juku* become the places where students form important friendship circles. Certain types of *juku* therefore will serve as channels to build up social capital.

Also, work patterns in Japanese society are changing, with more women participating in the workforce. In 2017, more than 75% of 25~39 year old women held jobs, their share having increased almost 6% since 2012 (Nikkei Asian Review 2018). Putting aside the Japanese government's 'womenomics' programme of recent years, labour shortage, but also the fact that more households depend on double incomes are major factors contributing to the increasing share of women entering the workforce. For example, the most recent Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions (*Kokumin Seikatsu Kiso Chōsa*) provides evidence of more than 60% of Japanese households earning below the calculated average annual income level of 5.45 million Yen in 2016 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2017). The same survey also finds that a large share of households (62%) with children perceived it difficult to make ends meet, and, not surprisingly, this share is even larger among single-parent households (83%).

These trends have two major potential implications for *juku*: An increasing share of households in which both parents work could further increase the importance of *juku* as 'care centres' after school, particularly if regular schools are not able to provide after-school care that matches parents' employment hours. But it could also mean increasing inequalities between high and low income households as to the educational services both strata have the means to utilise. Going back to the share of households earning below the

national average, 40% of these households had annual incomes between one to four million Yen. Also, while the average income level of households with children was at seven million Yen in 2015, single-parent households made far below even half of that amount at just 2.7 million Yen. For the 'losers' of Japan's gap society, therefore, additional out-of-school services such as *juku* are and will continue to be out-of-reach.

Finally we need to return to the type of officially desired skills that are the focus of current policy discourses in education. In the most recent years toward the newest CoS revisions to be implemented from 2020, educational policymakers have responded to criticism to and concerns over the difficulty of fostering non-cognitive skills as they are represented in *ikiru chikara* within school education by referring to overseas research evidence in the fields of psychology and neuroscience, that seem to indicate that such skills could indeed be fostered through school education (Aoyagi 2018). This has led the policy discourse to shift the focus once again, this time by arguing the importance of fostering non-cognitive skills as a measure to alleviate the gap society. But as Aoyagi (2018) explains, this has not put an end to neoliberal principles underlying the current educational policy discourse, which continues to conceptualise individuals as entrepreneurial selves.

Moreover, the current policy discourse working on the assumption that non-cognitive skills may be fostered through pedagogical measures – that an individual's inner self and emotions can be managed and controlled through the development of techniques (Aoyagi 2018) – provides especially larger *juku* companies with new opportunities. It allows them to market 'pedagogical tools and techniques' with which to foster these skills and this within an official policy discourse framework that endorses a technical view of the educational process.

These dangers need to be kept in mind and more discussion on the roles of *juku* within current Japanese education needs to happen. Given that the entire

development of students is now subsumed under the idea of having them become entrepreneurial selves, *juku* in their functions in relation to students, parents, and schools will continue to shift. Often, these shifts indicate the gap in role expectations among all stakeholders involved and should therefore be given more attention.

This thesis has clarified the importance of distinguishing between different functions of *juku* within Japanese society. By distinguishing these functions, this thesis hopes to make a contribution to a more differentiated discussion of *juku* and their positive and negative potentials in education.

The limitations and outlook for future research is given in the last section.



## Limitations and Outlook

This thesis has conducted an investigation into the diversity of roles of *juku* within Japanese education. The analysis relied on official data on education and *juku*, a review of literature on *juku* and shadow education, and interview data with *juku* stakeholders. For the analysis, no data was collected among other stakeholders such as parents, students, or schools. Also, the empirical data is limited to a specific urban locality. The thesis could therefore not investigate other stakeholder perceptions of *juku* roles and differences for other local contexts.

More qualitative research on the *juku* sector is necessary to conduct deeper investigations into how *juku* form a part of local educational landscapes. Here future studies should conduct qualitative investigations for *juku* of different scales operating in the same locality, such as smaller, owner-operated *juku* and branch-schools of larger *juku* chains. There is also a lack of ethnographic studies that give a more detailed picture of the relationship between students, *juku*, parents, and schools.

At the same time, future research needs to pay greater attention to school and *juku* collaborations to identify possible cases of good practice in which both work in symbiosis with each other, but also cases in which both feed on each other and thereby serve to undermine school education. Current models of school-*juku* collaborations (*kanmin ittai kō*) in which schools integrate the knowhow of *juku* are a newer trend and form an interesting site for research.

Finally, this thesis has given attention to some long-standing, owner-operated *juku*. Market monopolisation in the sector has meant that such small *juku* face increasing pressure to ensure their survival and independence from larger *juku* companies. They are the ones that have the best potential to serve a positive role in their local educational contexts. More research into their local

engagement would make an important contribution to gaining deeper insights into the everyday workings of Japanese education at the ground-level.

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