Learning from Japan: Interviews with the Board of Education about Shadow Education (Working Paper)

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Abstract:

The findings of a recent survey by Ireson and Rushforth (2005)\textsuperscript{1} provide the first systematic and detailed picture of the nature of private tuition in England. The present study aims to contribute further to the development of theory about the role of shadow education by offering insights into the potential impact shadow education can have on educators in the classroom and administrators at local boards of education. In this paper, I present the findings of interviews with representatives from Hiroshima City Board of Education and Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education. The representatives answered semi-structured interview questions relating to:

1. The manner in which they advise state schools on the objectives, contents, instructional materials and teaching methods specified in the Courses of Study compiled by Japan’s Ministry of Education;
2. Their observations of teaching methods used by mathematics teachers in state schools; and
3. Their personal opinions with regard to Japan’s extensive shadow education.

I analyse the interview data from two perspectives: first I compare and contrast the representatives’ opinions concerning the impact of shadow education on Japan’s secondary schools with those of Japanese scholars and educators; and secondly, I compare and contrast their opinions with the research by Western scholars and educators about Japan’s school system.

Research Objective:

Long Term Objective:

As a researcher:

◆ To compile a set of guidelines for scholars who do not speak Japanese but are interested in collecting reliable data about mathematics pedagogy in Japan’s secondary schools

As a translator:

◆ To translate (Japanese into English) and compile a body of research about mathematics education in Japan’s secondary schools that represents the opinions of a wider range of Japanese scholars than is currently available

Paper Objective:

◆ The present study aims to contribute to the development of theory about the role of shadow education in the UK by offering insights into the impact shadow education in Japan has had on educators in the classroom and administrators at local boards of education in Hiroshima prefecture.
Why this objective?

I was surprised to read that as many as 27% of the 3515 year 6, 11 and 13 pupils from the UK that answered a questionnaire survey conducted by Ireson and Rushforth (2005: 4) had received some form of private tutoring:

Students were asked if they had ever had a private tutor. Of the 3515 pupils who answered this question, 27% had received tutoring. A somewhat higher proportion of students in year 13 reported having a tutor (29.5%) compared with 26% in both year 6 and year 11...

Julie Henry (Telegraph, 2nd April: 2008) reported in the media on the extent of private tuition in a somewhat more dramatic manner claiming that:

Private tutoring of children has reached “epidemic proportions” as competition intensifies for entry to the best schools, according to a leading education guide.

However, more than anything else, I was most surprised by Ireson and Rushforth’s (2005: 11) concluding remarks:

A priority in the future must be to develop a better understanding of quality in private tuition.

Why the surprise?

In 1991 a HMI\(^2\) team visited Japan for the purpose of examining the roles of local and national governments in Japanese education and governance, funding, management and responsiveness of upper secondary and higher education institutions. The team reported that:

The existence of juku and yobiko\(^3\) undoubtedly indicates some flaws in the Japanese education system (HMI, 1991: 28)

If this claim holds true, then it can also be argued that:

The existence of shadow education in the UK undoubtedly indicates some flaws in the education system in England, Scotland and Wales.

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\(^2\) Her Majesty’s Inspectorate

\(^3\) Yobiko is a juku that focuses on preparing students to retake university entrance exams
Therefore, before trying to better understand quality of private tuition as Ireson and Rushforth (2005: 11) propose, I believe that a priority should be to:

- Identify flaws in the education system that have led to the recent expansion of shadow education in the UK
- Understand the potential impact an expanding shadow education can have on educators and pupils in state school classrooms, coordinators at local boards of education and policy makers at the Ministry of Education

This is where I believe educators, scholars and policy makers in England, Scotland and Wales can learn from Japan where in 1995 it was estimated that as many as 77.4 percent (Table 1) of lower secondary school pupils participated in shadow education—hereinafter referred to as academic juku when reference is made to Japan. With that objective in mind this working paper comprises:

Table 1: Academic Juku Attendance by Lower Secondary School Pupils in Japan (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.7(8)</td>
<td>44.5(8)</td>
<td>59.1(8)</td>
<td>77.4*</td>
<td>75*</td>
<td>71.8*</td>
<td>49.8(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.4(9)</td>
<td>47.3(9)</td>
<td>67.1(9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62.5(9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Average for state lower secondary schools
(8) Year Eight (Junior High School 2nd Year)
(9) Year Nine (Junior High School 3rd Year)

- **Part 1:** Observation of academic juku in Japan: teachers, students, focus of courses, teaching materials, class sizes, prices and admission criteria
- **Part 2:** An overview of misconceptions about pedagogical flaws in Japan’s educational system
- **Part 3:** An overview of factors that have contributed to the growth and stability of academic juku in Japan since 1982
- **Part 4:** An overview of impact academic juku has had on educators in the classroom and coordinators at local boards of education
**Underlying Belief of this Study**

Based on:

1. Research that I have conducted since 2006:
   - Interviews: Lower Secondary School Teachers (WIP)
   - Interviews: Board of Education (McLean, 2008)
   - Questionnaire Surveys: Students (2009 publication)

2. Research written in Japanese that I have read or am currently translating

3. Undocumented visits to approximately 15 lower secondary schools in Hiroshima prefecture over the past 5 years on official university business that involved:
   - Classroom observations (approximately 12 schools )
   - Discussions with principals and vice principals (approximately 15 schools )

The underlying belief behind this study is that while academic juku in Japan have arguably influenced the achievement of a vast number of pupils, they have also:

- Compromised educators in the compulsory school classroom
- Compromised coordinators a local boards of education

Furthermore, that shadow education in Japan is a financially driven private industry that:

- Is not within the control of educational policy makers
- Is not within the financial means of all families
- Benefits from media publicity that acts to increase the number of anxious parents
- Will continue to grow if left unchecked
- Already has a foothold in UK (Kumon: one of Japan’s biggest academic juku)
- …
Method

In an attempt to highlight some of the ways in which academic juku have compromised educators in the compulsory school classroom and administrators at local boards of education in Hiroshima prefecture, this working paper includes data collected from interviews with:

- Two board of education mathematics coordinators:
  - One from Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education—hereinafter referred to as Coordinator P (Interview: June 2007); and
  - One from Hiroshima City Board of Education—hereinafter referred to as Coordinator C (Interview: July 2007)

  (See: McLean (2008) for details about the coordinators, their direct contact with educators in schools, the interview schedule, situation, procedure, and original analysis of the interview data.)

- One secondary school mathematics teacher—hereinafter referred to as Teacher A—who started his teaching career working for a state school, followed by one of West Japan’s most reputable academic juku—Oshu juku—and is now employed by one of Hiroshima’s leading private schools—Yasuda Girls’ Junior and Senior High School (Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

This paper also includes information about academic juku in Hiroshima compiled from inserts in the Japanese newspaper Asahi-shimbun during the first week of July 2008. The decision to include this information was made in response to Teacher A’s reply to the question: ‘Why do so many pupils attend academic juku?’

The power of newspaper inserts, by that I mean the power of advertising…

(Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)
Interview Participant

Yasuda Girls’ Junior and Senior High School Mathematics Teacher

Criteria:
The participant (Teacher A) is in his early 40s. He was chosen for this interview due to his experience of teaching mathematics at a:

- State lower secondary school (7 years)
- Academic juku (6 years)
- Private secondary school (3 years)

Situation:

- July 2008
- Secluded office at Yasuda Girls’ Junior High School in Hiroshima
- The participant was relaxed, extremely open and confident.

Procedure:

- Approximately 60-minute unstructured interview about juku conducted in Japanese
- The interview was conducted on the premise that I would return at a later date for a more specific follow up interview

Analysis:
The unstructured open nature of the interview proved to be an effective means of gathering information about Teacher A’s perception of the impact that academic juku has had on:

- Pedagogy in the lower secondary school mathematics classroom; and
- Policy makers ability to introduce change to schools

The transcript was translated into English and then coded by key words from the two theoretical frameworks.
Part 1:

Observation of Academic Juku in Japan

Seven types of academic juku currently operate in Japan: preparatory juku (shingaku juku); supplementary juku (hoshu juku); comprehensive juku (sogo juku); home-tutoring agencies (kateikyo); drill juku (doriru juku); relief juku (kyusai juku); and correspondence juku (tsushin kyoiku). The following is an observation of information available about teachers, students, focus of courses, teaching materials, class sizes, prices and admission criteria at academic juku in Japan. Information presented in this section was compiled from:

1. Existing research (Hood, 2001; Monbusho, 1993; Roesgaard, 2006)
3. Academic juku homepages (Benesse, 2008; Kumon, 2008b)

Teachers at Academic Juku in Japan

According to Hood (2001:116), juku teachers are often part-time undergraduate students with no teaching qualifications, people who have teaching certificates but have little or no teaching experience, or former teachers. This claim finds support in data provided by Japan’s Ministry of Education about the educational background of academic juku teachers in 1985 and 1993 (Table 2).

Table 2: Educational background of academic juku teachers in Japan 1985 and 1993(%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>University Education</th>
<th>School-teachers</th>
<th>Previous experience</th>
<th>No experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Monbusho (1993)

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In 1993, 28.1% of students in the final year of senior high school continued on to university; this figure increased to 47.2% in 2007 (Monbusho, 2007. Available at: http://www.mext.go.jp)
Table 3: Information about *academic juku* teachers in Japan

**Preparatory Juku:**
- Oshu Juku (July 2008) claims that the reason why their pupils do so well on lower and upper secondary school entrance exams is because all of their teachers are employed fulltime.

**Home Tutoring Agencies:**
- Kateikyoshi no Torai (July 2008) includes photos of 19 tutors on their newspaper insert:
  - 5 tutors are described as being professional teachers (whether or not this means *qualified teachers* is unclear; in this situation it is more likely to mean fulltime);
  - 9 tutors are students at Hiroshima University Faculty of Medicine;
  - 2 tutors are students at Hiroshima University Faculty of Dentistry;
  - 1 tutor is a student at Hiroshima University Faculty of Pharmacy;
  - 1 tutor is a student at Hiroshima University Faculty of Education; and
  - 1 tutor is a student at Hiroshima University Faculty of Science
- Sutandado Kateikyoshi Sabisu (July 2008) includes photos of 4 tutors on their newspaper insert:
  - All 4 tutors are students at Hiroshima University
  - All 4 tutors graduated from one of Hiroshima prefectures top ranking state or private schools

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**Pupils at Academic Juku in Japan**

Table 4: Information about pupils at academic Juku in Japan

**Preparatory Juku:**
- *High performers* (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)
- Oshu Juku (July 2008) claims that 36 percent of the 2008 intake of pupils at Motomachi Upper Secondary School—Hiroshima prefecture’s top ranking state upper secondary school—studied at Oshu Juku.

**Supplementary Juku:**
- *Average performers* (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)

**Comprehensive Juku:**
- Both Shiraishi-Gakushuin (July 2008) and Tanaka-Gakushukai (July 2008) offer classes for pupils of all levels
- Shiraishi-Gakushuin (July 2008) claims that in 2008 31% of the pupils that took their preparatory study courses passed one of Hiroshima prefectures top four state upper secondary schools—Motomachi, Funaeri, Yasufuruichi, Kokutaiji

**Home Tutoring Agencies:**
- Kateikyo Group (July 2008), Kateikyoshi no Torai (July 2008) and Sutandado Kateikyoshi
Sabisu (July 2008) offer classes for pupils of all levels

**Drill Juku:**
- Courses are available for pupils of all levels (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)
- Kumon (July 2008a) offers classes for pupils of all levels

**Relief Juku:**
- Poor performers (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)
- Students who struggle at regular schools because of social problems. (Hood, 2001: 114)

**Correspondence Juku:**
- Both Benesse (2008) and Kumon (2008b) offer correspondence courses for pupils of all levels

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### Focus of Courses at Academic Juku in Japan

Table 5: Information about the focus of courses at academic juku in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparatory Juku:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Entrance exams (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Oshu Juku (July 2008) claims that their courses prepare pupils for top ranking state upper secondary school entrance examinations, and for national and private lower secondary school entrance examinations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplementary Juku:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Catching up and school tests (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Supplementary juku ‘shadow’ the school curriculum by repeating past lessons and preparing for future lessons (Hood, 2001: 114)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Juku:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- According to Hood (2001: 114), sogo juku combine the aims of [shingaku juku and hoshu juku] but tend to concentrate on preparatory studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Both Shiraishi-Gakushuin (July 2008) and Tanaka-Gakushukai (July 2008) offer courses for entrance exams, catching up and school tests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Tutoring Agencies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Kateikyo Group (July 2008), Kateikyoshi no Torai (July 2008) and Sutandado Kateikyoshi Sabisu (July 2008) offer tutoring for entrance exams, catching up and school tests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drill Juku:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Basic skills (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relief Juku:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Basic learning (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correspondence Juku:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Benesse (2008) offers correspondence courses for basic skills, catching up and school tests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Materials at Academic Juku in Japan

Table 6: Information about teaching materials used at academic juku in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juku Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Juku</td>
<td>Own texts (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Juku</td>
<td>Homemade, commercial or school texts (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Juku</td>
<td>Tanaka-Gakushukai (July 2008) uses their own handouts as teaching materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill Juku</td>
<td>Own texts (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kumon (July 2008a) uses their own handouts as teaching materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief Juku</td>
<td>Homemade, commercial or school texts (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence Juku</td>
<td>Both Benesse (2008) and Kumon (2008b) use the own texts or handouts as teaching materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class Size at Academic Juku in Japan

Table 7: Information about class size at academic juku in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juku Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Juku</td>
<td>Classes for elementary school pupils at Oshu Juku (July 2008) average between 25-28 pupils per class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular classes for lower secondary school pupils at Oshu Juku (July 2008) average 28 pupils per class with the top level class having only 10 pupils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices of Courses at Academic Juku in Japan

Table 8: Information about the prices of courses offered at academic juku in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juku Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Juku</td>
<td>Oshu Juku (July 2008) fees for lower secondary school pupils:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrance Fee: ¥2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly Fee: (Regular High School Entrance Examination Classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¥26,250 (English + Mathematics) (approx. ¥3,281 per lesson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¥41,265 (English, Mathematics, Japanese, Science and Sociology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(approx. ¥2,063 per lesson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly Fee: (Top Level High School Entrance Examination Class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¥32,865 (English, Mathematics, Japanese, Science and Sociology)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comprehensive *Juku*:

- **Shiraishi-Gakushuin** (July 2008) fees for lower secondary school pupils:
  - Entrance Fee: ¥*** (A fee is mentioned on the insert but the amount is not disclosed)
  - Monthly Fee (General Course / Higher Level General Course):
    - ¥19,950 (English + Mathematics) (approx. ¥2,494 per lesson)
    - ¥39,900 (English, Mathematics, Japanese, Science and Sociology)
      (approx. ¥2,063 per lesson)
  - Monthly Fee (High School Entrance Examination Course):
    - ¥19,950 (English + Mathematics) (approx. ¥2,494 per lesson)
    - ¥51,450 (English, Mathematics, Japanese, Science and Sociology)
      (approx. ¥2,573 per lesson)

- **Tanaka-Gakushukai** (July 2008) fees for lower secondary school pupils:
  - Entrance Fee: ¥ (No Mention)
  - Monthly Fee (Revision Course for Year Eight Pupils):
    - ¥6,000 (per subject) (approx. ¥1,750 per lesson)
  - Monthly Fee (High School Entrance Examination Course):
    - ¥52,500 (English, Mathematics, Japanese, Science and Sociology)
      (approx. ¥2,625 per lesson)

## Home Tutoring Agencies:

- **Kateikyoshi no Torai** (July 2008) fees for lower secondary school pupils:
  - 12 × 60-minute lessons: ¥30,000 (¥2,500 per lesson)

- **Sutandado Kateikyoshi Sabisu** (July 2008) fees for lower secondary school pupils:
  - Year Seven and Eight Pupils: 4 × 60-minute lessons: ¥9,400 (¥2,350 per lesson)
  - Year Nine Pupils: 4 × 60-minute lessons: ¥11,400 (¥2,850 per lesson)

## Correspondence *Juku*:

- **Benesse** (2008) fees for lower secondary school pupils:
  - Monthly fee for 5 subjects:
    - ¥6,800 (English, Mathematics, Japanese, Science and Sociology)
    (This fee includes 5 textbooks + marking of 1 monthly assignment for each subject)

- **Kumon** (2008b) fees for lower secondary school pupils:
  - Monthly fee per subject:
    - Monthly: ¥8,350 (This fee includes materials + marking of 1 monthly assignment)
## Admission Criteria of Academic Juku in Japan

Table 9: Information about the admission criteria of academic juku in Japan

### Preparatory Juku:
- Entrance exam or test (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)
- Oshu Juku (July 2008) set an examination for admission to all of its courses

### Supplementary Juku:
- Physical limits only (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)

### Comprehensive Juku:
- The only criteria restricting admission at Shiraishi-Gakushuin (July 2008) and Tanaka-Gakushukai (July 2008) is the physical limits of each school

### Home Tutoring Agencies:
- The only criteria restricting admission at Kateikyoshiki no Torai (July 2008), Sutandado Kateikyoshi Sabisu (July 2008) and Kateikyo Group (July 2008) is the supply of tutors

### Drill Juku:
- No limit (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)
- The only criteria restricting admission at Kumon is the physical limits of each school it opens. However, no mention of this is made on the newspaper insert (Kumon, July 2008a)

### Relief Juku:
- Physical limits only (Roesgaard, 2006: 34)

### Correspondence Juku:
- Neither Benesse (2008) not Kumon (2008b) mention any factors that may limit admission to the correspondence courses
Part 2:

An overview of misconceptions about pedagogical flaws in Japan’s educational system

As can be seen from Table 1, academic juku attendance among lower secondary school pupils in Japan more than doubled between the years 1976 and 1995 when it reached an all time high of 77.4 percent. In the years that followed, academic juku attendance once again subsided (62.5 percent of grade nine pupils in 2003), but still remained more than 25 percent above the rate of attendance in 1976 (37.4 percent). However, in order to get a clear understanding of what factors have led to this phenomenon, one must first have a clear understanding of what is happening in Japan’s compulsory school classrooms.

Table 10:

An overview of misconceptions about pedagogical flaws in Japan’s educational system

- teaching methods are inflexible (HMI, 1991: 28)
- …standardized and egalitarian teaching methods (Koyama, 1985)
- …perpetuating uniformity in instruction at the secondary level in Japan. (Shimahara, 1997: 100)
- …great emphasis on rote learning (HMI, 1991: 28)
- …rote learning…is crucial to doing well. (Nemoto, 1999: 86)
- One of the most important methods of learning in Japanese schools is memorization (Nemoto, 1999: 86)
- Classroom teachers…foster the development of memorization. (White, 1987: 80)
- Teachers teach to the test rather than inspire students to think creatively. (Schoppa, 1991: 57)
- a heavy reliance on the textbook (Schmidt, 1993:143)
- …teachers and students regard the textbook as a bible which contains all essential knowledge (Park and Leung, 2006: 230)

Any claim that the expansion of academic juku in Japan is the result of conservative pedagogy (Table 5) fails to take into consideration the extent of diversity evident in Japan. McLean (2008) explains that a dichotomy exists with regard to descriptions of
mathematics pedagogy in Japan’s lower secondary schools by a number of Western scholars. While one group of scholars claim that pedagogy is conservative in nature, another group claim that it is constructivist in nature. McLean (ibid) uses data from interviews with coordinator at Hiroshima Prefecture and Hiroshima City Board Education along with the observations of Japanese scholars (Horio, 1994; Ichikawa, 1986; Okano and Tsuchiya, 1999; Akita, 2006) to highlight the diversity in teaching methodology between different teachers within each school, schools within each region, regions within each prefecture and prefectures within Japan. McLean goes on to list the following factors as primary contributors to the diversity:

1. The nature of the Courses of Study
   - Teaching methodology is not specified
2. The way in which teacher training is administered in individual schools
3. The experience and teaching ability of each individual teacher
4. The ability of the pupils in state schools in any particular region within a prefecture which is influenced by, among other things, the number of national and private schools in the region
5. The level of the official textbook chosen by the local board of education
   - Each local board of education selects a textbook that best suits the ability of pupils in that region
6. The use of supplementary teaching materials
   - Each school has the freedom to choose supplementary teaching materials
7. …
Part 3:

An overview of factors that have contributed to the growth and stability of academic juku in Japan since 1982

In my research the primary factors that I have identified that enabled academic juku attendance to more than double in Japan between the years 1982 and 1995 are:

1. Increased competition for places at university caused by:
   - A 25 percent increase in the population of 18-year olds between the years 1982 to 1992
   - An continuing increase in the percentage of students wanting to attend university

   The knock-on effect of this phenomenon was:
   - An increase in the percentage roninsei at yobiko—in 1992 only 63 percent of the students that wanted to go to university were able to get a place at university (Niwa, 2004: 118)
   - An increase in the percentage of upper secondary school students attending academic juku
   - Increased competition for places at national and private schools and at high ranking upper secondary schools due to the gap between the official curriculum guidelines for state secondary schools and the entry requirements of top ranking universities.

2. The gap between the official curriculum guidelines and requirements for entry to:
   - National and private lower secondary schools; (Coordinator C, Interview: July 2007; Zeng 1999: 190)
   - National and private upper secondary schools; (Coordinator C, Interview: July 2007; Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)
   - Top ranking universities (Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

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5 The word ronin means master less samurai. However, in modern Japanese the word roninsei is used to refer to the students who study for an extra year to get into university.

From a Sellers Market to a Buyers Market

Japan’s Ministry of Education, Monbusho (2002) reported that due to the declining birth-rate, the number of places available at universities in Japan would exceed the number of applicants by the year 2007. Yet, in spite of this fact, lower secondary school attendance of academic juku remained high. The following inexhaustible list helps to explain the reason why academic juku attendance has remained more than 25 percent above the rate of attendance in 1976.

1. The power of advertising: Academic juku that grew in size throughout the 1980s were able devote sizable amounts of money to advertising. In addition to advertising on newspapers inserts, most major academic juku also advertise on large billboards and even television commercials.

   Question: Why do so many pupils attend academic juku?

   The power of newspaper inserts, by that I mean the power of advertising… Newspaper inserts that say how many of the juku’s pupils got into such and such a high school are particularly effective at stimulating parents’ interest. Word of mouth seems to be very effective for smaller juku. Smaller juku try to integrate into a community. If they are successful, they’ll never be short of pupils.

   (Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

2. A constant supply of university graduates that are not qualified teachers but have adequate subject knowledge and are confident in their ability to teach

   One of the things about academic juku is that you can teach without a teacher’s licence. For this reason, university graduates that can’t quite get the job that they want but have subject knowledge and confidence in their ability to teach as a result of working part-time as home tutor for example (See Tables 2 and 3) can always find work teaching at academic juku.

   (Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

3. Juku strive to satisfy the customer’s needs: As Russell (1997: 156) points out juku work outside the official requirements for compulsory education, enabling them to operate flexibly.
Juku are free to track children by ability, offer smaller classes and focus solely on test participation…

(Russell, 1997: 154)

Juku are companies, so as a company they strive to make a profit. The profit a juku makes is directly connected to its number of pupils, which in turn is connected to the number of pupils that the juku can get through entrance exams. For this reason, juku teachers spend a lot of more time and energy thinking seriously about how to improve the performance of the pupils than state school teachers do. Many juku teachers feel very competitive towards school teachers, which I suppose is natural because juku teachers, unlike school teachers, can devote all of their energy to teaching.

(Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

Each stage of formal schooling is closely connected with a supporting system [juku] that is continuously changing according to social demand.

(Kitamura, 1986: 161)

4. Academic juku teachers leaving larger juku to start their own juku

A number of juku teachers start out their career working for a large juku. However, large juku often have strict targets with regard to the number of pupils a teacher has to enroll on certain courses available in the school. To be honest, it can be really tough, so teachers or sometimes groups of teachers leave these juku and set up their own juku, which in turn causes the number of juku to keep on increasing.

(Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

5. Smaller families and affordable academic juku education

I’m confident that compulsory schooling and academic juku will continue to coexist in Japan from now on. By that I mean, juku won’t simply disappear, not with the current low birth-rates; which mean that most families can now afford to send their children for extra tuition.

(Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

As can be seen from list of academic juku prices in Table 8, prices start from as little as ¥1,643 per lesson which is well within the financial means of most families in Japan.
Part 4:

An overview of impact academic juku has had on educators in the classroom and coordinators at local boards of education

According to Hood (2001: 115) studies into juku have proven inconclusive about the degree to which they help students, though they were not considered to be ‘disruptive’ to the teaching in schools. As previously mentioned the objective of the present study is not to provide conclusive evidence about the impact academic juku has had on educators, administrator at local boards of education in Japan, but to contribute to the development of theory about the role of shadow education in the UK by offering insights into the impact shadow education in Japan has had on educators in the classroom and administrators at local boards of education in Hiroshima prefecture. However, having said that, if the above claim by Hood (ibid) is widely considered to be true, I believe that the potential for the following to be disruptive to teaching in school needs to be reconsidered:

1. Juku enables quick learners—particularly at state schools—to get ahead of what is being taught in compulsory school:

   In terms of content, juku may complement school lessons by…pushing quick students and providing a different classroom atmosphere.

   (Russell, 1997: 160)

   According to a survey conducted by Monbusho (2004b) 32.1 percent of 9th graders were studying mathematics at academic juku more advanced than the mathematics they were studying at school.

   The materials used by Kumon get the pupils to do the same kind of question exercises again and again until they understand it and are ready to go on to the next level. Fast pupils tend to be doing 10th grade question exercises when they are in the 9th grade.

   (Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

2. According to Russell (1997: 160), juku fills in the gaps for slow learners. While on the one hand this would appear to be very positive, a survey by Monbusho (2004b)
reveals that potential repercussions should also not be overlooked:

41.6 percent of 9th graders said that if they don’t understand something in their compulsory school class, they ask their juku teacher or home tutor. Only 20.7 percent said that they would ask their compulsory school teacher during the class. (Monbusho, 2004b)

The above point may also help to explain the reason why 44.3 percent of mathematics teachers at compulsory schools in Japan said that they do not give extra guidance between or after classes to 9th grade pupils that did not understand something in class. (Monbusho, 2004b)

3. The need to set homework becomes less obvious if more than 60 percent of the pupils in the class study at juku:

52.4% of mathematics teachers at compulsory secondary schools in Japan said that they do not set homework for their 9th grade pupils. (Monbusho, 2004b)

4. Compulsory school ranking tables compiled by academic juku (Coordinator P., Interview: June 2007) bring into question the objectives of teachers in compulsory education:

Academic juku in Japan rank compulsory schools based on:

- The scores its pupils get on the prefecture upper secondary school entrance examinations (state schools);
- The level or difficulty of the entrance examinations (private schools); and
- The number of pupils that the school that gets into top ranking universities.

Many pupils and their families in Japan pick an upper secondary school based on the universities that its pupils get into. For that reason, at private upper secondary schools we have no option except to focus on teaching the skills required for students to pass university entrance examinations.

(Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

This above mentioned factors help to explain Coordinator C’s (Interview: July 2007) observation that a lot of teachers continue to teach in the same manner: Even if they change school.
Finally, I believe that the following points should be taken into consideration with regard to the how academic juku have compromised the ability of administrators at local boards of education and policy makers at the Ministry of Education in Japan ability to:

- Assess the effectiveness of pedagogy in compulsory schools
- Assess the effectiveness of actions taken to improve education
- Instill confidence in the public

5. Assess the effectiveness of: pedagogy in compulsory schools

A survey by Kariya et al. (2002: 23) comparing: the mathematics scores of lower secondary school pupils that studied mathematics at juku in 1989 with pupils that studied mathematics at juku in 2001; and the scores of the pupils that did not study mathematics at juku in 1989 with the score of pupils that did not study mathematics at juku in 2001. The group indicated that: while there was very little change in the scores of pupils that attend juku—2001 was 1.54% lower than in 1989—a recognizable drop existed between the scores of those that did not attend juku—2001 was 6.44% lower than in 1989; adding support to the groups thesis that national surveys of secondary school pupils mathematics ability cannot ignore the influence of juku

...it should also be noted that such supremacy could not be maintained without extensive utilization of the huge non-formal support (Guo, 2005: 42)

Japanese children possibly may have accomplished their admirable achievements by studying outside school in cram courses or with the assistance of tutors.

(Ichikawa, 1986: 248)

Family finances appear to be one of the most important factors determining a child’s academic capabilities. (Research by Ochanomizu University professor Hiroaki Mumizuku) “The wealthier a family is, the more it can spend on out-of-school education, such as private tutoring (“juku”), and this must be behind the survey result,” Mimizuka said...

Mathematics test scores of elementary 6th grade pupils in the Kanto region of Japan (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income (year)</th>
<th>¥ 2–3 million</th>
<th>¥ 3–5 million</th>
<th>¥ 5–7 million</th>
<th>¥ 7–10 million</th>
<th>¥ 10–15 million</th>
<th>¥ 15+ million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hirano, Japan Times: 2nd November 2006)
6. Assess the effectiveness of actions taken to improve education:

According to Coordinator P (Interview: June 2007):

*Teachers at lower secondary schools join training workshops where they think about their lessons and how to improve them. I think that the teachers are able to adapt their lesson to meet the needs of the pupils because this kind of training system is well developed.*

*Teachers [at state secondary schools] thoroughly teach what needs to be taught. Then, they drill the pupils on it again and again until they are able to understand it. Then, in addition to that they make the students think about what they need to think about. This kind of teaching is what leads to good results.*

Based on actual classroom observations Coordinator C (Interview: July 2007) contradicts Coordinator P saying:

*In Hiroshima prefecture a lot of teachers continue to teach in the same manner: Even if they change school.*

7. Instill confidence in the public:

*Juku are an embarrassment to the Japanese government and a threat to teacher union ideals that stress “whole person” education. The flourishing juku business also contradicts public sentiment, which outwardly favors a lessening of educational pressure on children.*

(Russell, 1997: 154)
Points for Consideration

1. Are factors that contributed to the growth and stability of *academic juku* in Japan present in the UK?
   - Increasing competition for places at university
   - A gap between the education offered in state schools and the university entry requirements
   - A gap between the education offered in state and private schools
   - A constant supply of university graduates with an interest in teaching but without any official teaching credentials

Do individuals and companies in the shadow education industry in the UK:
   - Have the financial means to exploit the *power of advertising*?
   - Have more time to think seriously about how to improve the performance of pupils than teachers in compulsory schools?
   - Have the ability to change according to social demand?

Is shadow education within their financial means of more families in the UK than are currently paying for it?

2. Are policy makers, administrators and educators in the UK aware of and willing to accept the potential impact a growing shadow education industry can have on the following:
   - Teaching in schools?
   - The ability to assess the effectiveness of pedagogy in schools?
   - The ability to assess the effectiveness of actions taken to improve pedagogy in schools?
   - Policy makers, administrators and educators ability to instill confidence in the public about the quality of education being offered at state schools?

3. If policy makers, administrators and educators in the UK are not willing to accept the above mentioned consequences, a priority must be *to investigate ways of curbing the growing shadow education industry*. 
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**Notes**

i In 1982, there were 1,640,000 18 year olds in Japan. This figure continued to increase in the years that followed until it reached its peak in 1992 of 2,500,000; some 25 percent more than it was ten years earlier. (Niwa, 2004: 118) (Language of original text: Japanese)

ii [In 1963] only 10 percent of high school graduates went to college. Now the intensity of preparation for entrance examinations has escalated even more... (Shimahara, 1997: 90)

iii In 1982, 71 percent of the students that wanted to go to university or junior college were successful. However, in 1992 this figure had dropped to 63 percent, which meant that 3 to 4 out of 10 students failed to get a place a university. (Niwa, 2004: 118) (Language of original text: Japanese)

iv This non-formal education system is no longer simply a sub-ordinate system supporting the formal school system but an increasingly important means for high school students to make the college choice and to prepare for the entrance examinations. (Kitamura, 1986: 163)

v A student who pursues mainstream education has little prospect of gaining entry to a high prestige university without recourse to expense, supplementary evening classes (HML, 1991: 28)

vi I would say that a lot of the children that get into those schools [reputable private school in Hiroshima prefecture] will have been studying at juku or with a home tutor from elementary school. Regular study at state elementary schools isn’t enough. (Coordinator C, Interview; July 2007)

vii According to Zeng (1999: 10) in 1993, 66.7% of private lower secondary schools entrance examinations and 11.8 % of national schools entrance exams exceeded the scope of the official curriculum guides lines specified in 1994
viii Private upper secondary schools like Yasuda or Shudo are extremely difficult to get in if you study for their entrance exams at juku. It’s next to impossible if you just study at a state lower secondary school. (Coordinator C, Interview: July 2007)

ix There’s a huge difference between the difficulty of what pupils study at private secondary school and what they study at state secondary schools. (Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

x McLean: Do you think that the contents of what pupils study at state upper secondary schools is sufficient for them to be able to get into top ranking universities such as Keio University?
Teacher A: No, it’s simply not enough. (Teacher A, Interview: July 2008)

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