Local knowledge and value transformation in East Asian mass tutorial schools

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Based on field trips to some mass tutorial schools from 1998 to 2000 and documentary analysis, a three-layered cultural model of cram schools in East Asian comparative perspective is articulated. The paper focuses on dynamic inter-and intra-layer interactions of some key components of the model, exploring areas such as socio-cognitive modes of examination-oriented learning, impacts of local popular culture, degree of impact of transmitting heritage culture, and the value transformations induced by cram schools. Facing regional trends of launching large-scale educational reforms in East Asia, such a study can help policy-makers understand the tensions between the functioning of daytime and cram schools and thereby realise reform barriers in the 21st century.

tutorial schools, cram schools, local knowledge, heritage culture, East Asia

INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that private supplementary tutoring (or cramming, in the negative value sense that it is related to rote learning) is a huge enterprise in many countries, with far-reaching economic, social and educational implications, it has received little attention in the research literature. Researchers such as Dore (1976, 1997), Hargreaves (1997), Little (1994, 1997) and Noah and Eckstein (1993) did not treat supplementary tutoring as the main theme of their analyses, but indirectly touched upon it, albeit superficially, when investigating primary and secondary education systems and related socio-cultural issues in single-country or cross-societal studies. Many national and international educators or policy-makers (Asiaweek, 1997; Bray, 1999; de Silva, 1994; Foondun, 1992, 1998; Republic of Korea, 1991; The Korea Herald 2001; Yoon, et al. 1997) have commented negatively on the apparently uncontrollable and vigorous growth of private tutoring, which they argue is parasitic on day-time schooling. These researchers or policy-makers generally have not explored the many significant implications for further research and policy analysis. To social theorists, there have hardly been any conceptual linkages between tutoring and their grand theories, or any need to revitalise their theories. In fact, the subtlety of the subject matter lies in the intangible nature of the tutoring services offered, in the hidden scale of household financing (Bray, 1996, 1998) and in the complexity of the multi-faceted relationships between demand or supply patterns and possible social and educational determinants (Kwok, 2001).

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Private tutoring is defined here as extra, fee-paying academic teaching or drilling for full-time students studying in regular school instruction programs or syllabuses at primary (grades 1 to 6) and secondary (grades 7 to 12 or 7 to 13) school levels. It is academically-oriented, with monetary transfer from tutees to tutors. The tutoring content and assistance with mastery of cognitive or technical skills are related to the tutees’ daytime schooling.
Mass tutoring refers to tutorial lessons involving at least 10 tutees in each class. Note that this paper does not include reference to *yobiko* (full time mass tutorial schools) in Japan. Such schools mostly cater for *ronin*, who are full-time repeaters re-sitting for university entrance examinations.

The study is based on ethnographic research, documentary analysis, participatory observation, and semi-structured interviews with key informants carried out during several field trips to five East Asian cities: Hong Kong, Macau, Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo, from 1998 to 2000. Strictly speaking, the field studies only focused on a few tutorial schools without any intention to make generalisations at societal and national levels. Triangulation of data sources, stakeholders and perspectives was limited, facing visiting time and language constraints (while the author has good mastery of the Cantonese, Mandarin and English languages, his knowledge of Korean and Japanese languages is quite limited).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

There have been more cross- or single-societal (or country) studies on the demand side than on the supply side of tutoring. Past research agendas were often confined to the socio-economic scale of household financing (Falzon and Busuttil, 1988; George, 1992; Lee, 1996) and socio-cultural patterns of demand (Chew and Leong, 1995; de Silva, 1994; Harnisch, 1994; Hussein, 1987; Ukai Russell, 1997; Tseng, 1998; Yoon, et al. 1997), and their possible determinants in some Asian, central European and African countries. The supply mechanism of tutoring has only been investigated in comparative perspective by Bray (1999). Policy-makers and educators (Asiaweek, 1997; Bray, 1998; 1999; de Silva, 1994; Mauritius, 1994, 1997; Nanayakkara and Ranaweera, 1994) report that most countries face considerable difficulty in banning or censoring various types of tutoring and even in controlling its growth. Only a few cultural studies on mass tutorial schools have been undertaken (Rohlen, 1980; Zeng, 1999).

Rohlen (1980) carried out a case study of tutorial or *juku* schools in Japan at individual, family and societal system levels. He observed the institutionalised and franchised market of *juku* with their heavy promotional advertising through the mass media. He speculated an intersection of social and educational factors to account for the growing popularity of *juku* since the late 1960s. The poor quality of daytime schools, and their inability to meet parental demand for higher educational achievement (especially for tertiary entrance), also contributed to the growth of the *juku*. The *juku* therefore became a key to higher social status, especially when tutoring fees became more affordable after the great economic growth of the 1960s and 1970s. Most of the common tutorial schools (called *gakushu juku*) offered pedagogical guidelines for examination preparation or university entrance examinations. Top *juku* were successful because they attracted the best students via competitive entrance examinations and other selection mechanisms. Most *juku* stressed strict discipline and promoted academic diligence for motivating tutees to sit for examinations. Under peer group pressure, parents were willing to afford tutoring fees as they also realised that obtaining higher education could help their children climb the social ladder after graduation. More importantly, *juku* differentiation increasingly became a kind of educational stratification. The higher the household income, the greater the participation rates in *juku*.

Zeng (1999) conducted a penetrating, ethnographic, cross-societal study of mass tutorial schools in three East Asian cities (namely, *juku* in Tokyo; *hakwon* in Seoul; *buxiban* in Taipei). Based on three tutee case studies, he highlighted commonalities and differences in their organisational structures and regional disparities in their growth. With higher demand for mass tutorial schools, geographical distribution was more intense in urban areas than in
rural. He also noted that some crucial socio-cultural and socio-economic characteristics of formal school curricula and features of entrance examinations were related to the high demand for tutoring in the three cities. They included meritocratic drives in university entrance examinations for upward social mobility, cultural and institutional structures of credentialism, and economic affluence of families leading to increasing educational expenditure on schooling children. In particular, he observed that juku bridged the curriculum gaps between daytime textbooks and examination questions by providing repetitive drilling graded exercises in the 1990s in Japan.

On evaluation, without doing field studies in other East Asian countries, Rohlen (1980) speculated that social determinants similar to the above were related to the influence of Confucian heritage culture. Zeng (1999) did not go into depth about other socio-cultural features of those tutorial schools and relationships between school features and educational and social systems in the three East Asian contexts studied. In short, both failed to conceptualise a socio-cultural model of East Asian tutorial schools when investigating relationships between local knowledge and transmission of heritage culture.

Based on the above literature review, three research agendas are raised when a three-layered cultural model is articulated. The first is to account for those similarities and differences between functioning, infrastructural innovations and popularity of East Asian tutorial schools by conceptualising some descriptive indicators. The second is to pinpoint those socio-cultural features of tutorial schools that reveal distinctive patterns of learning in East Asia in cross-cultural and cross-societal perspective. The last is to pose future challenges to East Asian educational systems in the 21st century when local knowledge and value transformation are linked to transmission of heritage culture in tutorial schools.

A THREE-LAYERED CULTURAL MODEL OF TUTORIAL SCHOOLS

A three-layered cultural model is presented in Figure 1. It is articulated from some past cultural studies (Neville, 1995; Owen and Steinhoff, 1989; Schein, 1985). In the outer detectable behaviour layer, several categories are found. They are crests/songs/mottoes; rites/rituals/ceremonies; rewards/sanctions; human relationships; family/social interactions; leadership or marketing style; geographical locations and functions/roles. The middle conceptual layer contains stories/myths; symbols/metaphors/analogues; values/mission/beliefs; traditions/legends and heroes/heroines. At the inner, intangible level, basic hidden cultural or ideological assumptions are implicitly embedded. External social forces continually act upon and sometimes modify the content structure of the model, as suggested by some anthropologists (Benedict, 1935; Shweder and LeVine, 1984; Spindler, 1997). Dialectical interactions between categories within and across layers result from other internal forces acting upon layers. Such categories may also be under the impact of some outward social forces from time to time. The model is hypothesised to illuminate the organic structure of mass tutorial schools after the filling-up of some ethnographic ‘thick’ descriptions (Geertz, 1973) in each category and their possible inter-and intra-layer interactions.

In the outer observable layer, mass tutorial schools in East Asia played a supplementary role of repeating daytime lesson contents while also helping tutees master related learning skills that school teachers did not teach in daytime lessons. These data were based on participant observations and semi-structured interviews with tutorial school heads and tutors, daytime school principals and teachers, students, tutees, parents. Other relevant literature also was consulted (Harnish, 1994; Kato, 1992; Kawaijuku, 2000; Kim, 2000; Kwok, 2001; Lee, 1996; SEG, 1994; Sorensen, 1994; Tseng, 1998; Ukai Russell, 1997; Yoon, et al. 1997). Concerning school accessibility, geographical locations were usually in public areas with a
convenient transportation system; e.g., near railway, bus or subway stations. There were individual tutorial schools and chains of franchised large-scale tutorial schools. The number of simultaneous tutorial classes ranged from 2 to 30. Most tutees’ families were nuclear in size, with an average of 1 or 2 school age children. Reasons for seeking tutoring included insufficient free academic guidance from daytime schooling or from older family members. School peers or older family members recommended tutees to seek mass tutoring or the tutees knew of the promotion of mass tutorial schools through the mass media (e.g., catchy advertisements in open public areas, daily newspapers, internet e-commerce, popular magazines, subway stations and crowded streets).

Figure 1. A cultural model of East Asian tutorial schools

Tutorial class size varied from 10 to 50. Class pedagogy was teacher-centred and therefore no different from traditional daytime lessons. Yet tutees had free questioning time and more thematic, intensive learning than in daytime schooling as tutors liked to offer frequent lesson pre-review or revision and to offer graded drilling exercises, suitable to tutee learning needs. At upper secondary levels, tutees were trained to have appropriate examination skills such as good mastery of examination time, effective lesson revision and techniques of choosing and answering the right examination questions. Rewards were given to those tutees with brilliant open examination results or big academic improvements across or within school years. Awards could be a book trophy, monetary scholarships, back-payment of tutoring fees and other material goods such as free sightseeing trips abroad. Some mass tutorial schools in
Hong Kong like to use such bonuses or awarding ceremonies to advertise their tutoring services in daily newspapers and popular magazines. Most mass tutorial schools in Hong Kong, Macau, Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo have distinctive school names or images, related to diligent learning, wisdom and knowledge, academic excellence and glory. In order to nurture an ardent learning culture, some tutorial schools have their weekly pamphlets, monthly or yearly bulletins (Kawaijuku 2000; SEG 1994). The main contents covered prestigious universities’ entrance requirements, brilliant students’ personal information, bonuses (e.g., discounts to buy daily necessities) given to tutees when taking courses, updated contact information about new courses with telephone hotlines, fax numbers or internet web addresses.

In the middle layer, thick qualitative data were finely categorised and analysed. There were two types of heroes or heroines. Everlasting (or born) heroes or heroines (Deal and Kennedy, 1982:43-48) refer to idol tutors (named ming shi - meaning famous teachers - in the Chinese language) who have high tutee participation rates and/or high reputations. They were either dressed in formal style, imitating daytime school teachers, or in casual trendy wear, following tutees’ fashions in popular culture. They were either the bosses (or shareholders) or the ‘spirits’ of the tutorial schools. Without their presence, tutees would have changed their tutoring venues. Idol tutors often earned higher monthly salaries than daytime school teachers. Such heroes or heroines played multi-faceted roles. They were good friends, soothing examination pressure when providing open examination skills, playing jokes to make lessons more interesting or citing teenagers’ jargon to draw tutees’ attention. They were also academic scholars who had earned Masters or Doctoral degrees and acted like school teachers, partially reinforcing or complementing daytime lessons. To some extent, they provided more care when offering academic guidance or spent a longer time with tutees than tutees’ parents. Situational heroes or heroines (Deal and Kennedy, 1982:43-48) were those tutees with brilliant open examination results at upper secondary levels. In Chinese societies like Hong Kong, Macau and Taipei, the special name of zhuang yuan was used, referring to those successful candidates who sat for open examinations for recruitment of civil servants in ancient China.

Mass tutees or their parents often held common value beliefs that tutorial lessons were resourceful and that tutors were helpful to supplement daytime school lessons. Review of past examination papers (or even release of some open examination tips) drew tutees’ attention. Tutoring was perceived to offer a ‘shortcut’ to daytime lessons, besides facilitating self-learning. Most tutees, their parents, tutors and tutoring school heads believed that getting higher education was the most potent means for upward social mobility. Repetitive learning and memory recall could, to some extent, enhance tutees’ understanding of learning content. Chinese stakeholders deliberately or indirectly liked to cite some Confucian proverbs to depict their learning habits or modes, explain their study motivations, or to describe societal viewpoints about diligence being more important than inborn abilities.

To exemplify the symbolic interactions (Shweder and LeVine, 1984) between and across some components of the cultural model for Chinese tutorial schools in Hong Kong, Macau and Taipei, a symbiotic analysis of a Confucian phrase wen gu zhi xin is tabulated in Table 1.

### MULTILEVEL COMPARISONS

For conceptual depictions of organisational structure, pedagogical functioning and innovations, six descriptive indicators have been devised as follows:

*Accessibility* refers to tutees’ ease of access when consuming mass tutoring services
Affordability is tutees’ or their parents’ socio-economic power to pay for tutoring fees.

Connectivity is related to the possible chained multi-level marketing business, or network of franchised large-scale tutorial schools, in one particular city or within and across cities in one particular country.

Insufficiency is directly correlated with low levels of free academic guidance from daytime schooling or elder family members.

Interactivity concerns didactic interactions between tutees and tutors in tutorial lessons.

Sustainability involves the persistence or usefulness of tutorial services, supporting tutees’ learning needs during or beyond tutorial lessons, facilitated by ICT.

The following provides a multilevel comparative framework (after Bray and Thomas, 1995) to highlight distinctive socio-cultural characteristics of East Asian tutorial schools.

Table 1. Symbiotic analysis of the Confucian phrase: wen gu zhi xin

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<tr>
<th>Outward detectable layer</th>
<th>Pedagogical functions of tutorial lessons</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors devised strategies to repetitively review past lessons (such as past examination papers) through lecture notes and drilling exercises</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>ii. Human interactions</strong></td>
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<td>Tutees revised past tutorials or even daytime lessons to make future examination preparations</td>
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<th>Middle conceptual layer</th>
<th>Symbols/metaphors/analogues:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Meaning of the Confucian phrase: revising past lessons to obtain future knowledge</td>
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<th>Inner intangible layer</th>
<th>Basic ideological assumptions</th>
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<td></td>
<td>held by tutors, tutees and their family members that repetitive learning could enhance deep understanding through memory recall and that diligence was more important than inborn abilities in academic studies. This was in line with some past cognitive or cross-cultural research studies on Asian learners (Watkins and Biggs, 1996)</td>
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Inward horizontal comparisons in East Asian societies

Both daytime and tutorial schools provided a teaching and learning environment (mostly happening in classrooms) for students or tutees to learn academic knowledge and related problem-solving skills and assess their learning outcomes through (mock) tests, quizzes and examinations. Both daytime and tutoring East Asian schools often adopted teacher-led pedagogy, affecting interactivity. Students or tutees were accommodated into unified school curricula at primary and secondary levels (Cheng, 1990). There was some ‘learning space’ for open discussion or students’ free explorations in some East Asian classrooms concerning interactivity of tutorial schools (Kato, 1992; Kawaijuku, 2000; Kwok, 2001). Yet teacher-led instructions were often adopted to maximise effective time and lesson management when faced with more than 30 students or tutees per class (Bray, 1999; Kwok, 2001; SEG, 1994; Tseng 1998). Norm-referenced summative assessments and bottleneck schooling systems with pressure or tension points at Grade 6, 10 and 12 (or 13) levels were prevalent in most East Asian countries (Bray, 1999; Kwok, 2001; SEG, 1994; Yoon, et. al. 1997; Zeng, 1999).

In order to reduce individual learning differences (concerning interactivity), some mass tutorial schools in Japan deliberately arranged tutorial classes, based on their (half-) yearly academic standards (SEG, 1994). Becoming increasingly popular in Asia and North America, Kumon schools carefully designed worksheets and self-learning packages, fully based on students’ individual cognitive levels in individual subjects (Kato, 1992). Field trips...
revealed that there were cognitive gaps between examination requirements and what students learn in daytime lessons. Content analysis of some school textbooks and reference books or materials from tutorial schools in Chinese English and Mathematics (published in Hong Kong, Macau, Taipei) showed remarkable differences. Tutorial schools provided more graded drilling exercises or easily understood (often in bullet-point forms) and step-by-step lecture notes and necessary examination skills than daytime lessons, related to open or school examinations and students’ varying learning needs. Tutors’ presentation skills were better than daytime school teachers’, in most mass tutees’ perceptions. Some of them sought tutoring mainly because of insufficient learning guidance from daytime schools. To cope with current IT global trends, idol tutors in Hong Kong, Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo liked to use power-point demonstrations using good printing effects in their lecture notes and drilling exercises. Some large-scale tutorial schools even used the internet to answer tutees’ questions on a web forum or let them download free soft copies of their reference materials.

**Inward vertical comparisons in cross-cultural and cross-societal East Asian perspectives**

The drastic growth and popularity of mass tutorial schools was positively correlated with several socio-cultural and socio-economic factors: affordability of standardised mass tutoring fees in a large competitive market; economic affluence; and the nuclear nature of tutees’ families (Kim, 2000; Kwok, 2001; Yoon, et al. 1997). Tutoring accessibility was facilitated by heavy promotional advertising through the mass media or in popular culture, by the governments’ ineffective censorship or monitoring policies towards tutorial schools, and through the convenient siting of tutorial schools close to convenient public transport systems. Insufficiency referred to bad-quality daytime pedagogy or low daytime school effectiveness (Bray, 1999; George, 1992; Kwok, 2001; Yoon, et al. 1997, Zeng, 1999).

Comparing tutorial schools across societies, geo-political differences were found. Mass tutorial schools were concentrated in some crowded areas in Taipei (e.g., in a ‘cram schools street’ near the railway station noted by Tseng, 1998) but more scattered in Hong Kong, Macau, Seoul and Tokyo (Harnisch, 1994; Kawaijuku, 2000; Kwok 2001; Yoon, et al. 1997). Segmented markets (Kotler, 1987) on particular tutoring subjects were located in Seoul and Taipei, but more ‘comprehensive’ tutorial schools (providing wide ranges of tutoring subjects or a variety of tutoring services such as lesson revisions, examination preparations and homework guidance) were found in Hong Kong, Macau and Tokyo (Kawaijuku, 2000; Kwok, 2001; SEG, 1994).

‘Kingdoms’ of large-scale or franchised tutorial schools (connectivity) were common in Hong Kong and Tokyo because of high living standards, an increasing number of potential mass tutees and adoption of multi-level marketing techniques. To facilitate synchronous mass tutorial lessons in other key cities like Hiroshima and Osaka in Japan, the headquarters in Tokyo used satellites to transmit video mass tutorial lessons (Kawaijuku, 2000). In Hong Kong, to bypass legislative controls, some mass tutorial schools used tactics to carry out video mass tutorial lessons to enlarge the number of tutees at any one time (Kwok, 2001). In Seoul, free helpful academic guidance lessons were broadcast through television channels at nights to replace mass tutorial schools and equalise educational opportunities, aggravated by seeking tutoring (Yoon, et al. 1997). To provide more client-based consultation services after tutorial time for sustainability, some large-scale tutorial schools in Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan provided a 24-hour on-line web forum for tutees to raise study questions, do on-line drilling exercises or download required soft copies of past lecture notes or other reference materials (Kawaijuku, 2000; Kwok, 2001).
Outward cross-cultural/cross-societal comparisons between Asian and non-Asian tutorial schools

Business-run mass tutorial schools at Grade 10 to 12 levels or Kumon schools are increasingly common in the United States and some provinces of Canada. Roughly speaking, the scale of demand for such schools in North America is believed to be smaller than in most East Asian countries. Probable reasons for such differences were speculated to be less examination-oriented school curricula, existence of alternative means for selecting university freshmen, multi-dimensional assessment involving group projects, smaller income differences between blue and white collar workers (with higher educational qualifications), high ratios of university undergraduate places to high school places, and better educational benefits (in terms of allowances) to every citizen under 18.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE TRANSFORMATION

From a tutee perspective, the emergence of demand for tutoring most likely originated from: awareness of external examinations; societal stresses being internalised by the individual; examination-driven school cultures; meritocratic societies; credential inflation (Dore, 1976, 1997); and Confucian heritage cultural influences in Hong Kong, Macau, Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo (Kwok, 2001; Sorensen, 1994; Ukai Russell, 1997; Zeng, 1999). Under the impact of peer group pressure and mass media or popular culture, some ideological features or socio-cultural conceptions of learning influenced by the ‘popular culture’ of mass tutoring were articulated in the processes of masking, fragmenting and reuniting educational, self and societal values (Hall, 1977, 1981).

Masking. In mass tutees’ perceptions, mass tutorial schools provided shortcuts to learning, thorough past examination paper analysis, and even seemingly reliable open examination tips in Hong Kong, Taipei and Tokyo. In particular, they were made to believe by tutors that it was more effective and efficient to learn in tutorial schools than in daytime schools. Such modes of learning and tutoring were generally different from those of teachers in daytime schools. Some school teachers and principals who were interviewed doubted the legitimacy of such pedagogy. To some extent, the reputations of school teachers were replaced by idol tutors in these Chinese societies, the latter being worshipped as ming shi (famous teachers).

Fragmenting. Idol tutors delineated piecemeal educational processes and outcomes, entirely determined by open examination results. Their marketing styles and pedagogical characteristics reinforced open examination pressure and encouraged students to value the importance of open examinations to their life career. Interview data in field work indicated that some mass tutees even identified personal success through materialistic stimulation like monetary bonuses, tutoring fee exemption after getting academic improvements and good grades in open examinations in Hong Kong, Taipei and Tokyo. Such kinds of learning and tutoring to some extent run against the whole-person education or other educational aims stressed in some daytime schools.

Reuniting. Integration of materialistic consumption, marketing techniques and technical skills and professional knowledge into a mass tutoring sub-culture reinforced an examination-oriented environment through mass media in Hong Kong, Taipei and Tokyo. As a result, vicious circles of students’ misbehaviour or paying less attention to daytime lessons were found after seeking mass tutoring in some extreme cases. ‘Moonlighting’ daytime school teachers found difficulties in daytime teaching after doing mass tutoring after school, and their daytime students were cared for less well. In-depth case studies and
interview data also revealed that interactions between family members were weakened when school children had heavy demands for tutoring.

With advances in ICT, sources of knowledge not only came from daytime school teachers or mass tutors, but also from other diversified sources; e.g., some resourceful (questions and answers) web fora, online interactive drilling exercises, soft copies of resource materials and user-centred learning computer program tutors, provided by some ‘updated’ large-scale tutorial schools in Hong Kong, Taipei and Tokyo (Kawaijuku, 2000; Kwok, 2001; Tseng, 1998).

TUTORIAL SCHOOLS: FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

During the last decade there have been large-scale school and educational reforms initiated at primary and secondary levels in East Asia. National (e.g., Education Commission of Hong Kong, 2000; Republic of China Ministry of Education, 2001; Republic of Korea Ministry of Education 1999; Singapore Ministry of Education, 2001; Japan Ministry of Education, Science, Sports & Culture, 1999) and international (UNICEF, 1998) policy documents on education have shared common goals of:

- expanding educational opportunities by reducing hurdles at grades 6, 10 and 12 (or 13) levels
- fostering continuous life-long or life-wide learning
- increasing quality school education
- promoting paradigmatic shifts from teacher-centred to student-centred learning

However, according to the above socio-cultural studies, the increasing growth of Asian mass tutorial schools cannot easily be hindered due to the persistence of several social phenomena:

- Convenient public transportation, multi-service marketing and a prevalent mass media culture which enhance accessibility and affordability of mass tutoring.

- Emergence of nuclear families which allows educational expenditure focused on 1 or 2 school age children per household, thereby leading to heavy demand for tutoring in response to extra individual learning needs (affordability), or elder family members’ heavy daily works or inappropriate educational qualifications (insufficiency).

- Large daytime school class sizes in many East Asian countries which may not easily be reduced because of financial constraints; it therefore may take a long time to achieve quality school education, and especially a complete cultural transformation from teacher-led to student-centred pedagogy, because of unsatisfactory means of catering for students’ individual learning needs (insufficiency) and increasingly heavy workloads of daytime school practitioners as a result of recent school reforms.

- Further ICT advances will increase the connectivity of mass tutoring in various geographical locations of a country or city, thus facilitating interactivity and sustainability by providing more interactive, user-friendly web services beyond tutorial lesson times.

- A meritocratic societal drive in Confucian heritage cultures will continue to encourage students to climb up social ladders through education, and accelerating credential inflation will further increase employees’ educational qualifications.
CONCLUSION

The continuing existence of mass tutorial schools poses great challenges to educational systems as they can easily change students’ daytime learning attitudes and may distort positive values of daytime teaching and learning. As a result, school education may not easily be effective, as students’ fruitful learning outcomes may, to a considerable extent, result from private tutoring. Distinctions between formal and informal learning has been blurred after the emergence of mass tutorial schools. Mass tutoring fees will still occupy a considerable proportion of household financing of education (Bray, 1996, 1998) in those East Asian countries with heavy demands for private tutoring.

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