Public Provision of Education Information in Japanese Higher Education

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Overview

➤ The presenter will address issues concerning the public provision of education information capturing the Japanese College and University Portraits (JPCUP), based on the experience of a researcher on higher education, a private university professor, a member of the JPCUP Stakeholders Board, and an acting member of the Subcommittee for Quality Assurance System of the University Committee of the Central Council for Education.

➤ Primary data on Japanese higher education:

Aggregate data	Data on individual institutions	Comparative data collected by survey respondents
Basic School Survey (MEXT) (Private universities) *Admission Application Trends* (Private universities) *The Current Financial Condition of Private Institutions*	*National Directories of Universities* (MEXT) JPCUP *The True Strength of Universities* (Keisetsujidai) *University Ranking* (Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc.) *All University Entrance Examination Records* (Sunday Mainichi) *Truly Strong Universities* (Toyo Keizai Inc.)	*Nationwide Survey of University Students* (MEXT) The Institutional Research Consortium of Japanese Universities PROG Test (Kawaijuku Educational Institution, RIASEC, Inc.) GPS-Academic (Benesse i-Career Co., Ltd.)

In addition to data from MEXT, there is an abundance of information from private companies. However, public databases remain a challenge in improvement (based on Morozumi 2022, Table 1).

Public provision of education information

➢ Purpose of specification of the education information to be provided (2011)

    ➢ Promote institutional accountability to society and improve education quality as a public organization
(Enforcement of the Ministerial Ordinance that Partially Revises the Regulation for Enforcement of the School Education Act [June 16, 2010])

➢ Public information provision (*kohyo*), rather than information disclosure (*kokai*)

    ➢ *Kokai*: Making information available to those who need it
    ➢ *Kohyo*: Disseminating information to the public widely, regardless of whether it is demanded
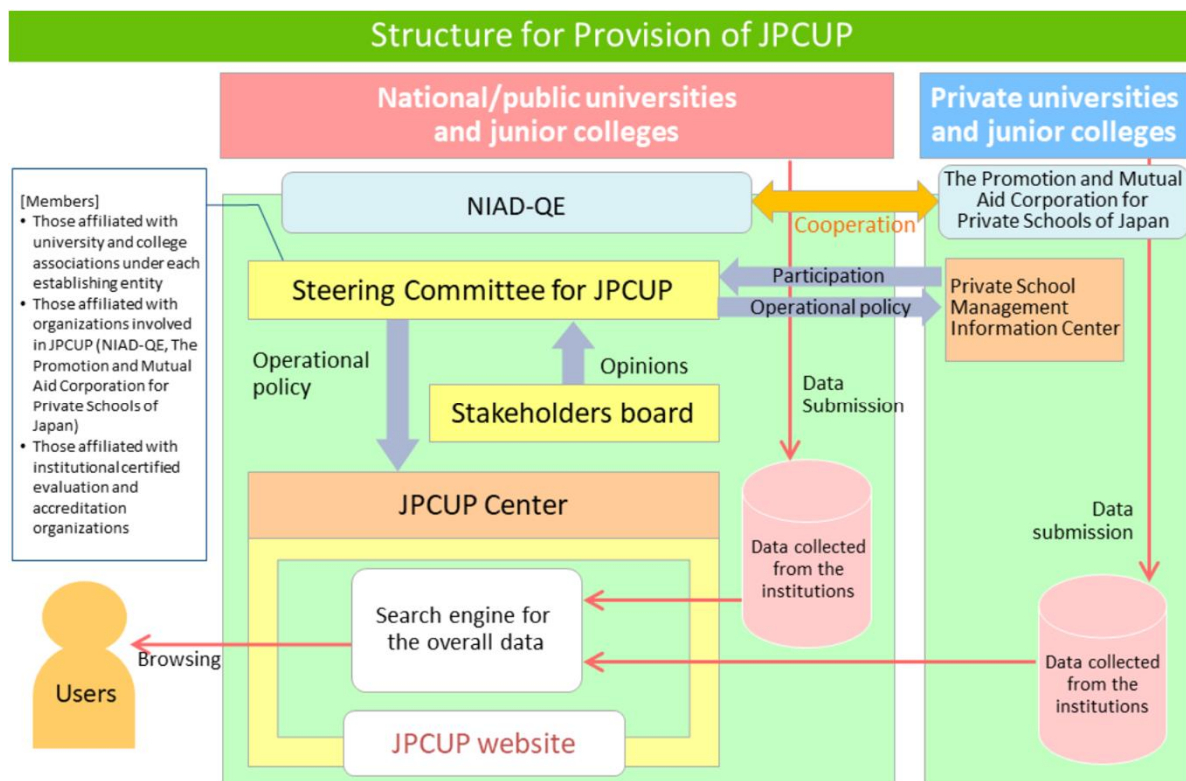   = The party who has the information **actively provides it**

(Kawashima 2012)

Objectives of JPCUP

➢ Provide information on the diverse education activities of universities and colleges in a comprehensible manner to **various people in Japan and elsewhere**, thereby enhancing the accountability of universities and colleges, supporting college choices of those who wish to participate in higher education, and increasing the international recognition of higher education institutions in Japan

➢ Accelerate the qualitative transformation of university education by strengthening the evidence-based PDCA cycle within the university and enhance the quality assurance system through external evaluation using education information to better understand and analyze the condition of their own activities

➢ Help universities and colleges respond to various surveys and improve the efficiency of university management by establishing a common mechanism for the public provision of fundamental information

➢ **JPCUP is not for comparing universities. It is a tool for understanding the individual characteristics of each university and the type of education being offered.**

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(https://portraits.niad.ac.jp/about/index.html)

JPCUP Structure

Structure for Provision of JPCUP

Voluntary and autonomous initiatives by university and college association, certified evaluation and accreditation (CEA) organizations, and other bodies

➢ Started providing information on private universities and junior colleges in October 2014

➢ Started providing information on national, public, and private universities and junior colleges in March 2015

(https://portraits.niad.ac.jp/about/index.html)

Items provided on JPCUP (Japanese version)

National/public edition				Private edition			
University		Faculty/Graduate School		Institution		Faculty, etc.	
Items	Number of items	Items	Number of items	Items	Number of items	Items	Number of items
Basic information on the university	7	Education and research objectives and the three policies	5	Characteristics of the institution	3	Characteristics of the faculty, etc.	2
Education and research objectives and school mottos	1	Characteristics of the faculty, graduate school, etc.	1	Learning at the institution	4	Learning in the faculty, etc.	4
Characteristics of the university	1	Curriculum	12, *1	Student life support	2	Student life support	2
Basic organization for education and research	1, *1	Qualifications	1	Career and job-placement information	5	Career and job-placement information	7
List of campuses	6	Entrance examination	3, *3	Various initiatives	10	Various initiatives	10
New Academic Support System for Higher Education	1	Academic staff	3, *2	Student information	3	Tuition and financial support	2
Evaluation results	1	Students	4, *2	Academic staff information	3	Entrance examination and student information	7
Student support	5	Campus	7	Basic information	13	Academic staff information	3
Extracurricular activities	2	Expenses and financial support	8			Basic information	6
List of student dormitories	1	Career path	3, *3				
Financial statements, etc.	1						

Optional items are marked with asterisks (*)
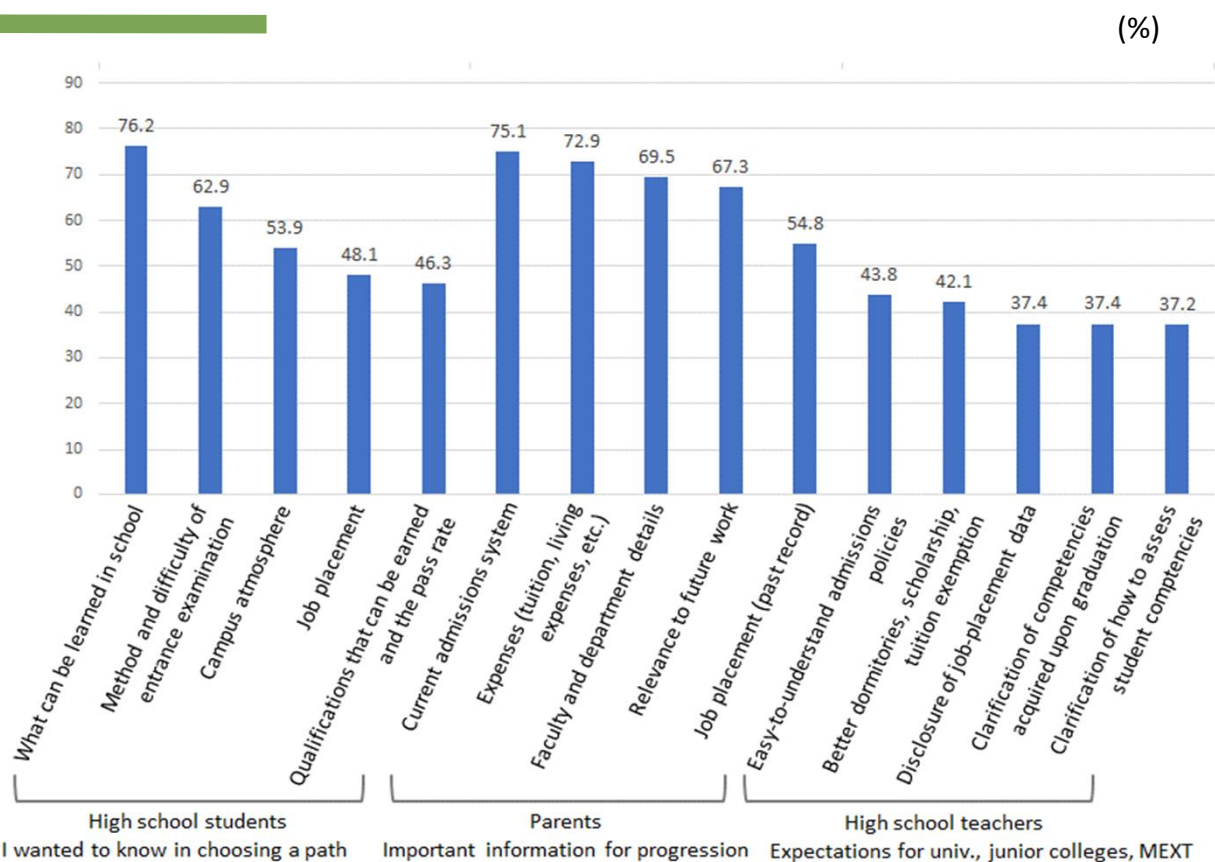
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Opinions from the Stakeholders Board

➢ Credibility of information
➢ Comparability of information
➢ Richness of information
➢ Understanding the characteristics of the university

Challenges
➢ Increased page views
➢ Increased awareness by schools, companies, etc.
➢ Increased items and enhanced search functions
➢ Surveyability and comparability
➢ Updating to the latest information
➢ User assistance
➢ Collecting and providing information for use in institutional research
➢ Prioritization

What stakeholders want (top 5 items)

(%)

Value	Label
76.2	What can be learned in school
62.9	Method and difficulty of entrance examination
53.9	Campus atmosphere
48.1	Job placement
46.3	Qualifications that can be earned and the pass rate
75.1	Current admissions system
72.9	Expenses (tuition, living expenses, etc.)
69.5	Faculty and department details
67.3	Relevance to future work
54.8	Job placement (past record)
43.8	Easy-to-understand admissions policies
42.1	Better dormitories, scholarship, tuition exemption
37.4	Disclosure of job-placement data
37.4	Clarification of competencies acquired upon graduation
37.2	Clarification of how to assess student comptencies

High school students
What I wanted to know in choosing a path

Parents
Important information for progression

High school teachers
Expectations for univ., junior colleges, MEXT

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(Based on Kobayashi 2019)

How JPCUP is improving

- ➤ Items largely common to both the national/public edition and the private edition
  - ➤ Addition of provided items and search functions
  - ➤ Mobile support

- ➤ Items currently available only in the national/public edition
  - ➤ International dissemination (the private edition: still being considered), multilingual support
  - ➤ Surveyability of (1) expenses and financial support, (2) information on entrance examinations, and (3) student dormitories
  - ➤ Function to create a common basic data form for certified evaluation and accreditation (the private edition: considering what data to provide)
  - ➤ Launch of a website for the national and public university information (basic university information) (the private edition: provides reports to their parent organizations; the information is used in management consultation).
  - ➤ Web-API function

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(Based on *The Current Status of JPCUP*, 2023)

Proposals by the Subcommittee for Quality Assurance System

➢ The "matters concerning university entrance examinations" and other topics should be added to the items to be provided by each university as stipulated in the Regulation for Enforcement of the School Education Act.

➢ Based on the "Policy for Management of Teaching and Learning," universities' efforts to provide information should be examined in the certified evaluation and accreditation (CEA).

➢ Consideration should be given to the provision of a list of evaluation results determined by each CEA organization.

➢ Implement measures to simplify evaluation items and methods regarding legal compliance for universities that provide information accordingly regarding legal compliance.

➢ Information should be provided on JPCUP in a comprehensible manner so that it can be delivered effectively and efficiently to users, considering that JPCUP is managed autonomously by the university community. Improvements should also be made so that universities locate in the same are or has the same specialized fields can be compared with one another for use in institutional research for teaching and learning (by presenting a common benchmark).

➢ **Regarding the public provision of information that contributes to the quality assurance of university education and research,** there should be ongoing considerations regarding measures to encourage universities to provide information voluntarily and autonomously. **Such considerations include: how to ensure the provision of appropriate items for an appropriate target (i.e., students, parents, prospective students, the local community, companies, etc.); how to create methods to communicate the strengths and characteristics of each university, for example, relevant initiatives from universities could be presented along with a method for interpreting information.**

10   (Based on the overview and the main text from the "Summary of Discussion" by the Subcommittee for Quality Assurance System [2022])

Toward surveyability and comparability

➢ Difficulties in listing and providing individual data of private universities
  - ➢ Tight operations with limited funds
  - ➢ Fundamental question on comparing national/public institutions with private institutions that have different management bases and operating policies
  - ➢ Risk of causing reputational damage, unintended ranking, etc.
  - ➢ Providing statistical data and information via a private university information provision system and individual inquiry, respectively
    (Material 2 from the 16th meeting of the Steering Committee for JPCUP [February 10, 2022])

➢ Examples of information expected to be compared
  - ➢ (1) university name, (2) location, (3) faculty names, (4) expenses, (5) amount of scholarships awarded, (6) website address, (7) items evaluated by CEA organization, (8) job-placement data, (9) department names, (10) location, (11) expenses, (12) diploma policies, (13) curriculum policies, (14) capacity, (15) type of entrance examination, (16) name of degrees, (17) graduation rate
  - ➢ Analysis and clarifications regarding each university, such as what the information means and why certain results were obtained, could also be provided.
    (The subcommittee on information disclosure of the management committee of the Japan Association of Private Universities and Colleges, 2022)

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Initial concept in the 2010s

- Creation of a forum for promoting the utilization and public provision of education information: **Prioritizing** *katsuyo* **(utilization) over** *kohyo* **(public provision).**
    (Expert meeting for supporting the utilization and promoting the public provision of education information at universities, 2011)

- **Distinguishing** *kohyo* **(public provision) from** *katsuyo* **(utilization), discussing** *kohyo* **first**
- Emphasis on university applicants and their parents among various stakeholders
- Paper-view format to avoid uniform ranking
- **Step-by-step initiatives toward information utilization (consideration/initiation by university associations under each parent entity) → implementation through agreement among universities (associations)**
- **Use and partial provision of aggregate information (mean, median, and distribution) and other data by each university group**
- **Consideration of the scope of information that can be provided to university evaluation organizations, consortiums, etc., and the related procedure**
- Information collection by the JPCUP Center, provision of information regarding the analysis method, and fostering of institutional research personnel
    (Working Group, Provisional Committee for Japanese College and University Portraits [provisional name], 2012, 2014)

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Challenges

➢ Distinguish among the data to be collected, shared, and provided.
➢ Identify each of the purpose of collecting, sharing, and providing data and its users.
➢ Consider what contents should be surveyable and comparable, how, and to whom.
➢ Whether the above should be performed through a single medium or plural access points.
➢ Consider in connection with certified evaluation and accreditation (CEA) and the public provision of education information.
➢ Along with the importance of showing the diverse and multifaceted characteristics of universities, convey actively what information can be important to measure the quality of universities, how to interpret it, and how to use it (to foster a culture of information utilization at the university and among stakeholders).
➢ Expect autonomous provision of information from the university community and the utilization of such information.

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