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An Analysis of Bylaws of Christian School Corporations in Japan: The Impact of Christianity on Organizational Governance

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of Christianity-related (CR) words in bylaws on governance structures in Christian school corporations (CSCs) that established higher education institutions, such as private universities, in Japan. Governance structures in religious school corporations in Japan are characterized by the specific religion. Therefore, CR words in CSCs' bylaws are powerful clues to identify the characteristics of their governance structures. This study examined the bylaws of three Protestant Christian CSCs in Japan: Tohoku Gakuin, Kwansei Gakuin, and Seinan Gakuin. The numbers and percentages of Christian directors, councillors, and auditors were also assessed. The results indicated that (1) Tohoku Gakuin and Kwansei Gakuin do not mention any Christian denominations, whereas Seinan Gakuin does; (2) Kwansei Gakuin does not have a Christian code for directors, whereas Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin do; (3) all CSCs have a Christian code for councillors; (4) the lowest percentage of Christians on the board of directors is 54.5% for Tohoku Gakuin, 0% for Kwansei Gakuin, and 62.5% for Seinan Gakuin; (5) the lowest percentage of Christians on the board of councillors is 52.1% for Tohoku Gakuin, 15.4% for Kwansei Gakuin, and 54.3% for Seinan Gakuin; and (6) the lowest percentage of Christians among auditors is 0% for Tohoku Gakuin, 0% for Kwansei Gakuin, and 50% for Seinan Gakuin. Moreover, Kwansei Gakuin employs a governance system that suppresses director voting by Christian councillors, whereas Christian councillors of Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin encourage Christian director voting. Based on the findings, directions for further research are discussed.

Keywords: bylaws; governance structure; Christian school corporations

Introduction

This study aimed to examine the bylaws of Christian school corporations (CSCs) in Japan that strive to provide a Christian-based education and have established higher education institutions (hereafter universities) to investigate the effect of Christianity, as indicated by Christianity-related (CR) words, the decision-making structure, and processes (hereafter governance) of the organization.

Recent research has investigated the characteristics and governance of university organizations in Japan. These studies can be said to be attempts to examine the internal decision-making, responsibility, and information disclosure of universities, and implement necessary reforms (Institute for Development of Higher Education, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020, 2022). In response to this trend, the *Nihon Shiritsu Daigaku Renmei* (The Japan Association of Private Universities and Colleges) and *Nihon Shiritsu Daigaku Kyokai* (Association of Private Universities of Japan) proposed their own governance codes to their member universities.

The legal basis for the governance of private universities in Japan is based on the Private School Law.¹ However, the specific form of governance is defined by the individual bylaws of school corporations.

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The governance of religious school corporations is often influenced by the specific religion that is the basis of the founding process and spirit of the institution (Saito, 2011). Therefore, the language of the bylaws regarding religion sheds light on organizational governance. This study examined CR words in the bylaw of three CSCs and investigated the influence of organizational Christianity on governance by describing the percentage of Christians on the board of directors, board of auditors, and board of councillors.

Private School Law and Private University Governance in Japan

Governance of private universities in Japan is often described based on the relationship between the school corporation (board of directors, auditors, and councillors) and university organization (president and faculty). However, “the legal basis for the governance of private universities in Japan is vague and extremely thin” (Morozumi, 2000, p. 237). The issues specified in the Private School Law are restricted to (1) the duties and authority of the president, (2) the number of officers (directors and auditors), (3) the method of election of councillors and the board of councillors, and (4) the method of election of the faculty council. Details regarding the exercise of authority and decision-making process in the organization of private universities are defined by the bylaw of the school corporation that established the university. Therefore, the act of bylaw is an important document for understanding organizational governance of the school corporation.²

In accordance with Article 30 of the Private School Act, a person who intends to establish a school corporation in Japan must specify in the following 12 articles of bylaw: (1) purpose; (2) name; (3) name and type of school; (4) location of office; (5) number of officers, term, method of election and dismissal, and other regulations concerning officers; (6) provisions concerning the board of directors; (7) provisions concerning the board of councillors and councillors; (8) provisions concerning assets and accounting; (9) provisions concerning the type of business in case of for-profit businesses; (10) provisions concerning dissolution; (11) provisions on changes to the bylaw articles; and (12) method of giving public notice. Among these 12 articles, the state of governance of the school corporation can be identified by analysing points 5, 6, and 7, as they are related to the exercise of authority and decision-making in the organization (Okubo, 2014).³

Impact of Christianity on Organizational Governance

This study focused on CSCs in Japan. In Western countries, Christian churches were historically involved in the establishment of many schools, including universities. In Japan, which is not a Christian country, the prohibition against Christianity ended in 1873, and missionary activities began in earnest.⁴ However, in 1899, the supervision of Christian private schools was strengthened by the Private School Ordinance (Yasujima, 2012). In the same year, Instruction No. 12 by the Ministry of Education prohibited religious education. Missionaries from abroad fought against numerous oppressions to establish private schools and devoted themselves to developing their organizations.

Organizations acquire social legitimacy by adapting to institutional rules, such as laws, which increases their chances of survival in a changing society (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Sakurada, 2013). In the post-war period, many private schools established by missionaries acquired social legitimacy as school corporations by stipulating their organizational structure in the bylaws under Article 30 of the Private School Law and by obtaining approval from the relevant ministries. Saito (2011) found that the basis for the Christianity of CSCs can be determined by examining the CR words that appear in the articles of bylaw of CSCs. Saito analysed Christian words and phrases used in bylaws of CSCs in Japan that established institutions of higher education, including the purpose; election of directors, auditors, and councillors; resolution; residual assets; and president. The results revealed that diverse Christian words and phrases were used in many bylaw articles. Furthermore, Saito noted that some CSCs specified only the number and percentage of Christians among board members and councillors, whereas others explicitly required the inclusion of Christians of a particular denomination. Saito argued that the inclusion of a certain number of Christians on the board was a symbolic element in the former case, whereas the relationship with the denomination implied the social legitimacy of the organization in the latter case. However, to the best of the author’s knowledge, little research has been conducted on how

the number of Christians on the board of directors, auditors, and board of councillors may influence CSC's organizational decision-making.

The present study attempted to identify the effect of Christianity on organizational decision-making to examine “the governance structure and mechanism of the organization as a whole” (Morozumi, 2000, p. 236). Specifically, this study aimed to examine how Christian words and phrases in the articles concerning the election of directors, auditors, and councillors, and voting process characterize the governance of CSCs and their impact on organizational governance.

Materials and Methods

Purpose

This study analysed the bylaws of CSCs in Japan to examine how Christianity, as expressed through words related to Christianity (*e.g.*, Christian, Christian education, missionary, church), characterizes and influences organizational governance.

CSCs and Bylaws

In selecting the subjects of the study (CSCs and bylaws)⁵, the author used Ejima's (2017) quantitative data and the provision of religious qualifications at religious universities in Japan. This is because Ejima (2017) is the only recent study on the current state of religious universities in Japan. Of the 202 religious universities (including junior colleges) in Japan as of 2017, the largest number were Christian (121, 59.9%), including 36 Catholic universities (17 junior colleges) and 85 Protestant universities (26 junior colleges).

As a criterion for selecting CSCs for the survey, the author focused on the characteristics of maintaining a system that “trains religious people in the institutional and administrative domain of universities (Ejima, 2017, p. 66). A bylaw of a CSC that trains religious people, for example, pastors or schoolteachers of Christianity, in the university system is likely to confirm its Christianity based on CR words. According to this criterion, the author selected the bylaws of nine CSCs⁶ (two Catholic universities: Jochi Gakuin [Jesuits] and Nanzan Gakuen [Societas Verbi Divini]; three Protestant universities: Tohoku Gakuin [The United Church of Christ in Japan], Doshisha [The United Church of Christ in Japan], and Tokyo Christian Academy [The United Church of Christ in Japan]; Tokyo Theological Seminary [The United Church of Christ in Japan]; Lutheran Gakuin [Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church]; Kwansei Gakuin [Japan Christian Church]; and Seinan Gakuin [Japan Baptist Convention]). Next, the author selected three school corporations that operate universities that originated from Protestant private schools. The bylaws of the selected schools were as follows.

- (1) Articles of Bylaw of Tohoku Gakuin School Corporation (Amended on December 5, 2019, No.83): <https://www.tohoku-gakuin.jp/about/donation.html>
- (2) Act of Bylaw of Kwansei Gakuin School Corporation (Notified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology on April 27, 2020): <https://www.kwansei.ac.jp/cms/kwansei/file/0000173638.pdf>
- (3) Act of Bylaw of Seinan Gakuin School Corporation (Approved by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology on January 15, 2020): <https://www.seinangu.ac.jp/shared/pdf/rule/kifu.pdf>

Procedures

Information on the articles of bylaw and school corporations on official websites were reviewed, and the basic attributes (year of establishment, location, university admission capacity, number of faculties, number of departments, and number of schools established by the school corporation) were summarized in a table. CR words shown in the articles of bylaw were extracted for each article, and their contents, types, and numbers were analysed and summarized in a table. From the viewpoint related to the governance of the school corporation, the following information in the articles of bylaw were summarized: (1) on directors and board of directors (number of directors, election of directors, holding of board of directors meetings, resolution of board of directors meetings, election of the president); (2) on auditors (number of auditors, election of auditors); and (3) on councillors and board of councillors

(number of councillors, election of councillors, breakdown of councillors, duties of councillors in accordance with Article 42 of the Private School Law, holding of the board of councillors, and resolution of the board of councillors).⁷ Finally, the percentage of Christians on the board of directors, board of auditors, and board of councillors (minimum ratio) was calculated after reviewing the contents of the entire act of bylaw.⁸ The data in the following tables were originally presented in Japanese and translated into English by the author.

Results

Table 1 shows the basic attributes of the CSCs. Moreover, the admission capacity of universities is shown. The size of the university was proportional to the number of departments, and the three school corporations were similar in that they had not only universities but also junior high schools and high schools.

Table 1. Basic attributes of Christian school corporations

School Corporation	Tohoku Gakuin	Kwansei Gakuin	Seinan Gakuin
University	Tohoku Gakuin University	Kwansei Gakuin University	Seinan Gakuin University
Year of establishment (school corporation)	1951	1950	1951
Location	Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture	Nishinomiya City, Hyogo Prefecture	Fukuoka City, Fukuoka Prefecture
Admission capacity (university)	2,656	5,700	1,955
Number of faculties (university)	6	15	8
Number of departments and courses (university)	16	35 (including 4 courses)	14
Number of schools including university	5	9	5

Table 2 summarizes the CR words in the act of bylaw of each school corporation, extracted by article. In the act of bylaw of Tohoku Gakuin, two terms, “Christianity” and “members of a church based on evangelical Christianity,” were used in the articles concerning purpose, officers, and election of councillors (five articles in total). In the Articles of Bylaw of Kwansei Gakuin, the articles concerning purpose, president of Kwansei Gakuin, election of councilors, and person to whom remaining property is attributed used four different words: “Christian,” “Christianity,” “Evangelical Christian,” and “missionaries in Japan” (five in total). In the Articles of Bylaw of Seinan Gakuin, the articles on purpose, election, term and duties of directors, election, term and duties of president, president, and election and term of councillors used four different words: “Christianity,” “Christians,” “pastors of Japan Baptist Convention member churches,” and “Christian education” (12 in total).

Table 2. Christianity-related words in bylaw articles

Tohoku Gakuin	Kwansei Gakuin	Seinan Gakuin
(Purpose) The purpose of this organization is to provide moral education based on <u>Christianity</u> and kindergarten, junior high school, high school, and university education in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Education and School Education Law.	(Purpose) The purpose of this corporation is to provide education based on <u>Christian principles</u> in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Education and School Education Law.	(Purpose) The purpose of this school corporation is to provide school education based on <u>Christian principles</u> in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Education and School Education Law.
(Officer) The majority of the directors shall be <u>members of an evangelical Christian church</u> .	(President of Kwansei Gakuin) The President of Kwansei Gakuin governs Kwansei Gakuin in accordance with the spirit of the school’s founding and promoting <u>Christian-based</u> education.	(Election, Term of Office and Duties of Directors) The directors shall be as follows, at least ten of whom shall be <u>Christians</u> .
The Director of the Board of Directors shall be a member of <u>an evangelical Christian church</u> .	(Appointment of Councillors) Four of the councillors shall be elected by the board from among <u>evangelical ministers</u> .	Three persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the <u>pastors of member churches of the Japan Baptist Convention</u> .
In principle, the president and the principal among the directors shall be		(2) The ten or more <u>Christians</u> prescribed in the preceding paragraph

<p>members of <u>a church based on evangelical Christianity</u>.</p> <p>(Appointment of Councillors) The majority of the councillors shall be <u>members of an evangelical Christian church</u>.</p> <p>2 types (5 in total)</p>	<p>Four of the councillors shall be elected by the Board of Directors from among the <u>missionaries in Japan</u>.</p> <p>(To whom the remainder of the property belongs) In the event of dissolution of the corporation, its assets shall be donated to other school corporations that provide <u>Christian</u> education or other educational projects in accordance with the purpose of Article 3 of this Bylaw.</p> <p>4 types (5 in total)</p>	<p>shall include three of the persons listed in items 1–4, 8, and 10 of the same paragraph.</p> <p>(Appointment, dismissal and duties of the President) The president must be a <u>Christian</u>.</p> <p>(Appointment and Term of Office of Auditors) At least one of the two auditors must be a <u>Christian</u>.</p> <p>(Director) The Rector shall promote <u>Christian</u> education based on the spirit of the school’s founding and shall oversee the teaching and learning of the school corporation.</p> <p>(Appointment and Term of Office of Councillors) Two persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the members of the Council of Deans of Colleges (one of whom shall be a <u>Christian</u>)</p> <p>Two persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the <u>pastors of member churches of the Japan Baptist Convention</u>.</p> <p>Six persons (including three <u>Christians</u>) appointed by the Board of Directors from among graduates of schools established by the Academy, who are at least 25 years of age.</p> <p>Six persons (including four <u>Christians</u>) appointed by the Board of Directors from among those who have an understanding of the education of this school corporation.</p> <p>At least 19 persons, including four of those listed in item 1 of the preceding paragraph, one of those listed in items 2 and 3, three of those listed in items 5, 6, 8, and 9, and four of those listed in item 10, must be <u>Christians</u>.</p> <p>4 types (12 in total)</p>
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Table 3 shows information about directors and board of directors. Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin required the attendance of two-thirds of the board members. However, Kwansei Gakuin required the majority to hold a meeting. Conversely, while Tohoku Gakuin and Kwansei Gakuin required the majority of the board members present for voting, Seinan Gakuin required a two-thirds majority. The details of the election of the president differed from corporation to corporation, and the details were not clear from the contents of the act of bylaw alone. After confirming all the contents of the articles of bylaw regarding directors and the board of directors, the author investigated how many of the directors were Christians, and the percentage of Christians (the lowest percentage) is shown in Table 3.

Table 4 presents information on the auditors. Tohoku Gakuin and Kwansei Gakuin adopted the same election method selection of candidates by the board of directors → consent of the board of councillors → appointment by the chairperson of the board of directors.

Table 3. Information on the directors and board of directors

School Corporation	Tohoku Gakuin	Kwansei Gakuin	Seinan Gakuin
Number of board members	22	25	16
Appointment of Directors	<p>Director. Dean of the College. Vice-Presidents (3 persons). High School Principals (2 persons). Director General of Corporate Affairs. Four persons appointed by the Board of Councillors from among the Councillors. Ten persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among academics related to the corporation.</p>	<p>Director. President, Kwansei Gakuin University period Two persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the President of Seiwa Junior College, the Dean of Kwansei Gakuin Senior High School, the Principal of Senri International High School, the Dean of Kwansei Gakuin Junior High School, the Principal of Senri International Middle School, the Principal of Elementary School, the Director of Kwansei Gakuin Kindergarten and the Principal of Osaka International School. Director General of Religious Affairs, Kwansei Gakuin. Six members elected by the Board of Councillors, including at least five Councillors. Seven persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among academic experts, members of the Kwansei Gakuin Alumni Association, and persons who have an understanding of the education of this corporation. Six persons appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.</p>	<p>Director. Dean of the College. Principals of junior high and high schools. Elementary school Principal. Executive Director. One person appointed by the Board of Directors from among the Vice Presidents. Two persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the members of the Council of Deans of Universities. Three persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the pastors of member churches of the Japan Baptist Convention. One person appointed by the Board of Councillors from among the Councillors. Four persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among graduates of schools established by the School corporation and persons who have an understanding of the education of the school corporation.</p>
Board Meetings	Attendance of two-thirds or more of the total number of directors.	Attendance of the majority of the total number of directors.	Attendance of two-thirds or more of the total number of directors.
Resolution of the Board of Directors Appointment of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors	<p>The majority of the directors present. Election by a majority vote of the total number of directors; dismissal by the same vote.</p>	<p>The majority of the directors present. Dean of Kwansei Gakuin period President, Kwansei Gakuin University. Two persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the President of Seiwa Junior College, the Dean of Kwansei Gakuin Senior High School, the Principal of Senri International High School, the Dean of Kwansei Gakuin Junior High School, the Principal of Senri International Middle School, the Principal of Elementary School, the Director of Kwansei Gakuin Kindergarten and the Principal of Osaka International School. Director General, Kwansei Gakuin Administrative Office. Six elected by the Board of Councillors. However, at least five of them must be Councillors. Seven persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among academic experts,</p>	<p>Two-thirds or more of the directors present. One of the Directors appointed by the Board of Directors as the President.</p>

Christianity	The majority of the board members are members of evangelical Christian based churches (at least 12 out of 22).	members of the Kwansei Gakuin Alumni Association, and persons with an understanding of the education of this corporation. To be determined by mutual election of the Directors in accordance with the above provisions. None in particular.	Ten must be Christians (president, one junior high school or high school principal, and one elementary school principal must be Christians), three pastors appointed by the board of directors from among pastors of churches affiliated with the Japan Baptist Convention, and four graduates or those who have an understanding of education at the corporation, at least three of whom must be Christians.
Percentage of Christians (lowest rate)	12 or more out of 22 (54.5%)	No special remarks (0%)	10 or more out of 16 (62.5%)

Seinan Gakuin used the same method as Tohoku Gakuin and Kwansei Gakuin in terms of consent of the Board of Councillors and election by the president; however, the method of election of auditors was determined separately, and the details were not clear from the contents of the Articles of Bylaw alone. Tohoku Gakuin and Kwansei Gakuin did not require that the auditors be Christians. Seinan Gakuin required at least one of its two auditors to be a Christian. After checking all the contents of the act of bylaw regarding the auditors, the author investigated how many of the auditors were required to be Christians, and the percentage of Christians (minimum percentage) is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Information on the auditors

School Corporation	Tohoku Gakuin	Kwansei Gakuin	Seinan Gakuin
Number of Auditors	3	4	2
Appointment of Auditors	The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall elect from among the candidates selected by the Board of Directors, with the consent of the Board of Councillors.	The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall appoint from among the candidates selected by the Board of Directors, with the consent of the Board of Councillors.	The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall appoint with the consent of the Board of Councillors. The method of appointment shall be determined separately.
Christianity	No special note.	No special note.	At least one of the two must be Christian.
Percentage of Christians (lowest rate)	0%	0%	50%

Table 5 presents information regarding the councillors and board of councillors. The three school corporations exhibited the same information in the duties of councillors. After reviewing all of the information regarding councillors and board of councillors in the articles of bylaw, the author investigated how many of the total councillors were determined to be Christians, and the percentage of Christians (the lowest percentage) is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Information on the councillors and board of councillors

School Corporation	Tohoku Gakuin	Kwansei Gakuin	Seinan Gakuin
Number of councillors	46	52	35
Appointment of Councillors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Determine separately

Breakdown of Councillors	Rector. Dean. Director of Religious Affairs. General Manager of General Affairs Dept. General Affairs Section Chief. Assistant Principal. Kindergarten Director. General Manager. General Manager, Finance Dept. Director of Facilities. Seven persons to be appointed from among staff members. Twelve persons who graduated from a school established by a juridical person, who are appointed, and who are 25 years of age or more. Ten academic experts related to the corporation.	President of Kwansei Gakuin. Seven persons from among the President of Seiwa Junior College, the Dean of Kwansei Gakuin Senior High School, the Principal of Senri International High School, the Dean of Kwansei Gakuin Junior High School, the Principal of Senri International Middle School, the Principal of Elementary School, the Principal of Kwansei Gakuin Kindergarten and the Principal of Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin. Chief Minister of Religious Affairs, Kwansei Gakuin. Four evangelicals who stand for evangelicalism. Four missionaries in Japan. Ten students who graduated from a school established by the corporation and are at least 25 years of age. Two parents or guardians of students enrolled in schools established by the corporation. Two are academic experts related to the corporation. Fifteen full-time faculty members. Five persons who served the corporation well and have a good understanding of education at the schools established by the corporation.	The Rector, the President, the Principal, the Principals of junior high schools, high schools, and elementary schools, and one Vice-President who is a member of the Board of Directors. Director of Religious Affairs. Two persons appointed by the Board of Councillors from among the members of the Council of Deans of Colleges and Universities, one of whom shall be a Christian. Vice-principals of junior high schools and high schools, and vice-principals of high schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools. Religious director of high schools and junior high schools. Director of kindergarten and nursery school. Two persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the members of the Administrative Managers' Council. Two persons appointed by the Board of Directors from among the pastors of member churches of the Japan Baptist Convention. Six graduates (age 25 and over) from schools established by the school corporation, three of whom are Christians. Six persons (four of whom are Christians) who have an understanding of the education of the school corporation. Three staff members.
Duties of Councillors with respect to Article 42 of the Private School Act	The President must hear the opinions of the Board of Councillors.	Requires consent of the Board of Councillors.	The President must hear the opinions of the Board of Councillors.
Meeting of the Board of Councillors	Majority attendance.	Majority attendance.	Majority attendance.
Resolution of the Board of Councillors	The majority of the councillors present.	The majority of the councillors present.	The majority of the councillors present.
Christianity	The majority of the councillors shall be members of an evangelical Christian church.	Among eight councillors, four shall be evangelical ministers and four, missionaries in Japan.	At least 19 of the 35 councillors must be Christians.
Percentage of Christians (lowest rate)	Out of 46, more than 24 are Christians (52.1%)	8 out of 52 are Christians (15.4%)	19 out of 35 are Christians (54.3%)

Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis of the bylaws of three CSCs, this study examined the potential impact of the number of Christians on (1) the Christian-related language in the bylaws and (2) the governance of each school corporation organization.

CR Words as Indicated in Bylaw Articles

In the bylaws of Tohoku Gakuin and Kwansei Gakuin, there are no references to specific denominations, such as “Christianity,” “members of churches based on evangelical Christianity,” “evangelical church leaders,” and “missionaries in Japan.” This could be interpreted as meaning that “something symbolic” (Saito, 2011, p. 89) is included in the organization itself. Conversely, Seinan Gakuin’s articles of bylaw state the name of a specific religious organization, as in “a minister of a church affiliated with the Japan Baptist Convention”. The Christianity expressed in the act of bylaw of Seinan Gakuin is more concrete than that of Japanese Christians as a symbolic element. The fact that the pastor is a member of a federation of churches of a denomination closely related to the founder of the school could be interpreted as meaning the social legitimacy of the corporate organization itself.

To understand the nature of CSCs in Japan, it must be confirmed whether Christians are the managers, and the purpose of the school corporation in the bylaw act must be identified (Suzuki, 2017). Therefore, when the contents of the bylaw act were analysed, the word “Christian” or “Christianity” was indicated in the purpose of all three corporations. The bylaw acts of Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin specify that Christians are elected as directors, whereas Kwansei Gakuin’s bylaw act does not. In this respect, it seems that Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin clearly indicate the character of a Christian-run school corporation.

Impact of the Number of Christians on the Governance of School Organizations

Referring to Table 2, the number of directors required to attend a board meeting and the number of directors required to vote were used to determine the percentage of the total number of directors required to make a final decision. Tohoku Gakuin, Kwansei Gakuin, and Seinan Gakuin can make a resolution with the affirmative votes of 34%, 26%, and 67% of all directors, respectively.

Based on the information presented in Tables 2, 4, and 5, the author examined the percentage (minimum percentage) of Christians in the number of officers (directors and auditors). The results demonstrated that Tohoku Gakuin had 48% (12 out of 25), Kwansei Gakuin had 0% (0 out of 29), and Seinan Gakuin had 61.1% (11 out of 18). The minimum percentages of Christians among the councillors shown in Table 5 were 52.1% at Tohoku Gakuin, 15.4% at Kwansei Gakuin, and 54.4% at Seinan Gakuin.

Based on the characteristics of the three school corporations, the author investigated (1) directors and board of councillors, (2) auditors, and (3) councillors and board of councillors and examined how the number of Christians might function in the governance of each corporate organization. In the case of Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin, more than half of the members of both the board of directors and the board of councillors are Christians. This suggests that the boards of councillors at Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin not only check the board of directors but also have the function of promoting the board’s policies based on the intentions of the board from the perspective of Christians. As mentioned, Tohoku Gakuin has a lower percentage of Christians on the Board of Councillors than Seinan Gakuin. However, unlike Seinan Gakuin, which requires a two-third majority of the board members in attendance to vote, Tohoku Gakuin allows voting with the majority of the board members in attendance, facilitating the promotion of Christian voting. As such, both Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin have a governance system that promotes Christian voting by the board of directors and board of councillors.

Kwansei Gakuin does not specify the election of Christians to the Board of Directors. Christians may be elected to the positions of president, rector, and deans of junior colleges. However, it is not clearly stated. Christians are elected to 15.4% (8 out of 52) of the Board of Councillors. Kwansei Gakuin’s Articles of Bylaw state that the Board of Directors requires the “consent” of the Board of Councillors. As with Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin, Kwansei Gakuin’s Board of Councillors has voting rights.

If this “consent” is the three-fourths majority indicated in the Articles of Bylaw, then in addition to Christians, who make up 15.4% of the Board of Councillors, other councillors (approximately 10% of the total) would agree with the views of the Councillors elected as Christians. The Board of Councillors can check and balance the Board of Directors. Therefore, Kwansei Gakuin has a governance system in which Christian councillors can check and restrict the Board of Directors from voting.⁹

CSC in Japan have faced a decline in the number of Christians on the teaching staff for more than half a century, indicating the secularization of the organization (Fukaya, 2006).⁸ There are two possible responses to secularization. The first is to emphasize self-identity as a CSC and enhance legitimacy within the organization to prevent further secularization. Specifically, Christian articles in bylaws would be maintained, and the number of Christians on the board of directors would be maintained or increased. The second is to accept secularization. From a management perspective, the simplification or elimination of the Christian article could be considered to increase legitimacy outside the organization by emphasizing the school corporation and university’s name recognition and public reputation.

Arthur (2006) reported that Baylor University in Texas, USA, oscillated between two self-definitions of religious and academic in its university administration, with the religious aspect corresponding to the internal legitimacy of the university’s founding, history, and traditions, and academic aspect corresponding to the external legitimacy that emphasizes the university’s reputation in society. Baylor’s lack of financial resources and administrative leadership led the university to re-evaluate its governance, to distance itself from the influence of its founding parents, the Southern Baptist Convention, and focus on the academic side of the university. Maintaining a cooperative relationship with related churches and organizations, the university does not identify externally with any particular denomination but defines itself as a Christian university and nationally ranked research institution.¹¹ This distancing from specific denominations, shift in policy toward the pursuit of scholarship, and emphasis on Christianity in general signify the secularization of Christian universities (Umezu, 2012). Future studies should analyse the bylaws from a diachronic perspective and consider whether the discussion can be developed by relating organizational change to the phenomenon of secularization.

Conclusion and Remaining Issues

The following conclusions were obtained.

- (1) In the articles of bylaw of the three school corporations studied, some or all of the articles concerning directors, board of directors, auditors, councillors, and board of councillors used CR words, and there were provisions concerning the election of Christians.
- (2) CR words were used differently by school corporations. Moreover, there was a difference between the use of CR words in general (Tohoku Gakuin, Kwansei Gakuin) and the use of names of specific religious institutions (Seinan Gakuin).
- (3) Tohoku Gakuin and Kwansei Gakuin did not use CR words in their articles regarding auditors and directors, respectively.
- (4) Two types of governance were identified: Christians promoting voting by the Board of Directors and Board of Councillors” (Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin) and Christian councillors checking and restricting voting by the Board of Directors” (Kwansei Gakuin).

Future research should consider a longitudinal analysis of the articles of bylaw of school corporations and examine whether changes in the governance of CSCs are associated with the secularization of the organization. The acts of bylaw define the basic framework of the organization. Moreover, there is an “informal aspect of organizational decision-making that is based on the implicit agreement of the parties involved” (Oba, 2011, p. 267). To accurately understand organizational governance, future studies should include interviews with the parties concerned.

Notes

1. The Private School Law and School Education Law apply to school corporations.
2. The Private School Law has provisions regarding the composition of the board of directors and board of councillors. However, there is no regulation on who appoints directors and councillors, and it is left to the contents of the bylaw articles.
3. As Okubo (2014) noted, the board of directors is the decision-making body for school corporation operations, the president is responsible for the execution of operations, and the board of councillors is an advisory body to the board. Therefore, the board of councillors is regarded as an executive body. However, unlike foundations, school corporations cannot be regarded as a board of councillors that appoints directors (governing body).
4. At that time, the Meiji government ended its policy of banning Christianity to proceed with treaty revisions with Western countries.
5. The subjects of this research are school corporations founded by Christian missionaries and running universities that have a theological department or curriculum that trains pastors and schoolteachers of Christianity.
6. An anonymous reviewer argues that women's schools had played an essential role in the emergence of Christian universities in Japan. Given this historical reality, it might be reasonable to analyse bylaws of women's Christian universities in Japan. However, as far as the author investigated, based on Ejima (2017), no women's universities have training programs for religious people such as pastors or schoolteachers of Christianity.
7. Article 42 of the Private School Law stipulates that the President shall obtain the opinions of the Board of Councillors on the following nine matters: (1) budget and business plan, (2) mid-term plan, (3) matters concerning borrowings and disposal of important assets, (4) standards for payment of remuneration to officers, (5) amendment to articles of bylaw, (6) mergers, (7) dissolutions, (8) important matters concerning profit-making business, (9) other important matters concerning business of the School Corporation, which are to be determined by the articles of bylaw.
8. The three bylaws analysed in this study do not exclude the election of Christians, except in the clause on the election of Christians, nor do they require the election of a certain number of "non-Christians." Therefore, it is possible that more than the minimum number (minimum rate) of Christians would be elected.
9. The relationship between Kwansei Gakuin's board members (directors and auditors) and the board of councillors seems to approximate the governance of a foundation. It differs from Tohoku Gakuin and Seinan Gakuin in that it does not specify the assumption that Christians are elected to the Board of Councillors.
10. There are many critical opinions about the secularization of Christian school organizations. However, there is also an argument that the significance of secular evaluation, such as university name recognition, should be emphasized from the perspective of management (Doi, 2005).
11. Baylor University is known for its high percentage of Christian students and faculty. As such, even if the governance of the corporation avoids the influence of the founding denominations, the faith and religiosity of the faculty and staff are maintained. Comparisons with the current situation in Japan will be developed in a separate paper.

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