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Investigating the Degree of Penetration of the School Motto in Christian Schools in Japan

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Abstract

This study examines how the school motto is understood and permeated by the full-time staff of Christian schools in Japan by surveying 159 full-time staff members. It highlights that the school motto has always been a prerequisite for establishing nationwide training sessions to improve the qualifications of administrative staff working in Christian schools. The response rate was 98.1% (N = 156). An analysis of the responses revealed that less than 10% of the respondents gave affirmative answers to all questionnaire items regarding the school motto. The results suggested that the influence of the messages on the organisation depends on the thinking and actions of the person in charge who sends out messages regarding the school motto. Concrete discussions about the organisation's future with young alumni will improve the quality of the staff who protect and promote the 'school motto' and generate constructive discussions for the future reform of school corporation governance.

Keywords: School motto, Christian school, School corporation, Japan

Introduction

This study examines the degree of penetration of school mottos among full-time employees of private Christian schools in Japan (hereafter referred to as Christian schools). First, we summarise the relationship between school mottos and Christian schools. Next, based on the activities of the Association of Christian Schools in Japan (ACSJ) in recent years, we highlight that the school motto has always been a prerequisite for establishing nationwide training sessions to improve the qualifications of administrative staff working in Christian schools and for requests regarding school corporation governance reform submitted to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). We then discuss the need for a survey of full-time staff working in Christian schools to determine how the school motto has penetrated their daily work. Based on the survey results, actions should be taken to improve the qualifications of the administrative staff in Christian schools, and the need to utilise the school motto in the decision-making processes of school corporations should be discussed.

School Motto and Christian Schools as Private Schools in Japan

Why were private schools established in Japan? The reason is to realise a mission backed by a strong orientation toward Enlightenment (Amano, 2009) and to promote education focused on human development (Kimura, 2017). One concrete clue is the school motto or the spirit of its foundations. Kimura (2010) points out that the school motto is the spiritual foundation of a private school established

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with the private funds of its founders and supporters and can encourage conscious reflection by future faculty members. The school motto is the historical source of private schools and the reason for their existence from the past to the present. Therefore, the school motto is a fundamental principle that private schools should always return and can be a criterion for organisational decisions. According to Nakajima (2019), several Christian schools are trying to return to their school motto, that is, to reflect on the thoughts of Christian missionaries and supporters who founded Christian schools and reaffirm the *raison d'être* and role of such schools.

Historically, the Christian Church has founded numerous schools in Western countries. In Japan, which is not a Christian nation, the prohibition policy against Christianity ended in 1873 and then the missionary activities commenced. However, in 1899, the supervision of Christian schools was strengthened through the Private School Ordinance (Yasushima, 2012). In the same year, Ministry of Education Instruction No. 12, which prohibited religious education, was issued. Missionaries abroad fought oppression to establish schools and devoted themselves to their development. The school motto was set forth according to the founders' wishes and prayers (Masuda, 2007). Doi (2001) argues that the school motto is needed to rebuild or strengthen Christian schools 'when they are shaken in some respect and when they are aware of their deficiencies' (p. 3). Mori (2003) explained the need to consider the school motto's inheritance within a sound historical perspective and insights into the new era in light of the current situation of Christian schools. Onishi (2015) emphasises the need for clarity and unity in Christian school education and the importance of presenting the educational goals of such schools in a way easily understood by non-Christian faculty and staff members. These arguments imply that it is more important to know how school mottos are embodied in educational activities than how they are shouted (Doi, 2001). This is because for the school motto to bring meaning to us not only in the past but also in the present and the future, it must 'heat up' the members of the Christian school 'as a vision or an idea' and must be expressed through concrete words and human actions (Fukaya, 2008). What is the status of Christian schools?

This study introduces the recent activities of the ACSJ, such as the establishment of the National Conference of Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors and the submission of the 'Request for Reform of School Corporation Governance' to the MEXT. While confirming the current status of the motto in Christian schools, this study also examined its degree of penetration. The necessity of surveying the school motto in Christian schools and verification of its degree of penetration are discussed in this study.

The ACSJ and the School Motto

The ACSJ (formerly the National Christian Education Association in Japan) was founded in 1910 owing to the merger of the 'Christian Education Alliance', founded by Protestant Christian schools, and the Women's Christian Education Association, founded in 1913. As of May 2023, the ACSJ had 102 Protestant school corporations nationwide. Article 3 of the Articles of Incorporation (ACSJ 2016) states that the ACSJ aims to contribute to education by studying issues common to all Christian school corporations and promoting the enhancement and development of Christian school education. Consequently, the ACSJ has developed various projects such as training teachers and staff, publishing newspapers on Christian school education, providing promotional grants for such education, and supporting employment in Christian schools.

The ACSJ's teacher and staff training aims to improve the quality of staff working in Christian school corporations. One such attempt was implementing a national training workshop called the National Conference of Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors. The considerations for establishing this national conference can be traced back to 2014. The 56th Conference of School Representatives of the ACSJ held on 15 November 2014, aimed to protect and promote the school motto, establish a national conference to increase the number of administrative staff who preserve and promote the school motto in member schools and train administrative managers to take the initiative in reforming school corporations and individual schools. Establishing a training program to increase the number of administrative staff members who could proactively work to reform Christian school corporations and individual schools was approved. In March 2015, at an extraordinary general meeting, in response to a

consultation from the President, the Project Committee on New Collaboration in the Education Association reported on the need to establish a Liaison Conference of Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors to Promote the Mission Statement (School Motto). The Secretaries-General, Administrative Directors, and others were asked to oversee the qualities of administrative staff (sense of belonging and understanding of schools), discuss how systematic training opportunities could be established, and seek to establish a conference to recommend implementing such training opportunities. In January 2016, the First Liaison Conference of Secretary-General and Administrative Directors to Promote the Mission of Schools was held at Seinan Gakuin University in Fukuoka, Japan. In 2017, the name was changed to the National Conference of Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors, which has since been held annually. Confirming the history of the conference, the ACSJ has aimed to improve the quality of administrative staff through (1) a sense of belonging to the organisation and (2) an understanding of schools to uphold and promote the school motto. This can be interpreted as an attempt to promote the management and reform of Christian schools. The Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors, who are in charge of their organisations, are responsible for improving the quality of the administrative staff, and the National Conference of Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors is a forum for proposing relevant practices.

As previously mentioned, the school motto is the spiritual foundation of private schools, which is the same for Christian schools and is the basic principle and criterion for the school corporation to promote the conscious reflection of its members. In Christian school corporations, quotes from the Bible or the founder's legacy are often considered school mottos. The school motto directly or indirectly influences various elements related to the organisation of the school corporation, such as the method of selecting directors, councillors, and auditors and the attributes, characteristics, and ratios of the members of the school corporation. One example is the ACSJ's response to the recent school corporation governance reform. Debates on school corporation governance reform and the revision of the Private School Law have focused on the authority and function of the Board of Councillors in school corporation decision-making. The Board of Councillors functioned as a check on the Board of Trustees at the Nihon Daigaku School Corporation to manage Nihon University in countering frauds, resulting in the proposal that the Board of Councillors be composed solely of experts from outside the university. In response, the ACSJ submitted a Request for School Corporation Governance Reform (18 October 2021) to MEXT. It stated the necessity for the Board of Counsellors to be a well-balanced group of school personnel, including faculty members, alums, and parents who understand educational policy based on the school motto, the lifeline of school management and operation, and outside experts. It can be interpreted as follows: (1) the school motto is the lifeline for the operation of Christian schools, and (2) people who understand school mottos based on Christianity should be involved in the decision-making of Christian school corporations.

To summarise, the school motto is considered to require protection in the recent request by the ACSJ to establish a National Conference of Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors and another request by MEXT to reform school corporation governance. In the ACSJ newspaper, Masuda (2007) argued that the school motto of Christian schools must remain unchanged amidst changing times and that we must question whether it maintains its fresh vitality and is carried through in daily educational activities. In other words, verifying and evaluating the current status of school mottos is a prerequisite for any school reform. This would verify whether the motto has penetrated as 'common principles and goals of the educational community' (Funamoto, 2008). What is the current situation at Christian schools? Do school mottos permeate the daily activities today? To the best of our knowledge, no survey has been conducted on the degree of the penetration of school mottos among Christian school members. Therefore, this study conducted a questionnaire survey on school mottos among the administrative staff of a Christian school corporation in Japan, which is an ACSJ member. Based on the survey results, we make concrete proposals to improve the quality of administrative staff in the future and protect and promote the school motto in the governance reform of school corporations following the revision of the Private School Law 2023.

Based on the above discussion, the following research question was set up: Has school motto permeated administrative staff working in Christian schools in Japan?

Method

Purpose

This study investigates the degree of penetration of school mottos among administrative staff working in Christian schools.

Participants

Participants were 159 full-time administrative staff members working in Christian schools in Japan. As of 1 June 2023, 165 full-time administrative staff members worked in Christian schools during the survey. After excluding six employees on maternity or childcare leave, the participants were 159. All participants worked in the administrative offices of the Christian School Corporation in kindergartens, nurseries, and elementary, junior high, senior high, universities, and graduate schools.

Materials

The questionnaire developed for this study (see Appendix) consisted of two sections: one with 12 binary-choice questions and the other with open-ended questions. The binary section consisted of nine questions regarding the school motto and three questions regarding respondent's attributes (position, age, and affiliation with the school (alums of the school)). To develop the questionnaire, we surveyed the literature on educational goals and school mottos in Christian schools. We attempted to analyse the characteristics that should reflect such mottos in private schools and related matters. Fukaya (2008) conducted historical and theoretical research on the school mottos of Christian schools and pointed out that they serve as a vision or philosophy for the future of private schools, including Christian schools, and that their messages must be presented through concrete words and human actions consistent with the established National Conference of Secretaries-General and Administrative Directors by the ACSJ. Therefore, the questionnaire included questions that asked whether the school motto permeated the thinking, values, and concrete actions of Christian schools and whether it was communicated to members through concrete words and human actions. Fukaya (2008) asks, 'Who should communicate the school motto in concrete words and actions to inspire the school members and how?' In this survey, full-time administrative staff working in Christian schools are the subjects and based on the National Conference of Secretary-Generals and Administrative Directors conducted by the ACSJ, the Secretary-Generals and administrative directors are responsible for the school organisations regarding: (1) improving the qualifications of administrative staff and (2) discussing the educational policy and future of Christian schools through the school motto. In the questionnaire, we mentioned secretary-generals, administrative directors, and others as 'the persons in charge of the organisation' and did not specify specific titles or positions.

Procedures

After obtaining secret written consent, the questionnaire was administered using the Function of Questionnaire of DeskNet. Questionnaires and response formats were set using the Create Questionnaire function of DeskNet, and the start and end dates of the survey were entered. The questionnaire was administered over two weeks. The day before the survey commenced, letters of request were prepared for all 159 survey targets. The person administering the questionnaire survey (the author) stated that he was researching the governance of Christian schools and needed participants to complete the questionnaire to learn their thoughts on the school motto as part of the information-gathering process. One week later, another request letter was prepared and sent to the schools and departments requesting their cooperation in answering the questionnaire. The author visited all schools and departments where the staff members worked and handed the form in person. One week after the questionnaire was administered, an e-mail message was sent to all participants to provide an interim report on the collection rate and encourage cooperation in responding to the questionnaire. Consequently, 156 of the 159 eligible employees responded by the deadline, with a final response rate of 98.1%. Subsequently, the respondents clicked on Response History in the Desknets survey function, checked the contents of the Response Details section, and clicked on Download to download the response data. Of all respondents, 97 (62.1%) answered the Free Answer section, with 33,447 Japanese characters. All statistical analyses were

performed using the free statistical analysis software R. The authors received prior consultation from iStat Inc. (<https://istat.co.jp/>) to select and perform appropriate statistical analysis methods.

Results

Table 1 presents the questionnaire results. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of the questionnaire items regarding the school motto (items 1–9, excluding those regarding attributes; items 10, 11, and 12) was 0.71. The results indicate that respondents (N=156) who 'feel' (54.5%) that the school motto applies to the organisation and its educational policies are approximately nine points higher than those who 'do not feel' (45.5%). Most respondents (80.8%) 'did not think' the school motto permeated their thoughts, values, or specific actions in their daily work. Moreover, most respondents (83.3%) 'did not think' that the school motto permeated their teaching faculty. The results suggested that 71.8% of the respondents 'understand and interpret the school motto', and 83.3% think 'the school motto should be reflected in their daily work, values, and specific actions'. However, a similar percentage of respondents 'agree' (49.4%) and 'disagree' (50.6%) that the person in charge of the organisation sends out messages regarding the school motto. They suggested that the influence of the messages on the organisation depends on the thinking and actions of the person in charge who sends out messages regarding the school motto. Moreover, 61.5% 'did not think' that the ideas and actions of those in charge of disseminating the school motto were the driving force of the organisation, while 38.5% believed they were.

A cross-tabulation of the results in Table 1 shows that nine respondents, or 5.8% of all respondents, chose affirmative responses ('feel', 'agree', or 'have') to all nine items regarding the school motto. When Item 3, a question about teaching faculty, was excluded, the number of respondents who gave affirmative responses to all eight items increased by 3 to 12, or 7.7% of all respondents.

Table 1. Results of the school motto questionnaire (N=156)

Question	Participants (N)	Yes, I do.	No, I don't
1. Do you feel that the school motto ("Seinan, Be True to Christ") is reflected in the organization and educational policies of Seinan Gakuin as an educational institution?	156	85 (54.5%)	71 (45.5%)
2. Do you think the school motto ("Seinan, Be True to Christ") permeates the thinking, values, and specific actions of the staff in their daily work?	156	30 (19.2%)	126 (80.8%)
3. Do you think the school motto ("Seinan, Be True to Christ") permeates the faculty's thinking, values, and specific actions of the teaching faculty in the workplace?	156	26 (16.7%)	130 (83.3%)
4. Do you have your own understanding and interpretation of the school motto ("Be true to Christ, O Southwest")?	156	112 (71.8%)	44 (28.2%)
5. Do you think it is desirable for the school motto ("Seinan, Be True to Christ") to be reflected in the thinking, values, and actions of the staff in the work of Seinan Gakuin as an educational institution?	156	130 (83.3%)	26 (16.7%)
6. Do you think the person in charge of the organization sends out messages about the school motto?	156	77 (49.4%)	79 (50.6%)
7. Do you think that the message about the school motto sent out by the person in charge of the organization contains his/her personal interpretation, thoughts, and feelings about the school motto?	76	71 (93.4%)	5 (6.6%)
8. In general, do you think the influence of the message on the organization differs depending on the thinking and actions of the person in charge of the organization who is in a position to transmit the message about the school motto?	156	147 (94.2%)	9 (5.8%)
9. Do you think that the thinking and actions of those in charge of the organization who are in a position to transmit the message about the school motto are the driving force of the organization?	156	60 (38.5%)	96 (61.5%)

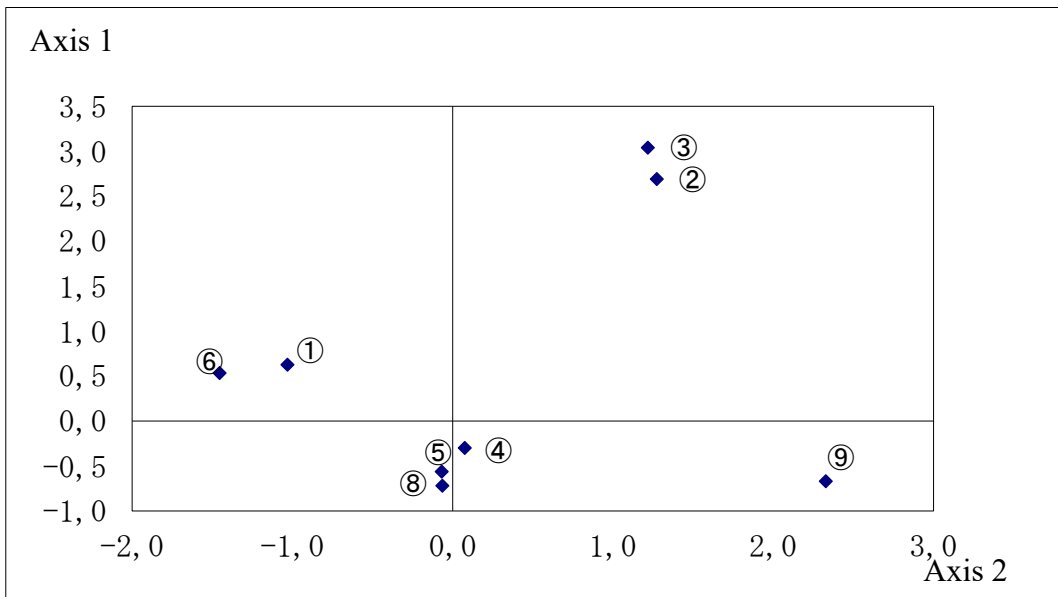


Figure 1. Similarity of Questionnaire Items according to Quantification III (N=156)

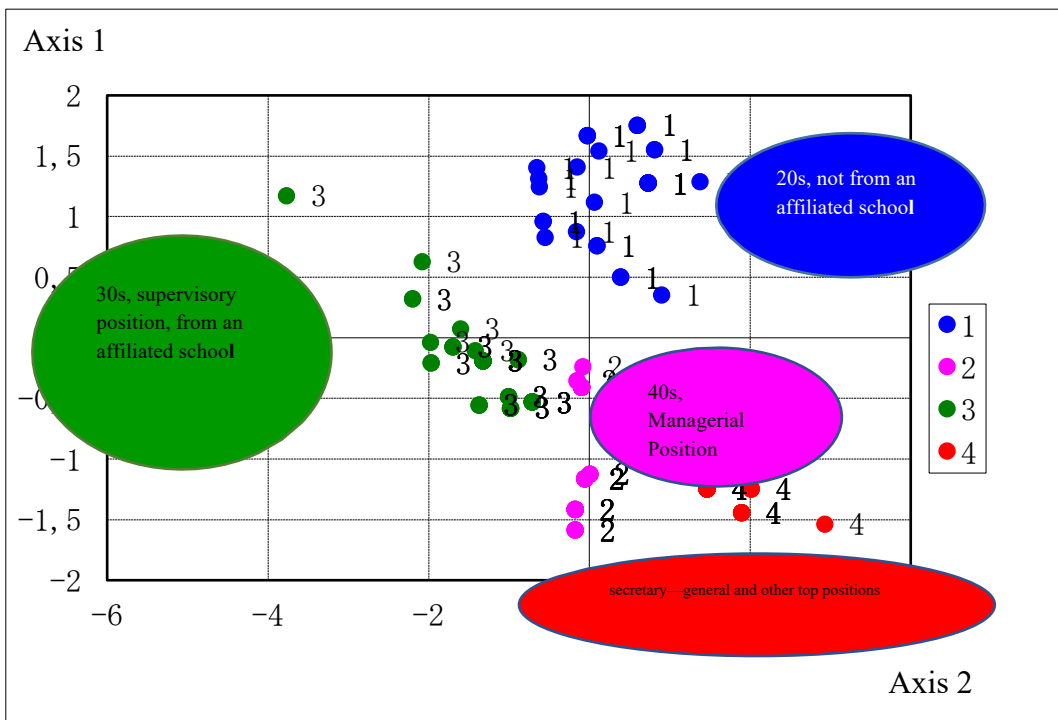


Figure 2. Degree of Association between Age, Job Title, and Affiliated High School Origin According to Quantification III (N=156)

Following cross-tabulation, an analysis was conducted using Quantification III. This is a statistical method for finding latent variables from observed variables and verifying the degree of similarity based on respondents' scores for the latent variables. Consequently, two axes (latent variables) were found in questionnaire items (1)–(9) (observed variables). Based on the analysis, we interpreted the vertical axis (Axis 1) to discriminate the degree of penetration and influence of the school motto and the horizontal axis (Axis 2) to discriminate the behaviour of those in charge as the organisation's driving force.

Figure 1 plots the scores (category scores) of survey participants for each survey item on the plane created by the above two axes. Next, we calculated the average score (category score) for each participant's attributes (survey items 10–12) and plotted information on age, position, and affiliated school background. Figure 2 shows the results, demonstrating the similarity of each questionnaire item and its relationship with the respondents' age, position, and affiliated school background. In Figures 1 and 2, items with high similarity are placed near each other, and items with low similarity are placed far from each other. Consequently, as Figure 2 shows, the characteristics and attributes of respondents' answers can be classified into four categories.

Discussion

Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2 present these discussions. Less than 10% of the respondents selected positive responses for all survey items. Interpreting these results is difficult because no criteria exist for judging them. However, given that 98.1% of the constituents responded, it was impossible to determine whether the school motto had penetrated the Christian school's administrative staff. In the Christian schools surveyed, the school motto was listed and disclosed on the school corporation's website, along with the organisational chart and educational policies of each school managed by the school corporation, suggesting that approximately half (54.5%) of the full-time employees were aware that the school utilised the 'spirit'. Furthermore, various activities, including Christian elements (entrance and graduation ceremonies, mandatory Christian courses, chapel lectures, and Christmas events) in each school (elementary school, junior high school, high school, university, and graduate school) have been traditionally and continuously implemented. The administrative staff recognise these activities along with the school motto. However, the school motto is considered 'utilised' to some extent in the organisation and educational policies. Moreover, only 19.2% of all respondents thought that the school motto permeated their thinking, values, and specific actions in their daily work, and the same tendency was true of the faculty from the administrative staff's perspective. This current situation suggests that the school motto is not the 'lifeline' (ACJSJ, 2021) or the 'source of life' of the organisation (Masuda, 2007) among the administrative staff. However, approximately 71.8% of the administrative staff had their interpretations of the school motto, and 83.3% believed that it should be reflected in their thinking, values, and actions in their work at educational institutions. Approximately half (49.4%) of the administrative staff believed those in charge of the organisation sent messages about the school motto. However, over 90% (94.2%) agreed that the ideas and actions of those in charge had different influences on the organisation. What do these results imply? We examine the individual coordinate areas of the plan shown in Figure 1 from the perspective of the similarities between the question items. The high similarity between the responses to survey items (1) and (6) indicates that when respondents perceive the school motto as a message from the person in charge of the organisation, they feel that it applies to the organisation and its educational policies. The high similarity of responses to Items (2) and (3) of the questionnaire suggests that incorporating the school motto into the daily work of full-time staff is linked to the same among teaching faculty members. Furthermore, the high similarity between items (5) and (8) suggests that the influence of the school motto on the thinking, values, and behaviour of the staff is the thinking and behaviour of those in charge. The high similarity between items (4) and (9) suggests a relationship between one's interpretation of the school motto and the perception that the ideas and actions of those in charge of the organisation are the driving forces of the organisation. Regarding the similarities between these items, the survey participants and administrative staff members did not sufficiently discuss the school motto, and there were insufficient opportunities and support mechanisms available to confirm their interpretation and reflect it in their ideas, values, and actions. The school motto must be constantly interpreted to repeat the principles of past founders, reflect on history and find new meanings to prepare for the future (Fukaya, 2008), suggesting that individuals and organisations do not adequately perform this activity. To create an organisation based on the school motto, those in charge

must transmit specific details in their own words. This will 'get the organisation's members fired up' (Fukaya, 2008). While the message content is important, it should also be consistent with the person in charge of the organisation's daily awareness and actions. In other words, those who are trusted and those who can be trusted by members speak passionately about the organisation's direction in their own words based on the school motto. Furthermore, for the administrative staff of Christian schools and the school motto to permeate organisations, the responsible person must send specific messages based on the interpretation of the school motto and convert it into a 'common language' to link it to daily work and mid- to long-term action plans.

What, then, should we do to improve the qualifications of the administrative staff of Christian schools and proper decision-making of school corporations for the activities mentioned above of the ACSJ and future reforms of school corporation governance? As mentioned earlier, approximately 70% of the respondents had their interpretations of the school motto. If we interpret the vertical axis (axis 1) as the axis that determines the penetration and influence of the school motto and the horizontal axis (axis 2) as the axis that defines the actions of those in charge as the driving force of the organisation, the axis of origin at the intersection of the two axes would be the secretary-general, administrative director, head of the internal audit office, and head of the administrative department, which are the top levels of the administrative organisation. Groups that can be judged to have different or even opposing response tendencies concerning the school motto at the top administrative levels are those in their 30s, have supervisory positions, and are graduates of affiliated schools. If we explain this result in Christian terms, the mentality of the top-level administrators regarding the school motto is 'heretical' for the '30s, supervisory positions, and affiliated school graduates' and the two groups are opponents as they claim their own 'legitimacy'. Considering the historical formation process of Christian denominations, Morimoto (2018) states that others with different opinions are essential for establishing legitimacy and attempting to expand the relationship between orthodoxy and heresy to organisational theory. Similar to the importance of meeting others with various interests and concerns to know oneself, it is also essential to discuss the school motto as a common topic among people and groups with different perceptions and to reflect the results in the organisation and its policies for the future. Some may ask the author to give specific suggestions on what the leaders of the organizations should do in light of these results. So, the author would like to make one suggestion. Based on the results of this study, the leaders of the organizations should continue to question whether the Christian schools surveyed "may not already be Christian schools," and only by continuing to act to envision what a Christian school should be like based on the "foundation spirit," express their thoughts in their own words, and motivate the members, will they be able to see light in the future of Christian schools. Many founders of Christian schools in Japan have experienced great setbacks in their lives, along with the accomplishment of their mission of establishing a school. This is because, even after founding the school, they continued to "sweat" to root Christianity in the organization, and never rested on the status quo. If you feel a sense of crisis about the current state of Christian schools, you need to have a strong conviction to be prepared to even feel a healthy sense of defeat at the end of the "sweat" to change it, rather than lamenting that "the status quo will not change" (Ito, 2023, p. 3).

What do the results of this study suggest regarding recent private school governance reforms? How and to what extent can top-level administrative staff, mostly directors and councillors of the school corporation, use different perceptions in the decision-making process of the school corporation? This is essential for creating an open organisational climate. Regardless, the current situation is that the school motto has not fully penetrated. There may be various ways to instil the school motto among the administrative staff of Christian schools. What can we do based on the research findings? We could give young people in their 30s and 40s the opportunity to become directors or councillors of school corporations, and exchange with older directors and councillors their opinions regarding the future of Christian school corporations. It is important to create a system in which young people can think about what a Christian school should be based on the school motto and reflect their opinions in the school corporation decision-making. Differences in opinions between generations regarding school mottos may provide energy for thinking about the future of Christian school corporations in Japan. We must involve the younger generation, who will be responsible for the future of Christian school corporations in Japan, in managing them at an early stage.

Conclusions and Remaining Issues

This study conducted a questionnaire survey on school mottos among administrative staff working in a Christian school in Japan to investigate the current status of the penetration, considered a prerequisite for improving the quality of full-time staff (sense of belonging and understanding of the school) and governance of the school corporation. The discussions in this study are summarised as follows. (1) The degree of penetration of the school motto among full-time employees is not high. (2) Full-time employees have a relatively high tendency to have their own interpret school mottos. (3) The perception of school mottos differed depending on the participants' attributes (age, position, and school background). (4) Based on the school motto, to improve the qualifications of administrative staff (sense of belonging to the school and understanding of the school) and examine the governance of the school corporation, discussions must be held among groups with different perceptions of such mottos.

The questionnaire included 13 items and free-text answers. In a subsequent study, we plan to analyse the content of the open-ended responses. Specifically, we describe and clarify the participants' feelings towards the school motto and the current organisation using AI word mapping to analyse the relationship between the terms and feelings expressed in their responses. If we can find 'school motto', 'staff', 'member', 'Christian', and 'organisation' in the data, word mapping can be used to measure the 'mental distance' and the relationship between the words to identify the participants' closeness to school motto based on Christianity, indispensable for Christian schools to be 'Christian'.

Notes

1. In this study, the term 'Christian school' is used to describe all private schools in Japan established based on Christianity. The extent to which school motto has been adopted in Christian schools in countries other than Japan (especially Western countries) is not within the scope of this paper. For literature on school motto in Christian schools in the West and North America, see Smith (2011) and Smith (2018). Unlike Western civil society, Christians make up less than 1% of the population in Japan. The purpose of this paper is to measure and evaluate the extent to which school motto has been adopted in Christian schools in this environment, and to present a case study to consider the future of Christian schools. The future of Christian schools in Japan cannot be considered without the understanding and cooperation of non-Christians.
2. In this study, we examined the degree of penetration of the school motto with reference to Fukaya (2008) and Sudo (2023). It is defined as the degree to which they feel that they are utilized by the organisation and its educational policies and recognize that they permeate their ideas, values, and specific actions in their daily work. Therefore, the three questionnaire items (1), (2), and (3) in the questionnaire developed and administered for this study were set to reflect the content of the definition.
3. According to Fukaya (2008), the role of communicating the school motto as a vision and philosophy for the future can be interpreted as that of university faculty members, including teachers. One of the anonymous reviewers pointed out that the participants for this survey were limited to full-time administrative staff. This survey was conducted in preparation for the author's own lecture, which was held at a training session for staff working at Japanese Christian schools (e.g., the National Executive Director/Secretary General Conference). Therefore, the subjects were limited to full-time administrative staff. It goes without saying that it will be necessary to measure the degree to which the school motto has penetrated teachers and students at Christian schools in Japan. Surveying full-time faculty members is currently under consideration.
4. The author does not believe that the administrative staff members involved in this study should have the same or highly similar understanding or perception of the school motto. The school motto is inherently subject to interpretation over time, which may also mean that each member of the organisation has a different view. Therefore, rather than making all concerned think in the same way according to the school motto, those in charge of the organisation should interpret the school motto independently according to the times and the environment inside and outside the school, express their own opinions, and develop discussions about the future of the Christian

school with this as the axis. For this, participation by the younger generation, who will be responsible for the future of Christian schools, is indispensable.

5. From the results of Quantification III, we can observe that managerial and non-managerial staff have different perceptions of the school motto. This study is unique in that the analysis of the questionnaire results allowed us to clarify the necessity of discussing the state of the organisation based on the school motto among specific age groups, rather than simply a general discourse on the necessity of stimulating discussion within the organisation.
6. Although the data are almost 10 years old, according to the Private School Management Study Group (2014), the average age of directors of school corporations was 65 to 69 years (46.4% for universities and junior colleges and 32.3% for high schools and below). The percentage of those under 55 was 1.3% for universities and colleges and 2.5% for high school and below.

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Appendix

Questionnaire on the School Motto

The Seinan Gakuin (nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, high school, university, and graduate school) is where you are currently working. Please answer the questions while imagining the organisation, educational policy, and character development of students.

(1) Do you feel that the school motto ('Seinan, Be True to Christ') is reflected in the organisation and educational policies of Seinan Gakuin as an educational institution?

I feel so I do not feel so

(2) Do you think the school motto ('Seinan, Be True to Christ') permeates the thinking, values, and specific actions of the staff in their daily work?

I think so I do not think so

(3) Do you think the school motto ('Seinan, Be True to Christ') permeates the faculty's thinking, values, and specific actions of the teaching faculty in the workplace?

I think so I do not think so

(4) Do you have your own understanding and interpretation of the school motto ('Seinan, Be True to Christ')?

Yes, I do No, I do not

(5) Do you think the school motto ('Seinan, Be True to Christ') should be reflected in the thinking, values, and actions of the staff in the work of Seinan Gakuin as an educational institution?

I think so I do not think so

(6) Do you think the person in charge of the organisation sends out messages about the school motto?

I think so I do not think so

(7) Do you think that the message about the school motto sent out by the person in charge of the organisation contains his/her personal interpretation, thoughts, and feelings about the school motto?

If you answered 'No, I do not think so' in (8), you do not need to answer this.

I think so I do not think so

(8) In general, do you think the message's influence on the organisation differs depending on the thinking and actions of the person in charge of the organisation who can transmit the message about the school motto?

I think so I do not think so

(9) Do you think that the thinking and actions of those in charge of the organisation who can transmit the message about the school motto are the driving force of the organisation?

I think so I do not think so

(10) Please indicate your current position.

Secretary-General, Administrative Director, Head of the Internal Audit Office, and Head of the Administrative Department Managerial Position Supervisory Position General Section Staff, Other

No answer

(11) Please answer the following questions regarding your age.

20s 30s 40s 50s 60s No answer

(12) Please indicate whether you are from a Seinan Gakuin-affiliated school.

kindergarten nursery elementary school junior high school high school university graduate school not applicable no answer

(13) Free description

Please feel free to describe any feelings you have about the current Seinan Gakuin regarding the school motto. You can also provide detailed explanations or additional information regarding your answers to these questions.

---o---o---o--- **Article Notes** ---o---o---o---

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