
THE ROLE AND GOVERNANCE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM:

TRANSFORMATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN THE ERA OF DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE

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This paper aims to examine the distinctive features of the governance structure of private universities in contemporary Japan and to explore policy responses to the declining birthrate within the higher education system. The study undertakes a detailed literature-based analysis, drawing primarily on the findings of the prior studies as well as relevant policy documents. Through this analytical process, this paper seeks to articulate the contours of the Japanese model of higher education, and, building upon this framework, examine both the required features of governance and management structures in private universities in Japan and the policy responses needed to address the challenges posed by the declining birthrate in contemporary Japanese society. It is concluded that one of the key features of private university governance is that private universities are established by incorporated educational institutions (gakkō hōjin) that place special emphasis on public interest. Private universities in Japan have been increasingly formulating medium- to long-term institutional development strategies in order to ensure stable university management. This represents a significant shift when contrasted with the fact that traditionally they were characterised by a lack of governance reform. In the context of Japan's decreasing birthrate, ensuring sound management of private universities is of utmost importance - not only for institutional sustainability development but also for safeguarding the interests of individual students. To this end, it is crucial to explore possibilities for collaboration and coordination among incorporated educational institutions, universities and their faculty and staff.

Keywords: *Role and governance of private universities; Higher education system; Transformation and challenges in the era of demographic decline; Japan.*

1. Introduction

In February 2025, the Central Council for Education in Japan issued a policy recommendation entitled "A Vision for Enhancing the Nation's Aggregate Knowledge: Reconstructing the Higher Education System." This document identifies Japan's declining birthrate as an urgent national issue. It states: "The crisis is already at our doorstep. This crisis stems from the rapidly accelerating demographic decline and drastic changes in domestic and international circumstances. The declining birthrate is significantly slowing the prosperity of every sector of our society - industry, economy, culture and the arts - as well as impeding the balanced development between urban and rural areas." In this way, the report links the falling birthrate to a broad decline in national strength,

encompassing economic, industrial and cultural dimensions. At the core of this concern lies a growing sense of crisis that the shrinking scale of higher education institutions - particularly in the private sector - will reduce the number of potential highly skilled human resources.

Against this backdrop, the recommendation explicitly discusses the projected downsizing of private universities and junior colleges as follows:

"The rapid pace of population decline suggests that approximately 90 mid-sized universities may cease operations annually. It is thus inevitable that more institutions will face under-enrollment, suspend student admissions, or fall into financial insolvency. The contraction of higher education may particularly threaten equitable access to quality higher education in regional areas."

As widely acknowledged, the private sector has played a key role in the quantitative expansion of Japan's higher education system. Umakoshi (1999), in reference to the stages of higher education development (from elite to mass, mass to universal access), proposed a typological model for the transition of private sectors in Asia. This model comprises three types: the Peripheral Private Model, the Complementary Private Model, and the Dominant Private Model. According to this framework, Japan—alongside countries such as South Korea and the Philippines—is positioned within the Dominant Private Model. Vietnam and China, by contrast, are categorized under the Peripheral Private Model and are expected to shift toward the Complementary Model in the future.

A crucial implication of this model is that, in Asia, the rising demand for higher education has led to the expansion of the private sector across all countries. It was anticipated that countries in the Peripheral Private category would transition to the Complementary stage and those in the Complementary category would eventually progress to the Dominant stage. However, in light of Japan's current demographic crisis and the necessity for restructuring the private higher education sector, it becomes imperative to critically re-examine the Japanese model of higher education and the institutional characteristics of private university governance and management. Moreover, there is a growing need to engage in comparative dialogue with other Asian countries regarding these issues.

In this context, the central research question arises: Amidst a demographic decline that is progressing far more rapidly than government projections, what policies have been enacted in Japan concerning the governance and administration of private universities and what challenges have emerged? This paper aims to examine the distinctive features of the governance structure of private universities in contemporary Japan and to explore policy responses to the declining birthrate within the higher education system.

2. Overview of the problem research

First, among the major preceding studies that have explored the distinctive characteristics of Japan's higher education system or what may be termed the "Japanese model" of higher education, the works of Ehara (1984, 2021) and Amano (1986) are particularly noteworthy. Although conducted in the 1980s, Amano (1986) offers a meticulous examination of the formation process of Japan's higher education system from the perspectives of educational sociology and history. His study elucidates the structural development of Japan's higher education by analyzing the central-local relationship and the quantitative expansion of higher

education in the postwar era. Meanwhile, Ehara (2021), drawing on an extensive body of literature, systematically reviews the developments in key areas such as upper secondary–higher education articulation, university curricula, university governance, and institutional evaluation. His work critically reconsiders the direction of university reforms in the post war era of Japan.

Second, in the field of research on the governance and management of private universities in Japan, a significant body of work has been developed by Morozumi (2000, 2010, 2011). In particular, Morozumi and Ogata (2011) empirically investigates whether elements such as university governance, personnel systems and organizational climate contribute to institutional management improvement, even when controlling for variables such as institutional size and student selectivity (i.e., entrance difficulty level). The study demonstrates that: (1) an appropriate power balance between the university corporation and the university president (or the faculty) has a positive effect on management improvement, and (2) organizational culture, including ease of administrative work and the sharing of institutional challenges, also contributes positively to the overall governance and performance of private universities.

However, these previous studies have overlooked the need to situate private universities within the historical development of the Japan's higher education model, particularly in relation to the expected role and governance of these institutions amid the accelerating demographic decline in current Japanese society. Specifically, they lack a perspective that clarifies the role and characteristics of private universities by placing them within the uniquely historical and structural context of Japanese higher education development.

3. Methodology

In light of these considerations, the study undertakes a detailed literature-based analysis, drawing primarily on the findings of the aforementioned prior studies as well as relevant policy documents. Through this analytical process, the study seeks to articulate the contours of the Japanese model of higher education, and, building upon this framework, examine both the required features of governance and management structures in private universities in Japan and the policy responses needed to address the challenges posed by the declining birthrate in contemporary Japanese society.

Specifically, this study first focuses on the characteristics of the Japanese model of higher education in the post-World War II period. It outlines the historical development of higher education

in Japan and delineates the structural features of the Japanese higher education system. Building on this foundation, the study then examines the position and role of private universities within the system. Based on these considerations, it further explores the characteristics of governance and administrative structures in private universities and discusses strategies necessary to ensure sound management of these institutions amid the ongoing demographic decline.

4. Research results

4.1. Japan's model of higher education

How can the Japanese model of higher education be characterized? Drawing on key preceding studies, this paper examines three interrelated dimensions: (1) the influence of foreign university models on the structure of Japanese higher education and the distinctive features of Japanese universities; (2) the typology and institutional diversity of higher education institutions in Japan; and (3) the role and positioning of private universities within the Japanese higher education system.

(1) Foreign University Models That Influenced the Structure of Japanese Higher Education and the Distinctive Features of Japanese Universities

Historically, Japanese universities have been profoundly influenced by the German model of higher education, particularly the Humboldtian ideal, which emphasized the integration of both research and education in university. Prior to Japan's defeat of World War II (WWII) in August 1945, the Japanese education system under the prewar regime was characterized by a dual-track structure. Access to higher education such as university education was mainly limited to a small number of elite males who succeeded in ascending a highly competitive educational hierarchy. In this context, universities were often perceived as higher education institutions that should remain detached from the everyday world, with remoteness from ordinary society seen as a virtue. Interestingly, unlike the present-day system, universities under the prewar regime in Japan were primarily higher education institutions for professional training.

However, Japan's education system underwent a radical transformation under the Allied occupation following World War II. The current structure of higher education in Japan was shaped through reforms that aimed to democratize the education system as a whole. A major characteristic of these reforms was the significant influence of American educational practices. Elements of higher education system such as general education alongside professional training, the credit system, graduate programs based on course units, and institutional accreditation (or quality assurance)

were incorporated - features that were previously unfamiliar in Japanese higher education.

The impact of the American model of higher education can be observed in the 1965 Standards for the Establishment of Universities (Daigaku setchi kijun), which specified that undergraduate curricula should consist of four main categories: general education, foreign languages, health and physical education and specialized education. According to the university establishment standards, general education courses were further classified into the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Furthermore, degree completion required at least four years of study and the acquisition of a minimum of 124 credits - closely resembling the structure of undergraduate programs in the United States (Ehara, 2021). Although revised multiple times since its enactment, the university establishment standards continue to shape the overall framework of Japan's university system.

(2) Typology and Diversity of Japanese Higher Education Institutions

As mentioned earlier, one of the key objectives of postwar university reform under the Allied occupation was to transform Japan's elitist prewar higher education system into one that provided broader access to university education. This reform significantly expanded access to institutions called "universities," democratizing higher education and laying the institutional groundwork for its subsequent massification. The transition to the "mass" stage (as defined by Trow) of access to higher education occurred around 1970, when the combined enrollment rate in universities and junior colleges surpassed 30%, and by the 2000s, it had entered the "universal" stage, exceeding 50%.

Of particular note for the present discussion is that the principal driver of this expansion of higher education in Japan was the private university sector, which had been elevated to university status during the postwar reforms and provided higher education on a user-pays basis as a whole. While universities and junior colleges constitute the main axis of Japan's higher education system, tertiary education system in Japan as a whole is composed of a variety of education institution types. According to the OECD's report (Newby et.al. 2009), these institutions include:

- Universities have as their aim to conduct teaching and research in depth in specialised subjects, to operate as "centers of learning" and to "develop intellectual, moral, and practical abilities".

- Junior colleges "cultivate such abilities as are required in vocation or practical life", typically offering two-year sub-degree qualifications within a baccalaureate four-year bachelors degree

framework. There are typically progression opportunities to university programmes.

- Colleges of technology, or kosen are institutions offering high-level vocational qualifications through teaching and related research.

- Professional training colleges offer practical vocational and specialized technical education aiming to foster abilities required for vocational or daily life, or provide general education.

- Graduate schools conduct academic research, in particular basic research, and train researchers and professionals with advanced skills.

- Professional graduate schools are oriented towards high-level graduate entry to key professions - for example, law, business studies, etc.

In addition to inter-institutional diversity among higher education system in Japan, there is significant variation within each higher education institution type. With respect to research activities, national universities play a central role, although not all national universities are research-oriented. Among them, the seven former imperial universities, such as the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University and Tohoku University, function as comprehensive, research-driven institutions that house multiple faculties. In contrast, regional universities, such as Saitama University, are national universities mainly established in each prefecture that has no former imperial university .

(3) The Role of Private Universities in Japanese Higher Education

Higher education system in Japan comprises more than 800 universities and nearly 300 junior colleges. These higher education institutions vary widely in terms of faculty and student quality, facilities, academic standards and social prestige, forming a steeply hierarchical pyramid with a sharp apex and a broad base (Amano, 1986). This diversity in higher education institutional type is closely linked to another defining feature of Japanese higher education: the exceptionally high proportion of students enrolled in private higher education institutions.

As of 2024, Japan has 813 universities and 297 junior colleges in detail. Of these higher education institutions, 624 universities (76%) and 282 junior colleges (94%) are private. In terms of enrollment, out of 2,949,795 university students, 2,177,756 (73%) students attend private universities. Similarly, 93% of junior college students (73,374 out of 78,295) are enrolled in private institutions. Thus, from a quantitative perspective, private institutions have borne the primary burden of expanding access to higher education in Japan.

During the period of rapid economic growth

in Japan from the 1950s to the 1970s, demand for higher education also steadily increased. However, restrictions on the establishment and capacity expansion of national universities created a favorable environment for private higher education institutions to attract larger student populations to enroll them. This dynamism contributed to the expansion of the private sector within Japanese higher education system. Many private universities grew in scale and new private universities, junior colleges and higher education institutions for only women were established to meet rising demand. Nevertheless, the competition for student enrollment tended to benefit older, more established private universities, which were positioned higher in the internal hierarchy of the private sector. This was because accumulated resources and social prestige generally correlate with institutional longevity, enabling older universities to attract better students more easily.

To this day, private universities are stratified according to their year of establishment. Newly established institutions must begin at the base of the pyramid, while a few older universities such as Waseda University and Keio University occupy the top. This pyramid structure of private sector has persisted as a fundamental feature of Japan's higher education landscape.

4.2. Governance of private universities in Japan

Building on the preceding discussion of the Japanese model of higher education, this section examines the governance and management structures specific to private universities in Japan. Private universities are established by incorporated educational institutions (gakkō hōjin) in accordance with the Private Schools Act, and are overseen by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Each educational corporation is required to have a board of directors, a board of councilors and auditors. Given the high degree of public interest and social responsibility associated with private schools in Japan, the governance structure is designed to prevent autocratic control by a small number of executive officers. From the perspective of public interest, for instance, a school corporation must appoint at least five directors and two auditors, and neither group may include more than one person who is a spouse or relative within the third degree of kinship to another member. Based on the Private Schools Act, the key roles of governance bodies - incorporated educational institutions - in private universities can be briefly outlined as follows: directors assist the chairperson and manage the corporation's operations; auditors monitor the overall activities of the corporation and oversee the performance of directors; and the board of councilors provides

opinions to the chairperson on major matters such as budgets, business plans, and medium-term strategies, while also expressing views on the corporation's financial and operational status. In addition, universities are required to have a faculty council (*kyōjukai*), composed mainly of academic staff, to deliberate on important academic matters concerning teaching and learning.

Until the early 1990s, the majority of private universities experienced relatively stable enrollment, with demand for higher education exceeding available places. As a result, few institutions undertook serious governance or management reforms. Thus, private universities in Japan were traditionally characterized by a lack of emphasis on governance reform as a whole. However, according to Ehara (2021), a critical challenge now facing Japanese private universities is to strengthen the public nature of their founding corporations while also establishing a governance structure that reflects genuine corporation characteristics. Furthermore, private universities are expected to build institutional cultures aligned with their respective missions and values. Among these challenges, balancing a traditional “corporate” institutional culture with an increasingly necessary “enterprise” oriented culture has become particularly important.

In discussing the management and governance of universities, Ehara (2021) draws upon McNay's model of organizational culture in higher education. The concept of “organizational culture” in universities refers to the collective term for the distinctive values, norms, modes of thinking and behavior, institutional frameworks and the overall atmosphere unique to each higher education institution. For each university, such an organizational culture constitutes a unique resource shaped by its historical development and accumulated achievements, serving as the foundation for its distinct identity and capacity for innovation.

What, then, does it mean for a “enterprise” oriented organizational culture to become increasingly prominent in private universities?

McNay analytically categorizes university organizational cultures based on two dimensions: (1) the definition of overall institutional policy and (2) the degree of control over policy implementation. Each dimension is assessed according to whether it is loosely or tightly regulated. Based on this framework, he identifies four types of university organizational cultures: collegiality (loose in both policy definition and control), bureaucracy (loose in policy definition but tight in control), corporation (tight in both) and enterprise (tight in policy definition but loose in control).

Accordingly, in universities where the enterprise culture is dominant, emphasis is placed on achieving institution-wide goals, while simultaneously valuing the autonomous decision-making and initiatives of sub-units such as individual faculty members, groups, or project teams. This situation closely resembles that of a private corporation, in which mid-level managers with delegated authority - such as section heads - work flexibly with their team members to accomplish departmental objectives while keeping the overarching goal of corporate profit in view. Thus, the key to effectively leveraging a corporate-oriented organizational culture in private universities lies in how the decision-making and actions of university members can be activated and empowered (Ehara, 2021).

This concern is rooted in the broader context of demographic decline. A growing number of private universities are expected to fall below enrollment capacity, raising concerns about financial sustainability. In the 2024 academic year, 354 private universities (approximately 60%) reported enrollment numbers below their quotas. Even in urban areas, which have traditionally attracted more students, an increasing number of institutions face operational difficulties. Of particular concern are the 182 private universities (30.4%) whose enrollment fell below 80% of their capacity (The Nikkei, September 13, 2024). Women's universities - those that serve only female students - are especially vulnerable, with seven institutions having suspended admissions since 2000.

The 2004 amendment to the Private Schools Act marked a turning point, prompting institutions to clarify the functions and responsibilities of their boards of directors, auditors, and councilors. Universities were also encouraged to reform internal governance structures to reflect new challenges - redefining the role of the president, clarifying the position of the faculty council, and strengthening administrative functions.

A particularly influential development was the 2012 policy proposal issued by the Japan Association of Corporate Executives (*Keizai Dōyūkai*), entitled “Governance Reform in Private Universities” (Ehara, 2021). This proposal was the first serious attempt to address the issue of governance in private higher education from the perspective of quality improvement. It identified two prevailing governance models: universities where authority is concentrated in the faculty council with a relatively weak president and institutions operated in an owner-centered fashion by founding families or their affiliates. The proposal primarily targeted the former type and recommended: (1) strengthening the power of the board of directors by reasserting its authority

to appoint the president and ensuring that the board influences university governance indirectly through presidential leadership; (2) enhancing the authority of presidents and deans; and (3) clarifying and simultaneously weakening the role of faculty councils. Underlying this proposal was an implicit analogy between university governance and corporate management—emphasizing a shift toward centralized, top-down leadership and oversight by boards.

According to Ehara (2021), an essential task in reforming the governance of private universities is to conceptualize the school corporation and the university as an integrated system and to manage them accordingly. Traditionally, governance has been divided between administrative management by the board of directors and academic affairs handled independently by the president and faculty. However, recent trends call for a more comprehensive, strategic approach to university management that includes teaching, research and public engagement. Central to this rethinking is the need to establish a bidirectional, cooperative relationship between the board, which is responsible for institutional management and the president and faculty, who oversee academic affairs. A purely top-down approach risks alienating academic staff and undermining institutional function, while a purely bottom-up system may lack the strategic coherence needed to navigate complex, large-scale challenges.

4.3. Toward Sound Management of Private Universities

In 2019, the Subcommittee for the Reform of the Incorporated School System published a report titled “Improving the System of Incorporated Educational Institutions.” This report aimed to enhance the autonomous governance of school corporations, strengthen management practices, and promote information disclosure in order to ensure that private universities - which play a significant role in Japanese education - can continue to fulfill their social mission while earning the trust and support of society. As discussed earlier, the context for this reform includes the accelerating decline in the birthrate, with annual births dropping below one million, as well as the rapid progression of globalization and technological innovation, such as the emergence of Society 5.0. These shifts have created an urgent need to improve university governance structures and reform educational content (Subcommittee for the Reform of the Incorporated School System, 2019).

The report called for a fundamental restructuring of the school corporation system. Specifically, it emphasized revitalizing the functions of core governing bodies - boards of directors, auditors

and boards of councilors - so that they can fulfill their original intended roles. It also advocated promoting transparency through enhanced information disclosure. Key recommendations included encouraging the formulation of medium-term institutional plans, developing a “Governance Code for Private Universities” (analogous to the Corporate Governance Code for the business sector) and ensuring that the core governance bodies operate substantively and effectively.

Following this report, a partial revision of the Private Schools Act was enacted in 2019. The amendment mandated that school corporations operating private universities and junior colleges under the jurisdiction of MEXT formulate medium-term plans based on the outcomes of certified evaluations. It also sought to enhance the role of the board of councilors.

In Japan, the majority of private university revenues are derived from student tuition fees, making student enrollment one of the most critical factors for financial sustainability. Accordingly, each university’s enrollment fulfillment rate - measuring the extent to which it meets its admission quota - is commonly used as an indicator of management performance. Generally, the enrollment rate is higher among large-scale private universities and institutions with high entrance selectivity (i.e., higher deviation scores) (Ehara, 2021). Although more than half of private universities currently fall short of their admission capacity, this trend is most pronounced among smaller institutions located in less competitive rural regions.

However, a detailed analysis of data from the University of Tokyo’s 2010 national survey on administrative staff in universities, focusing on the private sector, found that even after controlling for institutional size and selectivity, factors such as governance practices, organizational culture and personnel systems significantly affect institutional performance (Morozumi & Ogata, 2011). The key findings of this analysis can be summarized as follows:

First, private universities with well-balanced internal governance structures—such as institutions where (1) the chairperson is not a founder or family member (i.e., not an “owner-chairperson”), (2) former administrative staff serve as directors, and (3) the faculty council enjoys substantial autonomy - tend to perform better in terms of enrollment fulfillment. Importantly, the mere presence of an owner-chairperson is not inherently problematic. Rather, universities that provide inclusive governance structures - where diverse internal stakeholders can participate in decision-making and checks and balances are effectively maintained - are more likely to achieve

sound management.

Second, with regard to organizational climate, private universities that (1) foster mutual trust between faculty and staff and (2) successfully communicate and share institutional management policies throughout the organization are more likely to maintain high enrollment rates. Although appropriate human resource practices were found to have little direct impact on institutional performance metrics, they do positively influence employee motivation, including job satisfaction and long-term engagement. Conversely, the presence of these favorable internal conditions may also indicate that universities with stable management structures tend to cultivate strong internal trust and share management goals across all organizational levels.

5. Discussion

This study has explored the governance structures and management characteristics of private universities within Japan's contemporary higher education system, with particular attention to how these institutions are responding to demographic decline. Based on the preceding analysis, several key points emerge.

First, a defining feature of the Japanese model of higher education is its dominance by the private sector. Japan exhibits a private-sector dominant structure, in which private universities comprise the majority of higher education institutions. The expansion of private universities was driven largely by increasing demand during the country's period of rapid economic growth. However, it is also important to note that Japan's higher education system is marked by a clearly stratified institutional hierarchy. Historically prestigious national universities (notably the former imperial universities) and a few elite private universities sit at the top of the hierarchy, while newly established private institutions typically begin at the lower tiers. In general, the selectivity and attractiveness of a university tend to correlate with its position within this pyramid.

Second, even after Japan's period of rapid economic growth ended in the 1980s and despite increasing awareness of demographic decline, the establishment of new private universities has continued, albeit intermittently. At the same time, the number of private institutions failing to meet their enrollment capacity has steadily increased. As of 2024, 182 private universities (30.4%) enrolled fewer than 80% of their quota. Particularly vulnerable are women's universities, which have faced growing challenges in student recruitment; since the 2000s, three have closed, and four have suspended student admissions. Notably, even

historically well-established private universities have been forced to shut down. As a whole, private universities in Japan were traditionally characterized by a lack of emphasis on governance reform.

Third, in response to these challenges, national policies have emphasized the importance of strengthening the governance functions of school corporations to ensure sound institutional management. Specifically, reforms have sought to enhance the substantive roles of core governance bodies - boards of directors, auditors and boards of councilors - and to integrate these efforts with the long-term development strategies of private universities. However, as Ehara (2021) argues, effective strategic management requires more than top-down oversight. A bidirectional and cooperative relationship between those responsible for institutional governance (i.e., school corporations and their governing bodies) and those responsible for academic affairs (i.e., university presidents and faculty) is essential. To support this, universities should foster organizational cultures in which mutual trust exists among faculty and staff and in which institutional policies are shared across all levels of the organization.

Drawing on the author's own experience as a faculty member at a private university, it is worth noting several important factors that contribute to faculty members' perceptions of a healthy and supportive work environment. Chief among these are the ability to feel that the voices of frontline staff are heard by university executives and the perception that management policies and institutional missions are shared rather than imposed. Conversely, there are institutions where a strong emphasis on managerial control has led to top-down decision-making structures that marginalize faculty input. In such cases, the faculty council - nominally a body for deliberating important academic matters - functions merely to confirm decisions already made by the university corporation.

In conclusion, private universities in Japan account for a significant share of the higher education system and therefore play a vital public role in sustaining higher education. This public character of private universities demands careful oversight and planning. At the pre-establishment stage, school corporation executives must rigorously assess student recruitment potential, and MEXT should exercise caution in granting new approvals. At the institutional level, school corporations - through their boards of directors, auditors, and councilors - must prioritize the well-being and interests of current students while formulating medium- and long-term strategies to ensure sustainability. The ideal governance

model for private universities is not one that adheres to a rigid dichotomy between top-down and bottom-up decision-making. Rather, it should seek a collaborative structure in which university executives, faculty, and staff engage in mutual dialogue and cooperation to support institutional development.

This conclusion leads to the following implication: In relation to McNay's model of the enterprise culture in university organizations, it can be argued that in the governance of private universities, the involvement of the incorporated educational institution (*gakkō hōjin*) plays a crucial role in ensuring that the direction and goals of university management are shared among individual university units and faculty and staff. At the same time, it is essential to respect and promote autonomous and creative practices undertaken by university organizations, faculty and staff in order to realize those shared goals.

6. Conclusion

This paper has examined the distinctive features of the governance structure of private universities in contemporary Japan and to explore policy responses to the declining birthrate within the higher education system. One of the key features of private university governance revealed through this study is that private universities are established by incorporated educational institutions (*gakkō hōjin*)

that place special emphasis on public interest. These private universities are increasingly formulating medium - to long-term institutional development strategies in order to ensure stable and strategic university management. In the context of Japan's ongoing demographic decline, particularly the decreasing birthrate, ensuring sound management of private universities is of utmost importance - not only for institutional sustainability development but also for safeguarding the interests of individual students. To this end, it is crucial to explore possibilities for collaboration and coordination among incorporated educational institutions, universities and their faculty and staff.

This paper has examined these issues primarily through a literature review focusing on previous studies. By taking a macro-level perspective, it has elucidated the distinctive characteristics of the management and governance structures required of private universities related to the framework of the Japanese model of higher education, especially under conditions of demographic decline. Building upon these findings, future research should focus on analyzing the actual responses of individual private higher education institutions - particularly those with an enrollment rate below 100% - including their management strategies and decisions to suspend student recruitment or expand enrollment targets.

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**VAI TRÒ VÀ QUẢN TRỊ CỦA CÁC TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC TƯ THỰC
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Tóm tắt:

Bài viết này nhằm mục đích xem xét những đặc điểm riêng biệt của cơ cấu quản trị của các trường đại học tư thực tại Nhật Bản đương đại và tìm hiểu các tác động của chính sách đối với tỷ lệ sinh giảm trong hệ thống giáo dục đại học. Nghiên cứu thực hiện phân tích chi tiết dựa trên tài liệu, chủ yếu dựa trên những phát hiện của các nghiên cứu trước đây cũng như các văn bản chính sách liên quan. Thông qua quá trình phân tích này, bài viết tìm cách làm rõ những nét chính của mô hình giáo dục đại học Nhật Bản và dựa trên khuôn khổ này, xem xét cả những đặc điểm cần thiết của cơ cấu quản trị và quản lý tại các trường đại học tư thực ở Nhật Bản và các tác động cần thiết của chính sách để giải quyết những thách thức do tỷ lệ sinh giảm trong xã hội Nhật Bản đương đại. Kết luận rằng một trong những đặc điểm chính của quản trị đại học tư thực là các trường đại học tư thực được thành lập bởi các tổ chức giáo dục hợp nhất (*gakkō hōjin*) đặc biệt chú trọng đến lợi ích công. Các trường đại học tư thực ở Nhật Bản xây dựng các chiến lược phát triển thể chế trung và dài hạn để đảm bảo quản lý đại học ổn định. Điều này thể hiện một sự thay đổi đáng kể khi so sánh với thực tế là các trường này theo truyền thống được đặc trưng bởi sự thiếu cải cách quản trị. Trong bối cảnh tỷ lệ sinh giảm ở Nhật Bản, việc đảm bảo quản lý hiệu quả các trường đại học tư thực là vô cùng quan trọng - không chỉ vì sự phát triển bền vững của các trường đại học mà còn vì lợi ích của từng sinh viên. Vì vậy, việc tìm hiểu các khả năng hợp tác và phối hợp giữa các cơ sở giáo dục, các trường đại học, các giảng viên, các nhân viên của các trường đại học là vô cùng quan trọng.

Từ khóa: *Vai trò và quản trị của các Trường Đại học tư thực; Hệ thống giáo dục đại học; Chuyển đổi và thách thức trong thời đại suy giảm dân số; Nhật Bản.*