

The Diffusion of CSR-Related Departments in Japan's Information and Communications Industry

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Abstract—This study clarifies the diffusion process of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) in the information and communications industry, which accounted for the largest proportion of Japan's nominal GDP in 2011. The data for 32 companies, from among 328 companies with net sales of at least 100 million yen in 2012, were used to examine the pattern of companies have established dedicated CSR-related departments. The subject data are data for 2005, 2007 and 2009 in Japan.

CSR-related departments are CSR department, legal and regulatory compliance aimed at CSR, a written corporate ethics policy or employee conduct provisions, and respective departments dedicated to Investor Relations, contribution to society and environmental countermeasures.

What became clear as a result of this study is that the department had been established most by 2009 is a dedicated IR department, followed by departments for legal and regulatory compliance, CSR, environmental countermeasures and contribution to society. Moreover, it was understood that the higher their net sales, the greater the tendency to consider CSR and contribution to society simultaneously, while the lower their net sales, the greater the tendency to consider IR.

Index Terms—CSR, information and communications industry, diffusion pattern of CSR-related departments, dedicated department.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been heightened interest in Japan in corporate social responsibility (CSR)¹ as the Table I is indicated [2].

TABLE I: NUMBER OF ARTICLES FROM 2003 TO 2013 WITH THE KEYWORD CSR SEARCH IN 4 NEWSPAPERS IN JAPAN [2]

Year	Number of articles
2003	205
2004	703
2005	831
2006	885
2007	990
2008	962
2009	927
2010	756
2011	820
2012	800
2013	753

It has been pointed out that there have been three factors

behind this phenomenon.

First, establishment of corporate ethics, compliance with legal statutes, contributions to society and enhanced corporate value have come to be required that are suitable for international trade as the transactions with foreign companies increased [3].

Second is the presentation of norms for CSR and corporate activities by influential groups such as Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organizations). For example, Keidanren presented its Corporate Behavior Charter in 1991. In addition, in March 2003 Japan's Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives) put together a report titled *The 15th Corporate White Paper on "Market Evolution" and CSR Management*, and released its basic thinking concerning CSR together with an Evaluation Worksheet from a CSR point of view [4]. Moreover, in October 2010 the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) prepared ISO26000 (Guidance on Social Responsibility) and in March 2012, the Japan Industrial Standards Committee (JISC) enacted this as a domestic standard JISZ 26000 which summarized the social responsibility of various organizations including companies [5].

Finally, the fact the proportion of corporate scandals that occur in Japan was rising annually also was a factor [6].

The definition and scope of CSR vary depending on country, regional firm and type of business, therefore, setting a definition and scope that is shared internationally is assumed to be difficult. Nevertheless, there are four items many researchers recognize as the scope of CSR.

They are pursuit of economic responsibility, legal responsibility (compliance with laws), ethics-based provisions regarding conduct, and the scope of other discretionary matters (or service, contribution to society, and response to environmental issues) [1], [7]-[9].

According to data on the diffusion of CSR at Japanese companies [10], [11] the departments for addressing these four items are a CSR department, legal compliance department, IR department, social contribution department and environmental department.

References [10], [11], when viewed along a time axis, there was a tendency these four items diffused like blow sequences. Environmental departments to be established first before 1979, followed by the establishment of social contribution departments after 1994, the creation of departments dedicated to legal and regulatory compliance around 1999 and departments dedicated to IR from around 2000, and finally departments responsible for CSR, which only began to be established after 2003 by 2005.

In other words, matters related to CSR at Japanese companies took root in order of response to environmental issues, contribution to society, legal and regulatory

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¹In this study CSR refers to business obligation that included the idea that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligations, but ethical and discretionary (philanthropic) responsibility as well [1].

compliance, and support for investors. This can be said to be the pattern of CSR diffusion at Japanese companies.

This tendency, however, is only the tendency if no distinctions are made between industries. Moreover, because it was unclear with the exception of departments for IR and legal and regulatory compliance whether companies had departments dedicated exclusively to these matters, it is uncertain whether active efforts were undertaken. In other words, the limitation of previous literatures [12], [13] lay in the fact that the influence an industry has on the diffusion of CSR was not considered, and analysis of the reality was insufficient.

If patterns of CSR introduction by industry and the factors that affect these patterns can be clarified, it would present the possibility that in the future, guidelines for companies that are contemplating the introduction of CSR.

Therefore this study seeks to clarify whether there are departments dedicated to CSR related index (CSR, legal compliance, ethics, IR, social contribution and environmental issues) and the patterns of their diffusion in Japan's information and communications industry which accounted for the largest proportion of Japan's nominal GDP in 2011 [14].

The following section reviews the previous literatures concerning the diffusion of CSR in Japanese companies, and shows the position of this study.

II. PREVIOUS LITERATURES

A. The Diffusion Pattern of CSR-Related Departments at Japanese Companies

Discussion concerning the diffusion of CSR at Japanese companies is wide-ranging. This includes one study that observes the diffusion of CSR at Japanese companies over the long term and summarizes the actual conditions of institutionalization of CSR [15]-[19]. Ref. [15]-[19] was implemented five times by questionnaire survey once every three years from 1996 to 2008.

This research, undertook a study by sending out a questionnaire annually concerning the enactment of in-house corporate ethics standards, whether companies had a full-time manager responsible for corporate ethics, whether companies had established an ethics committee, whether companies had implemented training and established a dedicated organization for global environmental problems², and whether companies had established an organization dedicated to social contribution activities. Ref. [15]-[19] did not distinguish by industry category between regular member companies of the Business Research Institute in Japan, which has been active since 1948, and companies that participate in the activities of the Business Research Institute's research committee.

What these papers clarified was that already in 1996, 62.5% of companies had established a dedicated organization for global environmental problems and 29.5% of companies had established an organization dedicated to social contribution

activities, whereas only 7.1% of all companies had appointed a full-time manager responsible for corporate ethics [15]. This last item showed a rapid increase, however, with the proportion of companies having a full-time manager responsible for corporate ethics rising to 47.7% at the time of the third survey in 2002 [17] and climbing to 85.1% by 2008 [19].

On the other hand, the proportion of companies that had established a dedicated organization for global environmental problems had reached 82.4% in 2008, not substantially different from 79.3% in 2002 [17].

Unlike in the case of corporate ethics and global environment problem, a rising trend of an organization dedicated to social contribution activities, which increased from 29.5% in 1996 to 42.6% in 2002 and 48.6% in 2008, did not change rapidly its percentage.

In other words, the CSR-related departments that had spread most widely among Japanese companies by 2002 are understood to have been a department responsible for environmental measures, followed by a department dedicated to legal and regulatory compliance (including corporate ethics) then a department responsible for social contribution activities.

Similar trends can be examined from the Toyo Keizai Inc. data of 2007 [10], [11], however, after 2007, the trend for established a dedicated CSR department has examined [20]-[22].

B. Factors Influencing the Diffusion of CSR at Japanese Companies

There are broadly four factors that existing research has specified as items affecting diffusion of CSR-related departments or activity at Japanese companies after 2000 [12], [23]-[25].

The first is actions by the government and business-related groups. These actions are assumed to have been administrative guidance by the government, and the concerns about corporate CSR that were raised by Japan Association of Corporate Executives in March 2003. The second is the increase in overseas transactions because of the international growth of Japanese companies. The fact that many of these transactions are in the United States or countries in the EU zone in particular, where CSR has been actively introduced, is surmised to be a factor accelerating the diffusion of CSR at Japanese companies.

Another development that has attracted attention as a factor behind the diffusion of CSR-related departments in addition to the above is the increase in the percentage of shareholdings by overseas investors. According to [25], there has been a significant impact since the percentage of overseas investors' shareholdings rose above 20% in 2003. Such influences from the external environment affects to the collapse of the unique business model of Japanese companies. This is the third factor. Ref. [13], [24] points to the possibility that the collapse of the holding company arrangement formed after World War II, which involved stock cross-holdings by Japan's *zaibatsu* financial cliques, main banks and group companies and the long-term employment system, led to the need for new evaluation criteria when evaluating companies, and that CSR is being used as one corporate appraisal item.

² Although "a specialized organization concerning global environmental problems" and "a department responsible for environmental countermeasures" differ according to the existing literatures, they both indicate activities aimed at reducing negative environmental impact.

The final factor is the appearance of corporate norms and ethics-related problems (death from overwork, environmental pollution, collapse of long-term employment, etc.). The business liability that arose from companies' activities and the emergence of related issues is assumed to have become one factor behind the diffusion of CSR [23].

C. Position of the Present Research

Previous researches as pointed out in their case studies, the raising portions of the CSR-related departments and activities are influenced by the external environment factors in terms of the trade environment and administrative guidance. The subject areas of these researches, however, are mainly the external environments factors and are not considered the influence of the industry and diffusion pattern of CSR-related departments and activities.

According to the reference [14] the industry that accounts for the highest proportion of Japan's nominal GDP is shown to be the information and communication industry, at 9% in 2011 and it almost every year increased its portion in nominal GDP. In other words, the information and communication industry is having the greatest impact on Japan's economy as of 2011.

Therefore, this paper discusses pattern for the diffusion of CSR-related departments within information and communications industry, and the pattern showing of how this expanding industry has grown while embracing CSR.

III. CASE ANALYSIS

A. Sample and Methods

This study uses data from reference [10], [20], [22] to understand whether companies in the information and communications industry have departments dedicated to CSR-related activities, whether they have prepared written documentation for legal and regulatory compliance, corporate ethics and the employee conduct provisions assumed to be the subject of CSR, and whether they have respective specialized departments for Investor Relations (hereafter, IR), social contribution and environmental activities companies. With those data this study clarifies the pattern for the diffusion of CSR.

For data, the fiscal 2005 data (published 2006), fiscal 2007 data (published 2008) and fiscal 2009 data (published 2010) were used³. For analysis 32 companies selected from the 206 highest ranking companies among 328 companies that have net sales of at least 100 million yen [26].

When reference[10], [20], [22]conducts its questionnaire survey, it asks companies whether they have departments dedicated to activities related to CSR, legal and regulatory compliance, ethics, IR, contribution to society and environmental measures. However, while data for the above-mentioned items in fiscal 2005 are in principle for dedicated, full-time departments, activities were in some

cases performed concurrently because companies responded without distinguishing between whether their departments were dedicated and full time or concurrent posts. Therefore, the fiscal 2005 data ultimately analyzed only whether companies had a department responsible for the activity. Likewise with regard to ethics (employee conduct provisions), written documentation existed at all of the companies subject to the survey in 2005. The meanings of the numerical values on the vertical axis in each of the following diagrams are shown in Table II below.

TABLE II: EXISTENCE OF A CSR-RELATED DEPARTMENT

0	No responsible department
1	Has a responsible department, or has provisions. However, it is unclear whether the department is dedicated to the activity or handles it concurrently with other activities.
2	Has a department that handles the relevant item concurrently with other items.
3	Has a dedicated department for each item.

Company names are ranked in order from high to low according to net sales.

B. Diffusion of Departments Dedicated to CSR

This paper begins with a discussion of the diffusion pattern of dedicated CSR departments, based on Fig. 1. As shown in Fig. 1, by 2005 there were 10 companies out of 32 had department dedicated to CSR or concurrently handled it with other activities. In 2007, 11 companies had established a dedicated department and 13 companies had established a department to be concurrently responsible for CSR. The trend towards handling CSR through a dedicated department did not improved prominently; in 2009, 2 companies had newly established a dedicated CSR department. Companies Fig. 1 shows that by 2009, 24 companies out of 32 had established a dedicated department or a department to be responsible for the activity concurrently.

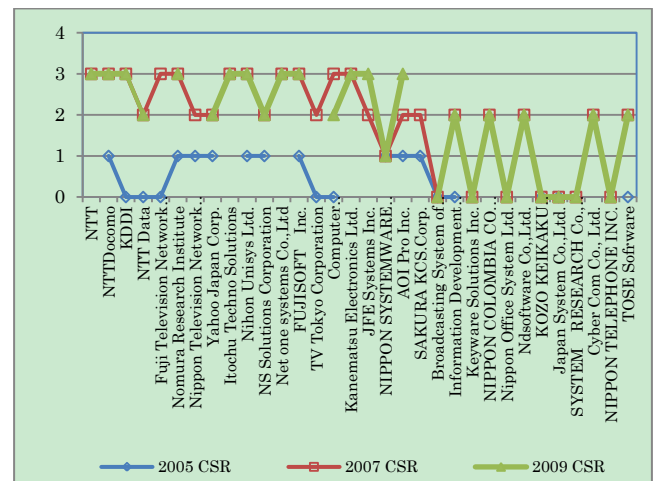


Fig. 1. Existence of a department dedicated to CSR.

C. Diffusion of Departments Dedicated to Legal and Regulatory Compliance

As shown in Fig. 2, by 2005 there were 14 companies had a department dedicated to legal and regulatory compliance or concurrently handled it with other activities. By 2007, 16 companies established dedicated department. Moreover, 13

³ For several of the 32 companies, data was available only for the years 2005 and 2007, or for 2007 and 2009, and for these companies the data for just the two years was used; despite having only data for two years, however, I judged it is possible to grasp the change in the diffusion of CSR because no significant change is seen in the share of nominal GDP accounted for by the information and communications industry during the period from 2005 to 2009 based on the statistics from the reference [14].

companies had established a department to concurrently handle legal and regulatory compliance.

In 2009, one company newly established a dedicated department and another company changed their department from dedicated to concurrently department to handle legal and regulatory compliance. By 2009 every company had established a department dedicated to the activity or handles it concurrently with other activities.

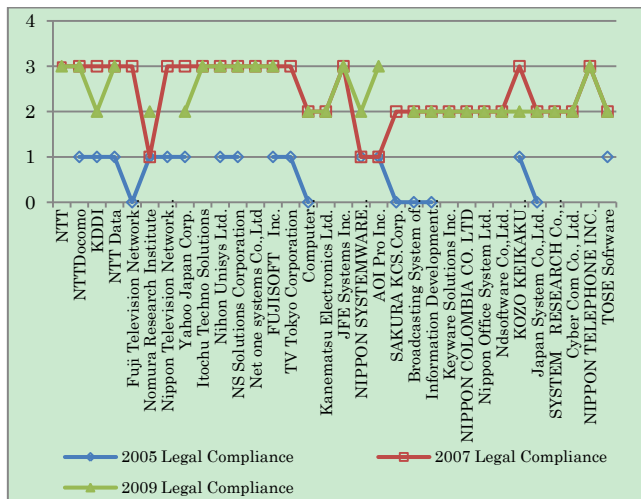


Fig. 2. Existence of a department dedicated to legal and regulatory compliance.

D. Diffusion of Departments Dedicated to IR

As shown in Fig. 3, 19 companies had established a dedicated IR department or had a department to be responsible concurrently with its other activity by 2005. Moreover, by 2007, 21 companies had established a dedicated IR department and 10 companies newly had established a department to concurrently handle legal and regulatory compliance. By 2009, 32 companies had the dedicated IR department or a department to be responsible for the activity concurrently.

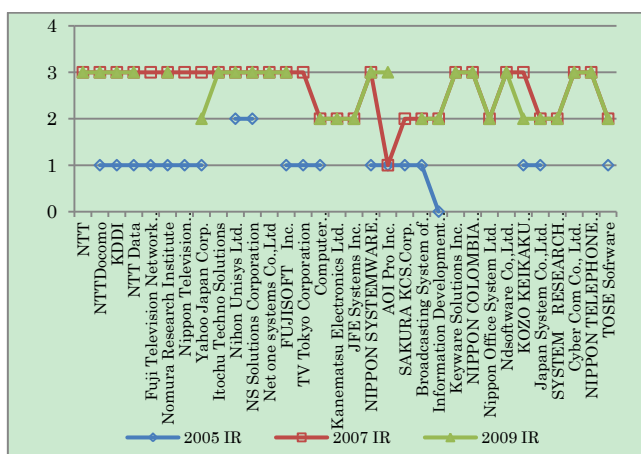


Fig. 3. Existence of a department dedicated to IR.

E. Diffusion of Departments Dedicated to Social Contribution

Only 11 companies had established a department dedicated to social contribution or had a department to be responsible concurrently with its other activities by 2005, as shown in Fig. 4. This trend changed by 2007. 5 companies

established dedicated department for social contribution and 19 companies had established a department to handle this concurrently with its other activities. By 2009, totally just 7 companies had established a dedicated department. This shows the diffusion pace of departments for social contribution activities was slower than other departments.

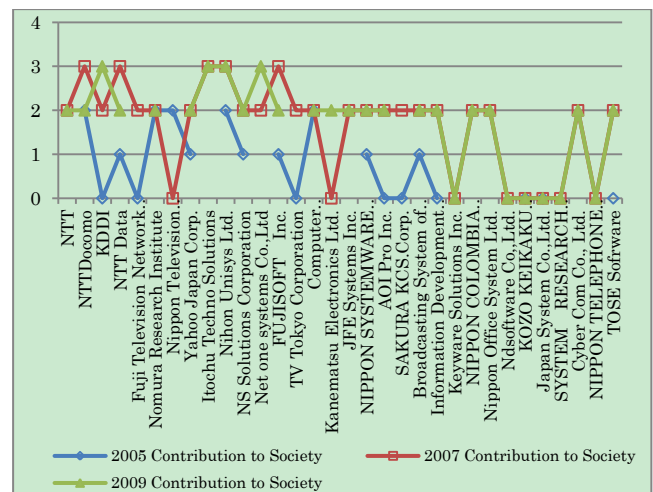


Fig. 4. Existence of a department dedicated to social contribution.

F. Diffusion of Dedicated Departments Related to Environmental Measures

As shown in Fig. 5, by 2005, 14 companies had established a department dedicated to environmental measures or a department to be responsible concurrently with other activities. By 2007 only 8 companies had established a dedicated department. In contrast to this, by 2007, 15 companies had established a department to handle this concurrently with other activities. No additional companies had newly established a dedicated department by 2009. Judging from the Fig. 5, 14 companies had already established a department related to environmental measures by 2005, however, it is surmised that while companies did not go as far as establishing a dedicated department at an early stage.

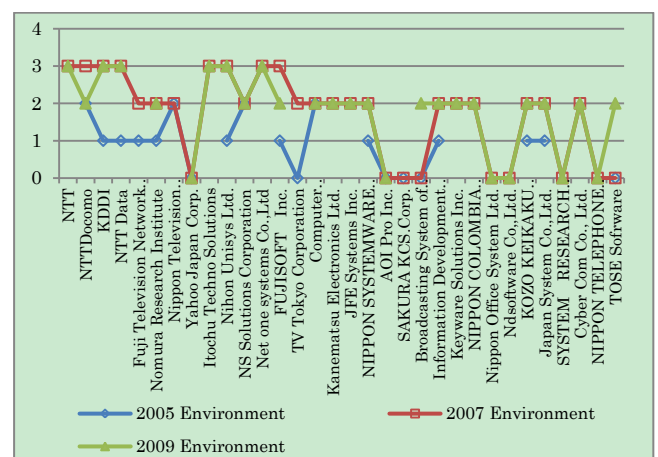


Fig. 5. Existence of a dedicated department related to environmental measures.

G. Diffusion of a Written Corporate Ethics Policy or Employee Conduct Provisions

As shown in Fig. 6, by 2009, 31 companies had a written corporate ethics policy or employee conduct provisions.

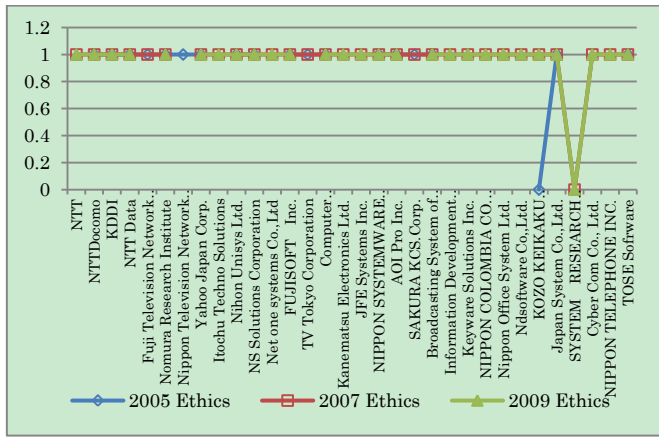


Fig. 6. Existence of a department for a written corporate ethics policy or employee conduct provisions.

TABLE III: CORRELATION BETWEEN EACH ITEM

	CSR	Legal Compliance	Ethics	IR	Social Contributions	Environment	Numbers of Employee	Net Sales Ranking in 2012
CSR	1							
Legal Compliance	0.467	1.000						
Ethics	0.301	0.155	1.000					
IR	0.396	0.497	0.239	1.000				
Social Contributions	0.718	0.316	0.344	0.218	1.000			
Environment	0.420	0.242	0.339	0.263	0.526	1.000		
Numbers of Employee	0.439	0.269	0.140	0.413	0.448	0.525	1.000	
Net Sales Ranking in 2012	-0.687	-0.501	-0.263	-0.389	-0.675	-0.514	-0.592	1.000

From Table III, it was clear that a social contribution department was the item having the highest correlation with existence of a CSR department. This shows there is a strong tendency for companies that have established a department to handle CSR to also establish a department to be responsible for social contribution. In other words, it is seen that in the information and communications industry there is a strong tendency to simultaneously consider CSR and contribution to society. Furthermore, we can understand that large-scale companies with many employees have a strong tendency to establish a department related to environmental measures, and additionally that there is a strong tendency higher ranking companies to have a department responsible for CSR and a department to handle social contribution.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the data analysis in this study, the diffusion of CSR-related departments in the information and communications industry in Japan can be said to have shown the following pattern.

The earliest items to be established dedicated department in the information and communications industry was ethics as shown in Fig. 6. Among the 32 companies 31(one company did not respond to the questionnaire) had the corporate ethics policy or employee conduct provision. Following the ethics policy, the IR department as shown in Fig. 3, were diffused in information and communications

H. Correlation between CSR-Related Items

This paper examined the correlation between whether companies have departments related to CSR, legal and regulatory compliance, a written corporate ethics policy or employee conduct provisions, IR, social contribution and environmental measures (this included whether it has a department that merely handles the activity, without distinguishing between dedicated or concurrent, and by distinguishing whether the department is dedicated or handles the activity concurrently), ranking of the data in 2012 of the information and communication industry and the number of their employees. Table III shows the result.

industry in Japan. Among the 32 companies in this study, 21 had already established a department dedicated to IR in 2007, and by 2009, 32 companies had established a department dedicated to IR or had a department to be responsible concurrently with other activities.

The next department to be established was a department responsible for legal and regulatory compliance. If looked at without regard to whether this was a dedicated department or one to handle this responsibility concurrently with other activities, by 2005, 14 companies had established a department to be responsible for this activity, and 16 companies had established a dedicated department by 2007.

The next department to be established was a department related to environmental measures. 14 companies had already established a department responsible for environmental measures at the 2005 stage, as shown in Fig. 5. At only 8 of the 14 companies, however, was a dedicated department confirmed to have been established afterwards. If no distinction is made between a dedicated department and one that handles this activity concurrently with other activities, however, in 2009, 25 companies had established a department.

This was followed by CSR departments; 10 companies had established such a department by 2005, either as a dedicated department or one that handled this responsibility concurrently. By 2007, 11 companies had established a department dedicated to CSR, and by 2009, 12 companies had established such a specialized department. The final department to be established was a social contribution

department; by 2005 only 11 companies had established a department responsible for this or had a responsible concurrently with other activities, and just 7 companies had a dedicated department in 2009. However, although by 2007, 19 companies had established a department responsible concurrently with other activities and by 2009, 7 dedicated departments for social contribution had established, this does not mean the establishment of a department this activity was never observed.

In summary, when diffusion of dedicated departments is used as a standard, the diffusion of CSR-related departments or activities in Japan's information and communications industry occurred in the following order: Corporate ethics policy or Employee conduct provisions, IR, legal and regulatory compliance, environmental measures-related, CSR, and contribution to society. Moreover, from the correlation table (Table III) it was shown there is a high probability that departments responsible for CSR and departments responsible for social contribution, which became widespread in recent years, spread through companies in parallel.

V. CONTRIBUTION AND IMPLICATIONS

Until now, previous researches assumed the diffusion of CSR-related departments or specialists at Japanese companies had followed a pattern in which departments related to environmental measures had spread the earliest, followed by departments for contribution to society, and then by departments for legal and regulatory compliance and corporate ethics policy, IR departments and CSR departments.

In Japan's information and communications sector, however, it was corporate ethics policy or employee conduct provisions and IR-related departments that spread first, followed by departments for legal and regulatory compliance, departments for environmental measures, CSR departments and finally by social contribution departments.

This shows the probability that the pattern by which CSR-related departments or activities diffuse will vary depending on an industry's characteristics. The information and communications industry is a capital-intensive industry, and since 2000 the industry's net sales have grown rapidly. From such a background, it is surmised that corporate ethics policy or employee conduct provisions and IR-related departments were the first and second activity and a department to diffuse because outside investment has become a critical factor for growth and continuation of the business. Legal and regulatory compliance is a component of evaluations from outside a company, and it is surmised this was the reason departments for legal and regulatory compliance were the next to spread. Also, although environment-related departments and departments for social contribution have diffused, the shift to dedicated departments has slowed, and can be seen to be fewer in number than the departments dedicated to CSR that have appeared in recent years. This is surmised to indicate that integrated management of environmental measure and social contributions under CSR departments has progressed further than the establishment of specialized departments related to environmental measures and departments dedicated to social

contribution.

This study contributes to our understanding that the patterns by which CSR spreads will differ depending on an industry's characteristics, and furthermore newly clarifies the fact that the large or small scale of a firm will influence the establishment of departments responsible for IR, legal and regulatory compliance.

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