Evaluation of internship programs abroad at universities in Indonesia: A case study of Indonesian intern students in Japan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate internship programs in Japan held by Japanese departments at universities in Indonesia as an implementation of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture's policy on independent study on campuses in 2020, examining the students' culture shock level and the difficulties they encountered during the internship program. This study used a mixed-methods approach with case studies. We used quantitative data to measure the students' culture shock level, and qualitative data to uncover the difficulties they encountered. Data were collected through a questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview with 100 intern students took place. This research found that Indonesian intern students' culture shock was at a moderate level and encountered difficulties due to language, job performance, Japanese work culture, negative local attitude toward intern students, and the intern's personalities such as low adaptability and lack of confidence. This study also found that all of the students at each level of culture shock faced difficulties in performing jobs because of their low Japanese ability and work culture differences, but student personalities and locals's responses are the determinants of the student's culture shock level. The implications of this study highlight the need for an evaluation of Japanese language and culture learning curricula and methods in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

There are three items in Japanese that mean 'internship' in English but have different concepts in Japanese, such as *kenshū*, *jisshū*, and *intanshippu*. Kenshū and jisshū are terms in the Technical Internship Training Program (TITP), which

are apprenticeship programs aimed at transferring skills, technology, and knowledge possessed by Japan to developing countries as a contribution to the international world [1]. While the term *intanshippu*, derived from 'internship' in English, means an apprenticeship program that provides an opportunity for students with active status at a tertiary institution to gain experience working in a company according to the field or career they want [2] this term of internship is the focus of this research.

The Japanese department at universities in Indonesia has started to conduct internship programs in Japan since 2012 through collaboration with Japan's government, such as METI (the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry of Japan), NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and companies that act as third parties, bridging cooperation between companies in Japan and universities in Indonesia. Each internship program offered has a different duration and place of work, depending on the program. The shortest internship duration is two weeks, and the longest is one year. Internship opportunities extend beyonds hotels or resorts, encompassing sports venues like golf, elctronics companies, advertising, publishing, resturants, convience stores and more.

The government established the "Independent Learning Independent Campus" also known as Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), a self-contained and versatile mode of higher education learning that aims to create a non-restrictive, creative learning community that meets student needs [3]. Students are encouraged to study outside their study program for 2 semesters out of the 8 semesters of their education. There are eight programs for this policy: internships, projects in the village, teaching at school, student exchange, research, entrepreneurship, independent studies, and humanitarian projects [4].

Considering the programs' benefits in developing students' abilities in Japanese language, soft skills, and interpersonal skills, such as professionalism, cultural sensitivity [5, 6] confidence, self-efficacy [7] and communication skills [8] the Japanese department at universities in Indonesia made this program one of the implementations of the MBKM policy. The students do not need to take time off from college or postpone their graduation to participate in an internship program like before because it is in the university curriculum and students get credit for it.

Despite the fact that more institutions organized internship programs since 2012, no research has been conducted to evaluate this program. This study attempts to investigate the intern students 'culture shock level and the difficulties they faced during the programs, and as well as to determine what needs to be considered and improved for the success of overseas internship programs in the future.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Culture Shock
Culture shock was first introduced by an anthropologist, Oberg, and defined as negative reactions to a new cultural environment, such as depression, frustration, and disorientation [9]. Along with the increasing research on culture shock, a new perspective has developed. Anderson [10] conducted research on definitions of culture shock and subsequently divided it into four distinct models: The recuperation model sees culture shock as negative psychological symptoms resulting from identity crises; the learning model sees culture shock as a learning experience that promotes self-development, personality growth, increased confidence, and awareness; the journey model, a blend of the recuperation and learning models, views culture shock as a crucial transitional phase in recovery and learning; and the equilibrium model suggests that systems remain stable until disrupted, and homeostatic adaptation reduces imbalances caused by foreign cultural confrontation, requiring immigrants to achieve satisfactory functioning within their frame of reference [11].

Through culture shock experiences, one can understand a new culture and get to know one's own culture [12] which increases cultural awareness and supports individual growth [13, 14]. In addition to personal growth, culture shock can be used as learning and evaluation material for related parties, in this case, the organizing organization, the company where the intern student works, and the university where they study.

2.2. Measuring the Degree of Culture Shock
In the 35 years since Oberg first used the term "culture shock," no study has attempted to quantify the phenomenon or even experimentally support the idea. As a result, Mumford [15] attempted to create and assess a questionnaire to gauge culture shock in his study. 380 British volunteers who were employed overseas in various nations made up the study's sample, and 12 questions were created as a result of this research [15]. The questions consist of seven culture shock questions and five interpersonal stress questions, which tend to characterize culture shock as a psychological rather than physical ailment. While there may be occasional physical consequences, psychological factors are typically the cause.

2.3. Cultural Difference between Indonesia and Japan
Japan and Indonesia are both Asian nations, but geographically and historically, Japan and Indonesia have contrasting backgrounds. The isolation policy during the Edo period, spanning 220 years from 1639 to 1853, isolated Japan from other countries, preventing foreign invasion and fostering racial homogeniety, leading to a culturally and ethnically homogenous society [16]. Japan has had tight controls on immigrants, making it a country with little room for foreigners [17] because the arrival of large numbers of immigrants to Japan is feared to contaminate and damage the social order and harmonious life of Japanese society that have been maintained for a long time [18]. Even though some Japanese people have begun to open up to foreigners' in today global era, many still feel uncomfortable with their presence [16].

In the meantime, Indonesia, which has more than 1,340 ethnic groups, is a world trade route and is geographically very strategically situated in the middle of the equator [19]. Furthermore, historically, it served as a hub for foreign countries to transit, including those from the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, and as a result, Indonesia was not immune from their

colonization. Indonesia and Japan are geographically and historically very different countries. While Japan is a homogeneous nation, Indonesia is a heterogeneous country that is accustomed to diversity and foreigners.

Table 1.
Cultural dimensions by Hofstede [20] between Japan and Indonesia.

Country	Hofstede's cultural dimension			
	IDN	MAS	PDI	UAI
Japan	46	95	54	92
Indonesia	14	46	78	49

Note: IDN (Individualism), MAS (Masculinity), PDI (Power distance), UAI (Uncertainty avoidance).

Table 1 shows that Japan's masculinity (MAS), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and individualism scores are higher than Indonesia's. The high degree of masculinity demonstrates that the Japanese have a clear division of roles between men and women. The Japanese expect women to be gentle, nurturing, and kind, while they expect men to be competitive, assertive, and tough. Men deal with facts; women deal with feelings. Men leave the house to work and provide for the family, while women look after the home [21]. Meanwhile, a high level of uncertainty avoidance shows that Japan is a busy, anxious, emotional, aggressive, and active society, attaching great importance to time and discipline in applying laws, rules, and codes of conduct to ensure a stable and orderly life [22]. Uncertainty is viewed as a threat in high-uncertainty avoidance societies, and it must be controlled through conservatism, law, and order. People avoid taking risks and resist change. People highly value seniority and company loyalty [21]. On the other hand, Indonesia has a lower score on both the dimensions of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. A low score of masculinity, shows that Indonesians prioritize quality of life, balance, peace of mind, family, and concern for the weak, while low uncertainty avoidance indicates passive, easy-going, slow, controlled, and lazy [22].

2.4. Determinants of Success and Failure in the Internship Program

Individual, organizational, and contextual factors determine success or failure in international missions. It is argued that individual factors such as the intern student's personality and intercultural skills are the determinants of the success of an internship program. The personalities of intern students are needed to handle trouble faced at the internship site, such as a positive, creative, open, independent, reflexive, and fateful attitude that there is no problem that has no solution [23]. This skill is important because it indicates an ability to believe in oneself and one's ability to succeed in a novel environment [24, 25]. Interns with high intercultural skills are those who have a higher ability to communicate effectively and establish personal relationships [26]. The organizational variables include preparation before departure and organizational social support on arrival. The preparations before departure include administrative support, briefing, visiting the host country, and providing training, whether pre departure or in country [27]. Pre-departure preparation is important because it provides interns with knowledge about the host country, which allows them to reduce the uncertainty of the new environment by anticipating environmental differences [28] as well as accurate information about their role, which leads to realistic expectations [29] that can reduce the amount of uncertainty associated with the work situation [30, 31]. Organizational social support on arrival, on the other hand, includes providing on-site or country training as well as acting as a mentor or supervisor. Social support from coworkers and possibly superiors in the novel environment that would provide an expatriate with information relating to the description of acceptable, less acceptable, or unacceptable behaviors in the new organizational setting could reduce the uncertainty caused by organizational culture novelty [32].

The last, contextual factors are related to the situation that influences intern students, such as time spent abroad, cultural distance between home and the host country, and economic and political context.

3. Method

This research employed a mixed method, incorporating case studies, to accomplish its objectives. Mixed-methods were applied to enhance understanding of problems or questions, effectively "mining" the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding [33]. Case studies can provide an opportunity for the researcher to gain a deep, holistic view of the research problem and may facilitate describing, understanding, and explaining a research problem or situation from the experiences or angles of the participants [34].

Four investigators conducted the study. The principal investigator, is a doctoral student at Padjajaran University who initiated the internship program at the university she teaches. The first co-author, is a Japanese lecturer who got his master's in Japan and is familiar with Japanese culture, and the second co-author is a professor at the Padjadjaran University doctoral program, who brings methodological rigor to research and checks for bias. The third co-author, who is also a professor at Padjadjaran University in the faculty of cultural science, helped the first author with the theory and the questionnaire. Participants in this study are 100 intern students from eight Indonesian universities that hold internship program in Japan. This study employed purposive sampling to gather as many samples, covering a wide range of case types [35]. The respondents consisted of 49 men and 51 women. 36 students worked as caddies at a country club in the Kansai area; 5 students worked in a restaurant in Osaka; 5 students worked at offices in Osaka and Tokyo; and 3 students worked in a mini-mart in Osaka and Okinawa. In addition, 32 students worked at a hotel for three months in Hokkaido, and 19 students did the same for six months in Hokkaido and Okinawa. A triangulation of data was used in this study through questionnaires and semi structured interviews. The questionnaire was distributed to intern students from February to March 2023 with the help of eight universities that held an internship program. The interview was conducted with 23 students

from each internship site who have returned to their home country; country club (n=6), hotel (n=10), office (n=4), restaurant (n=2), and family mart (n=1). The questionnaires consist of four parts. Part 1 includes questions about student identity and the program. Student identity includes gender, Japanese language ability, previous overseas experience, expectations, and whether there is or is not pre-departure training. Internship programs include the internship site, and duration. Meanwhile, parts 2 and 3 were based on a 12-item questionnaire developed by Mumford [15] to measure the intern students' level of culture shock. The questionnaire consists of seven cultural shock items and five interpersonal stress items. Meanwhile, Part 4 consists of semi-structured written interview about the difficulties they faced during the program. After screening the questionnaire responses, we conducted an interview with selected intern students to gain a clearer explanation of their answers that needed clarification. Texting and video calls were used to conduct the interview.

The fourth investigator measured intern students' culture shock level by calculating the scores of a 12-item questionnaire by Mumford in parts 2 and 3. The measurement scale includes 12 Likert-type items with three answers each. We mark the items with three possible answers, awarding 2 points for the first answer, 1 point for the second, and 0 points for the third. The final value is the total score for each answer. Scores between 11 and 14 indicate a high level, scores between 6 and 10 are included in the moderate level, and scores between 0 and 5 indicate a low level.

The answers to the questions in Part 4 were coded and analyzed by the first and second investigators with a keen awareness of their experiences living in Japan and knowledge about Japan's culture. We explored three strategies to avoid introducing personal interpretations. To begin, peer debriefings with the co-investigator were held throughout the analysis to reduce bias and over- or under-emphasis on concepts. Second, to ensure that the participants' words remained the center of the analysis, themes and subthemes were generated with a significant reliance on complete quotations. Membership verification was the third approach [33]. The level of Indonesian intern students' culture shock was measured, and the difficulties faced by intern were also found.

4. Result and Discussion
4.1. Result
In order to gain a general understanding of the state of intern students at the culture shock stage, this research investigated the interns' level of cultural shock and the difficulties they faced while taking part in the program.

4.1.1. Intern Student Level of Culture Shock
We divide the 12 questions into seven core culture shock questions (CSQ) and five interpersonal stress questions (ISQ). Each of the three potential answers in the question item receives a score: the first answer earns 2 points, the second earns 1 point, and the third receives 0 points. Likert-type with three options each make up the measurement scale. We determine the degree of culture shock by assessing the results of 12 questionnaire items. The overall score for each response determines the final grade. High level is defined as a score between 11 and 14, moderate level as between 6 and 10, and low level as between 0 and 5. The following are the results of Mumford's answers to 12 questions from 100 respondents (N=100).

Table 2.
Mumford questionnaire answers and average scores.

No.	12 Mumford questionnaire items	Point			Total
		2	**1**	**0**	**score/N**
A	Core of culture shock questions (CSQ)				
1	Do you feel strain from the effort to adapt to a new culture?	7	67	26	0.81
2	Have you been missing your family and friends back home?	24	71	5	1.19
3	Do you feel generally accepted by the local people in the new culture?	0	19	81	0.19
4	Do you ever wish to escape from new environment altogether?	2	29	69	0.33
5	Do you ever feel confused about your role and identity in the new culture?	3	42	55	0.48
6	Have you found things in your new environment shocking or disgusting?	7	52	41	0.66
7	Do you ever feel helpless or powerless when trying to cope with the new culture	2	34	64	0.38
B	Interpersonal stress questions (ISQ)				
1	Do you feel anxious or awkward when meeting local people?	8	55	37	0.71
2	When talking to people can you make sense of their gesture facial expressions?	2	29	69	0.33
3	Do you feel uncomfortable if people stare at you when you go out?	19	50	31	0.88
4	When you go shopping.do you feel as though people may be trying to cheat you?	1	2	97	0.04
5	Are you finding it an effort to be polite to your hosts?	95	5	0	1.95
Mean score					7.95

The calculation results of the CSQ and ISQ scores show an average value of 7.9, which means that the level of culture shock for intern students is at a moderate level. Meanwhile, from calculating individual scores, the following results were obtained: 19 intern students have a score of 14-11, 64 intern students have a score of 10-6, and 17 intern students have a score of 0-5.

Table 3.
Culture shock level of intern students.

Level of culture shock	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Score	11-14	6-10	0-5	
Number of student	19	64	17	100

Table 3 shows that the majority of the intern students were at "a moderate level," indicating that students faced difficulties during the program. To identify the problems, this study found the difficulties that students faced during their internship program based on the internship site and level of culture shock through open-ended questions and interviews. The summary of the difficulties encountered is shown in Table 4.

Table 4.
The difficulties of intern students at internship site.

Internship site	High level	Moderate level	Low level
Hotel	Job beyond expectation, language difficulties low adaptability	Job performing, language difficulties, unwelcome locals, work culture	Language difficulties Welcome locals (Social support) the job meet expectation Self-well prepared. High adaptability
Golf	Job performing, lack of self-confidence	Job performing, work culture, language difficulties (Dialect) racist costumers	Job performing, the job meet expectation welcome local (Social support)
Restaurant	Language (Dialect), unwelcome locals Job beyond expectation	Job performing, work culture	--
Family mart	unwelcome locals, Japanese work culture	Job performing, language (Dialect)	Language (Dialect) the job meet expectation, work culture
Office	Language, work culture Lack of self-confidence, unwelcome co-worker	Job performing, work culture language (Dialect and writing skills) work culture	-

According to Table 4, there are six general factors that cause intern students difficulty: language barrier, job performance, work culture, expectation, intern personalities, and Local's attitude toward intern students or social support.

4.1.2. Language Barrier

Before departure, the Japanese language proficiency of intern student varies. Table 5 shows that most intern student's Japanese proficiency is N3 and N4, or beginner-intermediate level.

Table 5.
JLPT level of Indonesian intern student.

*Japanese language proficiency test (JLPT) level	N2	N3	N4	N5	No answer	Total
Number of intern students	9	56	29	5	1	100

Note: *JLPT is a test to measure one's level of Japanese ability, consisting of 5 levels: N1 (The highest), N2, N3, N4, and N5 (The lowest).

Regarding the language barrier, intern students struggled to understand what the Japanese were saying. Three factors contributed to those difficulties: the differences between the Japanese taught in the classroom and the everyday Japanese, the speed at which Japanese speak, and the students' ignorance of professional language (*senmonyougo*). In Indonesia, the Japanese language studied tends to be formal and polite, with informal language rarely used. The absence of native staff in universities causes students to become unfamiliar with the speed at which Japanese is spoken. Meanwhile, intern students' ignorance regarding professional language is due to their work novelty at the internship site and different students' majors in their jobs.

The next difficulty is kanji. Students from countries that don't use kanji, like Indonesia, face difficulties due to the large number of kanji characters. Upon arrival in Japan, intern students, especially those who work in hotel kitchens and restaurants, were surprised by the prevalence of kanji and had difficulty reading and memorizing the kanji used in the names of food, drinks, cooking ingredients, and restaurant menus.

"I had difficulty memorizing where the ingredients for food, drinks, and food equipment are stored at the warehouse because everything is written in kanji." (R33, hotel intern).

Dialect has become a barrier for intern students working outside of Tokyo, particularly in Kansai area (Osaka, Nara, Wakayama and Mie prefectures), Hokkaido, and Okinawa. Understanding the dialect becomes challenging for foreigners, as they typically learn standard Japanese, which is prevalent in Tokyo area. Intern students found it difficult to communicate with local customers because they prefer to speak in their own dialect.

"In Osaka, it is more difficult to understand dialects. They speak very quickly, and I can't distinguish angry tones because they seem similar to me." (R41, Family mart intern).

The Japanese honorific is also one of the language problems faced by interns. Honorific language is one of the characteristics of a vertical collectivist society like Japan, which has to consider familiarity (degree of intimacy), social status, social relations (boss and worker; customer and salesman), gender, group membership (in-group and out-group), and situational context in using language to speak [36].

"The Japanese honorific language is difficult. I often make mistakes by using it the other way around. The words that meant humility, I said them toward my boss, and the words that meant honor, I said them toward myself." (R36, office intern).

The final requirement is the ability to speak and write in Japanese. Every internship site requires intern students' Japanese language skills. Internship places that require direct communication with costumers demand high level of students' communication skills. Meanwhile, internship places such as offices require intern students' writing skills to write reports.

"I have difficulty explaining the course and giving input to players in good and appropriate Japanese, that is easy for customers to understand." (R84, country club intern).

4.1.3. Job Performing

At internship sites, almost all interns struggle to perform their jobs effectively. The causal factors are low role clarity, high role novelty, high role discretion, and low Japanese language skills. Lack of role clarity at the internship site causes students to experience role shock due to the abrupt change [37]. Twenty students, including six high-level students, 13 moderate-level students, and one low-level student, faced challenges in performing their jobs due to a lack of information regarding roles at the internship site.

"The internship site did not provide me with detailed job descriptions beforhand." Therefore, when it came time for me to start working, I did not understand anything. *That made me depressed.*" (R102, restaurant intern).

The high novelty of a student's internship role stems from a mismatch between their major and the job, as well as the lack of proper training. Most students faced challenges in job performance due to unfamiliar tasks on internship sites; only 30 intern students participated in the hotel, aligned with their educational backgrounds. However, the remaining 70 students who participated in an internship program did not align with their educational background. Students from Japanese department at the University of Computer, known as R47, are employed as caddies at a country club.

"Because I don't play golf, I have difficulty giving advice to the player. Even though there was training upon arrival, there are some parts that are still difficult for me to understand." (R47, country club intern).

The absence of training before departure worsens the conditions for intern students. Table 6 presents number of students who received training, including pre-departure or in-country training, and students who did not receive any training based on internship site. Only 21 interns from offices and some hotels received pre-departure training. Upon arrival, students in the country club internship program received in-country job training to become professional caddies, with failure requiring repetition of training. Initially, students struggled with the fast-paced and Japanese-speaking training, but eventually, it helped them adapt to their work. Without any training, the remaining 44 interns faced confusions, stress, and even expressed a desire to return to Indonesia.

Table 6.
Training received by students.

Internship site	Number of interns	Training		Withouttraining
		Pre-departure	**In country**	
Hotel	51	15	0	36
Country Club/Golf	35	0	35	0
Restaurant	5	0	0	5
Family mart	3	0	0	3
Office	6	6	0	-
Total	100	21	35	44

Japan's high uncertainty avoidance score emphasizes norms, leading to rigid work environments and strict adherence to hereditary methods or *kata* passed down through generations to sustain their existing stability, despite practical alternatives. That is why role discretion at the internship site in Japan is high. They forbid independent innovation and require intern students to follow their methods, known as *kata*.

"Japanese are rigid and unflinching in their work, adhering strictly to company SOP (Standard Operation), even if there's a more practical alternative." (R32, hotel intern).

Low Japanese language skills caused difficulties in understanding orders, tasks, and dealing with customers.

"I work at Family Mart. Many times I get flustered with customers because they are so grumpy even for small mistakes, like when we didn't catch their words at once." (R16, Family Mart Intern).

4.1.4. Adapt to Japanese Work Culture

Japan and Indonesia are geographically, historically, and religiously distinct. This difference causes differences in values, norms, and characteristics of society, as well as in work culture [38] which causes intern students to experience difficulties during the program. Firstly, adapt to the Japanese work ethic, which is detail-oriented, active, fast, and professional. Because of those differences, about 20 intern students faced challenges in their work.

"I was shocked at how swiftly most Japanese people work. I felt overwhelmed and bewildered. I've tried my best, but I still can't keep up their speed."(R42, hotel intern).

As a collectivist country, Japan prioritizes group harmony over individual harmony [38]. *Honne tatemae* is a term used in Japanese culture to describe the outcome of upholding this harmony. *Honne* is one's true feelings and intentions, and *tatemae* is social lies and verbal noise used to maintain a good atmosphere and avoid conflict [39]. But for intern students, it showed Japanese falsehood and dishonesty that made them uncomfortable [40].

"Tatemae felt very uncomfortable. I thought the Japanese were nice to me, but it turned out that they were saying something bad about me behind my back.*"(R16, Family Mart intern)*.

The next challenges is implementing religious activities effectively. Japan is a non-religious country, while Indonesia is a predominantly religious country, and its culture is heavily influenced by religion [41], with about 87% of the population practicing Islam. This difference makes it difficult for intern students to carry out religious activities, such as five times of worship and not drinking alcohol, which is one of the Japanese work cultures, or *inshuu bunka* (drinking culture).

"I find it difficult to ask for a day off on Friday to attend Friday prayers." (R31, country club intern).

"After work, the boss often invites everyone out to eat and drink. Sometimes he pours sake into my glass. I'm confused about refusing it." (R51, country club intern).

Japan, known as a collectivist country that expects loyalty from its members, and as a masculine country, Japan places work as a central component of their lives [21]. Sacrificing leisure time to devote themselves to their work without giving up is considered a signal of loyalty to the company and motivation to work [42].

"Proposing a day off was difficult, and the fact that you were duped like a robot that never tired was a challenge." (*R92, country club intern)*.

4.1.5. Local's Attitude toward Indonesian Intern Students

The experiences of intern students revealed varying focal attitudes towards them, with some recieving positive responses like welcoming and helping, while other faced negative responses like discrimination, prejudice, and rejection. About 24 intern students faced challenges due to a negative local attitude.

"In two days, I had customers who didn't like Indonesians. When caddying them, he completely ignored me and didn't respond to what I said." (R47, country club intern).

*"I got upset when Japanese co-workers accused us of what we didn't do. I didn't experience Japanese *omotenashi or* hospitality." (R28, hotel intern).

Japan, as a homogenous country, has a preventive fear of diversity. Japan's history of isolation from the rest of the world and the belief that preserving its own cultural integrity is more important than accepting foreign cultures largely contribute to this fear of diversity. This explained why Japanese are cold or exhibit more hostility toward outsiders [43]. In addition, efforts to maintain homogeneity and increase the sense of nationalism of the Japanese, such as the *Nihonjinron* ideology in 1960–1980 after World War II, led to a sense of superiority and pride in their country, which has had an impact on the treatment of some Japanese, who tend to be dismissive, unwelcome, prejudiced, and even racist towards foreigners, especially people from developing countries [43, 44].

The response of the host community greatly influences the level of culture shock among internal students. Internal students who received positive responses were at the low level, and conversely, those who received negative responses were at the high and moderate levels.

4.1.6. Intern's Personality

Adler and Gundersen [45] state that not everyone who experiences stress will have a negative impact, depending on how the individual's character and attitude respond to the stressor. Intern students' personalities are crucial to their success in managing stressors [46]. In Table 4, interns at high levels of culture shock struggled due to a lack of self-confidence and low adaptability [11] whereas interns with high adaptability were at low level and found no difficulty.

"The issue is that I am among those who require a significant amount of time to adjust. At times, I yearn for the end of everything and want to surrender. (R17, hotel intern).

"Lack of confidence made it difficult for me to grow in the first few months." (R90, country club intern).

4.2. Discussion

The previous description of the difficulties intern students faced leads to the conclusion that the following factors contributed to their moderate level of culture shock: a lack of language skills; the absence of job training; negative reactions from locals; and the weak personalities of the students. The troubles faced by intern students can be resolved by

giving them adequate pre-departure preparation, pre- or in-country training, a mentor at the internship site, and having the university oversee the program throughout its duration.

You can prepare both individually and organizationally before departure. Three intern students at a low level performed individual preparation by reading about the culture of the destination country, browsing the internet, or asking someone who has already experienced the same transition [47] to help understand the potential changes the intern may encounter. With adequate knowledge, intern students will avoid experiencing language shock, role shock, and conditions beyond their expectations upon their first arrival [48].

"I didn't experience culture shock or any difficulties because, before leaving. I read about Japanese culture, work ethic and shared it with people who had worked in Japan." (R60, hotel intern).

Preparation is not only intellectually, but emotionally and psychologically, as well as pursuing and responding to new experiences in a different culture [47]. Preparation emotionally and psychologically was done by an intern at low level who works at hotel.

"I didn't encounter any difficulties because, basically, when you set foot in another country, you have to understand from the start and be ready to accept that there must be a cultural gap." (R32, hotel intern).

Psychological individual preparation is very important because it relates to individual readiness to change, to overcome problems and difficulties while in a new environment. It was clear from Table 2, that intern students who have strong personalities and are self-confident, assertive, and adaptable are at a low level, whereas intern students who have weak personalities and are unassured, passive, and difficult to adapt are at a high level. It means that the strength or weakness of intern personality traits is a more important factor in determining the high or low level of student culture shock than skills, knowledge, and abilities [26, 48].

As organization, preparation can be held by sending organization or the company to Japan and universities. Sending organizations, can provide pre departure training or briefings. Pre-departure training can be in the form of intercultural training, language training, orr job training [27]. By pre-departure training or briefing, intern students will be well-informed about a general understanding of the destination country, such as climate, dialect, and other useful information required at their internship site [48]. The sending organization must also provide information about intern student roles at internship site [32, 49] to ease the transition by allowing interns to make the role more controllable, predictable, familiar, and leading to realistic expectations [29].

The company where the internship took place, providing job training post-arrival and mentors or supervisors as part of the interns' psycho-social transition during the internship program, is critical [50-52]. Job training is essential given the high job novelty and destination countries with strong cultural influences, such as Japan. Having a mentor will be very helpful in getting social support from the host culture, which as shown in Table 2, is very influential on the level of culture shock of intern students.

The university should ensure the effective implementation of their internship program by appointing experienced supervisors for each internship location and/or conducting regular visits to ensure that the internships are being carried out in an appropriate manner [53]. The university can also ask interns to give feedback on their experiences during or at the end of the internship or conduct research to discover the problems or the difficulties faced by intern students in completing the program in order to evaluate the implementation of the internship program for the university and the internship program's overall quality improvement.

5. Conclusions

An internship program is part of the learning and career development process and can help develop interpersonal skills such as professionalism, cultural sensitivity, time management, integrity, teamwork skills, professionalism, and customer management experience. Students also improve their communication, confidence, and self-efficacy, which are not generally part of the formal tertiary education curriculum. However, in a number of cases, including discrepancies in agreements related to the type of work and hours of work, university supervision is required. Supervision from the university can be carried out by assigning supervisors to several intern students who are in charge of controlling student conditions by requiring students to provide periodic reports regarding their activities while participating in the internship program. Conducting visits to internship sites to avoid misusing the internship program to provide labor in Japan.

6. Implications of the Study

This study discovered how crucial linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness are to internship activities in Japan. Students faced challenges due to language and cultural differences, necessitating an evaluation of Japanese language and culture learning curriculum and methods.

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