

Culture Shocks at Japanese Workplace of Indonesian Student Taking Internship Program in Japan

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to find out various aspects of culture shock experienced by Indonesian student taking internship in Japan especially at their workplace. The data were collected from 12 respondents by questionnaires and semi-structured interviews via social media such as WhatsApp, Messenger with Indonesian students who had taken internship programs in Japan. One of the major findings of this study is that Indonesian students experienced cultural shock related to language, communication, relationship, values and norms at their workplace, appearances, beliefs and religion, but most of the respondents felt confused and uncomfortable with language problems and the norms and values at the workplace. The problems faced by student interns related to language: 1) The use of honorifics; 2) Terms related to work; 3) *Kanji*/Chinese Character that used for kinds of drink or food names. In relation to norms and values at workplace, respondents had difficulty in understanding Japanese culture called *tatemae* and *honne*, *hadaka no tsuki ai*/nude communication, drinking habit, etc. Another culture shock they experience related to appearance, dress they wear at work and also the concept of religion's role to individual life. Finding the effect of Culture shock to the work performance is recommended for the next research.

1. Introduction

There are terms of internship in Japanese, namely *Kenshu*, *jisshu* and *intanshippu*. *Kenshu* and *jisshu* are terms in the Technical Internship Training Program (TITP), which is an apprenticeship program that aims to transfer the skills, technology and knowledge possessed by Japan to developing countries as a contribution to the international world [1]. While *intanshippu* is an internship program that provides an opportunity for students with active status in a university to experience working in a company according to the field or career they want [2]. This term of internship which is the focus of this research.

There are several studies on culture shock of Indonesians living in Japan. Maemura, et al, found out there are external factors made the adjustment difficult for Indonesian trainee of TITP in Japan, such as, language they used for their work, Chinese characters, regional dialects, and the separation of garbage [3]. Rafika et al, investigated four foreign workers from Indonesia who worked in four different countries, Malaysia, Australia, Lebanon and Japan. According to Rafika et al, there are ten aspects of culture shock experienced by the four foreign workers, which six aspects were experienced by four subjects and, the rest four aspects were only experienced by some of them. Those six aspects are language, environment, friends at work, food, dress, and women-men relationship. Meanwhile the

four aspects are season, rules, local people, and habit [4]. Research about culture shocks experienced by Indonesian taking TITP program some could be found but there has been no research yet about culture shock experienced by students taking internship program which become the focus of the research.

The purpose of this study is to find out various aspects of culture shock experienced by Indonesian student taking internship in Japan especially in their workplace with cultural anthropology approach. The research not only find the category or aspect of culture shocks like previous research, but also describe, analyze and compare between Indonesia and Japan culture so it can be understood why the culture shock occurred.

1.1. Culture Shock

The term culture shocks was first introduced by an anthropologist named Oberg in 1960 which is a condition of psychological discomfort in dealing with new experiences as a transition effect from a familiar culture to unfamiliar culture by people who work, live, or study abroad [5]. Then along with the increasing research on cultural shocks, the concept, description and definition of cultural shock was expanded. Several other terms also appear, such as, *Culture Fatigue*, *Language Shocks*, *Role Shocks*, and *Acculturative Stress*. From the definitions of culture shock, Anderson classified culture shock into four models, namely the Recuperation Model, the Learning Model, the Journey Model and the Equilibrium Model [6].

The recuperation model is the first and most common model of definitions of cultural shock. According to this model, the culture shock is a temporary condition in which recovery depends on the personality and skills of individuals.

The learning model sees cultural shock as a stimulus to acquire the specific culture skills needed to engage in social interactions in new environments. There are two different thoughts in this learning model. First, the idea that the thing that needs to be mastered when entering a new environment is communication skills. The second thought is that the thing that needs to be mastered when entering a new environment is learning the appropriate social behavior in a new culture [7].

The journey model sees cultural shock as a transitional experience. Adler divides this "transitional experience" into five stages: 1) contact, where the individual is in a new cultural environment and assesses existing in the new culture based on the culture of origin; (2) disintegration, in which confusion and disorientation arise due to increased perceived cultural differences; (3) reintegration, characterized by hostile rejection of the culture of origin which acts as a foundation in determining the nature of future reactions; (4) autonomy, in which increased sensitivity, personal flexibility, and appropriate skills in coping with developing new cultures; and (5) independence, where individuals accept and enjoy social, psychological and cultural differences.

The Equilibrium Model sees that the individual who is suffering from cultural shocks are in an imbalance, and their reactions to the new culture show a desire to return to balance.

1.2. Internship Program

The internship program to Japan has been introduced and offered to universities in Indonesia, especially to the Japanese Language/Literature Department since 2012 and continues to grow with a longer duration of internship and more diverse range of internship places. Previously, the duration of the internship program offered was less than 90 days. But now, internship programs of more than 90 days, such as six months or even one year, are being offered. Internship places are not limited to hotels, but are varied, such as electronic companies, computers, advertising, publishing, restaurants, resorts, and even golf.

Based on the duration of the internship, there are internships with less than 90 days and internships with more than 90 days. There are also, unpaid Internships and paid internship. The duration of the internship, paid or unpaid will take effect to the visa that has to take. Paid internships for less than 90 days or more than 90 days use a special activity visa or *tokutei katsudou*. A letter of eligibility is required to get a special activity visa. To get a letter of eligibility, an MOU or collaboration between

the company and the university is required in addition to other documents, such as a Certificate of Equalization of SKS, Certificate of Active Student, Statement of Graduation Plan. These letters are needed because the internship program is organized for educational purposes.

2. Method

This research used qualitative methods and cultural anthropology approach. The main objective of cultural anthropology is the comparative study of human society and culture by describing, analyzing cultural differences to show how a group adapts to an environment [8].

The research data obtained from questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was distributed to 12 students who have participated in the internship program in Japan. Later on, an interview was conducted via WhatsApp, Facebook or Messenger to get a better picture or to get clearer information regarding the answers to the questionnaire.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Culture shock experienced by interns

Table 1. Culture shock related to language

Resp	Japanese* Proficiency test	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
1	N2	- I did mistakes in structure, etc, when writing and presenting business trip report in Japanese in front of all the employees. - Using <i>sonkeigo</i> /honorific and <i>kenjougo</i> /humble language are often reversed.
2	N4	- I don't have Indonesian friend at my working place. So, when I didn't understand about something I have no friend to ask who can explain it to me in Indonesian.
3	N3	- The use of <i>keigo</i> /honorific language is very obvious at work. - I was shocked when I encountered foreign guests and had to translate golf terms that I commonly practiced in Japanese into other languages.
4	N3	- I felt confused because I had to speak and responded in Japanese very quickly.
5	N3	- I was confused at first because I did not get used to hear or speak Japanese that used at work such as honorific language and special terms related to work.
6	N3	- The influence of the mother's tongue is too strong that sometimes what I want to say is not said correctly.
8	N2	- I don't like Japanese which requires polite/honorific language when talking to superiors. Because I didn't master it.
12	N3	- It is very difficult to memorize the names of the drinks, and to find the location of items in restaurant storage areas such as tissue stock locations, straws, salad dressing and so on because they are written in kanji.

Japanese proficiency Test, N5 –N1, N5 the lowest and N1 the highest.

Table 2. Culture shock related to communication

Resp	Work of place	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
1	Office, Tokyo	- One of the senior employee often commented on my mistakes behind my back. Since that I became afraid to do something wrong and uncomfortable for always fear that other people is talking something bad about me either. - Gathering with company employees to the onsen, where people soak in it naked.
3	Golf cadygirl/Osaka	- Japanese's joke tends to be rude and physical. Sometimes the Japanese joke is talking about someone's physical form.
4	Hokkaido	- I was shocked when I was on a bus and asked for the last drop-off location, some young Japanese were a bit cold to foreigners. - One of the people at work is cold to strangers.

Resp	Work of place	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
5	Hokkaidou	- There has been misunderstanding because of the <i>honne</i> (true one) and <i>tatemae</i> /pleasantries in Japanese culture.
10	Cady	- Joking topics that often involve dirty jokes. - Japanese people are very professional about work. When we made a mistake they will say it flatly ignoring the close relationship between each other.
12	Waiters, Okinawa	- a senior foreign employee staff who acted as supervisor of the interns, always angry and put the blame on us.

Table 3. Culture shock related to Relationship at working place

Resp	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
1	- There was a senior employee who did not get Meishi when I first came in the company and introduce myself. Since that and he always commented on the way I dress and the way I behave behind my back along to his colleagues.
3	- There are guests who commit racism against me. I just smiled and tried to get a good impression from these guests.
4	- There are still some Japanese people who cannot accept foreigners
7	- Some seniors are racist. - The culture of drinking sake/beer in Japan is also very common and intimacy between people is very much influenced by their drinking habits, so I have a hard time making Japanese friends because I don't drink beer, sake.
9	- Japan differentiates others based on race and country (racism).
10	- Japanese are very professional. Outside of work they are nice and friendly, but if at work they will really serious and act as their position.

Table 4. Culture shock related to appearances at working place

Resp	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
1	- During an official trip to Sendai prefecture. I wore a shirt complete with loafers, and a neat coat but wore a black tie. Seeing me wearing a black tie a senior employee talked about me with another colleague, insinuating that I was going to attend a funeral.
5	- At the time of Internship when giving orders, guests refused because I was wearing a head scarf/hijab.
8	- Japanese people rarely wear flip-flops when they leave the house, they wear shoes when leaving the house.

Table 5. Culture shock related to norm and value at working place

Resp	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
1	- When I first entered the office, I became acquainted with all the employees in that room. But at that time I only brought a few <i>meishi</i> /business cards, because I kept the rest in apato. So I only give meishi to a few people because it's limited. There is one senior employee who didn't get <i>meishi</i> and he commented that I have no manners. - Soaking in an onsen together with everyone in the company naked. - My Japanese co-workers joke about pornographic stuff that makes me ilfeel at the onsen when everyone is completely naked. - Talking someone behind is not good thing in Indonesia but it's allowed in Japan's culture to avoid confrontation.
2	- At work I was required to always smile, but because my face expressions always look flat, I have to practice my expressions too. - Japanese people always follow the prescribed method of work, although I think there are more effective ways.
6	- Arrive at the office on time is considered late. - Leaving the office on time before the others leave considered not good.
7	- The culture of drinking sake / beer in Japan is also very common. - I am confused about the Japanese rule that you have to throw away leftover food (meaning food

Resp	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
	that has not been touched at all) and cannot carry it - Have to work outdoors without rest during snow storms with temperatures reaching almost -20 ° Celsius.
8	- When eating with the boss, the boss pays all the cost of the meal. - Appreciate those who work by saying <i>otsukaresama</i> . - There is a must to serve guests well and in excellent physical condition. - Too tense at work and don't think about subordinates.
10	- The topic of jokes often involves dirty jokes which are considered taboo in Indonesia.
11	- When I got accident that my arms was broken when I was working, I was shock because there wasn't health insurance because I was interns and interns cannot have insurance.
12	- When working there is a lot of pressure from everywhere and what I think it is very heavy because I was rushed to be able to open the restaurant on time where there are almost 30 more menus that have to prepare. - I refused to tasted wine when I was moved to bartender at the restaurant. - I asked 5 minutes in my working time to pray, but the manager didn't allow me.

Tabel 6. Culture shock and religion

Resp	Summary of event experienced in the Japan
5	- Difficult to find a mosque and difficult to determine prayer times.
7	- I felt homesick because I wanted the convenience of halal food and ease of worship. Common things in Indonesia, such as the sound of the call to prayer and recitation through mosque speakers, make me homesick even more.
9	- I am less nimble in doing work, such as bringing food from the kitchen to the table, carrying cutlery (plates, spoons, forks, etc.). - The most challenging thing for me is when I am required to serve as many as 200 guests at a time during weekdays.
11	- As a Muslim, I am obliged to perform Friday prayers while that day is not my holiday schedule. Then I tried to negotiate with the company so that my holiday schedule could be moved to Friday.
12	- It is difficult to find a place and time to pray in my internship area at Onna.

3.2. Explaining the Culture Shock experienced by Interns

When comparing each category of culture shock experienced by internship participants, it was found that a large number of respondents felt confused and uncomfortable with language problems and the norms and values at the workplace (see Tables 1 and 5).

From Table 1 it can be seen that the problems faced by student interns related to language: 1) The Using of honorifics; 2) Terms related to work; 3) Kanji/Chinese Character that used for kinds of drink or food names.

Unlike Indonesia, in Japanese there is honorific language called *keigo* that is normally classified into three groups, *sonkeigo*/exalted terms, *teineigo*/neutrally polite terms, *kenjoogo*/humble terms. To choose which one from those three, Mizutani described six factors that had to be considered, Familiarity (degree of intimacy), Social status, Social relations (boss & worker; customer & salesman), Gender, Group membership (in-group, out-group) and Situational context [9]. In other words, it is important to recognize someone's position in a group and adjust the outward behavior including language [10].

One of the culture shock which is related to communication, is *honne* and *tatemae*. *Honne* represents one's true feelings and thoughts while *tatemae* is a socially required and consequently acceptable white lie, used not to hurt peoples' feelings, to avoid causing losing of face by anybody and to avoid revealing the thoughts and emotions of the speaker [11]. In daily practice, *tatemae* is often used at formal occasions and when talking to people from out-group in order to maintain the harmony and *honne* is used in the inner circle of close family members or intimate friends [12]. Foreigners are always considered as out-group in Japan even if they come to work at their place and be a part of

them. Therefore, when there is something the Japanese doesn't like about the foreigner, he will not say it directly for fear of destroying the harmony between the foreigner and his company. As a result, the feeling or thoughts will be discussed frankly and openly with the people closed to him or people in-group.

Another Japanese communication is *hadaka no tsukai*, literally means a “naked relationship”. It means that a relation between people without being tied to their status or title and nothing to hide. There is an unspoken rule that we have to respect each other and accept each other as they are. Just by immersing in a bath together, means the distance between each other becomes much closer.

Related to Religion, there is something that should know, how Japanese think about religion. Religion for Japanese society is something that is very private. Religion for the Japanese is an individual matter. In the Japanese constitution, the government must not interfere in religious matters and strictly prohibits the use of the State budget for matters related to religious activities. Even because religion is a private matter, including it in other matters such as office, school is something that is not allowed in the norms of Japanese society. In other words, the norms of Japanese society show that religious identity which is a private matter must not be exhibited or shown to the general public. This concept is different with Indonesia, who think religion is a life guidance that have to implement in all aspect of life.

Related to appearance, especially dress, Japanese culture has some basic rules that must be considered. Men should go for a dark suit with a white tie at a formal ceremony, but if the occasion is more informal, the tie can be colorful. Avoiding not to wear a black tie with black coat because such suits are worn by Japanese at funeral [13].

4. Conclusion

Cultural shock can be viewed as a positive process, namely as a learning experience that leads individuals to understand intercultural communication. Cultural shock can be viewed as a transitional experience that can lead individuals to acquire new knowledge through understanding indigenous cultures related to their own ethnocentrism and to gain new perspectives on their native culture and other cultures. As a learning experience, an internship in Japan needs to be done so that students can understand communication between Japanese and Indonesian cultures.

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