

The Implementation of *Omotenashi* and Experience of Internship Students in Hotel and Ryokan in Japan

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Abstrak

Omotenashi adalah keramah-tamahan orang Jepang yang menggarisbawahi soal kenyamanan dan kepuasan dari orang lain. Penerapan *omotenashi* terbaik ada di hotel dan ryokan di Jepang. Beberapa mahasiswa UNITOMO melakukan magang di hotel dan ryokan di Jepang dan juga mengalami *omotenashi* secara langsung di sana. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan implementasi *omotenashi* dan reaksi mahasiswa magang terhadap standar *omotenashi* di hotel dan ryokan di Jepang. Wawancara langsung dan observasi dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data dan metode kualitatif digunakan sebagai cara untuk menganalisis data tersebut. Ada tiga hal utama yang dibutuhkan dalam melakukan *omotenashi*, yaitu penampilan, tingkah laku, dan penggunaan bahasa. Ide utamanya adalah menghias diri sendiri untuk membentuk kenyamanan bagi orang lain. Mahasiswa magang menerapkan standar *omotenashi* melalui berbagai kendala, terutama faktor bahasa, komunikasi, dan budaya. Kesimpulannya, mempelajari *omotenashi* digunakan untuk memahami keramah-tamahan orang Jepang lebih dalam dan bagaimana penerapannya di hotel dan ryokan. Mahasiswa magang juga dapat memperdalam pengetahuan tentang disiplin orang Jepang dalam penerapan *omotenashi* lebih lanjut.

Kata Kunci: Jepang; Keramah-Tamahan; Magang; *Omotenashi*; Ryokan

1. Introduction

In digital era, communication between humans is mostly done through online media, so the use of language, behavior, and appearance is considered not an important thing. On the other hand, ethics and manners in everyday life are still needed (Fauziah & Amril, 2022; Yi, 2016). Learning ethics and manners should be done from an early age, but it is getting unavoidable for college students. This is intended so that when entering the world of each occupation, students do not experience further culture shock and could find best ways to cope with it.

Ethics and manners in appearance, behavior, and the use of language in communication are very important for the business world engaged in services, such as hotels, culinaries, tourism, and others (Surajaya, 2020). Furthermore, matters related to appearance, behavior, and

language are included in the important concept of service which is often called *omotenashi* in Japan. *Omotenashi* is an expression of heartfelt hospitality, service, or welcome to guests (WakuWakuMagazine, 2016; Yi, 2016). Faculty of Letters in Universitas Dr. Soetomo since 2016 has shaped collaboration with several hotels in Japan which provide internship opportunities for students of the Japanese Literature study program. Until now, there are approximately 30 students who have participated in internships in several hotels in Japan, including in Hokkaido, Kyoto and Okinawa. This internship activity is one of the student learning processes before graduation to learn about how to look, behave, communicate, and be ethical in their each occupation.

The question is, how is *omotenashi* implemented in hotels and *ryokan* in Japan? Moreover, how may the students correspond to standardized *omotenashi* defined by the hotel and *ryokan*? The purpose of this study is to describe the application of *omotenashi* by internship students of UNITOMO in Japan, the obstacles encountered in implementing *omotenashi*, and the factors that trigger the emergence of these obstacles. Through this research, it will be found that the *omotenashi* values are well embraced by students during their internship in Japan alongside with its constraints and triggering factors. The benefits that can be obtained from this research are basic references as a guide to shape student character when entering the world of work that are useful for students, especially Japanese Literature study programs in increasing the competitiveness of following graduates.

2. Method

This study uses a type of qualitative research as a method and analysis of research data. Qualitative research was chosen because it is used to understand an event experienced by research subjects in depth with more emphasis on meaning rather than quantity of data. Therefore, it matches with the results that the researchers want to get from this research. This research uses a case study approach. The case study used in this study is an intrinsic case study, namely by researching and exploring the basics of the examined case so that the whole case could be understood. This research is a field research with interview method. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured method with five key informants (BA, NY, VA, NA, and D). To complement the interview data, a participatory direct observation plan was carried out in November 2022 at the Satomo and Kamogawa *Ryokan*. However, due to limited time, observations were limitedly

made at orphanages and Hamasaki *ryokan* in the Amakusa area, Kumamoto, Japan and at the *omotenashi* cafe in the Yamaga area, Kumamoto, Japan. The observation was continued with interviews with the owners of the three places to strengthen the data analysis. To strengthen the substance of the data from interviews and observations, a documentation study was conducted. All the data that has been collected is described based on the formulation of the research problem.

Many studies related to *omotenashi* have been carried out, one of which is done by Okubo in 2007 stating that recent Japanese-style hospitality or *omotenashi* has attracted world attention (Sato & Al-alsheikh, 2014). *Omotenashi*, which originates from the tea ceremony or *chanoyu*, is not only a central concept of service delivery in *kaiseki* restaurants (Japanese restaurants) and traditional inns, but has also become an important element in all areas of Japan's service industry. The research of "*The Application of Omotenashi to Internship Students in Japan*" is a continuation of the research entitled "*Cultural Shock Experienced by UNITOMO Students in Japan*". The research was presented at the International Conference on Japanese language Education Literature and Culture seminar at UPI Bandung on September 8-9 2018. The results of the research concluded that one of the cultural shocks experienced by UNITOMO students who carried out internships at hotels in Japan is the work system. The work system in every company is certainly different. Working in a factory is certainly different from that in a hotel or restaurant since one is behind the desk while another is where guests are always in contact.

Moreover, a literature study entitled "*Spirit of Omotenashi in Chanoyu for Japanese Companies*" was presented at the National Seminar at Surabaya State University on October 20 2018. The next is field research about *omotenashi* applied in hospitality companies, with the title

"*Omotenashi in the Work Culture of Japanese Companies in Indonesia*". The data were taken from the results of questionnaires, interviews, and observations made at tourist attractions that adopted the Japanese model in Batu, East Java. The results of this study are that three important things related to *omotenashi* (appearance, behavior, and use of language) are well-embraced by the employees. They show attitude of *omotenashi* in terms of appearance, starting from preparing to start work by tidying up. In terms of behavior, employees do *ojigi* or Japanese greeting and smile to hotel customers and to fellow co-workers. In terms of the use of language, they are mainly very communicative. However, it seems that the company's board of directors has not paid much attention to providing Japanese language training to the employees in order to support their work with Japanese nuances. This research was presented at the Asian Conference on Humanities, Industry, and Technology for Society in 2019.

From the previous studies above, this paper would like to fill the gap research in how internship students reacted to implementation of *omotenashi* in hotel and *ryokan* in Japan. Through interview as data collecting, this paper would like to show that *omotenashi* is not merely one-sided from the *ryokan*, but also from the sides of the students. By accentuating students' side, this paper indicates that implementation of *omotenashi* may also vary according to others' understanding of the concept. Then, this paper also enriches matter of *omotenashi* not as a given definition, but as a flexible process in which its idea is simultaneously produced and consumed as well.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 *Omotenashi* as Matter of Japanese Hospitality

Suryawati et al. explains that *omotenashi* is an expression of hospitality, service, or heartfelt welcome to guests (Suryawati et al., 2019). In other words, *omotenashi* is needed for the world of work related to services. Tomoko explains *omotenashi* as hospitality in serving guests or tourists as one of main characteristics of Japan (Janti, 2020). In addition, *omotenashi* is a high-quality service came from the heart so that there is good interaction, touchpoint, and communication between the service provider or seller and the customer. This *omotenashi* is inherited from generation to generation as a cultural tradition and way of life of the Japanese nation (Fauziah & Amril, 2022; Yamaguchi, 2017).

Omotenashi (おもてなし) is rooted from *motenasi* (もてなし) and is given the suffix "O" (お) as its subtle form. *Motenasi* is widely translated as acceptance, reception, or service. This word comes from the verb *motenasu* (もてなす) which means to receive, to entertain, or to serve (Belal et al., 2013; Matsuura, 1994). An example of the use of the word *motenasi* is *te atsuimotenashi* (手厚いもてなし) which means a warm welcome, or *shinsetsu ni motenasu* (親切にもてなす)" which means to accept warmly. Then, Christel Takigawa, a television journalist in his speech in Buenos Aires as a team for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, said the word *motenasu* in his statement "Regardless of what generation a person might be from, or where you are in Japan, you will encounter that spirit of *omotenashi*" (Jordan, 2014). Takigawa spells this word slowly "O - MO - TE - NA - SHI" and ends with *ojigi*, which is a Japanese salute by clapping hands together and bowing. After that occasion, the word *omotenashi* became worldly popular outside of Japan (Pelicanò, 2019).

The main elements of *omotenashi* could not be separated with the main word of *iki*. Ichijou states that Japanese culture has a word "IKI (粋)" (Ichijou, 2015). This

word in the dictionary has a denotation meaning of cultural disposition and deepest heart. *Iki* has the meaning of being worry, concern, and wise as well. This meaning is a representation of sympathetic behavior. The purpose of this sympathetic gesture is to respect others as dignified human beings (Fauziah & Amril, 2022; Pelicanò, 2019). The basis of respecting humans is shown by respecting people, not bothering people, making friends to make people happy, treating people kindly and warmly, not making someone feel bad, and not hurting others. This is the main ideas of the values of applying *omotenashi* in everyday life.

Based on the perspective above, there are 3 main points needed in doing *omotenashi*, namely appearance, behavior, and use of language. In terms of appearance, Ichijou divides it into three steps that must be considered (Ichijou, 2015). First, be careful in appearance. Appearance is about showing good intentions. Specifically, styling the hair, wearing clothes properly, and even using make-up properly. Clothing and make-up are not to decorate yourself, but must make the other person feel comfortable. For example, when meeting someone, all of parts of the body are seen by the other person (Morishita, 2016; Pelicanò, 2019). If the clothes are messy, then the other person will be anxious because they are uncomfortable. If the voice is too low and hard to hear, or the voice is too loud, then it will make others uncomfortable as well. If your sweat smells or you wear perfume that is too strong, it will also make the other persons uncomfortable. In Japanese, the idea is indicated through the word *midashinami* which means a person's first impression of your expression (最初に相手の目に飛び込んでくるのはあなたの表情であり、身だしなみです) is the first step to be considered in *omotenashi*. The second point is about how someone present him or herself (Belal et al., 2013; Surajaya, 2020). The way each person appears to others may change depend on

the place, for example appearance as a businessman, or at ceremonial events, casual events, etc. Everyone has various preferences for fashion, but there are some standards need to be obeyed, such as neat collars, styling hair, wearing age-appropriate clothing colors, tidying nails, etc. Ideas like these are to show beauty by decorating oneself by not forgetting modesty and decency (Kuraesin, 2021; Yi, 2016). The third is the importance of politeness of heart. Giving a good impression on the other person, is the beginning of good human relations. The basis for making a good impression is that there must be a feeling of respect. Respect could be realized by paying attention to appearance. In human relations, fashion is also an important factor by considering concept of TPO (Time, Place, and Occasion).

Another aspect of *omotenashi* is behavior. The origin of manners is in flexible behavior and the origin of behavior lies in attitude. So behaving properly requires good attitude either. Ichijou says to behave properly in Ogasawara Ryuu, the first teaching is basic ways of straightening back, lifting chin, puffing out chest, and face facing forward with eyes straight ahead (Ichijou, 2015). The reason is to evade condition of getting tired easily by balance the upper body through pose of *douzukuri* as Bodhisattva technique. *Douzukuri* as basis of behavior is applied to the way of sitting *seiza* on below or sitting on a chair properly, not tilting the upper body left-right back and forth. Besides, what needs to be considered is the expression of the eyes. Moving the eyes around will look like an impatient human while focused eyes on a point can give an intense feeling. When conversing with people, do not stare at one place with strong eyes. It is better to see the person's face from chest to head. When conversing, be sure to look at the other person's eyes then to see his whole body at the right duration and time (Kuraesin, 2021; Pelicanò, 2019). Moreover, the pose of

mouth is also important. The best of facial expression is a smile. The smile needs to be made by lifting both sides of the mouth and the corners of the mouth upwards. In addition, how to walk requires as smooth as flowing, not being dragged like carrying a heavy load.

The usage of language is crucial in *omotenashi*. Ichijou states that language is the basis of hospitality (Ichijou, 2015). Humans think about many things, convey their own thoughts, express feelings and communicate with others with language. It is not exaggeration to say that the human nature of a person emerges and can be seen from the language used, even if it is spoken accidentally. Language could also reveal the surrounding environment in which the person grew up (Morishita, 2016; Yi, 2016). Even though someone looks and acts impressively, if he or she makes a mistake in speaking, it will make the other persons feel uncomfortable and even hurt others.

Some things in using language that must be considered when doing *omotenashi* are using correct language and directly calling customer's name. Lately, many young people have their own style of language, which older people may find it disturbing. Language is a means of maintaining good relations between humans (Kuraesin, 2021; Yi, 2016). The important thing to note is to think about the position of the other person, have a heart that thinks about the feelings of the other person, and use good and polite language. Speaking must not use harsh language with no sensitivity. Kawamori Yoshizou writes "Not using offensive language is indeed very difficult in any situation, but people should be sensitive about the feelings of the other persons. It is much better to avoid language that can hurt others on purpose, and people should be more careful with anyone." (Ichijou, 2015).

The name is given by parents with the hope of good meaning of it. A good word when greeting a guest is Sir, Madam, Mam, etc. However, if someone knows the

name of the other person, be sure to call him or her by name (Morishita & Kosaka, 2017). If someone named Aoki comes to a company or restaurant, then avoid greeting him with "*Irasshaimase*", but with "*Aoki-sama, irasshaimase.*" (Welcome, Mr. Aoki). When expressing gratitude, it is better not to say "*Arigatou gozaimasu*", but to say "*Aoki-sama, arigatou gozaimasu*" (thank you, Mr. Aoki). Not only to guests, addressing superiors and subordinates should be done by their names. When asking for help from a subordinate named Yamamoto, it is best not to say "Hey you, please do this." but to speak "*Yamamoto-san, onegaishimasu*" (Mr. Yamamoto, please help). In short, language is an expression of the heart that must reflect sincere feeling.

3.2 Implementation of *Omotenashi* in Hotel and *Ryokan* in Japan

Kuniko states that *ryokan* is the most appropriate place to apply *omotenashi* (Kuniko, 2006). There are four *omotenashi* that are usually done in *ryokan*, the first one is *kokoro no komotta omotenashi wo taisetsu ni shite imasu* (心のこもったおもてなしを大切にしています). The point is to do service wholeheartedly. The first job done by Okami san (a lady assigned to manage the *Ryokan*) and room boys and girls to shape a line some minutes before hotel check in time (14.00 hrs). They line with beautiful kimonos at the entrance to welcome guests. After the guests enter the room, the next task is to serve tea and cake. Then, *yukata* are brought to the rooms according to the size of the guests while in the *Ryokan*. Next one is preparing dinner, breakfast, and all the other needs. Doing wholeheartedly one by one responsibly is a process of *omotenashi*. The second one is *okyaku no kokoro wo tsukamu okami no aisatsu mawari* (お客の心をつかむ 女将の挨拶まわり). The meaning is that Okami greets guests one by one to win over their hearts. As head of a *ryokan*, Okami has a

responsibility to know the condition of the guests at her place. When dinner time comes, as expression of gratitude, Okami will greet the guests one by one while seeing whether they are satisfied with condition of the *ryokan*.

The third one is related to *ryokan*; *no saabisu wa agezensuezen ga kihon desu* (旅館のサービスは上げ膳据え膳が基本です). The point of this statement is that the basic foundation in service at a *ryokan* is to serve quietly and without unnecessary noise. One of the customs practiced in *ryokan* is eating in the room. The food served is usually 8-9 types and served one by one. When serving the food, the waiters and waitresses do it in a quiet and silent atmosphere while regulating the time it takes between serving one meal to the next. In this case, they must not make guests wait between one meal and another for too long. In reverse, they must not serve food too quickly that it will lose its warmth. The last or the fourth is *rinki ouhen-na saabisu wo kokorogakeru* (臨機応変なサービスを心がける), which means having additional skills in serving guests. Besides having general abilities according to work procedures, special skills are needed so that guests can be served well (Wijayanti & Saifudin, 2021; Yi, 2016). For example, having the skills of *chanoyu*, *ikebana*, Japanese dance, helping to wear a *kimono* or *yukata*, or having a certificate of caring for the elderly, or those with special needs, and so on. Services like those are preventions against things out of habitual events in general. Even though this is not always needed, if a guest needs sudden special assistance, *ryokan* can fulfill the needs directly.

Omotenashi or Japanese hospitality is the main subject of this research. Based on interviews and observations of several places in Japan, many views regarding *omotenashi* were obtained. In theory, Ichijou explains that Japanese culture has a word 粹 or *iki* which means character and

heart (Ichijou, 2015). *Iki* has the meaning of sympathetic behavior, so that the value of *omotenashi* finds its main basis. In accordance with this theory, the Director of the Wakakusa orphanage, who accommodates children with special needs, has *omotenashi* including 目配り *mekubari*、気配り *kikubari*、and 思いやり *omoiyari*. *Mekubari* is paying attention to the little things, *kikubari* means thinking about what will happen to someone if that really happens, while *omoiyari* means thinking from the other person's point of view.

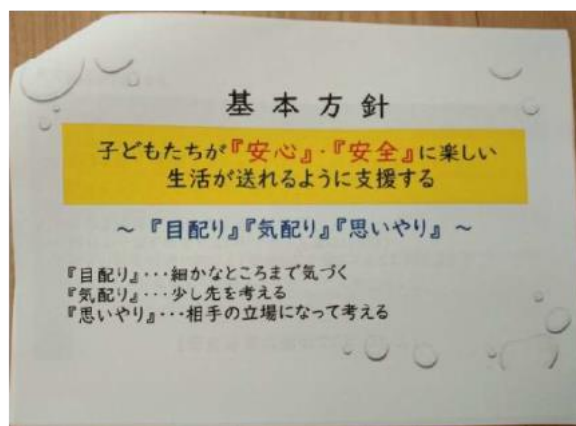


Figure 1. *Omotenashi* in orphanage for children with special needs

The picture is information related to basic policy of Wakakusa orphanage, namely 子供たちが『安心』・『安全』に楽しい生活が送れるように支援する *kodomotachi ga "an okokuruishin"*, "*anzenyousuruishuni ni tanouruishuni* means providing a pleasant life that are comfortable and safe for children. To achieve this goal, the orphanage director implements services that contain *omotenashi* values including *mekubari*, *kikubari*, and *omoiyari*. This is the basis of the Wakakusa Orphanage, Kumamoto, Japan in serving children with special needs, so that they feel comfortable and safe living in the orphanage. Until now, the Wakakusa orphanage accommodates around 30 children with special needs. From this observation, information was obtained regarding the concept of

omotenashi values in terms of behavior and good use of language, namely serving guests by paying attention to small things (*mekubari*), thinking before acting so as not to harm children (*kikubari*), and thinking from the side of children (*omoiyari*).

Next, the understanding of *omotenashi* from observations at *Hamasaki ryokan*, Amakusa shows serving guests wholeheartedly so that they feel comfortable. The service starts from when making a reservation with documents that have been provided neatly. It starts from filling in guests' data to giving shopping coupons from the government. Then the service is continued with re-confirmation of dinner and breakfast hours according to what the guests want, as well as a notification service regarding a bathroom that is ready for use. This service does not just stop here, but continues until the owner of the *ryokan* greets guests when they leave the place.



Figure 2. The owner of the *ryokan* greets the guest when they go home

From the observations above, it is known that the owner of the *ryokan* carries out the *omotenashi* concept from the beginning until the guests leave. In general, in Indonesia, hotel owners or hotel employees only stop at the reception. On the other hand, in Japan, the hotel owner or hotel employee escorts the guest until the guest gets into the vehicle and the guest's vehicle disappears from sight. The picture above shows the owner of the *ryokan* who keeps waving at the guests in the vehicle.

This is in accordance with Junichi's *omotenashi* theory (2006:6), namely 感謝の気持ちを込めてお客を見送る女将や従業員 or *kansha no kimochi wokomete okyaku wo mi okuru okama ya juugyouin tachi. Sugata ga mienakunaru made te wo furitsudzukeru* means that the owner of the *ryokan* and the employees greet the guest as a token of gratitude. They keep waving at the guest until the guest is no longer visible.

In terms of appearance, *omotenashi* that can be seen at *Hamasaki ryokan* is that every *ryokan* employee and owner wears an apron on their clothes. The use of the apron is a standard of appearance that must be carried out by them. Interestingly, when they were asked to take a photo with that appearance, the owner of the *ryokan* refused and felt uncomfortable because he was not wearing a *kimono*. From this observation, it is known that *kimono* is a general standard that describes *omotenashi* value in terms of appearance. But in reality, not all *ryokan* and hotel employees wear *kimono* when working (Morishita & Kosaka, 2017). Each hotel has different policy, such as the use of aprons by *Hamasaki ryokan* owners and employees. The most important point in this case is the appearance worn by employees must be able to create a comfortable impression for guests.

Then, the meaning of *omotenashi* based on the third observation at the *Omotenashi Café* in Yamaga, Kumamoto, Japan, is to inform tourists that Yamaga is a comfortable and pleasant place so that tourists feel happy and want to return to Yamaga. This concept is the opinion of a café owner who is also a *rakugo* (Japanese-style monologue) actor. It is said in the following quotation;

「山鹿をよく知ってもらいたいなとおもって、その一つの方法として、ま、さっきちょっといきました落語はっちゃんを強調されることで、ストーリー、物語的にはっ立って、理解してもらえれば、その形で『山鹿がおもしろい

な』、『山鹿がおもしろくて、よかったな〜』、そういうことで、「はい」ともらうことが私にとってはおもてなしかなだと思えます。」

“*Yamaga wo yoku shitte moraitaina to omotte, sono hitotsu no houhou toshite, sakki chotto ima shita rakugo wa Hacchan wo kyouchou sareru kotode, sutorii, monogatari teki ni hattatte, rikai shite moraerareba, sono katachi de “Yamaga ga omoshiroina”, “Yamaga ga omoshirokute, yokattana”, so iu kotode, ‘hai’ to morau koto ga watashi ni totte wa omotenashi kana dato omoimasu.*”

‘I want people to know Yamaga well. One way is to show Rakugo (which you saw) earlier, with Hacchan as the main character. Through highlighting the story, if it is well accepted, it will give the impression of “Yamaga is very interesting” or “Yamaga is fun and comfortable”, and if it is approved or want to return here, then that is already *omotenashi* in my opinion.”

From the explanation of the cafe owner above, it is known that the concept of comfort is the main point, because one will feel happy so there is a feeling of wanting to repeat that experience, namely coming to Yamaga again. This concept is in accordance with Shinichi's theory which states that what a tour guide needs is a friendly face, has a sense of love for the city visited, and is always respectful to other beings (Shinichi, 2006). Based on the results of observations and comparing them to theories, general perspectives of *omotenashi* include (1) appearances that are pleasing to the eye of other people, in this case is guests; (2) sympathetic behavior consisting of *mekubari*, *kikubari* and *omoiyari*. Those aspects are the main qualifications of implementation of *omotenashi* itself. From several points of view regarding *omotenashi*, the following describes the application of *omotenashi* carried out by UNITOMO students while doing internships in hotels and *ryokan* in Japan.

3.3 The Reality of *Omotenashi* and Experience from Internship Students on It

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured method with five key informants at the Multimedia Literature Laboratory, Universitas Dr. Soetomo and at the Cleo Hotel in Surabaya. Intensive interviews are done with BA, NY, VA, NA, and DA. The schedule for carrying out the interviews is to BA and NY on July 26, VA and NA on August 19, and DA on August 23, 2022. To complement the interview data, observations were made regarding the application of *omotenashi* at the Wakakusa orphanage, Hamasaki *ryokan*, and *Omotenashi* Cafe in the city of Amakusa. These observations are served as additional data in this study. To strengthen the data from interviews and observations, a documentation study was conducted. All collected data are described based on the following research problem formulation.

From the results of the interviews that have been conducted, it is known that three students have experienced working in the front office, while the other two are placed in the back. This is important to know, because students will have opportunities to meet guests and to serve them in the front office. Nonetheless, information data regarding the application of *omotenashi* can still be extracted through interviews, observations, and literature studies.

There are three main aspects of applied *omotenashi* in Japanese hotel and *ryokan*; appearance, attitude, and usage of language. Those three aspects must also be obeyed by the internship students and they must also adapt to the differences that they must face, feel, and apply. First, idea of appearance are dug from interviews with five informants about their performances during their internship at the hotel or *ryokan* where they worked. According to BA and NY they set their appearances according to hotel standards where they work, such as neatly tied hair. VA said

that, "For women, hair is usually tied back so that it may look neat. In the restaurant section, there is a hair covering that must be worn, and we use it according to the standards." (VA, personal interview, July 19, 2022)



still wear hijab but it must be black to match with my hair color" (NY, personal interview, July 26, 2022).



Figure 4. Appearance of internship students at Satomo Ryokan



Figure 3. Uniforms worn in the restaurant and kitchen of the Musashi hotel

VA and DA, as male interviewees, had no problems with hair appearance because VA chose neat short haircuts. Unlike NA, the hotel allows employees and internship participants to have long but neat hair, with the condition that they do not dye their hair any color other than black. "Long hair is still allowed, as long as it is styled neatly, not dyed and does not disturb the work" (DA, personal interview, August 23, 2022).

NA added this, "When I arrived in Japan, my hair was still short, it could not be tied as one. So, I tied it into two, the model to the side like that. So you can imagine their image to me, I am fat, I do not speak Japanese fluently, and my hair is in two pigtails too. So even though fellow employees at the *ryokan* often laughed at me, I still have to obey the rules" (NA, personal interview, August 19 2022). NY explained appearance in the internship at Satomo *ryokan*. "The hair is neatly tied back, so it looks neat." "For me (NY), I



Figure 5. Appearance of DA with long hair during internship

The reason given for being allowed to grow long hair is because the hotel's

location is on the coast, so hotel policies adjust to the surrounding environment. There are several things related to facial appearance that hotel or *ryokan* employees must pay attention to in terms of *omotenashi*, namely male employees are not allowed to grow a mustache or beard, even if it is just a thin one. Usually the manager will check and reprimand immediately if he finds an employee with a mustache or beard. VA and DA stated the same thing regarding this matter, as shown in DA's statement below. "Of course, *hige* (beard) is not allowed. But long hair is okay." (DA, personal interview, August 23, 2022) VA added that he had been notified for having a bit of a mustache on his face, even though he felt that the mustache was not very visible at a glance. "The child of *okami* warned me for having thin mustache. At that time I forgot not to shave. After that incident I paid more attention to my appearance." (VA, personal interview, August 19, 2022).

The next appearance that must be considered is the cleanliness of the fingernails. In the world of work in Japan, both male and female employees are not allowed to maintain their nails, especially for women to paint their nails with nail polish. The five interviewees said that they always maintained their nails, so they were never warned for this. One of the sources who conveyed this was DA who has a habit of keeping long nails. "If asked to cut it, I cut it. But during my internship I always took care of my nails. I am a professional, *sensei*. If I work, I will follow the rules of the place where I work."

From the explanation of the sources above, most of the UNITOMO students have applied *omotenashi* it correctly, with indicators 1) tidying up their hair when working by trying to style their hair neatly, 2) shaving mustache and beard regularly to be looked as neat by others, especially hotel guests, and 3) not maintaining long nails during the internship program. This is in accordance with *omotenashi* from Ichijou which says it is necessary to pay

attention to appearance procedures such as neat collars, styling hair, wearing age-appropriate clothing colors, cutting nails, etc (Ichijou, 2015). These things are a way to show beauty by decorating yourself without forgetting modesty and politeness. Furthermore, to support the external bodily appearance, some things need to be regulated, such as perfume, clothing and shoes. The clothing appearance of UNITOMO students participating in the internship program is supported by the hotel uniform they must wear when they work. BA, NY, NV, and VA explained that they started wearing uniforms once they were inside the *ryokan*. If they are outside the *ryokan* area such as when going to the store to buy beverages during break time, they are required to cover the uniform with a jacket or take off the uniform and to replace it with other clothes. The following is BA's statement regarding uniforms, "We wear uniforms of the hotel when we are in the hotel. So, when we come or go home, we have to take off the uniform. Even if we want to go to *konbini* during breaks, we have to wear jackets so that the uniforms are not seen by other people (guests) in public places." (BA, personal interview, July 26, 2022). In line with BA, VA and NA also said the same thing. "In the *ryokan* where we work, there are lockers. So we put the clothes we wore from the dormitory in the locker, then we changed into our uniforms. Later when it is time to go home we change again. The *ryokan* uniform was left at the hotel. If it is dirty, you can wash it and take it home, but you have to remove it first. The point is not allowed to wear uniforms outside the *ryokan*." (VA, personal interview, August 19, 2022). Unlike the four previous sources, DA found a different policy at the hotel where he did his internship. "I wear the uniform since I was in the dormitory. It does not matter if the uniform is worn outside the hotel. But if you are at the front office, you have to wear a special uniform from the hotel. The uniform is like an elegant suit, and this suit could not be

worn outside the hotel. Even if it is dirty, the hotel will clean it.” (DA, personal interview, August 23, 2022).

Appearance with shoes is also one of the things that must be considered in applying *omotenashi*. Basically, hotel or *ryokan* employees are asked not to use accessories that are too eye-catching. In this case, what is meant by eye-catching is not just a matter of color or shape that may attract attention, but also in terms of the price of the item. VA once experienced an incident where he was warned by his senior for wearing shoes that according to his seniors were expensive. “I once wore Fila brand shoes, and suddenly my senior reprimanded me not to wear those shoes again when I was working. The reason is because the shoes look expensive, even though in my opinion the shoe style is normal, and the color is neutral, white. Maybe because the brand is Fila, and those are considered expensive shoes” (VA, personal interview, August 19, 2022). From the VN’s experience, it is known that the importance of avoiding the use of excessive accessories is important. The using of well-known brands could reduce the comfort of other persons including guests.



Figure 6. Shoes that are forbidden to wear because they look expensive

Besides, the use of perfume is also something to note. Basically hotel employees are allowed to use perfume, but it is prohibited using perfume with a strong smell. It is feared that the perfume will stick to hotel or *ryokan* objects, such as bed sheets. This was conveyed by DA,

“You can use perfume, as long as it does not have strong smell. But if you get your turn at the *heya souji* (room cleaning) section, then it is not allowed, as that the smell of the perfume will stick to the bed sheet” (DA, personal interview, August 23, 2022).

The matter of attitude is also important in the application of *omotenashi* in hotels and *ryokan*. The application of the *omotenashi* value in terms of basic behavior is the attitude of *ojigi* (greeting by bowing half the body forward) to guests. In general, this *ojigi* attitude is carried out at every opportunity, such as when a new guest arrives at a hotel or *ryokan*, when passing a guest, even when a guest is about to leave the hotel, employees are asked to do *ojigi*. This is also done by students who carry out internship activities in Japan. DA explained his experience with *ojigi* as follows, “Of course we do *ojigi*, especially when we work at the *furonto* (receptionist). If we meet or meet guests at the hotel, we also have to do *ojigi*” (DA, personal interview, August 23, 2022). BA and NY also stated the same thing, “We were once asked to welcome guests from school. We picked them up in front of the *ryokan*. The welcoming must be started by doing *ojigi*. After greeting, what we do is escort them to their reserved rooms. After that we also do *ojigi* again when the task is finished”. (BA, personal interview, August 23, 2022).

From their statement above, it can be indicated that every employee, as hotel employees or internship students, carries out the obligatory *ojigi* attitude when they meet guests. DA added, “Sometimes when I am in *furonto*, after *ojigi* I usually ask guests, do they need help, *okyaku sama, nanika ga otetsudaimashouka? sensei.*” (DA, personal interview, August 23, 2022). DA then has carried out *kikubari* behavior, namely paying attention to the surrounding environment and responding immediately if someone needs help. In this case, after the DA greets the guests through *ojigi*, he pays attention to

the guest and asks the guest if there is anything they need help with.

Another behavior applied by students is *omoiyari* when serving food. *Omoiyari* is thinking from the other person's point of view. When serving food, students are required to be able to serve food according to hotel or *ryokan* standards, then they are asked to serve the food to guests quietly. The arrangement of serving food is intended to make it easier for guests to enjoy the food served as comfortable as possible. This is an example of implementing *omoiyari*. In general, *ryokan* in Japan provides around 7-9 sets of meals. The food is not taken out all at once, but gradually according to the order in which it is eaten (Wijayanti & Saifudin, 2021). The timing for serving food must also be right, because it is not permissible to make guests wait between one food and another for too long, or not to serve food too quickly either.

To determine the timings, the students positioned themselves close to the guests while they are eating, so they could maintain the time. They also try to calculate the gap between the times needed to finish the food with the next menu. NY said, "We could not put the food on our own wishes, since it has to be up to *ryokan* standards. Luckily, we had a small paper contained food serving arrangements from earlier *senpai*, so we were able to adjust quickly. And, our work is well appreciated by the *okami*." (NY, personal interview, August 26, 2022).

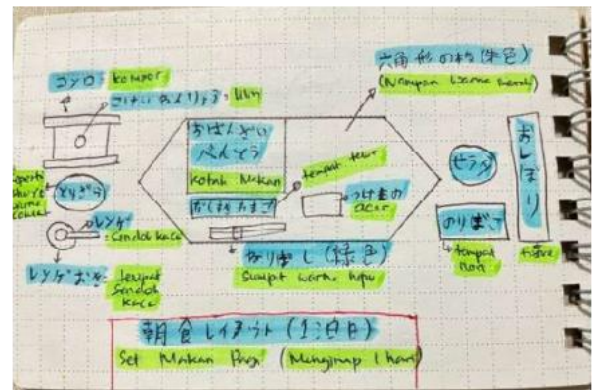


Figure 7. Food serving arrangements of internship students

Furthermore, when students make mistakes, they are asked to apologize to everyone directly involved. This was done by VA and NV when one of their internship colleagues made a mistake. VA and NV did nothing wrong, but since their fellow made a mistake, the two of them still had to apologize. "At that time, YG went out of the dormitory without saying goodbye. It was lockdown, and we were not allowed to leave the hostel. I know that YG went out of town. Coincidentally, a friend saw it, and finally the news about YG went out to the manager's ear. Right away, we (Indonesian students) were all sanctioned and the next day we were quarantined for a week. After that, when we came to work, we were told to apologize to all employees." (VA, personal interview, August 19, 2022).

Japanese society is very disciplined with time as employees in Japan are required to come at least 10 minutes before working hours start. This has caused Internship students to experience a culture shock for about a week. After being able to adapt, they usually come to work 10 minutes or 30 minutes before working hours. But when they have the morning shift at 5:00 a.m., they usually come right before working hours start. This is explained by VA in an interview, "We came 30 minutes before working hours started, but during the morning shift we came *giri-giri* (punctual) because it is 5 in the morning." (VA, personal interview,

August 19, 2022). From the interview above, it can be seen that UNITOMO students can comply with working hours as is compulsory for Japanese people, but they are not used to the working system in the morning.

The usage of language is also crucial in matter of *omotenashi*. When internship students serve guests, they use standard Japanese namely the *masukei* form and some may use the *sonkei* form as a more respectable form. The application of *masukei* and *sonkei* forms is carried out when they get a shift in the front office. Students who have had job opportunities in this section are BA, NY, and DA. BA explained his experience when welcoming guests, "At that time, I welcomed guests from elementary school. The guests are children, but even so I still use polite language. At least use the *masukei* form." (BA, personal interview, July 16, 2022). In contrast to BA, DA tries to use the *sonkei* form. However, if he finds it difficult, he changes it into *masukei* form. "When in *furonto*, I usually start with *sonkei*. At least the most standard one, *irasshaimasuka*, like that. However, if I have trouble, I replace it with the *masukei* form. At least it is still polite." (DA, personal interview, August 23, 2022).

Indeed, there are many obstacles faced by internship students in applying *omotenashi* in hotel and *ryokan*. The constraints are language, communication, and cultural factors. Some obstacles can be solved and resulting in good results, but there are also obstacles that have had ongoing effects until now even though the obstacles have been resolved by the students and the hotel. First is the language constraint. Japanese language, like Javanese language, has a level of politeness in language. Polite language is called *Sonkeigo* and common language is called *Futsuugo*. UNITOMO students learn *Sonkeigo* at the level of "*masu*" and "*desu*". There is also a polite form at a higher level called *Teineigo*. It is usually used in companies in a formal business

setting. Of the five students who were the main interviewees, there were two students, namely VP and NA, who were constrained by language skills. Both of them sometimes had difficulty understanding *Teineigo* level of Japanese spoken by their superiors, especially in time they first arrived in Japan. However, they can overcome these obstacles by asking other friends, or Japanese co-workers with the Japanese form "*masu*" or "*desu*" as they have learned on campus. NA said, "If there is a language I did not understand, I will usually smile, but without giving an answer. When I do that, the hotel leaders will call seniors who are also doing internships at the same hotel" (NA, personal interview, August 19, 2022). Then VA added, "The important thing is to smile, and realize that we do not understand, but at least we want to learn. And finally the leaders understood" (VA, personal interview, August 19, 2022). The solution used by NA and VA was with a smile and courtesy that was very Indonesian, they were both able to overcome the language barrier they faced.

The second obstacle is about the communication factor. Prof. Wilbur Schram states that communication and society cannot be separated from one another (Sigiro, 2014). In Japanese society, *Horenso* is famous as shorter form of *Houkoku Renraku Soudan* which means to tell, to contact, and to discuss. On the Japan in Cultural Consulting website, it is stated that "The HoRenSo Japanese problem solving system is sometimes abbreviated as *Ho* (*hokoku* or report), *Ren* (*renraku*, or contact) and *So* (*sodan*, or consult) (Pringle, 2020). This system says that when a problem occurs, workers should report the issue, and never keeping it by themselves. They should contact the relevant people, the foreman, or the Japanese coordinator in this case. Instead of assuming that they can fix it themselves, they should consult with others to get their advice."

Through the *horenso* culture, when a problem occurs, workers must report the problem, and not keep it to themselves. They should contact the relevant person, Japanese foreman or coordinator in this case. Instead of assuming they can fix it on their own, they should consult others for their advice. In case of *horenso*, there was a problem experienced by the internship students from UNITOMO which disrupted the communication between them and the hotel owner. One of the internship students (YG) did not do *horenso* by violating the rules. He left the apartment when the pandemic case was high without notifying his seniors, even though at that time there was a lockdown. The incident was told by VA, "At that time the Covid case in Japan was high, no one in our area had contracted Covid, but we were all ordered to stay in the dormitory and were forbidden to go anywhere. But YG went to another city to meet his colleague without telling anyone. Even I, who was in the same room, did not know about that. I found out from seniors (Japanese people) who saw from YG's status on Instagram that he was out of town." (VA, personal interview, August 19, 2022).

This violation has a very serious impact as the hotel generalized one mistake to all internship participants from Indonesia. Due to the violation, the *ryokan* no longer accepted internships from Indonesia. This also applies to internships from Vietnam, because those who violate the rules are students from Indonesia and Vietnam, while internships from other countries are still permitted. VA added, "Therefore after our batch, the hotel did not accept internships from Indonesia or Vietnam. In fact, the ones who often make mistakes are internship students from Vietnam. However, YG's case is a serious case because after YG returned, someone was infected with Covid, so everyone assumed YG brought the Covid from out of town." (VA, personal interview, August 19, 2022). The solution is after all have undergone quarantine for a week, by order

from the leaders, all internship students from Indonesia were told to apologize to all hotel staffs. They obeyed the order so that the problem regarding *horenso* above could be resolved.

The next communication problem was that an internship student from UNITOMO had made a mistake by not responding to questions from guests and immediately leaving them without asking their superiors furthermore. The guest submitted a complaint about the students' ignorance through the hotel's website. Based on *horenso*'s theory, if there is a problem, someone should contact senior and never think that he or she can solve it by him or herself. What happened is they did not answer guest's questions properly and politely, so the guest feel dissatisfied. In *omotenashi*, satisfaction and comfort from the guest is the main thing. As a result of this incident, the hotel shaped a stereotype by generalizing the internship students from Indonesia as they could not be given responsibility to guests directly. The internship students then were often blamed and received unfair treatment. They were given jobs in the back and were not trusted to serve guests directly in the front office. This problem finally found a solution, namely after BA talked directly to the hotel owner and had the courage to ask "「私たちの間違ったことは何ですか。」 *Watashitachi no machigatta koto wa nan desuka*. "What did we do wrong? It was as if we were being hidden from guests, and we were not allowed to meet guests in person directly." (BA, personal interview, July 16, 2022). Since then, the hotel owner began to trust in them and assigned tasks to the front office so that they could serve guests directly. From the problem above, having misunderstandings in communication will have a huge impact, for example students from Indonesia are no longer accepted for internships or there is no trust given to them. Communication problems should be solved by further dialogues.

The third aspect is cultural factor. Japanese people, especially workers, have a habit of gathering together outside working hours while drinking and eating snacks. This custom is called *nomikai*. Life style guides it in an article entitled "Japan's Drinking Culture: A Guide To Nomikai; Navigate the unwritten rules of Japan's drinking culture" writes "*Nomikai*, a term to describe the after-hours drinking among coworkers and friends, is seen as a social etiquette that is exceptionally integral to the Japanese culture." (Guide, 2021). *Nomikai*'s habit became one of the obstacles for one of the internship participants. NA said that, "When we were first invited to say that *nomikai* also included cultural learning, so we joined. If you refuse, the impression will be bad for us in the future. In each *nomikai*, there are usually around 10 people consisting of Japanese, some are from Indonesia, there are also internship students from other countries. Those who invite us to *nomikai* are usually kitchen people who are directly responsible for the internship. So when we are not on shift in the kitchen, we can refuse with the excuse that tomorrow will come in the morning" (NA, personal interview, September 19, 2022).

Japanese people work by only focusing on their work and are not used to talking to other co-workers. Therefore, *nomikai* is usually used to get to know one another. Internship students also understand that *nomikai* can be a means of getting to know each other with fellow co-workers, but *nomikai* requires more money spent and it will last until late night. This becomes an obstacle for internship students from UNITOMO. The solution they prepared is not to offend the person who invited them. They have to take turns, and if they were not in the same section, they used the excuse that they had to work early the next day.

4. Conclusion

The application of *omotenashi* is well applied in hotel and *ryokan* in Japan. The value is also embraced by internship students of UNITOMO. There are three main aspects of applied *omotenashi* in Japanese hotel and *ryokan*; appearance, attitude, and usage of language. In terms of appearance, procedures must be followed and the students followed it well, such as hair must always be neat, mustache and beard must be shaved everyday, nails must be short, strong perfume must be avoided, and excessive and expensive accessories must not be worn at work. In terms of attitude, students can adapt quickly in terms of *ojigi* habit, punctuality, and entrusted work, for example serving food to guests. In terms of language, the language used during the internship is standard language and sometimes using polite forms or *sonkeigo* for several guests and occasions. The obstacles faced by internship students are caused by three factors; language, communication, and cultural factors. When experiencing problems in the language factor, students overcome them by remaining friendly, smiling, and asking to seniors. The solution to cope up with obstacles in communication is prioritizing *horensō* with leaders, seniors and colleagues. The solution when constrained by cultural factors is not to immediately avoid it, but to wisely propose understanding to avoid creating such social anxieties among colleagues.

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