



THE INFLUENCE OF OMOTENASHI CULTURE ON THE WORK PERFORMANCE OF INTERNS AT GENSEN HOLDINGS, JAPAN

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the description of the implementation of Omotenashi Culture, the description of Student Work Performance, and to test the influence of Omotenashi Culture on the Work Performance of Internship Students at Gensen Holdings Japan. The study used a quantitative approach with descriptive and associative methods. The sample consisted of 31 students who had participated in industrial internships at Gensen Holdings, with a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected through a Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using validity, reliability, Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, t-test, coefficient of determination, assisted by SPSS 26. The results showed that all instruments were valid and very reliable. Omotenashi Culture was in the very good category with an average score of 3.99, while Student Work Performance was also very good with an average score of 4.05. Correlation analysis showed a very strong relationship between Omotenashi Culture and Student Work Performance ($r = 0.929$). The regression equation $Y = 3.084 + 0.877X$ showed that every increase in Omotenashi Culture increased Student Work Performance. The coefficient of determination value of 0.862 indicates that 86.2% of the performance variation is explained by the Omotenashi Culture, while 13.8% is influenced by other factors. The hypothesis test proves that the calculated t of 13.482 is greater than the t table value of 1.699, so that the Omotenashi Culture has a positive and significant effect on the Work Performance of Internship Students at Gensen Holdings Japan and strengthens the importance of implementing service, respect, care, and professionalism in improving the work quality of internship program students.

Keywords: Omotenashi Culture; Work Performance; Internship Students; Japan; Service Quality



INTRODUCTION

Increasingly fierce global competition demands that every individual and organization continuously improve the quality of their human resources. Service quality is a key determinant of a company's success, particularly in the service and hospitality sectors. Japan is known for its strong work culture, high discipline, and customer-focused service orientation, with Omotenashi being a defining characteristic of its service. Philosophically, Omotenashi is defined as a form of service delivered sincerely, without expecting anything in return, and prioritizing customer needs even before they are expressed (Arakawa, 2016).

Globalization has opened up opportunities for Indonesian students to participate in internship programs at Japanese companies, including Gensen Holdings, a hospitality company that prioritizes Omotenashi (a core value) in its operations. Interns at the company are not only required to understand the technical aspects of the job but also to implement Japanese work culture in their daily activities. The values embodied in Omotenashi—discipline, responsibility, attention to detail, good communication, and a focus on customer satisfaction—are thought to be closely related to interns' work performance indicators (Kasmir, 2019).

Previous research on Omotenashi generally focuses on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Felix & Honggowidagdo, 2025; Sattavorn & Khasasin, 2025), while research specifically examining the influence of Omotenashi on the Work Performance of Indonesian interns in Japanese companies is still limited. Intern students have different characteristics from permanent employees because they are still in the learning and adaptation stage of work culture. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the influence of Omotenashi Culture on the Work Performance of Intern Students at Gensen Holdings Japan, with the problem formulation: does Omotenashi Culture affect the Work Performance of students at Gensen Holdings? This research is expected to contribute both academically and practically to the development of student internship programs to Japan, especially in the context of strengthening soft skills and work ethics that are relevant to the achievement of SDGs 4 (quality education) and SDGs 8 (decent work and economic growth).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Omotenashi Culture

Omotenashi is a Japanese vocabulary that refers to hospitality, which is philosophically interpreted as a form of sincere service without expecting



anything in return (Arakawa, 2016). Unlike the concept of service in the West that involves a service fee transaction, Omotenashi is carried out without expecting any reward, rooted in the Japanese tea ceremony tradition, and aims to make guests feel comfortable through a personalized experience (Wijayanti & Saifudin, 2021). In this study, Omotenashi Culture is measured through five indicators synthesized by Hattori (2004, in Han et al., 2025), Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021), and Sattavorn and Khasasin (2025), namely: (1) attentive service; (2) two-way communication; (3) sincere service without expecting anything in return (selfless service); (4) sensitivity to implicit needs (thoughtfulness); and (5) self-effort.

Student Work Performance

Performance is the work results in terms of quality and quantity achieved by individuals in carrying out tasks according to the responsibilities given (Mangkunegara, 2017; Kasmir, 2019). Gibson's individual performance theory (in Ilyas, 2012) states that performance is influenced by individual factors, psychological factors, and organizational factors, where organizational culture—in this case Omotenashi Culture—is included in the organizational factors that influence performance. Student Work Performance in this study was measured through four indicators referring to Robbins (2006), Bernardin and Russel (in Sutrisno, 2011), and Mangkunegara (2017), namely: (1) quality; (2) quantity; (3) timeliness; and (4) resource effectiveness.

The Relationship between Omotenashi Culture and Student Work Performance

In line with Schein's (1992) argument that a strong organizational culture can increase the commitment, motivation, and productivity of organizational members, Omotenashi, as the dominant culture at Gensen Holdings, plays a role in shaping students' mindsets to be more quality-oriented. When students internalize the values of sincerity and proactiveness in service as taught by Omotenashi, this creates high work quality, time efficiency, and a consistent professional attitude. This finding is also supported by previous research showing the positive influence of Omotenashi on the work behavior, discipline, professionalism, and service abilities of student interns in Japan, as well as the positive influence of organizational culture on employee performance (Lestari & Palupi, 2023). Based on this description, the hypotheses proposed in this study are:

H1: Omotenashi culture has a positive and significant effect on the work performance of student interns at Gensen Holdings Japan.



RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive and associative methods to describe and test the relationship between the Omotenashi Culture variable (X) and Student Work Performance (Y). The study population was students of Manado State Polytechnic who had undertaken industrial internships at Gensen Holdings Japan. The sampling technique used non-probability sampling with a saturated sample type (accidental sampling), with a sample size of 31 respondents.

Primary data were collected through a Likert scale questionnaire 1–5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) distributed online via Google Form, consisting of 13 statement items for the Omotenashi Culture variable and 12 statement items for the Student Work Performance variable. Data were analyzed using the SPSS 26 program through the following stages: (1) validity test with the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique (items are declared valid if $r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}} = 0.367$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ and $n = 31$); (2) reliability test with Cronbach's Alpha (the instrument is declared reliable if the coefficient $\alpha > 0.6$); (3) Pearson correlation analysis to measure the degree of relationship between variables; (4) simple linear regression analysis with the equation $\hat{Y} = a + \beta X$; (5) hypothesis test (t test) at a significance level of 5%; and (6) analysis of the coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure the magnitude of the contribution of variable X to variable Y.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondent Characteristics and Test Instruments

The research respondents were 31 students from Manado State Polytechnic who had completed an industrial internship at Gensen Holdings Japan. Before further analysis, the research instruments were tested for validity and reliability.

The results of the validity test show that all 13 items of the Omotenashi Culture instrument (X) and all 12 items of the Student Work Performance instrument (Y) have a corrected item-total correlation coefficient value above the r_{table} (0.367), so that all items are declared valid and suitable for use as research measuring tools, as presented in Table 1.



Table 1.
Summary of Instrument Validity Test Results

Variables	Number of Items	Range of r count	Information
Omotenashi Culture (X)	13	0.540 – 0.873	All items are valid
Student Work Performance (Y)	12	0.574 – 0.822	All items are valid

Source: Results of primary data processing, 2026

The results of the reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Omotenashi Culture variable of 0.939 and for the Student Work Performance variable of 0.940. Both values are far above the threshold of 0.6 (Nunnally in Juliandi, Irfan & Manurung, 2014), so the research instrument is declared very reliable and suitable for use in research data collection.

2. Overview of Omotenashi Culture

The description of Omotenashi Culture at Gensen Holdings was analyzed based on the average score of respondents' answers on five indicators, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Description of Omotenashi Cultural Variables (X)

Indicator	Average	Category
Attentive service	4.02	Very good
Two-way communication	3.96	Very good
Sincere service without reward (selfless service)	3.95	Very good
Implicit need sensitivity (thoughtfulness)	3.98	Very good
Self-effort and responsibility	4.06	Very good
Overall Average	3.99	Very good

Source: Results of primary data processing, 2026

Table 2 shows that all indicators of Omotenashi Culture are in the very good category, with an overall average of 3.99. The self-effort and responsibility indicator obtained the highest score (4.06), indicating that the interns demonstrated sincerity and high initiative in completing their work. Meanwhile, the selfless service indicator obtained the lowest score, although still in the very good category (3.95), indicating that the value of sincerity in service has been sufficiently internalized but still has room for improvement.



3. Overview of Student Work Performance

Table 3.
Description of Student Work Performance Variables (Y)

Indicator	Average	Category
Quality	4.09	Very good
Quantity	4.02	Very good
Timeliness	4.04	Very good
Cost Effectiveness	4.03	Very good
Overall Average	4.05	Very good

Source: Results of primary data processing, 2026

Table 3 shows that the overall performance of interns at Gensen Holdings was in the excellent category, with an average score of 4.05. The quality indicator received the highest score (4.09), indicating that students were able to complete their work meticulously, accurately, and in accordance with company standards. The other four performance indicators also showed relatively even and consistent results in the excellent category, indicating that intern performance was quite stable across all measured aspects.

4. Correlation Analysis and Simple Linear Regression

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis between Omotenashi Culture (X) and Student Work Performance (Y) obtained a correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.929$. Referring to the Sugiyono (2008) correlation coefficient interpretation guidelines, this value is in the interval of 0.80–1.00 which is classified as a very strong relationship category, with a positive relationship direction. This means that the better the implementation of Omotenashi Culture perceived by the intern students, the higher the Work Performance they show.

The results of simple linear regression analysis using SPSS 26 are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4.
Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t count	Sig.
Constant (a)	3,084	3,425	0.901	0.375
Omotenashi Culture (X)	0.877	0.065	13,482	0,000

Source: Results of primary data processing with SPSS 26, 2026



Based on Table 4, the following simple linear regression equation is obtained:

$$\hat{Y} = 3.084 + 0.877X$$

The constant value of 3.084 indicates that if the Omotenashi Culture is zero, then Student Work Performance is predicted to be 3.084. The regression coefficient value of variable X is 0.877 and is positive indicating that every one unit increase in the Omotenashi Culture score will increase Student Work Performance by 0.877 units, assuming other variables are considered constant (*ceteris paribus*).

5. Hypothesis Test (t-Test)

Hypothesis testing was conducted through a t-test at a significance level of 5% with degrees of freedom $df = n - 2 = 29$, resulting in a t-table value of 1.699. Based on the analysis results in Table 4, the calculated t-value for the Omotenashi Culture variable was 13.482. Since the calculated t-value ($13.482 > 1.699$) and the significance value ($0.000 < 0.05$), H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that Omotenashi Culture partially has a positive and significant effect on the Work Performance of Internship Students at Gensen Holdings Japan.

6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The results of the determination coefficient analysis show an R^2 value of 0.862 or 86.2%. This value indicates that 86.2% of the variation that occurs in Student Work Performance can be explained by the Omotenashi Culture variable, while the remaining 13.8% is influenced by other factors outside this research model, such as individual motivation, leadership, work facilities, and work discipline (Afandy, 2018) which were not examined in this study.

7. Discussion

The results of this study empirically prove that Omotenashi Culture has a positive and significant effect on the Work Performance of Internship Students at Gensen Holdings Japan, with a very strong level of influence ($r = 0.929$) and a high contribution of determination (86.2%). This finding strengthens Schein's (1992) view that a strong organizational culture can increase the commitment and productivity of its members, and is consistent with Gibson's individual performance theory (in Ilyas, 2012) which places organizational culture as one of the determining factors of a person's performance.

This finding is also in line with the results of previous research on the implementation of Omotenashi on student interns at Japanese ryokans and hotels which showed that Omotenashi has a strong influence on the formation of work behavior, discipline, professionalism, and service skills of student interns, as well



as research by Lestari and Palupi (2023) which proved that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The values of Omotenashi such as attentive service, thoughtfulness, and self-effort that are consistently applied in the Gensen Holdings work environment appear to form a more structured, communicative, and quality-oriented work pattern for student interns, thus leading to an improvement in their overall work performance.

However, the remaining 13.8% of variance not explained by the Omotenashi Culture indicates that intern performance is also influenced by other factors, such as individual motivation levels, clarity of work roles, supporting facilities, and the leadership style of supervisors at the internship site (Afandy, 2018). Therefore, strengthening the Omotenashi Culture needs to be accompanied by optimizing other supporting factors so that intern performance can be improved more comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that: (1) Omotenashi Culture at Gensen Holdings is in the very good category with an average score of 3.99, where the self-effort indicator received the highest rating; (2) Internship Student Work Performance at Gensen Holdings is also in the very good category with an average score of 4.05, with the quality indicator receiving the highest rating; and (3) Omotenashi Culture is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Internship Student Work Performance at Gensen Holdings Japan, with a very strong relationship level ($r = 0.929$) and an influence contribution of 86.2% ($R^2 = 0.862$), as evidenced by the t-test (t count $13.482 > t$ table 1.699 ; sig. $0.000 < 0.05$), so that $H1$ is accepted.

For Gensen Holdings, it is recommended to continue maintaining and strengthening training in Omotenashi values, especially in the aspect of selfless service which received a relatively low score, so that the implementation of this work culture is more optimal. For student interns, internalizing the values of Omotenashi consistently can be an important provision in forming a professional work ethic relevant to the demands of the global workplace. Further research is recommended to add other variables that also influence Work Performance, such as work motivation, leadership, or work discipline, in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the determining factors of student intern performance in Japanese companies.

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