

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPLEMENTING GLOBAL HOUSEKEEPING STANDARDS AT THE GRAND PRINCE HOTEL OSAKA BAY, JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

The integration of foreign interns in the Japanese hospitality industry, particularly in housekeeping operations, presents various challenges and opportunities. This study examines the adaptation process of foreign interns at Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay, focusing on language barriers, cultural differences, and operational efficiency. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected through observations and interviews with foreign interns and hotel staff. The findings indicate that language barriers and cultural adaptation significantly impact the performance of foreign interns. However, structured training programs, mentorship initiatives, and technological interventions have proven to enhance their integration. While global housekeeping standards align with Japanese hospitality practices, discrepancies in service responsiveness during peak seasons highlight the need for resource optimization. The study underscores the necessity of balancing rigorous housekeeping standards with flexible adaptation programs to accommodate international staff. Future research should explore long-term adaptation strategies and examine cross-cultural workforce integration in multiple hospitality settings to provide broader insights into effective global workforce management.

Keywords : Housekeeping; Foreign Interns; Hospitality Industry; Cultural Adaptation; Training Programs

ABSTRAK

Integrasi pemegang indsutri hospitality, khususnya dalam tata graha (housekeeping) menghadirkan berbagai tantangan dan peluang. Studi ini, memaparkan proses adaptasi, pemegang asing di Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay, berfokus pada langauage barriers, perbedaan budaya dan efisiensi kerja. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui proses observasi, wawancara dengan pemegang asing dan staf hotel. Namun, program pelatihan terstruktur, bimbingan dan intervensi teknologi terbukti meningkatkan integrasi pemegang. Adapun, standar tata graha internasional selaras dengan praktik perhotelan di Jepang, perbedaan waktu pelayanan di beberapa musim puncak menyoroti perlu adanya pengoptimalan sumber daya. Studi ini menitikberatkan perlunya penyeimbangan standar tata graha yang tepat dengan program adaptasi yang fleksibel untuk mengakomodasi staf Internasional. Di masa mendatang eksplorasi strategi jangka panjang dan integrasi tenaga kerja lintas budaya di berbagai lingkungan perhotelan aikan memberikan wawasan yang lebih luas tentang manajemen tenaga kerja global yang efektif.

Kata kunci : Tata Graha, pemegang asing, industry perhoelan, adaptasi budaya, program pelatihan

INTRODUCTION

Housekeeping is a crucial element of the hospitality industry, playing a significant role in ensuring the cleanliness, comfort, and satisfaction of hotel guests. To uphold service quality, hotels across the globe adhere to established global housekeeping standards that encompass cleanliness, safety, and guest comfort, thereby promoting uniformity in service delivery (Okamoto et al., 2021). However, the implementation of these standards is influenced by various cultural and operational factors unique to each country (Raval et al., 2024). This cultural variability necessitates a nuanced understanding of how global standards can be adapted to local contexts, particularly in countries like Japan, where traditional practices may conflict with international expectations (Dobosz & Hetmańczyk, 2023).

The hospitality industry has undergone continuous evolution, with international hotels striving to maintain these global housekeeping standards. Numerous studies have investigated the effectiveness of housekeeping practices in enhancing customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. For instance, Smith et al. (2023) demonstrated that the integration of automated cleaning technologies significantly alleviated the workload of housekeeping staff while ensuring high cleanliness standards (Zhao & B'éri, 2022). Similarly, Kim and Lee (2022) emphasized the critical role of structured training programs in improving service quality and reducing turnover rates among hotel employees (Matsuo et al., 2022). Furthermore, Jones et al. (2021) explored the impact of cultural differences on housekeeping performance within multinational hotel chains, underscoring the necessity for tailored training programs for foreign employees (Abonmai et al., 2021).

Additional research supports these findings, indicating that hotels implementing standardized housekeeping protocols generally achieve higher guest satisfaction scores and repeat customer rates (Chen, 2022). Brown and Wilson (2023) found that advanced training programs, coupled with cultural sensitivity workshops, significantly enhanced the performance of foreign housekeeping staff in international hotel chains (Ye, 2023). Moreover, White and Nakamura (2023) highlighted the exceptional cleanliness standards maintained by Japanese hotels, while also noting challenges in integrating foreign workers due to strict adherence to local work ethics and communication barriers (Sakamoto & Roger, 2022). This complexity illustrates the need for a comprehensive

approach to training that addresses both operational standards and cultural integration.

Despite the extensive research on hotel housekeeping management, several critical gaps persist. Previous studies have predominantly focused on the relationship between housekeeping efficiency and customer satisfaction, sustainability, and automation, with limited attention given to the adaptation challenges faced by foreign interns in adopting Japanese hospitality work ethics and operational standards (Soneta et al., 2021). Furthermore, while the importance of employee training in enhancing service quality has been acknowledged, few studies have specifically examined how structured training programs can assist foreign interns in overcoming language barriers and cultural differences within a housekeeping context (Sari & Rini, 2023). Additionally, most existing literature tends to concentrate on housekeeping performance in Western hotels or international chains, leaving a significant gap in understanding how Japanese hotel housekeeping standards align with global frameworks and differ in practice (Li & Huang, 2024).

This study aims to address these gaps by analyzing the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing global housekeeping standards at the Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay, drawing from an internship experience. By focusing on communication gaps, cultural adaptation, and operational challenges, this research contributes novel insights to the field of hospitality management. The findings will enhance understanding of how global housekeeping standards can be effectively integrated into diverse cultural environments, particularly for international interns. Furthermore, this study will provide recommendations for hospitality education institutions and hotel management to improve training programs, facilitating smoother adaptation for foreign interns (Ohta et al., 2021).

Customer reviews of the Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay on various online travel platforms reflect both the strengths and challenges of its housekeeping services. Reviews from Booking.com and Tripadvisor frequently commend the cleanliness of the rooms, highlighting the hotel's commitment to high sanitation standards. Guests often note the meticulous attention to detail exhibited by housekeeping staff, ensuring that rooms are immaculate upon check-in. However, some reviews indicate challenges such as occasional delays in room cleaning and communication barriers with non-Japanese-speaking staff (Fadillah & Rochim, 2023). Feedback on Google suggests that while the

hotel's cleaning procedures align with global hospitality standards, the efficiency of room service may fluctuate based on occupancy levels. Additionally, some guests have remarked on differences in housekeeping responsiveness compared to international hotel chains, indicating a need for a more streamlined system to meet international expectations (Daudpota et al., 2021).

Summary of Housekeeping Reviews at Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay

Despite the extensive research on hotel housekeeping management, a critical gap remains in understanding how foreign interns adapt to global housekeeping standards in culturally distinct environments such as Japan. Previous studies have largely overlooked the practical difficulties faced by non-native workers in adopting local work ethics, communication barriers, and variations in technological application within housekeeping divisions. Furthermore, studies examining the integration of international housekeeping standards in Japanese hospitality settings are scarce.

This study aims to fill the identified research gap by analyzing the challenges and opportunities in implementing global housekeeping standards at Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay based on an internship experience. By addressing communication gaps, cultural work adaptation, and operational challenges, this study provides a novel contribution to the field of hospitality management. The findings from this study will contribute to a better understanding of how global housekeeping standards can be effectively integrated into diverse cultural environments, particularly for international interns.

The objective of this research is to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by foreign interns in adapting to global housekeeping standards in Japanese hotels. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify key difficulties encountered by interns in adjusting to the structured work environment in Japan.
2. Analyze how existing global housekeeping standards align with Japanese hospitality practices.
3. Propose strategies to enhance the adaptation process for international interns.

By addressing these objectives, this study aims to provide insights for both academia and industry practitioners in optimizing international internship programs in the hospitality sector.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

Method is a method of work that can be used to obtain something. While the research method can be interpreted as a work procedure in the research process, both in searching for data or disclosing existing phenomena (Zulkarnaen, W., et al., 2020:229). This study employs a qualitative research approach utilizing a descriptive analysis method. The qualitative approach is particularly suited for understanding the experiences of foreign interns adapting to housekeeping standards in Japan, as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of real-world challenges and opportunities encountered during this process McGinley et al. (2020). A descriptive analysis is chosen to systematically present the findings based on direct observations and internship reports, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the context and nuances involved in the adaptation process.

Implementation of the Method

The research is conducted through a case study approach, focusing specifically on the housekeeping operations at the Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay. Data collection involves an in-depth review of the internship experience, which includes documenting daily work routines, interactions with local staff, and the challenges faced during the adaptation to Japanese housekeeping standards. This method aligns with the qualitative research paradigm, which emphasizes the importance of context and participant perspectives in understanding complex social phenomena. By employing a case study approach, the research captures the intricacies of the interns' experiences and the operational dynamics within the hotel environment.

Research Location and Timeline

This research is based on an internship experience conducted at the Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay, Japan. The internship took place over six months, from March to September 2024. The hotel was selected due to its adherence to high housekeeping standards and its relevance to the study's focus on global hospitality practices. This timeframe allows for a thorough exploration of the interns' experiences and the operational practices within the hotel, providing a rich dataset for analysis.

Data Collection and Participants

The primary data source is the internship report, which includes daily logs, challenges encountered, and reflections on the adaptation process. Additional insights were gathered from interviews with housekeeping staff and supervisors at the hotel. The participants include:

- A foreign intern who documented their experience.
- Japanese housekeeping staff working alongside the intern.
- Supervisors overseeing housekeeping operations at the hotel.

By integrating qualitative data from multiple sources, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how global housekeeping standards are implemented in a culturally specific environment like Japan. The analysis will focus on the effectiveness of existing adaptation strategies and potential improvements to facilitate better integration for foreign interns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal key challenges and opportunities in implementing global housekeeping standards at Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay. The following results summarize the main aspects:

These findings confirm the hypothesis that while global housekeeping standards are effectively implemented in Japan, the adaptation process for foreign interns necessitates additional support in language training, cultural orientation, and workflow integration. The study underscores the importance of structured training tailored to the specific needs of international interns, ensuring smoother adaptation and enhanced housekeeping efficiency Thomas & Thomas (2021).

One of the most prominent findings is the significant challenge posed by language barriers. Foreign interns frequently struggle with communication when interacting with local housekeeping staff and supervisors. Many essential instructions and procedures are conveyed in Japanese, which complicates the ability of non-Japanese-speaking interns to fully grasp expectations. This situation highlights the urgent need for additional language training or the provision of bilingual support staff to facilitate better communication (Rupp et al., 2014). Research indicates that effective communication is critical for operational success in hospitality settings, as misunderstandings can lead to decreased service quality and guest satisfaction (Balkhair

et al., 2020).

The study also revealed issues in cultural adaptation. Japanese housekeeping standards emphasize meticulous attention to detail and strict adherence to protocol. Many foreign interns find it challenging to meet these high standards initially, as work expectations are often more rigid than in their home countries. This necessitates the development of a structured orientation program that includes cultural training alongside technical housekeeping skills (Peng et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that cultural orientation significantly enhances the ability of foreign workers to adapt to local practices, thereby improving overall job performance (Merkel et al., 2020).

Another key finding is the effectiveness of structured training programs. The data indicates that foreign interns who undergo comprehensive training integrate better into the housekeeping system. However, some gaps remain in addressing specific cultural and linguistic challenges. Customization of training materials to suit international interns is necessary to improve their learning curve and performance (Watanabe et al., 2014). Research has demonstrated that tailored training approaches can lead to higher retention rates and job satisfaction among international employees (Camilleri et al., 2023).

The study also found that high occupancy levels impact operational efficiency. During peak seasons, housekeeping staff experience increased workloads, which can lead to delays in room cleaning. While Japanese hotels are renowned for their efficiency, additional resources, such as temporary staffing solutions, could help maintain high service standards even during busy periods (Elgужja et al., 2019). The literature suggests that effective resource management during peak times is crucial for sustaining service quality and meeting guest expectations (Kajigaya et al., 2015).

Finally, guest satisfaction remains high, largely due to Japan's well-established reputation for cleanliness. However, some guests noted inconsistencies in service responsiveness, particularly in handling special housekeeping requests. Enhancing coordination between guests and housekeeping staff through digital request systems or multilingual concierge services could further improve service quality (Fakhri et al., 2024). Studies have shown that the integration of technology in hospitality operations can significantly enhance guest experiences by streamlining communication and service

delivery (Saber & Hamed, 2018).

In conclusion, the study found that foreign interns face significant challenges in adapting to Japanese housekeeping standards. Language barriers remain one of the most prominent obstacles, as many housekeeping instructions are conveyed in Japanese, making it difficult for interns to understand and execute tasks effectively. Furthermore, cultural differences, particularly in work ethic and attention to detail, add another layer of complexity to the adaptation process. Despite these challenges, the study highlights that Japanese hospitality practices align well with global housekeeping standards, particularly in terms of cleanliness and structured workflows. However, additional training programs tailored to international interns are necessary to bridge the gap in language proficiency and cultural adaptation.

To improve the adaptation of foreign interns, the study suggests structured training programs that include language support, cultural orientation, and hands-on learning experiences. Additionally, mentorship programs with experienced local staff could enhance the learning process and ease the transition for new interns. These strategies would help improve housekeeping efficiency while ensuring that foreign interns can integrate more seamlessly into the Japanese hospitality work environment (Lyu et al., 2023).

Discussion

The Findings of this study highlight both the challenges and opportunities faced by foreign interns in adapting to Japanese housekeeping standards. One of the most prominent challenges identified is the language barrier, which significantly impacts communication between foreign interns and local housekeeping staff. Compared to previous research by Kim & Lee (2022), which emphasized the importance of structured training programs for hospitality employees, this study suggests that language support should be integrated as a fundamental component of such training to address the specific needs of foreign workers Andrews & Cook (2021). Research indicates that effective communication is critical for operational success in hospitality settings, as misunderstandings can lead to decreased service quality and guest satisfaction (Amod & Mkhize, 2023).

Another major challenge is cultural adaptation. Japanese housekeeping standards demand a high level of discipline and meticulous attention to detail, which may be

unfamiliar to foreign interns accustomed to more flexible work environments. This study reinforces the findings of Jones et al. (2021), who also observed that cultural differences influence housekeeping performance in multinational hotel chains (Alidina et al., 2021). However, unlike prior research that focused on long-term employees, this study specifically examines how short-term interns adapt, revealing the need for additional cultural orientation sessions prior to their placements (Lau et al., 2018).

Despite these challenges, the study finds that structured training programs play a critical role in helping foreign interns integrate into Japanese housekeeping systems. Similar to the findings of Garcia et al. (2022), which demonstrated that cultural sensitivity workshops improve employee performance, this study suggests that mentorship programs with experienced local staff could further enhance the adaptation process (McGuire et al., 2021). Moreover, by providing targeted training sessions that simulate real-life housekeeping scenarios, interns can become better prepared to meet the high service standards expected in Japanese hotels (Byrnes et al., 2019).

Another key finding is that while global housekeeping standards align well with Japanese hospitality practices in terms of cleanliness and structured workflows, there are notable differences in service responsiveness. Unlike research conducted by White & Nakamura (2023), which praised Japanese hotels for their operational efficiency, this study found that during peak occupancy periods, housekeeping responsiveness tends to decline, leading to delays in room cleaning (Charron et al., 2019). This suggests that hotels could benefit from optimizing resource allocation and implementing technology-driven housekeeping management systems to mitigate service delays (Alshammari et al., 2019).

In comparison to Brown and Wilson's (2023) study on standardized housekeeping protocols improving customer satisfaction, this research suggests that while such protocols do enhance overall service quality, the integration of foreign interns presents unique logistical and operational challenges that must be addressed (Mremi et al., 2023). By ensuring that adaptation programs include language training, cultural orientation, and hands-on experience, hotels can create a more inclusive and efficient housekeeping workforce.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing body of research on international workforce integration in the hospitality industry by identifying specific

adaptation challenges faced by foreign interns in Japan. The recommendations provided, such as mentorship programs and improved training frameworks, can serve as a foundation for future policy development in global housekeeping management.

This study successfully achieved its research objectives by identifying key challenges and proposing practical solutions to facilitate the adaptation of foreign interns to Japanese housekeeping standards. The primary objective was to assess the difficulties faced by interns, and the findings confirmed that language barriers and cultural adaptation are significant obstacles. By evaluating how global housekeeping standards align with Japanese hospitality practices, the study highlighted the structured yet rigid nature of Japanese housekeeping operations and their implications for foreign workers.

Furthermore, the study aimed to propose strategies for improving the adaptation of foreign interns. Through analysis of previous literature and empirical findings, the research demonstrated that structured training programs, cultural orientation sessions, and mentorship initiatives are effective approaches to easing the transition (Brooks et al., 2019). The comparison with previous studies reinforced the need for language support and technological enhancements to optimize housekeeping efficiency. These findings contribute to the broader discussion on global workforce integration in the hospitality sector and provide a roadmap for developing future training programs that foster a seamless adaptation process for foreign interns.

The results of this study align with previous research while also offering new insights into foreign intern adaptation in Japanese housekeeping environments. The study confirms findings by Kim & Lee (2022) and Garcia et al. (2022) regarding the importance of structured training programs and cultural sensitivity workshops in improving foreign employee performance. However, this study extends previous work by specifically focusing on the experience of short-term foreign interns, a demographic that has received limited attention in hospitality research (Khan et al., 2020).

Additionally, this study supports the conclusions drawn by White & Nakamura (2023) about the efficiency of Japanese housekeeping operations but highlights discrepancies in service responsiveness during peak seasons, an area not fully explored in prior research (Caruso et al., 2019). Similarly, while Brown and Wilson (2023) emphasized the benefits of standardized housekeeping protocols, this study identifies

gaps in these protocols when applied to foreign interns, particularly in terms of language adaptation and cultural orientation.

By integrating findings from multiple studies and adding original empirical data, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the adaptation of foreign interns in Japanese housekeeping. The findings emphasize the need for a holistic approach that includes training, language support, mentorship, and improved resource allocation to ensure that foreign interns can successfully integrate into Japan's high-standard hospitality sector.

This study provides a foundation for future research on the adaptation of foreign interns in the hospitality industry, particularly in culturally distinct environments like Japan. One area for further investigation is the long-term impact of structured training programs on foreign interns' performance and career trajectories in the global hospitality sector. Future research could also explore the effectiveness of digital tools and AI-driven language translation technologies in improving communication between foreign interns and local housekeeping staff (Pelaiez et al., 2018).

Additionally, comparative studies between different international hospitality markets could offer deeper insights into how cultural adaptation challenges vary across countries. Examining best practices in other regions could help refine training programs and adaptation strategies for international interns. Lastly, longitudinal studies tracking foreign interns' adaptation progress over extended periods would provide valuable data on the sustainability of the recommended strategies and their effectiveness in real-world hospitality environments (Yamuragiye et al., 2023).

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The sample size was limited to a single hotel, which may not fully represent the broader hospitality industry in Japan. Future research should include multiple hotels across various regions to increase the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study relied on qualitative data, which, while rich in detail, may lack the statistical robustness that a mixed-methods or quantitative study could provide. Expanding the research methodology to incorporate surveys and performance metrics could strengthen future studies on foreign intern adaptation in housekeeping roles (Kpokiri et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the adaptation challenges faced by foreign interns in Japanese housekeeping environments, emphasizing the significant impact of language barriers, cultural expectations, and structured training programs. The research confirms that while global housekeeping standards are generally compatible with Japanese hospitality practices, the integration of foreign workers requires additional support mechanisms. The relationship between cultural adaptation and operational efficiency highlights the necessity of developing training frameworks that cater to international staff, allowing them to assimilate more effectively into structured housekeeping systems. This study also suggests that technological advancements, such as AI-driven language translation and automated housekeeping management tools, could enhance communication and workflow efficiency. Future research should explore long-term impacts of structured training programs and conduct cross-country comparative studies to refine best practices for international workforce integration. While this study offers valuable insights, its scope is limited to a single hotel, and future research should include a broader dataset to increase generalizability. The findings from this study contribute to the ongoing discourse on global workforce adaptation and provide practical strategies for improving the experience of foreign interns in the hospitality industry.

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TABEL

Review Category	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback
Cleanliness	Rooms are well-maintained and spotless upon check-in.	Some guests reported inconsistencies in daily cleaning routines.
Housekeeping Staff	Staff are polite and meticulous in maintaining room conditions.	Language barriers make it difficult for non-Japanese-speaking guests to communicate specific needs.
Response Time	Generally efficient in handling guest requests.	Delays in room cleaning during peak seasons.
Service Standards	Aligns well with international housekeeping standards.	Housekeeping responsiveness can be slower compared to some international hotel chains.

Key Aspect	Findings
Language Barrier	Communication challenges exist between foreign interns and local staff, requiring additional language training support.
Cultural Adaptation	Foreign interns struggle with the rigorous work ethic and attention to detail expected in Japanese housekeeping standards.
Training Effectiveness	Structured training programs help foreign interns integrate better but require customization to address language and cultural differences.
Operational Efficiency	Housekeeping processes follow a highly structured workflow, but peak season workloads sometimes lead to service delays.
Guest Satisfaction	High cleanliness standards contribute to positive guest feedback, yet responsiveness during peak times remains a challenge.