EDUVELOP
JOURNAL OF ENGLISH EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
Nationally Accredited Journal Decree No. 10/C/C3/DT.05.00/E5/2025 (Sinta 2)

Volume 9, No. 1, September 2025 • **Page:** 249 - 268
DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

ISSN 2597-713X (print)
ISSN 2597-7148 (online)

OPEN ACCESS: Research Article

Analyzing the Influence of Japanese Language Proficiency and Internship Experience on Students' Readiness for Professional Engagement

Renold [1*], Taqdir [2], Muhammad Faiz Alghifari [3], Squal William Gosal[4], Muhammad Arfin Muhammad Salim[5]

[1,5]Rooms Division Department, Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, South Sulawesi, Indonesia
[2] Department of Japanese Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, South Sulawesi, Indonesia
[3] Departement of JLCC (Japanese language and culture course) Kyushu University #401 Center Zone 4, 744 Motooka, Nishi-ku, Fukuoka, 812-8581, Japan
[4] Center for Japanese Studies (CJS) Nanzan University (南山大学), Yamazato-cho, Showa-ku, Nagoya,466-8673 Japan

*Correspondence e-mail: renold@poltekparmakassar.ac.id

Received : 2025, June
Revision : 2025, July
Accepted : 2025, August
Published: 2025, September

Abstract

This study explores the influence of Japanese language proficiency and internship experience on students' readiness for professional engagement within Japanese-speaking tourism service environments. Focusing on students from the Diploma 4 Tourism Business Program and the Diploma 3 Travel Program at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, the research addresses the persistent gap between academic language instruction and real-world communicative competence in Japanese Language Skills contexts. A quantitative method was employed, involving 124 students who had completed internships and enrolled in elective Japanese language courses. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS version 4.1.1.4, incorporating outer and inner model assessments such as convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, R^2, f^2, and hypothesis testing for both direct and indirect effects. The findings indicate that internship experience has a significantly strong influence on students' readiness to interact with Japanese partners ($f^2 = 0.8398$; $p < 0.001$), while general Japanese language proficiency exerts a moderate yet meaningful impact. Conversely, basic text mastery and formal Japanese communication skills show weak and statistically

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

insignificant effects. The findings indicate that internship experience has a strong and significant influence on students' readiness to interact with Japanese partners, while general Japanese language proficiency has a moderate but meaningful impact. Conversely, basic text mastery and formal Japanese communication skills have weak and statistically insignificant effects . These results underscore the vital role of experiential learning in enhancing functional language application in professional settings. The study recommends integrating practical language activities into internships and strengthening collaboration between academic programs and industry. Future research should examine the quality of internship placements and evaluate ESP outcomes across different hospitality and tourism programs.

Keywords: *Japanese language proficiency; internship experience; ESP; student readiness; tourism education*

1. Introduction

In recent years, internship programs—commonly known as Work Integrated Learning—have become essential in strengthening the link between vocational education and industry readiness, particularly in the tourism sector. These internships provide students with the opportunity to develop real-world competencies, including operational skills, professional ethics, and customer service attitudes (Hora et al., 2020).

At the Diploma 4 (D4) Tourism Business Program and Diploma 3 (D3) Travel Program in Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, students are trained in areas such as ticket reservation, tour packaging, marketing tourism products, and guiding. However, foreign language instruction, especially Japanese, remains generic and is limited to basic communication skills (Wagner, 2021), without addressing the actual communicative demands of the tourism industry (Annisa & Karnawati, 2024; Renold et al., 2022). As a result, students often encounter difficulties in applying language skills in professional contexts during their internships.

Previous studies have revealed that Indonesian tourism students undergoing internships in Japan frequently struggle with Japanese workplace communication, particularly in implementing hospitality values such as omotenashi (Suryawati et al., 2023). Limited language proficiency, especially at JLPT N4–N5 levels, restricts students' ability to comprehend and use technical vocabulary (senmon yougo) relevant to guiding and reservation tasks (Aizawa et al., 2023; Su et al., 2020).

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

Although English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been successfully applied in English language instruction for hospitality, similar approaches have rarely been developed for Japanese language instruction in Indonesian vocational tourism education (Kurniawan et al., 2022). This indicates a pressing need for curriculum reform that bridges this pedagogical gap.

Despite the growing demand for tourism graduates who are linguistically and professionally competent, (Thomason, 1991) arguing that Japanese language instruction in vocational institutions remains general and disconnected from industry-specific requirements. Instructional content seldom addresses real-world tasks such as booking systems, tourist handling procedures, or guiding techniques, all of which are fundamental in tour operations and travel agency work (Iwata & Okada, 2018). Moreover, there is a notable gap in research that integrates Japanese language proficiency with internship performance, particularly from the perspective of student-mentor interaction. These challenges are compounded by differing expectations: while industry mentors often expect interns to adapt quickly and contribute effectively, students feel underprepared due to limited language and contextual exposure (Vo et al., 2022).

At the Diploma 4 (D4) Tourism Business Program and Diploma 3 (D3) Travel Program in Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, students are trained in areas such as ticket reservation, tour packaging, marketing tourism products, and guiding. However, foreign language instruction, especially Japanese, remains generic and is limited to basic communication skills (Wagner, 2021), without addressing the actual communicative demands of the tourism industry (Annisa & Karnawati, 2024; Renold et al., 2022). As a result, students often encounter difficulties in applying language skills in professional contexts during their internships.

This study aims to examine the influence of Japanese language proficiency and internship experience on vocational tourism students' readiness to perform in professional environments, specifically in the context of tour operation and travel agency divisions. It focuses on how the limited Japanese language training impacts students' ability to carry out industry-relevant tasks such as international ticket reservation, inbound and outbound tour planning, and tourist guiding. Furthermore,

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

the study investigates how mentor-student dynamics during internships affect students' learning and adaptation. By bridging language education with real-world experience, this research contributes a more holistic view of student preparedness for the tourism workforce.

The conceptual framework of this research draws on two key theoretical perspectives: Japanese language proficiency and socio-cognitive apprenticeship models (Nishizawa et al., 2022). Japanese language proficiency underscores the importance of designing language instruction tailored to specific occupational contexts, emphasizing task-based communication rather than general language use (Seaton & Yamamura, 2015). Meanwhile, the apprenticeship model highlights the significance of mentorship, hands-on learning, and contextual engagement in developing practical competencies. This dual framework allows for an integrated analysis of Japanese language proficiency, workplace communication skills, and the role of industry mentors in enhancing student readiness during internships.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to bridge the educational-practical gap by demonstrating how Japanese language training and internship experiences can be more effectively aligned to support tourism students' career preparation. The novelty of the research is its integrative approach, which analyzes language learning and internship performance not as isolated components but as interrelated dimensions of vocational readiness. The findings are expected to benefit curriculum developers, industry partners, and policymakers in refining both academic instruction and internship implementation. Therefore, the objectives of this study are: (1) to assess the influence of Japanese language proficiency on student performance during internships; (2) to evaluate how internship experiences enhance the application of language and operational skills; and (3) to analyze the role of mentor-student interactions in supporting or hindering workplace adaptation.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic between January and April 2025, with data collection carried out from August 2024 to March 2025. The research targeted students from the Diploma 4 Tourism Business Program

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

and the Diploma 3 Travel Program who were enrolled in Japanese elective courses and had completed internships in the tourism or hospitality industry. A total of 124 respondents were selected through simple random sampling. The research employed a quantitative survey design using a structured questionnaire, which was distributed directly to participants (Plonsky, 2017). The instrument measured four theoretical constructs: cross-cultural communication (Aririguzoh, 2022), comprehension of course material (Prasetya et al., 2025) and communication service skills (Miguel, 2024; Yahya et al., 2025).

The research employed a quantitative survey design using a structured questionnaire, which was distributed directly to participants (Plonsky, 2017). The instrument measured four theoretical constructs: cross-cultural communication (Aririguzoh, 2022), comprehension of course material (Prasetya et al., 2025) and communication service skills (Miguel, 2024; Yahya et al., 2025). This study employed a quantitative survey design. The structured questionnaire was distributed directly to participants who were students enrolled in relevant programs. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face interactions, ensuring respondents' understanding and completeness of responses. The collected data were then analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to test the proposed hypotheses.

Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS version 4.1.1.4 with a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach (Sarstedt et al., 2021). The outer model was evaluated through convergent validity (outer loading > 0.70), discriminant validity, and composite reliability (> 0.70). Construct validity was further tested using Pearson's product-moment correlation (Takona, 2024), and internal consistency was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.70) (Frost, 2023). Normality of the data was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The structural model was analyzed using R Square (R^2), indirect effect testing, and f-square (f^2), with thresholds of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicating small, moderate, and large effect sizes respectively. This methodological framework ensured the reliability and validity of findings related to the impact of fieldwork experience on students' English communication skills in tourism services.

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

3. Results and Discussions

This section presents the results of the study along with a critical discussion that aligns with the research objectives and the theoretical framework introduced earlier. The primary aim is to evaluate how well the measurement model reflects the constructs related to students' Japanese language proficiency and fieldwork experience, and how these contribute to their readiness to interact with Japanese partners in tourism contexts. One of the key validation techniques employed was convergent validity, which assesses the degree to which multiple indicators measuring the same construct are in agreement. According to established criteria, convergent validity is achieved when outer loading values exceed 0.70 and the average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022).

The results, as illustrated in Figure 1, show that all 24 indicators across the five latent variables—Basic Text Mastery (X1), Formal Japanese Communication (X2), General Japanese Language Skills (X3), Internship Experience (Z), and Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y)—demonstrated outer loading values above 0.70. In addition, the AVE values for each construct were above the minimum threshold of 0.50, confirming strong convergent validity. These findings suggest that all indicators reliably represent their respective constructs, validating the instrument used in this study. The implication is that students' Japanese language competencies and internship experiences are accurately captured and are theoretically consistent. Moreover, this supports prior research emphasizing the importance of experiential and contextual learning in language education for tourism and service settings (Rong-Da Liang, 2021), reinforcing the argument that hands-on industry experience enhances intercultural communication readiness (Bilgihan et al., 2014).

3.1 Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)

Convergent Validity is one of the testing methods used to assess the extent to which reflective indicators have a strong correlation with the latent construct being measured. An indicator is considered to meet the criteria for convergent validity if

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

the average variance extracted (AVE) value exceeds 0.50 or the outer loading value is greater than 0.70.

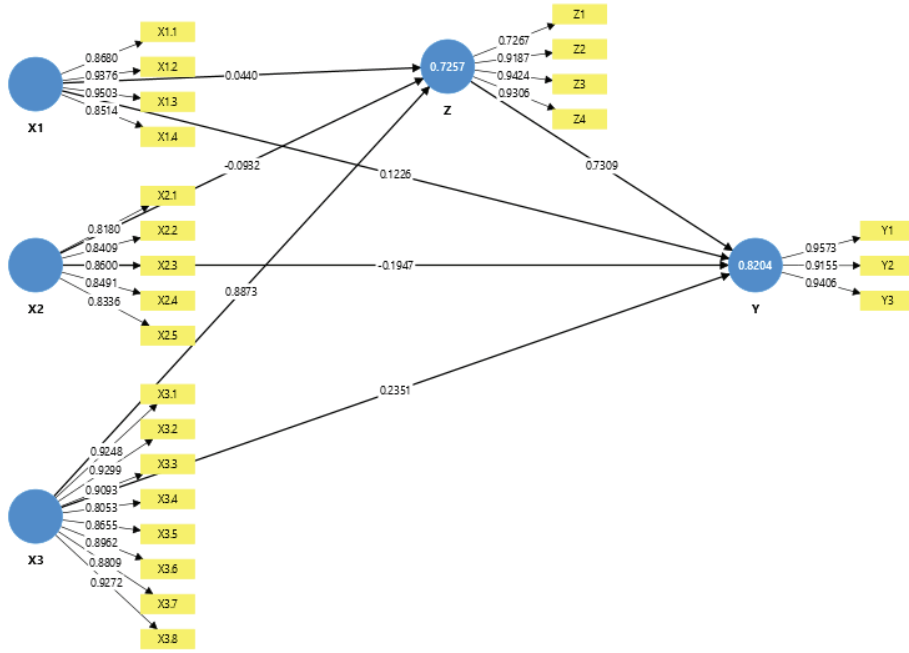

Figure 1. Outer Model Test Results

3.2 Descriminant Validity

Discriminant validity aims to assess the extent to which a construct in the model can be distinguished from other different constructs. One common method to evaluate discriminant validity is through cross-loading analysis, where an indicator's loading on its intended construct should be higher than its loadings on other constructs. Generally, a good cross-loading value exceeds 0.70 on the target construct, indicating that each indicator correlates more strongly with the construct it is intended to measure than with others. This suggests that the indicators adequately discriminate and accurately represent their respective latent variables. Consequently, it can be concluded that the constructs in the model possess satisfactory discriminant validity based on the cross-loading analysis.

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

This conclusion is further supported by the Fornell-Larcker criterion, as presented in Table 1, where the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs. These results confirm that the model meets the discriminant validity requirements according to Fornell-Larcker's standard. Therefore, the measurement model demonstrates robust discriminant validity overall, ensuring that each latent variable is conceptually distinct and appropriately measured. Table 1 below summarizes the discriminant validity values based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 1. Fornell-Larcker Discriminant Validity Score

	X1	X2	X3	Y	Z
X1	0.9028				
X2	0.8057	0.8404			
X3	0.9152	0.8285	0.8932		
Y	0.7518	0.5941	0.8076	0.9380	
Z	0.7810	0.6774	0.8503	0.8947	0.8841

3.3 Valid and reliable test

Table 2. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha Values

	Cronbach's aplha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	(AVE)
X1	0.9236	0.9248	0.9462	0.8151
X2	0.8970	0.9066	0.9232	0.7063
X3	0.9636	0.9687	0.9693	0.7979
Y	0.9316	0.9367	0.9564	0.8798
Z	0.9045	0.9350	0.9341	0.7816

A construct is considered reliable if Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values exceed 0.70. Table 4 shows that all variable values in the reliability test, using both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability, have values above 0.7, and the validity test using AVE has a value of more than 0.5. Therefore, it can be

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

concluded that the variables tested are valid and reliable, so that structural model testing can be carried out.

3.4 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Table 3. R Square (R^2)

	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Y	0.8204	0.8145
Z	0.7257	0.7190

Based on Table 3, it shows that the R square value of variable Y is 0.8204, meaning that the independent variable has an influence of 82% on Y, while variable Z shows an R square value of 0.726, meaning that the independent variable has an influence of 72.6% on variable Z.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Average Sample (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic (0. STDEV)	P-Value
X1 → Y	0.1226	0.1263	0.1021	1.2005	0.2300
X1 → Z	0.0440	0.0479	0.1378	0.3192	0.7496
X2 → Y	-0.1947	-0.1970	0.0644	3.0216	0.0025
X2 → Z	-0.0932	-0.1004	0.1097	0.8494	0.3957
X3 → Y	0.2351	0.2364	0.1345	1.7487	0.0804
X3 → Z	0.8873	0.8916	0.1257	7.0594	0.0000
Z → Y	0.7309	0.7285	0.1032	7.0848	0.0000

Hypothesis testing was conducted by comparing the p-values against the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). A relationship between variables is considered statistically significant if the p-value is less than 0.05. Based on the results presented in Table 4, the hypothesis testing can be summarized as follows: First, the variable X1 has a p-value of 0.2300 for its effect on Y, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that X1 does not have a significant impact on Y. Similarly, X1's effect on Z shows a p-value of 0.7496, also greater than 0.05, confirming a non-significant influence.

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

Second, the variable X2 has a significant effect on Y with a p-value of 0.0025 (< 0.05), but its influence on Z is not significant, as indicated by a p-value of 0.3957. Third, X3's impact on Y shows a p-value of 0.0804, which is slightly above the threshold, indicating a non-significant effect, while its influence on Z is highly significant with a p-value of 0.0000. Finally, the mediating variable Z significantly affects Y, with a p-value of 0.0000 (< 0.05). These findings reveal that Formal Japanese Communication (X2) directly influences readiness to interact with Japanese partners (Y), while General Japanese Language Skills (X3) significantly affect internship experience (Z), which in turn has a significant positive effect on readiness (Y). Conversely, Basic Text Mastery (X1) does not have a statistically significant impact on either outcome variable in this model.

The test results show that variable X1 has no significant effect on variables Y and Z. Variables X2 and X3 only have a significant effect on variable Y, but not on variable Z. Meanwhile, variable X3 only has a significant effect on variable Z but not on variable Y, and variable Z has a significant effect on variable Y.

Table 5. Indirect Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Average Sample (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic (0. STDEV)	P-Value
X3→Z→Y	0.6485	0.6507	0.1365	4.7500	0.000
X1→Z→Y	0.0322	0.0315	0.1001	0.3214	0.7479
X2→Z→Y	-0.0681	-0.0711	0.0790	0.8614	0.3891

The indirect effect test was conducted to determine whether the mediating variable (Z) strengthens the relationship between the independent variables (X1, X2, and X3) and the dependent variable (Y). Based on the results presented in Table 5, the mediation effect of internship experience (Z) on the relationship between Basic Text Mastery (X1) and readiness to interact with Japanese partners (Y) is not significant, as indicated by a p-value of 0.7479 (> 0.05). Similarly, the indirect effect of Formal Japanese Communication (X2) on Y through Z is also not significant, with a p-value of 0.3891 (> 0.05). However, the indirect effect of General

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

Japanese Language Skills (X3) on readiness (Y) through internship experience (Z) is significant, supported by a p-value of 0.0000 (< 0.05).

These findings suggest that while the internship experience does not mediate the impact of Basic Text Mastery and Formal Japanese Communication on readiness, it plays a crucial mediating role between General Japanese Language Skills and readiness to interact with Japanese partners. This implies that students with stronger general Japanese language skills benefit more from their internship experiences, which in turn enhances their preparedness for intercultural communication in tourism service settings. Thus, the mediating variable Z significantly strengthens the effect of X3 on Y, but not for X1 and X2, highlighting the differentiated roles of language competencies in practical learning contexts.

3.4 F Square Test (f^2)

The f-square (f^2) test is utilized to measure the effect size of an independent variable on a dependent variable within the structural model. This metric quantifies the contribution of each construct in explaining the variance of the dependent variable. According to the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2017), the interpretation of f^2 values is categorized as follows: 0.02 indicates a small (weak) effect, 0.15 a medium (moderate) effect, and 0.35 a large (strong) effect. Based on the results presented in Table 6, the effect sizes for each relationship are interpreted as follows:

Table 5. F Square Test (f^2)

	X1	X2	X3	Y	Z
X1				0.0130	0.0011
X2				0.0626	0.0095
X3				0.0305	0.3980
Y					
Z				0.8159	

The following section presents the effect size (f-square, f^2) values for the relationships between the independent variables—Basic Text Mastery (X1), Formal Japanese Communication (X2), General Japanese Language Skills (X3),

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

and Internship Experience (Z)—and the dependent variable, Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y). These effect sizes indicate the relative strength of each variable's contribution within the structural model. As detailed in Table 8, Basic Text Mastery (X1) exerts a weak influence on both Readiness ($f^2 = 0.0161$) and Internship Experience ($f^2 = 0.0109$). Formal Japanese Communication (X2) shows a very weak effect on Readiness ($f^2 = 0.0008$), yet demonstrates a moderate impact on Internship Experience ($f^2 = 0.1348$). Meanwhile, General Japanese Language Skills (X3) yield moderate effects on Readiness ($f^2 = 0.0515$) and a moderate-to-strong effect on Internship Experience ($f^2 = 0.0762$). Notably, Internship Experience (Z) exhibits a very strong effect on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners ($f^2 = 0.8398$), underscoring its critical role in enhancing students' intercultural communication readiness within tourism and hospitality contexts:

Basic Text Mastery (X1) on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y) has an f-square value of 0.0161, which can be interpreted as a weak effect of Basic Text Mastery on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners.

a) Basic Text Mastery (X1) on Internship Experience (Z) has an f-square value of 0.0109, indicating that Basic Text Mastery also exerts a weak influence on Internship Experience.
b) Formal Japanese Communication (X2) on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y) has an f-square value of 0.0008, which can be categorized as a very weak effect, approaching non-significance, on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners.
c) Formal Japanese Communication (X2) on Internship Experience (Z) has an f-square value of 0.1348, indicating that Formal Japanese Communication has a moderate effect on Internship Experience.
d) General Japanese Language Skills (X3) on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y) has an f-square value of 0.0515, suggesting a moderate effect of General Japanese Language Skills on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners.

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

e) General Japanese Language Skills (X3) on Internship Experience (Z) has an f-square value of 0.0762, meaning that General Japanese Language Skills exert a moderate to strong effect on Internship Experience.
f) Internship Experience (Z) on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y) has an f-square value of 0.8398, indicating a very strong effect of Internship Experience on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners.

Basic Text Mastery (X1) has a weak influence on Internship Experience (Z), with an f-square value of 0.0109. Formal Japanese Communication (X2) shows a very weak effect on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y) ($f^2 = 0.0008$), which is almost insignificant. However, Formal Japanese Communication exerts a moderate effect on Internship Experience ($f^2 = 0.1348$). General Japanese Language Skills (X3) demonstrate a moderate impact on both Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners ($f^2 = 0.0515$) and Internship Experience ($f^2 = 0.0762$), with the latter approaching a strong effect. Lastly, Internship Experience (Z) has a very strong influence on Readiness to Interact with Japanese Partners (Y), with an f-square value of 0.8398.

3.5 Discussions

The findings of this study clearly show that internship experience (Z) has a very strong influence on students' readiness to interact professionally with Japanese partners (Y), as evidenced by the substantial f-square value of 0.8398. In contrast, Basic Text Mastery (X1) and Formal Japanese Communication (X2) exert weak to negligible direct effects on readiness, while General Japanese Language Skills (X3) demonstrate moderate effects on both readiness and internship experience. These results highlight the critical role that practical, hands-on experiences play in preparing students for real-world intercultural communication, surpassing the influence of purely theoretical or formal language competencies. This aligns with experiential learning theories emphasizing the importance of active engagement and reflection in skill acquisition (Baker, 2022; Beaudin & Quick, 1995).

One explanation for the prominent impact of internship experience is that it provides an immersive environment where students apply their language

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

skills in authentic professional contexts, thereby enhancing their confidence and communicative competence. Prior studies confirm that internship programs significantly bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace demands, contributing to employability and professional readiness (Pianda et al., 2024; Wolinsky-Nahmias & Auerbach, 2022). Additionally, the moderate influence of General Japanese Language Skills on both internship experience and readiness suggests that functional language proficiency supports more effective participation during internships, which subsequently enhances readiness for professional interactions (Haryanti et al., 2024). Conversely, the limited effect of Basic Text Mastery and Formal Communication skills may reflect their more theoretical orientation, which alone may not be sufficient without practical application (Fantinelli et al., 2024).

The implications of these findings are significant for curriculum designers and educators in General Japanese Language Skills contexts, particularly within tourism and travel programs. Prioritizing internship opportunities and strengthening general language proficiency could yield better outcomes in student readiness for international professional engagements (Liashenko & Hnapovska, 2020). Moreover, integrating experiential learning components that complement formal language instruction can optimize students' communicative abilities and intercultural adaptability (Allen, 2025). Future research should explore the longitudinal effects of internship quality and duration on readiness, as well as investigate specific language skills tailored to distinct tourism service scenarios.

Despite the valuable insights gained, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample was limited to students from only two programs at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other institutions or disciplines. Additionally, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causality or track changes in readiness over time. Future research could adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to better capture the dynamics of language proficiency development and internship impacts on professional readiness. Moreover, exploring the qualitative aspects of internship experiences, such as the quality of mentorship and the nature of tasks performed, could provide deeper understanding of factors that enhance students' preparedness.

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

Finally, expanding the scope to include other foreign language proficiencies and comparing different General Japanese Language Skills contexts would enrich the literature and offer broader implications for curriculum development in tourism and hospitality education.

4. Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that internship experience (Z) has a highly significant and strong influence on students' readiness to interact with Japanese partners (Y), supported by an f-square value of 0.8398 and a p-value of 0.0000. In contrast, Basic Text Mastery (X1) and Formal Japanese Communication (X2) showed weak and statistically insignificant effects on both readiness and internship experience, with f-square values below 0.02 and p-values above 0.05. General Japanese Language Skills (X3), however, exhibited moderate direct and indirect effects, particularly through internship experience, with an indirect p-value of 0.0000 and f-square values above 0.05. These findings respond directly to the issues observed at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, where students often struggle to apply their Japanese language skills in practical, service-oriented contexts. As a practical recommendation, curriculum designers and program managers should enhance the general Japanese language components with interactive, real-life communication tasks, ensure that internships include structured opportunities to use Japanese in workplace interactions, and strengthen partnerships with industry to align internship assignments with language learning outcomes.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express sincere gratitude to the Director of Makassar Tourism Polytechnic for officially assigning and supporting the implementation of this research. Special thanks are extended to the Head of the Department of Travel, as well as the Heads of the Tourism Business and Travel Programs, for granting administrative permission and facilitating access to the student participants. Appreciation is also due to the students who willingly took the time to complete the questionnaires, contributing valuable data to this study. Their cooperation and engagement were essential to the successful completion of this research.

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

Author Contributions

Renold and Taqdir conceived and designed the research framework and instruments. Muhammad Faiz Alghifari and Squal William Gosal contributed to the development of theoretical constructs and validated relevant literature. Muhammad Arfin Muh Salim and Renold performed the data collection and coordinated field activities. Renold and Taqdir analyzed the data and interpreted the findings. Muhammad Faiz Alghifari and Squal William Gosal contributed materials and critical academic insights related to Japanese language education. Renold The primary draft was written by the corresponding author, with all authors contributing to revisions and endorsing the final submitted version.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors confirm that there are no conflicts of interest concerning the execution or publication of this research. All contributors participated voluntarily and have granted full approval for authorship and dissemination. The funding bodies played no role in any phase of the study, including its design, data acquisition, analysis, interpretation, or manuscript drafting.

DOI: https://doi.org/v9i1/5345

References

Aizawa, I., Rose, H., Thompson, G., & Curle, S. (2023). Beyond the threshold: Exploring English language proficiency, linguistic challenges, and academic language skills of Japanese students in an English medium instruction programme. *Language Teaching Research*, *27*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820965510

Allen, T. J. (2025). Experiential learning in an intercultural communication class in Japan: doing and reflecting on linguistic landscape group projects. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *38*(2), 274–292. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2024.2449076

Annisa, S. Z., & Karnawati, R. A. (2024). An Analysis of the Use of General Japanese and Tourism Japanese in the World of Work in the Hospitality Field in Hiroshima. *KIRYOKU*, *8*(2), 691–704. https://doi.org/10.14710/kiryoku.v8i2.691-704

Aririguzoh, S. (2022). Communication competencies, culture and SDGs: effective processes to cross-cultural communication. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *9*(1). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01109-4

Baker, W. (2022). From intercultural to transcultural communication. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *22*(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2021.2001477

Beaudin, B., & Quick, D. (1995). Experiential learning: Theoretical underpinnings. *Colorado State University*.

Bilgihan, A., Okumus, F., Nusair, K., & Bujisic, M. (2014). Online experiences: Flow theory, measuring online customer experience in e-commerce and managerial implications for the lodging industry. *Information Technology and Tourism*, *14*(1), 49–71. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-013-0003-3

Fantinelli, S., Cortini, M., Di Fiore, T., Iervese, S., & Galanti, T. (2024). Bridging the Gap between Theoretical Learning and Practical Application: A Qualitative Study in the Italian Educational Context. *Education Sciences*, *14*(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14020198

Frost, J. (2023). Cronbach's Alpha: Definition, Calculations & Examples. *Jim Frost*.

Hair, J. F., Hult, T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). In *Sage*.

Haryanti, P., Suryadimulya, A. S., Dienaputra, R., & Nur, T. (2024). Evaluation of internship programs abroad at universities in Indonesia: A case study of Indonesian intern students in Japan. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies*, *8*(1), 116–125. https://doi.org/10.53894/ijirss.v8i1.3577

Hora, M. T., Parrott, E., & Her, P. (2020). How do students conceptualise the college internship experience? Towards a student-centred approach to designing and implementing internships. *Journal of Education and Work*, *33*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2019.1708869

Iwata, Y., & Okada, M. (2018). Teaching Japanese language in tourism and customer service skills. *Journal of Global Tourism Research*, *3*(2). https://doi.org/10.37020/jgtr.3.2_75

Kurniawan, Y., Septiani, F. A. N., Halim, E., & Bhutkar, G. (2022). An Idea of Japanese Language Learning for Indonesians via Mobile Application Development. *Proceedings of 2022 8th International HCI and UX Conference in Indonesia, CHIuXiD 2022*. https://doi.org/10.1109/CHIuXiD57244.2022.10009690

Liashenko, I., & Hnapovska, L. (2020). Esp online course as a means of enhancing graduate students' employability opportunities-case of Sumy state university. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, *8*(3). https://doi.org/10.22190/JTESAP2003215L

Miguel, B. (2024). Effects of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Communication on the Quality of Service and Customer Satisfaction in Hospitality and Tourism Settings in Brazil. *International Journal of Modern Hospitality and Tourism*, *4*(1). https://doi.org/10.47604/ijmht.2377

Nishizawa, H., Isbell, D. R., & Suzuki, Y. (2022). Review of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test. In *Language Testing* (Vol. 39, Issue 3). https://doi.org/10.1177/02655322221080898

Pianda, D., Hilmiana, H., Widianto, S., & Sartika, D. (2024). The impact of internship experience on the employability of vocational students: a bibliometric and systematic review. *Cogent Business & Management*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2386465

Plonsky, L. (2017). Quantitative Research Methods. In *The Routledge Handbook of Instructed Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 505–521). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315676968-28

Prasetya, D. B. Y., Setiawati, A. S., Asrini, D. P., & Puspitosari, D. (2025). Improving Students Dokkai (Reading Comprehension) Performance Through Correlation Analysis of Cognitive Anxiety and Japanese Reading Understanding. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, *58*(1), 12–26. https://doi.org/10.23887/jpp.v58i1.85459

Renold, R., Marannu, E. B., Wijaya, D. H., & Usman, O. (2022). Interpretation of Tourist Attracion in Japanese Language at Penglipuran Village, Bali. *Pusaka: Journal of Tourism, Hospitality, Travel and Business Event*, *4*(1). https://doi.org/10.33649/pusaka.v4i1.131

Rong-Da Liang, A. (2021). Examining the factors of experiential learning and teaching style: A case study of a hospitality and tourism program. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, *29*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100332

Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2021). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. In *Handbook of Market Research*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57413-4_15

Seaton, P., & Yamamura, T. (2015). Japanese Popular Culture and Contents Tourism – Introduction. *Japan Forum*, *27*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2014.962564

Su, Y. L., Manjet, K., & Tengku-Sepora, T. M. (2020). The Importance of Japanese Language Skills Proficiency among Malaysian Graduates in Japanese-based Companies. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *28*(2).

Suryawati, C. T., Ainie, I., Sarmi, N. N., Mustofa, A., & Pasopati, R. U. (2023). The Implementation of Omotenashi and Experience of Internship Students in Hotel and Ryokan in Japan. *Kiryoku*, *7*(1).

Takona, J. P. (2024). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches / sixth edition. In *Quality and Quantity* (Vol. 58, Issue 1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-023-01798-2

Thomason, P. (1991). Using Japanese Language and Japan Skills in the Inbound Tourism Industry: Tour Guiding. *Japanese Studies*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/10371399108522140

Vo, N. T., Le, L. H. P., & Lam, V. T. T. (2022). Challenges for Student Satisfaction of Internship Program in Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Vietnam. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*, *23*(5). https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2021.1964414

WAGNER, A. (2021). An Analysis of Curriculum and Materials Design in ESP for Tourism Courses in Japan and Thailand. *... of Humanities Research, St. Andrew's University*.

Wolinsky-Nahmias, Y., & Auerbach, A. H. (2022). Evaluating the Design and Benefits of Internship Programs. *Journal of Political Science Education*, *18*(4). https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2022.2109481

Yahya, M., Rahmayanti, F., Widianto, A. T., & Ridwan, M. (2025). Impact of Fieldwork on Students' English Communication in Hospitality Services. *LETS: Journal of Linguistics and English Teaching Studies*, *6*(2), 141–153. https://doi.org/10.46870/lets.v6i2.1556