



**IMPLEMENTATION OF OMOTENASHI'S CULTURAL VALUES IN
IMPROVING GUEST SERVICE IN THE KITCHEN: A CASE STUDY OF
OOEDO ONSEN MONOGATARI PREMIUM HOTEL FUGETSU, JAPAN**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of Omotenashi cultural values in enhancing guest service in the Kitchen Division of Ooedo Onsen Monogatari Premium Hotel Fugetsu, Japan. Omotenashi, as Japan's distinctive hospitality philosophy, is embodied through three principal dimensions: Shitsurai (readiness and aesthetics of the service environment), Furumai (staff conduct and etiquette in serving guests), and Shikake (proactive anticipation of guest needs). A qualitative approach with a case study method was employed. Data were collected through one-year participatory observation during an internship, in-depth online interviews with 10 informants comprising kitchen staff, management, and hotel guests, and supporting document analysis. Findings reveal that all three Omotenashi dimensions were systematically and consistently implemented across breakfast buffet, dinner buffet, and live kitchen operations. Shitsurai was executed through rigorous mise en place standards and structured team role-division. Furumai was enacted through the use of keigo (honorific language), deliberate eye contact, and cross-cultural responsiveness. Shikake was realized through hidden menu presentations, live kitchen mini shows, and personalized guest experiences. All five SERVQUAL dimensions (Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy) were demonstrably fulfilled through these implementations. Principal challenges identified include seasonal guest surges, language barriers, and the ongoing need for value internalization.



This research contributes to the development of culture-based service models in the context of premium hotel kitchen operations in Japan.

Keywords: Omotenashi; Service Quality; Hotel Kitchen; SERVQUAL; Shitsurai; Furumai; Shikake; Japan Case Study

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic and competitive service sectors, where service quality is the main determining factor in creating satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth recommendations by customers. In contrast to the manufacturing industry that focuses on tangible products, the hospitality industry offers a customer experience that is inseparable from direct interaction between guests, staff, facilities, and service atmosphere (Shyju et al., 2021). In this context, the human dimension in service or known as human interaction service has proven to remain a dominant factor in shaping guest perception, even in the era of developing self-service technology (Park et al., 2022).

Among the various traditions of service that exist in the world, Japan occupies a privileged position through the philosophy of hospitality known as Omotenashi (おもてなし). More than just a standard of service, Omotenashi is a cultural expression rooted in the values of sincerity (makoto), deep care (kokoro), and sincere respect for guests without expecting anything in return (Morishita, 2021). The word Omotenashi itself comes from two parts: omote which means outward appearance or surface, and nashi which means without or nihil literally means to serve without pretense, from the innermost heart (Umemuro, 2015). This philosophy has long been the operational cornerstone of Japan's premium hospitality industry, and is now receiving more and more academic and practical attention from all over the world.

Conceptually, Omotenashi is realized through three main operational dimensions that complement each other, namely Shitsurai which refers to the readiness and aesthetics of the service environment; Furumai which includes the behavior, ethics, and attitude of the staff in serving guests with sincerity; and Shikake which is the ability to anticipate and create service experiences that proactively exceed guest expectations (Chikai et al., 2021). These three dimensions do not stand alone, but work synergistically to form a holistic and meaningful service ecosystem.



Interestingly, academic research on Omotenashi to date is still dominated by studies on conceptual and comparative aspects (Morishita, 2021), the context of traditional ryokan (Wijayanti & Saifudin, 2021), the aviation sector (Chikai et al., 2021), and linguistic aspects and cultural expression (Kuraesin, 2021). Research that specifically examines the implementation of Omotenashi in the Kitchen Section of starred hotels, especially in buffet and live kitchen systems involving direct interaction between kitchen staff and guests, is still very limited in the existing literature. This gap is the academic gap that this research aims to answer.

Ooedo Onsen Monogatari Premium Hotel Fugetsu is a premium hotel in Japan that carries the concept of a modern onsen ryokan with an Omotenashi-based service philosophy applied throughout its operational lines, including the Kitchen Section. The hotel serves culinary services through two main sessions, namely breakfast buffet and dinner buffet, and provides a live kitchen that allows guests to witness the food serving process firsthand. This system creates a high intensity of interaction between Kitchen staff and guests, so the implementation of Omotenashi's values in the kitchen is a very critical variable that has not been widely researched.

This study aims to: (1) describe the implementation of Omotenashi's values as a whole in the operations of the Fugetsu Hotel Kitchen Section; (2) analyze the application of the dimensions of Shitsurai, Furumai, and Shikake specifically; (3) identify the relationship between the three dimensions and the SERVQUAL service quality indicator; and (4) identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of Omotenashi in the Kitchen Section. Thus, this research is expected to fill the existing literature gap while making a practical contribution to the development of hotel service standards based on cultural values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Omotenashi as a Philosophy of Service

Omotenashi is one of the most meaningful concepts of service in the Japanese cultural tradition. Morishita (2021) defines Omotenashi as a service system that places guest satisfaction and comfort as an absolute priority, where staff do not simply reactively meet guest requests, but proactively anticipate and prepare all guest needs even before the guest is aware of his own needs. This definition is in line with the view of Umemuro (2015) who called Omotenashi an "affective quality" of service quality that is able to create a positive emotional



response through deep attention to the guest experience and the aesthetics of the service environment.

Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021) in their study of the implementation of Omotenashi in Japanese ryokans found that this philosophy is consistently applied through four main mechanisms: intensive and continuous staff training, personalization of services based on guest profiles, maintenance of genuine host–guest relationships (*omoiyari*), and systematic feedback-based evaluations. These findings confirm that Omotenashi is not just a slogan, but an operational system that is structured and can be implemented consistently.

Furthermore, Chikai et al. (2021) identified factors that affect customer perception of the quality of Omotenashi-based service in the Japanese aviation sector, finding that reliability, quality of human interaction, staff manners, and personal service character are the main predictors of guest satisfaction with Omotenashi. Although the research context is different, these findings provide a relevant comparative foundation for understanding the dynamics of Omotenashi in the hospitality context.

Omotenashi's Three Operational Dimensions

In the context of hospitality operations, Omotenashi is realized through three main dimensions formulated by Chikai et al. (2021). First, *Shitsurai* (設え) refers to the readiness and aesthetics of the service environment, including the layout of the room, cleanliness, visual beauty, and the completeness of the facilities that are carefully laid out as a form of respect for the upcoming guests. *Shitsurai* in the context of the hotel kitchen includes *mise en place* buffet area, aesthetics of serving dishes, neatness of tableware, and suitability of decoration with the prevailing theme.

Second, *Furumai* (振る舞い) covers the behavior, ethics, gestures, speech, and all aspects of the staff attitude in serving guests with sincerity and honor. *Furumai* is not just about formal manners, but about a sincere and responsive presence in every interaction with guests. The use of *keigo* (Japanese respectful language) is one of the most concrete expressions of *Furumai*, as explained by Kuraesin (2021) who attributes Omotenashi to the linguistic practices of Japanese culture.

Third, *Shikake* (仕掛け) is the most dynamic and creative dimension, which is the ability to organize and create service experiences that proactively trigger guest pleasure and satisfaction without being asked for and without expecting anything in return. *Shikake* includes various initiatives such as the presentation of hidden menus (*kakushi menus*), small performances in the live kitchen,



personalized culinary experiences for special guests, and various touches of surprises that create positive memories.

Service Quality and SERVQUAL Model

The quality of service in the hospitality industry is most academically studied using the SERVQUAL framework developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985). This model divides the quality of service into five dimensions: (1) Tangible (physical evidence), i.e. physical facilities, equipment, and the appearance of staff; (2) Reliability, namely the ability to provide services as promised accurately and consistently; (3) Responsiveness, which is the willingness to help and provide services quickly; (4) Assurance, namely the knowledge and manners of staff and their ability to build trust; and (5) Empathy, which is personal care and attention to customers.

In the context of this study, the five dimensions of SERVQUAL can be mapped directly with the three dimensions of Omotenashi: Shitsurai corresponds mainly with Tangible; Furumai is closely related to Assurance and Empathy; and Shikake contribute significantly to Responsiveness and Reliability. Sumbawati (2022) in his research on the application of Omotenashi in Japanese restaurants found that the consistent internalization of Omotenashi values significantly improves customer satisfaction in all dimensions of SERVQUAL, confirming the relevance of this theoretical framework.

Guest satisfaction, as a central construct in this study, is defined as an evaluative response that arises from a comparison between a guest's initial expectations and their perception of the service actually received (Shyju et al., 2021). If the service provided meets or exceeds the expectations of a condition that Sattavorn et al. (2025) refer to as service overdelivery, then guests are not only satisfied, but also have the potential to become loyal customers who recommend hotels to others.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the case study method, which was chosen because of its ability to explore the depth of meaning, context, and dynamics of a complex and contextual phenomenon (Sugiyono, 2018). The phenomenon of the implementation of Omotenashi cultural values in the Kitchen section of the hotel is a rich study and cannot be quantified simply, so a descriptive qualitative approach is the most appropriate methodological choice.

The research was conducted at Oedo Onsen Monogatari Premium Hotel Fugetsu, Japan, using two main data sources. First, participatory observation



during a one-year internship in the hotel's Kitchen Section, which allowed researchers to observe firsthand the dynamics of daily operations, including breakfast buffet sessions, buffet dinners, and live kitchens. Second, an in-depth interview online through the LINE application with a total of 10 informants selected using the purposive sampling technique, consisting of one Head Chef, one Food & Beverage Manager, four Kitchen staff (Sous Chef, Cook, and Live Kitchen Staff), and four hotel guests who have used buffet and live kitchen services.

The selection of informants is based on the criteria of relevance of the role and depth of experience to the research object (Sugiyono, 2019). It is possible to add informants through the snowball sampling mechanism if aspects that require further clarification are found at the analysis stage. The data collection technique is combined between observation, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of supporting documents (SOPs, operational records, and photo documentation).

Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994) which consists of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The validity of the data is ensured through four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are operationalized through triangulation of sources (Kitchen staff, management, and hotel guests), triangulation of techniques (interviews, observations, and documents), and time triangulation (checking at different hours and operational sessions).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Shitsurai: Readiness and Aesthetics of the Service Environment

The research findings show that the implementation of Shitsurai in the Kitchen Section of Hotel Fugetsu is carried out through a layered prep system that starts long before the restaurant opens to guests. Based on an interview with informant T.H. (Live Kitchen Staff / Buffet Section Leader, 7 years of experience), it is known that the Kitchen team began to prepare the buffet area about three hours before the dinner session started, and even earlier, around 04.30 WJ for the breakfast session. This process begins with a thorough check of all equipment using a standardized daily checklist.

- 1. I prepare tableware and utensils according to the company's terms. The preparation can change depending on the season or menu changes.*
- 2. I feel that I can apply it well.*



3. *All staff try to maintain cleanliness together. For filling or adding food, it is done by the staff in charge of the cooking section.*
4. *If there are any questions or requests from guests that I don't understand, I will ask the person in charge first, then serve the guest with polite language and smiles.*
5. *If the food starts to decrease, we will add it immediately. For input and complaints from guests, we always try to provide handling that is in accordance with their expectations and desires.*
6. *I always try to serve with a smile and use polite language.*
7. *For guests who have allergies, we ask them to check the table/list of ingredients to ensure their safety. As for guests who have religious taboos, we provide shōjin (Buddhist vegetarian cuisine) dishes.*
8. *I serve with a smile and body language (gestures).*
9. *We are unable to provide hidden menus. However, we did mini performances, such as product calls (announcing newly served dishes) and yamabiko calls (calls repeated by some staff to attract the attention of guests and create a festive atmosphere).*
10. *In my opinion, this is true all over the world, which is serving customers with a smile.*

This practice reflects the most basic Shitsurai principle: that the readiness of the service environment is not just about attractive appearances, but about genuine respect for guests manifested through attention to every detail, no matter how small. Umemuro (2015) refers to this dimension as shitsurae of physical readiness which is carried out as an expression of empathy and anticipation for the presence of guests.

When it comes to meal arrangements, the Kitchen staff not only follows the mise en place guidelines of the head chef, but also takes into account situational contextual factors: the composition of the guests on the day, the presence of group guests with special needs, or the dominance of family guests with small children. This adaptive flexibility is a tangible manifestation of what Chikai et al. (2021) call service sensitivity, the ability to adjust the service environment based on real-time reading of guest conditions.

The decoration aspect also received serious attention in the implementation of Shitsurai. Hotel Fugetsu has a seasonal theme that changes every month, such as the hanami theme in March with high-quality artificial cherry blossom decorations, pink tablecloths, and warm lighting. The Kitchen team is responsible for ensuring that every decoration element is installed correctly and maintained neatly throughout the operation. This is in line with the findings of Sumbawati (2022) which confirms that the aesthetic consistency of the service environment is



one of the strongest predictors of guest satisfaction in the context of Japanese culture-based restaurants.

To maintain Shitsurai's consistency throughout its busy operating hours, Hotel Fugetsu implements a layered surveillance system called "3-Eyes Patrol": a station keeper who is in charge of proactively refilling dishes, a runner who moves between the kitchen and the buffet area, and a section leader who keeps an eye on the whole while reading guests' consumption patterns. The principle of refilling is carried out with a preventive, non-reactive approach of filling is carried out when the contents of the container are reduced by a third, long before guests see any signs of deficiency.

This principle directly contributes to the simultaneous fulfillment of two dimensions of SERVQUAL. From the Tangible side, the buffet area that is always kept neat and clean creates strong physical evidence of quality. In terms of reliability, the consistency of dish availability throughout the session builds guests' confidence that the hotel is always able to deliver what it promises. Thus, Shitsurai serves not only as an aesthetic foundation, but also as a structured operational reliability mechanism.

Implementation of Furumai: Staff Behavior and Ethics in Service

The findings regarding the implementation of Furumai in the Kitchen of Hotel Fugetsu show a consistent pattern: staff behavior in interacting with guests is based on a set of principles that have been deeply internalized, rather than simply mechanically followed procedures. This is the essential difference between professional service and Omotenashi-based service.

The first principle identified is the concept of uninterrupted acknowledgment. When guests approach the live kitchen area and start asking questions, the staff reflexively slows down their movements and gives their full attention, regardless of what is being done. When work cannot be left for a moment, the staff uses nonverbal signals of eye contact and a smile while politely stating that they will be serving soon: "Sumimasen, mō sukoshi de gozaimasu" (Sorry, I will serve soon). This practice is a direct manifestation of Furumai's appreciation-oriented approach to guest attendance.

The second principle relates to the use of keigo (語) or Japanese polite language, which is applied consistently to all guests regardless of age or background. Kuraesin (2021) in his study of Omotenashi's expression in Japanese emphasizes that the use of keigo is not just a linguistic formality, but a concrete representation of the value of respect that is at the core of Omotenashi. At Hotel Fugetsu, this principle is applied because in the context of hospitality, the



hierarchy is not based on age, but rather based on the position in which guests are always in the position of *okyakusama* (distinguished guests).

The third principle is to approach unexpected requests without using the word "no." Staff are trained to avoid immediate negative responses, and instead always offer alternatives or clarify first before giving a final answer. This approach is in line with Furumai's philosophy which emphasizes that the way of service is delivered is as important as the substance of the service itself.

The handling of guests with special needs is the most tangible test of Furumai's implementation. Hotel Fugetsu integrates a guest profile system that records guests' food preferences and restrictions from the check-in process, so that Kitchen staff already has relevant information before guests arrive at the restaurant. For guests who don't list their special needs, the staff proactively offers menu guides in a way that doesn't make guests feel interrogated. For elderly guests who show signs of difficulty picking up their own food, the staff approaches with a warm and natural offer of help without leaving guests feeling helpless.

This statement reflects what Elias (2025) in his study of *Omotenashi* at the Rizzan Sea Park Hotel Tancha Bay refers to as invisible care that is conveyed in a way that feels so natural that guests perceive it as sincerity, not as a formal procedure. Within the framework of SERVQUAL, Furumai's implementation directly fulfills the Empathy dimension (personal care and attention) while strengthening the Assurance dimension (trust and competence of staff).

The implementation of Furumai has also been proven to have an impact on guest trust in the context of live kitchen. Transparency of the cooking process where staff actively explain the ingredients and cooking techniques used, as well as visibly changing gloves in front of guests builds trust through openness that feels authentic. Kim and Lee (2022) in their study of small-scale Japanese restaurants found that the perception of high service quality was positively correlated with guest trust, which ultimately had an impact on loyalty. Similar findings were identified in this study.

Shikake Implementation: Proactive Anticipation and Creation of Memorable Experiences

Among the three dimensions of *Omotenashi*, *Shikake* is the most dynamic and creative as well as the most difficult to standardize, as it essentially deals with the ability to read individual guests and creates moments of surprise that feel personal and authentic. Sattavorn et al. (2025) in their study of the impact of *Omotenashi* on restaurant customer loyalty found that *Shikake* elements of



attentive service, warm personal communication, and service speed that exceeded expectations were the strongest predictors of guest loyalty even beyond the influence of the quality of the food itself.

The implementation of Shikake at the Fugetsu Hotel manifests itself in three main forms. The first is the presentation of kakushi menu, a special dish that is not listed on the main menu list, only available to guests who know about it or to guests who are judged to appreciate it. A concrete example found in this study is the serving of handmade sakura mochi during spring, which is only issued when the staff judges the guest will respond positively to a seasonal authentic culinary experience.

The second is a mini show in a live kitchen designed to have its own aesthetic and entertainment value: handling yakitori on coals with a distinctive aroma, cutting sashimi on blocks of ice in a traditional style, or pouring hot sauce that produces a thin smoke with a spicy aroma. These movements are part of the actual cooking process, but they are done with precision and awareness that the guest is watching so that every technical action turns into a meaningful show.

The third is the unexpected small personalization of the simplest form of Shikake but with the most profound impact. The informant gave an example of the practice of giving a small garnish in the shape of hearts or flowers on the plates of birthday guests, information obtained from the morning briefing based on front office data. This kind of personal touch creates what Umemuro (2015) calls affective impact, an emotional response that goes beyond functional satisfaction and creates unforgettable memories.

This informant's statement eloquently illustrates the essence of Shikake: a service that goes beyond transactions and enters the realm of experience creation. Within the framework of SERVQUAL, Shikake contributes directly to the Responsiveness dimension through proactive anticipation, and to the Reliability dimension through consistency in creating positive moments that shape guests' expectations on their next visit.

Omotenashi's Relationship to the SERVQUAL Dimension

Based on the findings of the study, a systematic pattern of interconnectedness between the three dimensions of Omotenashi and the five dimensions of SERVQUAL can be identified. The following table presents the mapping of these linkages in a more structured manner.



Table 1.
Mapping the Linkage of the Omotenashi Dimension and the SERVQUAL Dimension

Omotenashi Dimensions	Corresponding SERVQUAL Dimensions	Implementation at Fugetsu Kitchen Hotel
Shitsurai (Environmental Readiness & Aesthetics)	Tangible (main) (support) Reliability	Structured mise en put, daily checklist, seasonal décor standards, 3-Eyes Patrol
Furumai (Staff Behaviour & Ethics)	Assurance (main) (supportive) Empathy Responsiveness	Use of keigo, personal attention, invisible care for guests with special needs, transparency of the live kitchen process
Shikake (Proactive Anticipation & Positive Surprises)	Responsiveness (main) Reliability (main) (support) Empathy	Hidden menu, mini show live kitchen, personalized special guests, preventive meal filling

This mapping shows that the three dimensions of Omotenashi do not operate in isolation, but rather complement each other in meeting the entire spectrum of SERVQUAL dimensions. There is not a single dimension of SERVQUAL that is not covered by a minimum of one dimension of Omotenashi, and conversely, each dimension of Omotenashi contributes to a minimum of two dimensions of SERVQUAL simultaneously. This finding is in line with Sumbawati's (2022) argument that Omotenashi is a holistic and comprehensive service framework, not a partial approach that only touches on certain aspects of service quality.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation in the Implementation of Omotenashi

One of the most significant findings in the study relates to the ability of the staff of Kitchen Hotel Fugetsu to adapt the implementation of Omotenashi for guests from various cultural backgrounds. This finding is relevant considering that Hotel Fugetsu welcomes international guests from various countries in Asia, Europe, and America simultaneously.

The fundamental principle that guides this adaptation is the understanding that the core of Omotenashi sincerity and sincere care is universal, while its concrete manifestations need to be adapted to the cultural context of the guest.



For guests from China, a more informative and straightforward approach is more effective; for Korean guests, appreciation of the hierarchy of seniority is key; for Western guests, light conversation and explanations of the cultural context behind the dish are greatly appreciated; Meanwhile, for Muslim guests, halal guidance is delivered proactively without waiting for guests to ask.

A multimodal approach to overcoming language barriers has also been found to be an effective innovative practice: bilingual menu labels with international allergen icons, mini tablets containing menu descriptions in multiple languages (English, Chinese, Korean, Thai), warm and gestural body language, and voice translator apps as a last resort. The combination of these communication tools allows Omotenashi to remain conveyed even if linguistic barriers cannot be completely eliminated.

Chikai et al. (2021) emphasized that customer perception of the quality of Omotenashi-based services is greatly influenced by the quality of personal interactions. In a cross-cultural context, the staff's ability to adapt flexibly while still maintaining sincerity is at its core that makes Omotenashi acceptable and appreciated by guests from very diverse cultural backgrounds.

Factors Supporting and Inhibiting the Implementation of Omotenashi

The implementation of Omotenashi in the Kitchen Section of Hotel Fugetsu did not go without challenges. This study identifies supporting and inhibiting factors that affect the consistency and quality of implementation.

Key supporting factors identified include: (1) a structured and clear team role sharing system, allowing each team member to focus on their specific responsibilities; (2) the internalization of Omotenashi's strong values through long-term work experience (the main informant has been working for 7 years), which transforms formal procedures into natural reflexes (muscle memory); (3) technological support such as an integrated guest profile system and multimodal communication tools; and (4) a kaizen (continuous improvement) culture that turns every complaint into a learning opportunity.

The inhibiting factors found include: (1) a surge in the number of guests during the holiday season that increases the workload and risk of decreased Shitsurai consistency; (2) language barriers that are structural challenges in the implementation of Furumai with foreign guests; (3) the limitations of internalizing value for new staff who do not have enough experience to realize Omotenashi as a natural response; and (4) inconsistencies in the implementation of Shikake amid high operational pressure, especially during peak hours.

The findings regarding these barriers are in line with the notes of Elias (2025) who identify that the consistency of the application of Omotenashi's values is



highly dependent on the depth of cultural training that employees receive, and not just procedural training. This underscores the importance of continuous investment in the development of staff cultural competencies as a strategic component of hotel service management.

CONCLUSION

This study succeeded in analyzing in depth the implementation of Omotenashi cultural values in improving guest service at the Kitchen Section of Ooedo Onsen Monogatari Premium Hotel Fugetsu, Japan. Several key conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study.

First, the three dimensions of Omotenashi Shitsurai, Furumai, and Shikake have been systematically and consistently implemented in the operations of the breakfast buffet, dinner buffet, and live kitchen of Hotel Fugetsu. This implementation is not just following written procedures, but has been internalized as part of the work ethic and professional identity of the staff, a condition that Morishita (2021) refers to as true Omotenashi, different from formal services that are only performative.

Second, there is a systematic and complementary relationship between the three dimensions of Omotenashi and all five dimensions of SERVQUAL. Shitsurai meets Tangible and supports Reliability; Furumai fulfills Assurance and Empathy; while Shikake contributes to Responsiveness and Reliability. There is not a single dimension of SERVQUAL that is not covered by the Omotenashi system, confirming that Omotenashi is a holistic and comprehensive service framework.

Third, cross-cultural adaptation is a critical competency needed to ensure that Omotenashi's values can be conveyed to guests from various cultural backgrounds. Hotel Fugetsu has developed a multimodal communication approach and cultural sensitivity that allows the implementation of Omotenashi to remain effective in a multicultural context.

Fourth, the main obstacles in the implementation of Omotenashi in the Kitchen Section are situational (guest surge) and structural (language barriers, internalization of values). Addressing these barriers requires a two-pronged approach: optimization of operational systems for situational barriers, and continued investment in the development of staff cultural competencies for structural barriers.

Academically, this research contributes to filling the gap in the literature regarding the implementation of Omotenashi in the operational context of a



starred hotel kitchen, a context that has received less attention in existing academic studies. Practically, the findings of this study can be a reference for the hospitality industry in developing kitchen service standards that are based on cultural values and not just oriented towards production efficiency.

Future research is suggested to develop quantitative measurement instruments that can operationalize Omotenashi's three dimensions in a measurable manner, so that its effect on guest satisfaction can be statistically studied. In addition, a comparative study across hotels with different service philosophies Omotenashi versus Western hospitality will also make valuable theoretical contributions to the development of service management science.

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