

Omotenashi in Service Marketing and Festival Tourism: The Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026

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Abstract

This article examines *omotenashi* as a cultural and organizational orientation in service marketing and extends its application from lodging to festival tourism through the Fukushima-kyosan Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026. The study adopts an integrative literature review supported by a documented platform-based search strategy focused on *omotenashi*, Japanese hospitality, customer experience, service management, event quality, festival experience, co-creation, trust, personalization, and intercultural interaction. The analytical corpus includes fifteen substantive academic studies that met the relevance criteria, complemented by official documentary sources used to examine the 2026 event. Thematic analysis identifies four service manifestations: anticipation of needs, personalization, attention to detail, and human relationships supported by organizational consistency and conditioned by functional quality and cultural context. The Sapporo application shows how these categories can interpret reservation design, tourist-specific *omotenashi* seats, multiple service environments, information, ordering, seating, and host–visitor interaction without treating institutional communication as evidence of satisfaction or loyalty. The findings position *omotenashi* as an analytical framework for service marketing across hospitality and festival settings and identify contextual appropriateness as the principle linking service design to visitor experience.

Keywords: *omotenashi*, service marketing, festival tourism, event experience, Sapporo Odori Beer Garden

A. INTRODUCTION

The competitiveness of tourism and hospitality organizations increasingly depends on how visitors evaluate a sequence of service encounters rather than a single transaction. This logic is especially visible in festivals, where information, access, seating, food and beverage service, sanitation, safety, staff contact, spatial design, and interaction with other visitors are experienced together. Festival research shows that perceived quality is connected with satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while service attributes such as information, hygiene, safety, infrastructure, and staff performance shape the overall evaluation of an event (Pivac et al., 2019; Maranisya et al., 2025). These findings establish an important boundary for the present study: culturally meaningful hospitality can enrich an event experience only when the basic service system remains reliable.

Within this debate, *omotenashi* offers a culturally grounded perspective on how service organizations organize attention to the customer. The term is widely associated with Japanese hospitality, although the literature treats it as more than courtesy or formal politeness. Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021) identify personalization, host and guest relationships, hospitality, and small surprises in the operation of a traditional *ryokan*. Abdullah et al. (2024) reach a related interpretation in cross-cultural research by connecting Japanese hospitality with anticipation of needs, customization, attention to detail, and a welcoming atmosphere. These accounts converge around a relational form of service in which the provider interprets the situation and prepares an appropriate response instead of waiting for every need to be explicitly stated.

This convergence does not imply that *omotenashi* can be reduced to a fixed list of gestures. Morishita (2024) adds a useful counterpoint through the concept of *omoiyari* in small Japanese inns, where guests valued family-like hospitality without excessive service. His findings qualify interpretations that associate superior hospitality with increasing the number of interventions or surprises. They suggest that the service provider must judge when to act, when to offer options, and when to preserve the guest's autonomy. Budianto (2025) strengthens this contextual reading by examining foreign workers in Japanese restaurants and finding that *omotenashi*-related skills can be learned through training and practice while also being adapted through workers' cultural repertoires. Together, these studies support an interpretation based on contextual appropriateness rather than service intensity.

The marketing relevance of this interpretation becomes clearer when relational and experiential outcomes are considered. Leingpibul et al. (2025) found that perceptions of *omotenashi*, salesperson expertise, and trust contribute to customer commitment in Japanese retail establishments. Kastuti and Sugiarto (2025) connect sincere service and attention to detail with memorable tourism experience, while festival research shows that co-created experience and satisfaction can strengthen future attendance intentions (Zhang et al., 2019). Together, these studies connect *omotenashi* with constructs familiar to service and relationship marketing while preserving the distinction between hospitality practice and its possible outcomes.

Research on the organizational side of *omotenashi* also complicates the idea that hospitality depends primarily on an employee's personal disposition. Morishita and Kosaka (2017), in their study of the Kagaya Inn, associate superior *omotenashi* with focused training, organization-wide communication, and feedback shared among staff and customers. Budianto (2025) reaches a compatible conclusion from a different context, since foreign workers learned and adapted relevant skills through employment and training. Organizational arrangements therefore matter because anticipation, personalization, and attentive interaction require knowledge, coordination, and discretion. The service encounter is visible to the guest, while the capability that supports it is distributed through routines, communication, and learning.

The same debate now takes place in a technologically mediated service environment. Ito (2024) argues that automated check-in, smart rooms, and artificial intelligence can improve efficiency and personalization in Japanese hospitality. This contribution is useful when it is read with caution. Technology can support recognition of preferences, reduce waiting time, and provide information, yet these functions do not by themselves reproduce the contextual judgement that the *omotenashi* literature associates with appropriate care. The relevant marketing issue concerns the allocation of tasks between data-driven systems and human interpretation. A hotel can automate predictable routines while retaining human discretion for exceptions, emotionally sensitive situations, and service recovery.

Despite the growing number of studies, the literature remains fragmented across tourism, hospitality, management, service research, and event studies. Some authors approach *omotenashi* as a cultural philosophy, others treat it as observable employee behaviour, and still others examine organizational practices that sustain it. Event research adds further concepts such as event quality, co-creation, *communitas*, intercultural competence, and place attachment. This fragmentation creates two analytical problems. The first concerns definition because satisfaction, loyalty, trust, memorability, and hospitality are often discussed in close proximity without a clear distinction between the practice and its outcomes. The second concerns transferability because a concept rooted in Japanese service culture cannot be assumed to operate identically across hotels, restaurants, retail, and large public festivals.

To address these problems, this article asks how *omotenashi* can be understood through service marketing and how its principles appear in the service design of the Fukushi-kyosan Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026. The study combines an integrative literature review with a documentary application to the

event, selected because it offers a large-scale public setting in which service design, visitor circulation, food and beverage delivery, reservation systems, tourist-specific seating, and host–visitor interaction are documented. The article aims to organize recurrent dimensions of *omotenashi*, connect them to service and event marketing concepts, distinguish organizational conditions from visitor outcomes, and examine how the resulting framework can interpret a current festival application.

Service marketing, festival experience, and customer experience

Service marketing in festival tourism requires a simultaneous reading of what the organizer delivers and how visitors experience delivery. Pivac et al. (2019), studying a major music festival, linked perceived quality dimensions, including traffic and information, hygiene and safety, socialization, infrastructure, products, and services to visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Maranisya et al. (2025) similarly found that service quality and event quality significantly influenced visiting decisions at a Japanese festival. These studies help prevent an overly symbolic interpretation of hospitality because the event experience develops through the combination of operational quality, environment, interaction, and interpretation.

Customer experience also extends beyond satisfaction alone. Zhang et al. (2019) found that satisfaction with co-creation experience contributes to festival attendance intentions through festival satisfaction and place-related mechanisms. Wu et al. (2025), in a Japanese festival context, showed that intercultural competence supports experience co-creation and that active participation and co-creation enhance cultural tourism experience. These findings give service marketing a broader frame in which visitors do not merely receive service but also participate in producing the atmosphere and meaning of the event.

Kastuti and Sugiarto (2025) add that memorable tourism experience depends on local culture, atmosphere, involvement, and genuine hospitality, while Hayes (2024) demonstrates in a Japanese mega-event that *omotenashi* can be embedded in the experiencescape through interactions among volunteers, visitors, and local communities. Read together, these studies clarify that event experience contains operational, relational, cultural, and participatory layers. Basic service must first work reliably; context-sensitive hospitality and co-creation can then contribute to differentiation and memorability.

Omotenashi as a culturally grounded service orientation

Omotenashi is frequently translated as Japanese hospitality, but this translation can narrow the concept when it is treated as a synonym for politeness. Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021) examined the Hyoe Koyokaku *ryokan* and identified personalization, host and guest relationships, hospitality, and small surprises as recurring manifestations. Their observations frame *omotenashi* as a practical orientation expressed through the way staff prepare and adapt service around the guest. Abdullah et al. (2024) reach a comparable interpretation through cross-cultural benchmarking and emphasize anticipation of needs, customization, attention to detail, cultural immersion, and service consistency. The agreement between these studies supports four recurrent manifestations that can be analysed across different hospitality settings.

Anticipation concerns the ability to recognise a likely need before the guest has to make a request. Personalization concerns the adjustment of the service response to the particular circumstances of the guest. Attention to detail concerns the coherence of small functional, sensory, and relational elements that communicate care. Human relationships concern the quality of interaction through respect, competence, and contextual sensitivity. These manifestations overlap in practice, yet separating them analytically helps clarify which organizational capability is being exercised and which aspect of the experience the guest may evaluate.

Morishita (2024) introduces an important boundary by examining *omoiyari* in small *ryokans*. His cases associate guest appeal with traditional local culture and family-like hospitality that avoids excessive service. This evidence qualifies a common managerial reading of *omotenashi* as continuous intervention. Contextual appropriateness provides a more precise interpretation because a guest can experience care when staff act before a need arises, but also when staff recognise that privacy or autonomy is preferable. The quality of *omotenashi* therefore depends on judgement about the situation rather than on a fixed volume of service.

Budianto (2025) adds an intercultural dimension by analysing foreign workers in Japanese restaurants. Training and work experience enabled employees to embody *omotenashi*-related skills, while their own cultural resources also influenced how those skills were practised. This result supports transferability at the level of principles rather than ritual imitation. A hotel outside Japan may apply anticipation, personalized attention, and respectful interaction without reproducing Japanese linguistic or ceremonial forms. The distinction matters for international service marketing because adaptation to the guest's cultural expectations is itself consistent with a context-sensitive interpretation of hospitality.

Organizational consistency and relational outcomes

Organizational consistency provides the infrastructure through which the visible dimensions of *omotenashi* can recur across encounters. Morishita and Kosaka (2017) found that Kagaya Inn relies on training, organization-wide communication, and shared feedback. In festival settings the same logic extends to coordination among organizers, venue operators, food and beverage teams, information staff, and other frontline personnel. Hayes (2024) further shows that event hospitality can emerge through organized volunteer–visitor interaction, making coordination and shared service expectations relevant beyond formal hotel departments.

This organizational view is compatible with Budianto's (2025) findings because learning occurs through structured employment and training rather than cultural origin alone. It also aligns with Ito's (2024) discussion of technology, since data systems can support memory, coordination, and personalization. The relationship between technology and *omotenashi* is therefore complementary when digital tools reduce friction and provide usable information, while staff retain the capacity to interpret context. Automation becomes problematic when it eliminates the discretion required for exceptions or when data collection reduces trust.

Relational outcomes should remain conceptually separate from the practice itself. Leingpibul et al. (2025) associate customer perceptions of *omotenashi*, expertise, and trust with commitment. Baquero (2025) likewise examines the relationships among customer experience, revisit intention, customer value, and engagement in hotel settings, supporting the treatment of revisit intention as a downstream outcome rather than as a defining element of hospitality practice. Zhang et al. (2019) link festival co-creation and satisfaction with future attendance intentions, while Pivac et al. (2019) connect perceived festival quality to satisfaction and behavioral intention. These relations allow the review to place trust, satisfaction, commitment, place attachment, revisit intention, and recommendation downstream from hospitality and event-service practices rather than inside the definition of *omotenashi*.

Table 1. Analytical categories derived from the theoretical dialogue

Category	Core meaning	Primary theoretical support	Service marketing link
Anticipation	Recognition of a relevant need before an explicit request	Wijayanti and Saifudin, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2024; Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a	Convenience, lower customer effort, experience relevance

Category	Core meaning	Primary theoretical support	Service marketing link
Personalization	Adjustment of the service response to the guest's circumstances	Wijayanti and Saifudin, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2019	Perceived value and differentiation
Attention to detail	Coherent care in functional, sensory, and interpersonal elements	Kastuti and Sugiarto, 2025; Pivac et al., 2019; Maranisa et al., 2025	Experience quality and memorability
Human relationship	Respectful and competent interaction adapted to context	Leingpibul et al., 2025; Budianto, 2025; Hayes, 2024; Wu et al., 2025	Trust and commitment
Organizational consistency	Training, communication, feedback, and knowledge that support repeated practice	Morishita and Kosaka, 2017; Budianto, 2025; Hayes, 2024	Service culture and reliable execution

The categories in Table 1 above organize the theoretical discussion without treating them as equivalent layers. Anticipation, personalization, attention to detail, and human relationships represent visible manifestations of service. Organizational consistency operates as a supporting condition because the employee needs information, training, communication, and discretion before these manifestations can be sustained. Functional quality and cultural context remain conditioning factors rather than additional *omotenashi* dimensions. This distinction guides the methodological coding and the interpretation of the contemporary festival application. Methodologically, the article adopts an integrative literature review supported by a documented platform-based search strategy, thematic synthesis, and a documentary application to a contemporary festival service setting, with research-data management organized according to FAIR principles.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts an integrative literature review supported by a documented platform-based search strategy and thematic synthesis. The method was selected because research on *omotenashi* is distributed across hospitality, tourism, service management, customer relationship research, cultural studies, and event and festival research, and the available evidence includes qualitative field studies, content analyses, quantitative surveys, and conceptual work. The purpose of the review is interpretive rather than meta-analytic. It seeks to identify recurrent conceptual elements, compare them with event-experience research, and construct an analytical framework that can be applied to a current festival context.

The search stage was conducted through the Consensus scholarly search platform, which retrieves academic publications and provides bibliographic metadata and abstracts. Searches combined *omotenashi* and Japanese hospitality with hotel, ryokan, service management, service marketing, customer experience, personalization, anticipation, trust, commitment, festival, event tourism, event quality, co-creation, visitor satisfaction, intercultural competence, and memorable tourism experience. Because the central concept is culturally specific and relevant event studies do not always use the term *omotenashi*, the strategy combined a narrow conceptual set with broader event- and experience-oriented combinations.

Eligibility followed substantive relevance rather than a date filter. Studies were retained when they directly defined *omotenashi*, examined its practice in hospitality or service settings, analysed organizational management of hospitality, or provided empirical evidence about festival service quality, co-creation, intercultural experience, satisfaction, and behavioral outcomes that could clarify the research question. Studies were excluded when *omotenashi* appeared only incidentally or when event evidence did not contribute to service or visitor-experience analysis. This procedure produced a final substantive corpus of fifteen studies. Eleven were published between 2023 and 2026, while four earlier studies were

retained because they provide direct evidence on omotenashi management, ryokan practice, festival quality, and festival co-creation.

Each included study was read at the abstract and metadata level and coded according to context, method, definition or use of omotenashi, service manifestations, organizational mechanisms, conditioning factors, event-quality dimensions, co-creation, intercultural interaction, and reported outcomes. Initial coding included anticipation, personalization, small surprises, host–guest relationships, attention to detail, staff competence, training, communication, information, hygiene and safety, trust, commitment, satisfaction, place attachment, and behavioral intention. A second analytical pass grouped related codes into higher-order categories. Anticipation, personalization, attention to detail, and human relationships were retained as manifestations of omotenashi; organizational consistency remained a supporting layer; functional quality and cultural context were treated as conditions; and visitor outcomes remained analytically downstream.

The synthesis compared convergent and divergent findings across lodging, service, and festival settings. Convergence was recorded when studies associated omotenashi or high-quality event experience with similar relational, informational, or adaptive service practices. Qualification was recorded when findings limited a broad interpretation, as when Morishita (2024) identifies valued hospitality without excessive service or when festival studies show that participation depends on visitor and contextual conditions. This procedure avoids a cumulative list of author claims and instead constructs a framework from relationships among findings.

The literature review was complemented by a documentary illustration involving the Fukushima-kyosan Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026, part of the Sapporo Summer Festival. Official tourism documentation records the event from July 23 to August 18, 2026, across Odori Park Nishi 5- to 11-chome, with approximately 13,000 seats distributed across six venue areas. The same documentation describes varied seating formats, reservation mechanisms, ordering procedures, restroom provision, tourist guidance, and tourist-specific reserved 'Omotenashi Seats' available through partner hotels (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a; 2026b). These sources provide a current documentary anchor for applying the framework. They are used to document service design, not as independent evidence of visitor satisfaction or effectiveness.

The documentary analysis applies the review categories to the Sapporo event through correspondence rather than causal testing. Evidence was considered compatible with anticipation when the event prepared for a likely visitor need before an explicit request; with personalization when visitors could select or reserve a service configuration suited to their circumstances; with attention to detail when spatial, informational, food-and-beverage, and comfort elements were deliberately coordinated; and with human relationship when staff or host–visitor interaction required contextual attention. Reservation rules, ordering systems, venue differentiation, crowd guidance, sanitation rules, and operational coordination were considered under organizational consistency and functional quality. This rule maintains a distinction between what official documentation records and what the framework interprets.

Review protocol and audit trail

The literature search was conducted exclusively through the Consensus scholarly search platform. Because Consensus is an AI-mediated academic discovery environment whose coverage, ranking mechanisms, and retrieval behaviour may change over time, the procedure is treated as a platform-specific documented search rather than as a fully reproducible database search. Methodological transparency is therefore based on the preservation of search expressions, execution dates, eligibility criteria, screening decisions, bibliographic records, extraction fields, and thematic coding decisions.

During revision, the final bibliography, extraction matrix, and included-study register were reconciled. This audit confirmed that the previous manuscript count of sixteen studies was a reporting error; the verified analytical corpus comprises fifteen substantive academic studies. The correction has been applied consistently to the abstract and research-method section.

Historical record counts for the initial retrieval and intermediate screening stages were not retained. Consequently, a retrospective numerical PRISMA-style flow was not reconstructed, because doing so would require estimating unavailable values. The audit trail therefore distinguishes preserved evidence from unavailable historical fields. Future updates should triangulate retrieval across additional scholarly databases or search systems and prospectively retain complete screening counts and record-level exclusion reasons.

FAIR Research Data Management

The research data generated during the integrative review will be managed according to the FAIR principles of Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability. In this study, research data comprise the bibliographic search records, search strategies and execution dates, eligibility decisions, final corpus of publications, extraction matrix, coding categories, analytical matrices, and the documentary sources used in the festival application. These materials document the analytical process that connects the search procedure to the categories and findings presented in the article. In this review, reproducibility is understood as auditability of the documented search and analytical process rather than as an expectation that an AI-mediated platform will necessarily return an identical result set at a later date.

Findability will be supported through deposit of the research data package in a repository that assigns a persistent identifier and permits structured metadata. Accessibility will be addressed by documenting access conditions for each deposited file while retaining metadata when access restrictions apply. Interoperability will be supported through non-proprietary formats, standardized variable names, consistent bibliographic identifiers, and a data dictionary describing the analytical categories. Reusability will be supported through provenance information, documentation of search and coding procedures, version information, a README file, and an explicit reuse license. These procedures follow evidence that FAIR implementation depends on persistent identifiers, rich metadata, accessible documentation, interoperability standards, and clear reuse conditions (Bhat & Wani, 2024; Fouilloux & Hasan, 2025; Lopez-Hoyos & Roa-Martínez, 2024).

The FAIR approach also informs transparency of the review procedure. Each bibliographic record will retain information on its source, search strategy, screening decision, eligibility status, and relationship with the analytical categories. Excluded full-text records will be accompanied by an exclusion reason, while included studies will be linked to the extraction and thematic coding matrices. This structure permits reconstruction of the transition from retrieved records to the final analytical corpus without requiring redistribution of copyrighted full-text publications.

The deposited dataset will not reproduce copyrighted articles or restricted database content. Bibliographic metadata, analytical decisions, coding produced by the authors, and links or persistent identifiers to the original publications will be shared instead. Documentary material related to the Sapporo Odori Beer Garden application will follow the same principle, with provenance and access information recorded for each source. The research data package will therefore support verification and reuse of the review process while respecting copyright, licensing, and access restrictions associated with the original sources.

Table 2. Stages of the Analytical Framework for Examining Japanese Hospitality Practices at Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026

Stage	Operational decision	Purpose
Search	Documented combinations centred on omotenashi and Japanese hospitality with service management, customer experience, festival, event quality, co-creation, satisfaction, trust, and commitment	Capture direct conceptual, service, and event-experience studies
Eligibility	Direct conceptual, empirical, or organizational contribution to the research problem	Exclude incidental mentions and unrelated contexts
Coding	Context, method, manifestations, organizational support, conditions, and outcomes	Create comparable analytical units
Synthesis	Comparison of convergence, qualification, and divergence across studies	Develop higher-order categories
Documentary application	Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026 official tourism, festival, venue, reservation, and park documentation	Examine how the framework interprets a contemporary large-scale festival service

Table 2 above outlines the analytical stages used to examine Japanese hospitality practices at Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026. The framework consists of five stages: search, eligibility, coding, synthesis, and documentary application. These stages guide the identification of relevant literature, the selection of studies with direct conceptual or empirical contributions, the classification of analytical units, and the synthesis of findings into higher-order categories. The final stage applies the framework to official documentation related to tourism, festivals, venue reservations, and park management. Overall, the framework provides a systematic approach to understanding how Japanese hospitality principles are reflected in service management, customer experience, and large-scale festival operations.

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

From cultural hospitality to an analytical service framework

The synthesis indicates that the main contribution of omotenashi to service marketing lies in contextual interpretation. The recurring practices identified across the corpus do not support a model in which hospitality quality increases simply with the amount of intervention. Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021) report personalization and small surprises in a traditional ryokan, Morishita (2024) reports family-like hospitality without excessive service, and Hayes (2024) shows that event hospitality can emerge through brief but meaningful host–visitor relationships. Read together, these findings support a proposition in which the value of an action depends on whether it fits the visitor, the setting, and the moment.

Abdullah et al. (2024) strengthen this interpretation because anticipation and customization are linked to understanding guests rather than merely adding amenities. Budianto (2025) adds that omotenashi can be learned and culturally adapted, while Wu et al. (2025) show that intercultural understanding and action influence co-created festival experience. The convergence supports four observable manifestations—anticipation, personalization, attention to detail, and human relationships—while suggesting that intercultural competence is especially relevant when these manifestations operate in public events with mixed visitor segments.

This result also clarifies the role of functional quality. In lodging, Morishita (2023) shows that maintenance, cleaning, and staffing remain basic requirements. In festivals, Pivac et al. (2019) and Maranisya et al. (2025) identify information, hygiene, safety, infrastructure, staff service, and event quality as consequential for visitor evaluations and visiting decisions. Functional quality therefore establishes the conditions under which relational and culturally framed hospitality can contribute to experience.

Anticipation and personalization as context-dependent practices

Anticipation appears when the service provider or event organizer recognises a likely need before the visitor has to articulate it. Abdullah et al. (2024) connect this practice to Japanese hospitality, while the Sapporo event provides a documentary example through tourist-specific Omotenashi Seats. Official documentation explains that these reservable seats were created because visitors had reported difficulty finding places in the crowded beer garden; eligible tourists staying at partner hotels can reserve them in advance (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a; Sapporo Summer Festival Executive Committee, 2024). The mechanism is analytically relevant because it responds in advance to a recurring visitor problem.

Personalization follows from the same informational base but operates through choice and adaptation. The Sapporo event distributes service across six venue areas and offers different seating formats and reservation arrangements, enabling visitors to choose among brand, food, seating, and service configurations. Some venues provide reserved seating and set-menu conditions, while others support more spontaneous use. These choices do not prove individualized service, but they create a structured platform for visitors to select an experience consistent with group size, timing, and preference (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a; 2026b).

Technology and ordering systems can support this adaptive layer. The 2026 official venue information documents cashless payment and reservation arrangements, while the Nishi 5-chome venue provides table delivery for orders and introduced expanded covered seating (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026b; 2026c). Such features can reduce friction and support convenience, but the framework treats them as infrastructure rather than omotenashi by themselves. Their relevance depends on whether they help the visitor navigate the event appropriately and reliably.

Attention to detail and memorable experience

Attention to detail appears in both cultural and experiential studies. Kastuti and Sugiarto (2025) associate omotenashi with sincere service, meticulous attention, and a harmonious atmosphere. Festival research similarly shows that information, hygiene, safety, infrastructure, and event service influence overall evaluation (Pivac et al., 2019; Maranisya et al., 2025). In Sapporo, official documentation identifies multiple seating types, covered tables, restrooms, ordering options, venue-specific menus, rules on smoking and outside food, and recommendations about crowd timing and personal belongings. These details can be read as components of an intentionally organized experiencescape when they work coherently.

The marketing implication concerns coherence rather than ornamentation. A covered table, reservation system, multilingual visitor guidance, or efficient ordering procedure has limited value when isolated from crowd management, cleanliness, staff execution, and reliable information. The same element can contribute strongly to experience when it is coordinated with weather exposure, group size, peak demand, or the visitor's familiarity with the city. This distinction explains why attention to detail belongs inside the framework while functional quality remains a separate condition.

Memorability should remain an outcome rather than a definition of omotenashi. Kastuti and Sugiarto (2025) associate hospitality practices with memorable tourism experience, while Zhang et al. (2019) and Wu et al. (2025) show that co-creation, participation, and satisfaction can strengthen festival experience and behavioral intentions. A researcher can therefore identify an omotenashi-compatible practice through its characteristics and then examine whether visitors experience it as memorable, satisfying, or worth repeating.

Human relationships, trust, and commitment

The human relationship category receives support from hospitality, retail, and event research. Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021) identify the host–guest relationship as part of omotenashi in a ryokan, Leingpibul et al. (2025) connect omotenashi, expertise, trust, and commitment in Japanese retail, and Hayes (2024) shows that volunteers at the 2019 Rugby World Cup helped create omotenashi through fleeting relationships with visitors rather than merely transactional service. The festival setting therefore makes relational hospitality analytically visible even when interactions are brief.

Intercultural competence adds an important condition to this relational process. Wu et al. (2025) found that intercultural responsibility, understanding, appreciation, and action positively influence experience co-creation among international tourists at a Japanese festival. In Sapporo, the beer garden brings local residents and tourists into the same public space, while official tourism information is designed for visitors from outside the city. The framework therefore treats cultural context and visitor competence as factors that can strengthen or weaken the interpretation of proactive attention.

Behavioral outcomes remain downstream. Zhang et al. (2019) show that co-creation experience and festival satisfaction contribute to intentions to attend again, and Pivac et al. (2019) link perceived event quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. These findings support the placement of revisit intention and recommendation after the experience rather than inside the hospitality construct. Omotenashi can contribute to a favorable relationship, but return behavior also depends on event content, quality, access, social context, and individual preference.

Organizational consistency as the supporting layer

Morishita and Kosaka (2017) provide the clearest organizational evidence in the omotenashi corpus by linking superior hospitality to focused training, organization-wide communication, and feedback. A large festival requires an analogous supporting layer across venue operators, service counters, reservation channels, food and beverage teams, information functions, and site rules. The Sapporo documentation shows standardized opening periods, reservation rules, cashless-payment information, seating conditions, and behavioral rules across the event, illustrating the kind of operational structure within which adaptive service can occur (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026b).

Budianto (2025) corroborates this organizational reading from the perspective of workforce learning, showing that hospitality skills can be learned and adapted through training and practice. Hayes (2024) extends the point into event settings, where organized volunteers contributed to a hospitable environment through interaction. These findings suggest that festival organizers seeking to operationalize omotenashi should invest in shared service principles, contextual judgement, communication, and role clarity rather than rely on scripted politeness.

Technology can also support organizational consistency when it reduces waiting, helps visitors access information, or enables reliable reservations and ordering. In Sapporo, official 2026 documentation records web-based reservations at several venues, cashless-payment guidance, and venue-specific ordering procedures (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026b). The analytical point is not that digitalization equals hospitality, but that infrastructure can free staff and visitors from avoidable friction while preserving human discretion where context requires it.

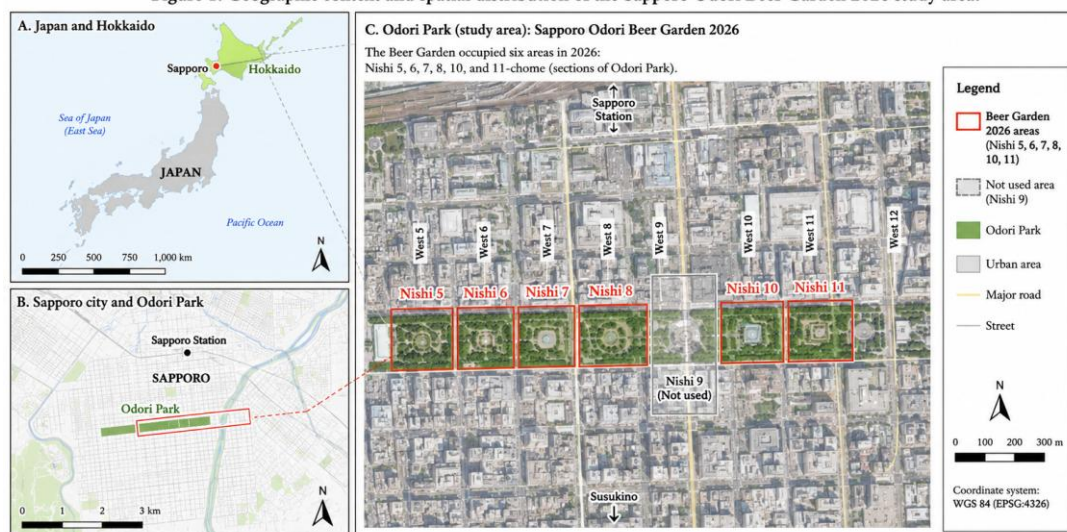
From a digital–human orchestration perspective, the managerial issue is not whether technology replaces interpersonal hospitality, but how routine and interpretive tasks are allocated. Automated systems can manage high-volume and predictable functions such as reservations, payment processing, menu information, availability communication, and routine ordering. Human discretion becomes comparatively more relevant when visitors encounter exceptions, linguistic ambiguity, accessibility needs, service failure, unfamiliar procedures, crowd-related difficulties, or situations requiring interpretation of

social and emotional cues. In this configuration, digital infrastructure reduces avoidable transactional friction, while frontline personnel retain the contextual judgement associated with omotenashi; the two components operate as complementary layers rather than substitutes (Ito, 2024; Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026b).

Contemporary application at the Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026

The Sapporo Odori Beer Garden application provides a contemporary test of interpretive usefulness rather than a causal validation of the framework. Official 2026 tourism documentation describes a roughly one-kilometre beer-garden corridor in Odori Park with approximately 13,000 seats and six venue areas serving major Japanese and international beer brands alongside Hokkaido seasonal foods. The event ran from July 23 to August 18, 2026 and formed part of the broader Sapporo Summer Festival (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a). The scale and segmentation make it a useful service-marketing case because visitors encounter multiple service environments within a common event system. The study area is located in Odori Park, Chuo-ku, central Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. For international readability, Figure 1 represents the study object at three spatial scales: Japan and Hokkaido, Sapporo and Odori Park, and the event sectors within the park. Odori Park extends approximately 1.5 km east-west, while the 2026 beer garden occupied Nishi 5-, 6-, 7-, 8-, 10-, and 11-chome (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a; Sapporo Parks and Greenery Association, 2026). This multiscale representation preserves geographic identification while making the event's urban and national context immediately interpretable to readers unfamiliar with Sapporo.

Figure 1. Geographic context and spatial distribution of the Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026 study area.



Notes. (A) Sapporo is the largest city in Hokkaido, located in northern Japan. (B) Odori Park is a linear park in the center of Sapporo, extending approximately 1.5 km east-west. (C) The Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026 was held in six sections of the park: Nishi 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11-chome. Nishi 9-chome was not used for the event.

Sources. Base maps: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI) / e-Stat, and Sapporo City Open Data Portal (map tiles);

Aerial imagery: © NTT InfraNet, Maxar Technologies (2024).

Event information: Sapporo Tourism Association. (2026). *Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026*. <https://www.sapporo.travel/en/event/event-list/sapporo-odori-beer-garden/>

Figure 1. Geographic context and spatial distribution of the Sapporo Odori Beer Garden 2026 study area. Panel A locates Sapporo in Hokkaido, northern Japan; Panel B identifies Odori Park within central Sapporo; Panel C delineates the six event sections documented for 2026 (Nishi 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11-chome). Nishi 9-chome is shown for spatial continuity but was not part of the Beer Garden. Coordinate reference system: WGS 84 (EPSG:4326). Source: authors' cartographic representation based on official Sapporo tourism and Odori Park documentation.

The strongest direct correspondence with anticipation is the event's tourist-specific reservation mechanism. The official visitor guide identifies reservable Omotenashi Seats for guests staying at partner

hotels, while earlier official festival documentation explains that the mechanism was introduced after tourists reported arriving to find no available seats. This makes the service design unusually valuable analytically: the organizer labels the mechanism with *omotenashi* and links it to a known visitor friction point. The evidence supports correspondence with anticipation and reduced customer effort, although it does not by itself demonstrate satisfaction (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a; Sapporo Summer Festival Executive Committee, 2024).

Personalization and attention to detail appear through differentiated venue and seating design. The 2026 event offered six venue areas, reservation availability at selected blocks, covered and uncovered seating, standing options in some areas, venue-specific menus and brands, and multiple ordering arrangements. Official rules also address smoking, outside food, closing procedures, and legal restrictions on underage drinking and drink-driving. One venue, Nishi 5-chome, introduced larger tents and table delivery for all orders in 2026 (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026b; 2026c). Together these features document a service architecture that combines standardization with visitor choice.

Human relationships and co-creation require more cautious interpretation because official documentation cannot directly reveal the quality of staff–visitor interaction. Hayes (2024) nevertheless provides event-specific evidence that *omotenashi* can be co-created through brief interactions in Japanese event spaces, and Wu et al. (2025) shows that participation and intercultural competence enhance cultural festival experiences. The Sapporo case can therefore support propositions about how staff contact, visitor-to-visitor interaction, and participation in the wider summer-festival atmosphere may operate, but guest-level research would be required to test trust, *communitas*, memorability, satisfaction, or revisit intention.

Table 3. Refined framework and original contribution

Analytical layer	Elements	Interpretive role	Expected marketing relation
Organizational base	Training, communication, feedback, knowledge, technology	Supports repeated and informed service practice	Service consistency and capability
Omotenashi manifestations	Anticipation, personalization, attention to detail, human relationship	Expresses context-sensitive hospitality	Visitor experience, perceived value, and co-creation
Conditioning factors	Functional quality, cultural context, visitor preferences, event format, crowding	Shapes how hospitality is interpreted	Strengthens or weakens the experience
Potential outcomes	Trust, satisfaction, place attachment, memorability, revisit intention, recommendation	Results that may follow a positive experience	Relationship and event-marketing outcomes

The refined framework in Table 3 constitutes the main theoretical contribution of the review. It separates what supports *omotenashi*, what manifests it, what conditions its interpretation, and what may follow from it. The Sapporo case adds an event-specific insight: large-scale hospitality is partly designed through service architecture before any face-to-face interaction occurs. Reservation mechanisms, seating formats, information, ordering, and crowd-related rules can reduce effort and prepare the conditions for relational hospitality, but they should not be equated automatically with *omotenashi*. Figure 2 translates these analytical layers into a visual model while preserving the distinction between theoretical relationships and empirically tested causal effects.

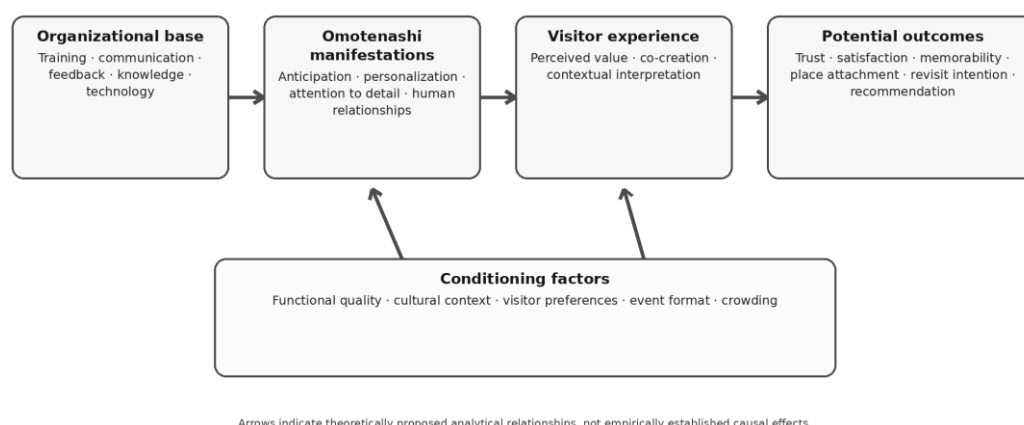


Figure 2. Proposed analytical framework for omotenashi in festival service settings. Organizational capabilities support the service manifestations, conditioning factors shape their interpretation, and potential outcomes remain analytically downstream. Arrows indicate theoretically proposed relationships and should not be interpreted as empirically established causal effects. Source: authors' elaboration based on the integrative review.

The framework also resolves the apparent tension between surprise and restraint. Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021) identify small surprises, while Morishita (2024) values family-like hospitality without excessive service. Both patterns can be compatible when the analytical centre is contextual appropriateness. Anticipation becomes useful when it reduces effort, personalization becomes useful when it responds to a meaningful difference, attention to detail becomes useful when it supports the purpose of the experience, and human contact becomes useful when it respects the guest's preferred level of interaction.

This interpretation narrows the managerial use of the concept in a productive way. Festival organizers should not equate omotenashi with adding gifts or increasing staff contact. A more defensible application involves identifying recurring visitor frictions, preparing appropriate responses, preserving choice, coordinating operational quality, and training staff to interpret context. The Sapporo Omotenashi Seats are illustrative because they address a predictable capacity problem for tourists while leaving the broader event open to multiple forms of participation.

Theoretical, methodological, and professional implications

Theoretically, the review connects a culturally specific hospitality concept with service marketing and festival tourism without erasing the distinction among them. Omotenashi remains grounded in Japanese service culture, while the framework translates recurrent practices into categories that can be compared across lodging, retail, restaurants, and public events. Hayes (2024) provides direct support for this extension into event experiences, and Wu et al. (2025) adds the role of intercultural competence and co-creation. Cross-context application should therefore preserve contextual sensitivity rather than reproduce a fixed ceremonial script.

The results support a distinction between observable practices and visitor outcomes. Future field research at the Sapporo event can operationalize anticipation, personalization, attention to detail, and human relationships as visitor perceptions while measuring event quality, satisfaction, trust, place attachment, memorability, revisit intention, and recommendation separately. This design would permit mediation and moderation testing without defining independent and dependent variables through the

same positive evaluation. Cultural background, prior festival experience, crowding, weather, group size, and functional service quality are plausible moderators.

For empirical operationalization, a subsequent field study could use multi-item Likert-type measures derived from the analytical framework. Illustrative candidate items include perceived anticipation “The event anticipated needs that I was likely to experience before I requested assistance”; personalization “The available service options were appropriate to my circumstances and preferences”; attention to detail “Information, seating, ordering, cleanliness, and comfort were coherently organized”; human relationship “Staff interactions were respectful, competent, and sensitive to the situation”; functional quality “The service operated reliably and the information provided was accurate”; and perceived crowding “Crowding interfered with my ability to use the service as intended.” Satisfaction, trust, memorability, place attachment, revisit intention, and recommendation should remain separate outcome constructs. These indicators are proposed for future testing and would require expert review, pilot testing, reliability analysis, and construct validation before inferential use.

For festival managers, the framework directs attention to service design, workforce capability, and visitor-flow conditions. Training should combine operational standards with contextual judgement. Reservation and ordering systems should reduce avoidable effort, while information should help tourists understand venue differences before and during the visit. Cleanliness, safety, legal alcohol-service rules, accuracy, and response time require consistent standards; interpersonal contact and personalization require discretion within those standards. This separation is particularly important in a high-volume outdoor event.

The Sapporo case adds a practical implication for destination marketing. The beer garden is not an isolated consumption space: it is embedded in Odori Park and the wider Sapporo Summer Festival, where local residents and tourists share a seasonal urban environment. Event research indicates that co-creation, place attachment, and intercultural participation can strengthen festival experience (Zhang et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2025), while the official Sapporo design explicitly includes a tourist-facing Omotenashi Seat mechanism. This combination creates a strong setting for future primary research on whether culturally framed service design translates into perceived welcome and behavioral outcomes.

D. CONCLUSION

This article examined how omotenashi can be understood through service marketing and how its principles appear in a contemporary festival setting. The review identifies anticipation, personalization, attention to detail, and human relationships as recurrent service manifestations, while organizational consistency supports their repeated execution. Functional quality, cultural context, and event conditions influence how visitors interpret these practices, and trust, satisfaction, place attachment, memorability, revisit intention, and recommendation remain possible outcomes rather than defining elements of the concept.

The dialogue among the selected studies also qualifies a common assumption about superior hospitality. Wijayanti and Saifudin (2021) identify small surprises and personalized host–guest relationships, Morishita (2024) finds value in hospitality without excessive service, Hayes (2024) locates omotenashi in relational event encounters, and Wu et al. (2025) emphasizes intercultural participation and co-creation. Taken together, these findings support contextual appropriateness as the organizing principle of the framework. The relevant managerial question is whether an intervention fits the visitor, event setting, and moment rather than whether the organization provides more service.

The review also clarifies the role of organizational management. Morishita and Kosaka (2017) connect omotenashi with training, communication, and feedback, while Budianto (2025) documents learning and cultural adaptation. Festival-quality studies show that information, hygiene, safety,

infrastructure, and staff service remain consequential for visitor evaluation (Pivac et al., 2019; Maranisya et al., 2025). These findings support a professional approach in which hospitality principles are embedded in reliable event operations rather than treated as a substitute for them.

The Sapporo Odori Beer Garden application provides a current documentary illustration of the framework. Official 2026 sources document approximately 13,000 seats across six venue areas, multiple reservation and seating formats, operating rules, ordering arrangements, and tourist-specific Omotenashi Seats (Sapporo Tourism & Convention Bureau, 2026a; 2026b). The latter mechanism is especially relevant because official festival documentation links it to the anticipation of tourist difficulty in finding seats. The correspondence supports the framework's interpretive usefulness, although documentary evidence cannot establish how visitors actually perceived these practices.

The study has limitations that follow from its integrative and documentary design. The corpus is conceptually focused rather than exhaustive, several omotenashi studies rely on qualitative cases, and the Sapporo application does not include new visitor-level data. Official sources document the offered service configuration but cannot establish satisfaction, trust, memorability, or behavioral effects. A next empirical stage should therefore survey visitors during the event, compare tourists and residents, and test whether perceived anticipation, personalization, attention to detail, and human relationships predict event experience after controlling for functional quality, crowding, cultural background, and prior attendance. The exclusive use of Consensus also constitutes a platform-specific selection limitation because the review is bounded by the platform's coverage and retrieval behaviour. Future updates should triangulate retrieval across additional scholarly databases or search systems and prospectively retain complete screening counts and record-level exclusion reasons.

Data Availability Statement

The research data supporting this study, including the search strategies, screening records, eligibility decisions, final bibliographic corpus, data extraction matrix, thematic coding framework, documentary source register, and geospatial file for the principal Sapporo venue, will be deposited in a research data repository following FAIR principles. The dataset will receive a persistent identifier and will include structured metadata, provenance information, a data dictionary, a README file, version information, and an explicit reuse license. Copyrighted full-text publications and materials subject to third-party access restrictions will not be redistributed. Their bibliographic metadata and persistent links will be provided instead. The repository name, dataset DOI, version, and license will be inserted in this statement before final publication.

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