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Managing Knowledge and Skill of *Omotenashi* in the Lodging Industry

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Omotenashi is Japan's unique culture of hospitality, holds such meanings as (1) warm reception, service, and entertainment for the guests and (2) meals and cuisines. Unlike Western concepts of hospitality, *omotenashi* holds a specific meaning of seeking no recompense from their customers and does not utilize it as service business. This study discovers the answers to the research question, "How does the lodging industry manages *omotenashi*, which is based on tacit knowledge of individuals, as service business in an organization?" First, the factors and characteristics of *omotenashi* that bring customer satisfaction was quantitatively analyzed using the text data from their word-of-mouth comments. As a result, the factors were not only with how the workers treated them, but rather, it was based on comprehensive inn services which included meals, facilities, hot spring baths, and rooms in inns. Then, the learning process of *omotenashi* was examined by a case study of the famous inns. That is, when an inexperienced staff alongside an experienced one, she will compare her work to the experienced, and discover her own *omotenashi*. When the her own *omotenashi* is practiced on customers, she receives feedback from the customers. She finds out new challenges and issues, repeats the learning process to seek for a better *omotenashi*. In addition, the process of creating *omotenashi* in organizations was examined by a case study of a well-established hot spring area. The landladies of inns embody their customer-oriented philosophy to "*omotenashi*." These landladies communicate their *omotenashi* to all their staff by working alongside them. In turn, each staff practices *omotenashi* on their customers, and receives feedback. They share the feedback with their co-workers and the landlady and discuss better *omotenashi*. Then, the landlady will reference it and create new better *omotenashi*. The series of processes is repeated. Finally, a new concept of "industrialization of *omotenashi*" was presented based on a case study of advanced companies. The term is taken in two *omotenashi* management approaches. One is "personalization", which starts with the collection of individual customer data, and provides unique *omotenashi* only for the customer, referring to various patterns of *omotenashi* in the data base. The other is "standardization", which is to analyze the *omotenashi* of an excellent staff, then that behavior is standardized in a way that regular employee could utilize it and then it is applied to all employees within that organization. *Omotenashi* created in this way is taught to members in an organization by the approach of "top-down", "amoeba" and "industrialization". In this way, this study used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to consider and explore the research question revolving on the organizational management of *omotenashi* as the service business on the lodging industry.

Keywords: *Omotenashi*, Hospitality, Lodging industry, Tacit and Explicit knowledge, Japanese inns, Customer satisfaction, Case study, Text data analysis