Analysis on Japanese Hospitality Spirit of

Omotenashi: Does it Work in Other Countries?

A Case of its Implementation in Indonesia

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<u>Abstract</u>

The spread of *omotenashi* has been growing somewhat rapidly for the past few years outside of Japan, notably to the region of South East Asia such as in Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand. This spread might be contributed to the widely expected positive impacts of *omotenashi* such as its capability to improve the overall level of customers' satisfaction through the empowerment of the service providers. Indeed, the discussions of *omotenashi* itself has actually been brought into the table since the early 2010 in the aim of introducing the concept to the rest of the world. To this, most of the discussions focus on how the notion of *omotenashi* is beneficial to be practiced by others and less on the negative impacts that might arise from the practice of *omotenashi* itself. Connecting to the rapid grow of popularity of *omotenashi* in the South East Asian regions, many literatures have also only focus on how the practice is good to increase the overall level of customers' satisfaction with little information given on the possible challenges and negative impacts that might arise from within each of the non-Japanese individuals who are practicing the concept.

In the pursuit of contributing more towards this phenomenon, this thesis aims to further assess and further dissect the notion of *omotenashi* in its own entirety in relation to the two concepts of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" which were then utilized as the theoretical framework in the assessment of data obtained through various qualitative methods such as observation, semi-structured interview and focus group interview on the application of the concept in Indonesia. The findings obtained have also proven that although the application of *omotenashi* is indeed beneficial in terms of empowering the local Indonesian service providers, the concept was also associated with several negative impacts and problems that have arisen inside the local workplace, most notably, the degree of emotional labor, disharmonious relation with co-workers and perceptions of "master-slave" relationship. Both of these positive and negative findings have also affected the overall construction of the local "experiencescape" in various ways.

Key concepts: *omotenashi, omoiyari, servicescape, experiencescape, emotional labor, harmony, communication*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Japan has long garnished the attentions of people from the world, from the country's products such as the electrical appliances until the country's tourism destinations, the land of the rising sun has found herself being showered with praises and commendations. The country's tourism attractions, in itself, has also been nominated as one of the most anticipated in the Asian region, with the astounding sky-scrappers combined with the traditional and tourist-friendly environment, the capital city of Tokyo stands in the 9th place (Rodgers, 2017). Kyoto, the old-capital city of Japan, has also won several rewards such as "tourist destination choice" and "most anticipated tourist destination" (Rodgers, 2017)

Perhaps one of the main determining factor of Japan's attractiveness in the eyes of the world is its quality of customer service. The land of the rising sun has been able to instill the image of a customer-centric, customer-oriented service industry through the country's oriental and unique spirit of *omotenashi*. In welcoming Japan's success of being selected into the host for the 2020 Olympic in Tokyo, Christell Takigawa, the representative of Japan's Olympic committee promoted *omotenashi* as the spirit of Japanese hospitality (Ishidzuka, 2017). The word *omotenashi* itself has long been known by foreigners as one of the beauties that define Japan; the warmheartedness, compassion and zeal of Japanese people in welcoming and serving tourists play an important role in the development of its tourism industry. The image of Japan in the eyes of tourists might be understood as "a country with the spirit of perfection in welcoming the customers".

This specific notion of *omotenashi* in terms of its zeal, warmheartedness and compassion towards the customers could be understood as one of the most important elements that various scholars found as appealing. Ikeda (2013) was among one of the first researchers that has introduced the notion into the global service stage with his work titled "Omotenashi: Japanese Hospitality as the Global Standard". Following Ikeda, Nagao & Umemuro (2012) mentioned that *omotenashi*, if practiced correctly, will be able to equip the service providers with the "sense of readiness" in which the service providers will be prepared to deal with the service exchanges. Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka (2013) added that *omotenashi* would be able to shorten the gaps between customers' expectation and the service providers' performance. Ikeda (2013) explained that the notion of

omotenashi would also equip the service providers to understand the supporting elements of service exchanges which will lead them towards being more customer-centric and customer-oriented in the final aim of giving the best, unparalleled quality of service towards the customers.

These positive, customer-centric and customer-oriented elements are some of the major driving factors of non-Japanese service providers and practitioners to take the notion and to implement it in a non-Japanese cultural context. Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are some of the most famous destination nowadays for the implementation of *omotenashi*. As mentioned by Zhu (2016), businesses in Hong Kong are now keen to learn more and to educate their employees using what they call as the "Japanese manner", and at the same time, many other businesses from major South-East Asian countries are also inviting the Japanese professional *omotenashi* trainer to come and to contribute towards the improvement of their service performance towards the local customers. Last year, in 2018, Aeon Mall, one of the biggest and notorious shopping mall chain from Japan, has done a contest called "Role-Playing in Customer Service: Providing Indonesian Customers with Japanese Service Quality" in which many service providers from various tenants inside the shopping mall were invited to be given lessons and to practice first-handedly the warmth and the perfection of Japanese spirit of *omotenashi* (Aeon Mall, 2018).

This so-perceived and so-called "perfection" exhibited by the Japanese spirit of *omotenashi*, however, is not one without any flaws. Kitanaka (2012) explained that the notion of *omotenashi* is widely understood as one of the major determinants in the high level of intrapersonal problem among the Japanese people. Adding to this statement, Ishidzuka (2017), in the author's discussion upon the book titled "The Cruel Society Called *Omotenashi*" has also suggested that the spirit of perfection and the high proficiency of *omotenashi* as could be seen in Japan has been considered by many other Japanese people as a major cause of the high degree of emotional labor. Further deepening the discussion on this matter, Sankei News (2016) brought upon the famous notion of *"okyaku sama wa kami sama"* or *"the customers are god"* to stress upon how the country's spirit of *omotenashi* might have been glorifying the customers too much while neglecting the needs of the service providers themselves.

These negative discussions, based on the author's opinion, are lacking from many of the literatures that focus on the application and training of *omotenashi* outside

of Japan. Zhu (2016) mainly focused upon how the training of *omotenashi* to the local Hong Kong service providers will be positively impactful towards the level of customers' satisfaction while the event recently held in the Aeon Mall Indonesia also focused more towards how the customers could be benefitted by the introduction of "Japanese shopping experience". While the element of customers' satisfaction has indeed exerted its own gravity on the success factors of many businesses, attention must also be given towards the experience and opinions of the front-line service providers/employees. The experience of service providers/employees have nowadays played a major role in the service industry and a harmonious relationship between service providers and customers would then be understood as the next major element, an understanding known as "experiencescape" (Sekhon & Roy, 2015 in Park, 2015).

Taking into deep consideration upon the importance of the experience and opinions of the local service providers as depicted inside what Sekhon & Roy (2015) mentioned as "experiencescape", the author has decided to contribute to the lack of discussions in the empirical data of the implementation of *omotenashi* outside of Japan and the possible existing negative impacts of the notion through the theoretical framework of "experiencescape". By this process, the author aims to provide the society with a deeper understanding on what could be understood as the unknown side of *omotenashi* itself; whether the notion is able to, not only improve the experience of the customers, but also improve the overall working experience and condition of the service providers. Following this logic, the author has also decided to take into account the lack of empirical data that focuses on the perspective of the local non-Japanese service providers and to further analyze and dissect the concept of *omotenashi*.

1.2 Research aim and research questions

This thesis is aimed **to obtain deeper understanding of *omotenashi* and its applicability in a non-Japanese cultural context**. These effects and analyses will then be seen in the construction of experience based on the theory of "experiencescape".

In the endeavor of reaching the aim, several research questions have been formulated as well:
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RQ1. How do employees perceive/think of *omotenashi* practice?

In this question, the author aims to understand the personal opinions of the service providers towards the concept of *omotenashi* and to dig deeper on discovering whether the notion is adaptable and practical in a non-Japanese cultural context.

RQ2. What are the impacts of *omotenashi* in daily service performance?

In this question, the author aims to understand the opinions of the service providers on both the positive impacts as well as negative impacts of their *omotenashi* practice in their daily service performance. This question is also aimed towards understanding the motivation of the service providers in implementing the concept in a non-Japanese cultural context.

RQ3. What are the obstacles and challenges of implementing *omotenashi* in the daily service performance?

In this question, the author aims to understand the obstacles and challenges that undermine the implementation of the concept and to understand the methods of which the service providers are adopting in order to tackle those challenges and obstacles.

RQ4. Does the practice of *omotenashi* helps in constructing a good working experience?

In this question, the author aims to understand the personal opinions of the service providers of the concept of *omotenashi* and whether the concept is able to contribute towards the construction of a meaningful working experience. This question is also aimed to contribute towards the existing arrays of literatures regarding *omotenashi* especially from the standpoint of "experiencescape".

1.3 Thesis structure

The thesis will be presented as follows: the first chapter of the thesis will focus on providing ground-rooting logic behind the importance of alleviating the research topic and to provide general guidelines towards the readers on the main aim of the thesis. The second chapter of the thesis will be focused on enlightening the readers with the

theories, literatures as well as the ontological factors of *omotenashi* that could be found through the origins of the Japanese culture itself and how the theoretical framework of "experiencescape" will be utilized to answer the various research questions. Chapter three of the thesis will provide the readers with the methodology in which the thesis is based on, this chapter will also give a clear guideline as to how certain data collection methods are adopted and the reasons behind it. The fourth chapter will be focused on providing the readers with the empirical data obtained through qualitative method of interviews, observations and a focus group discussion as well as providing the analysis of the findings and to also discuss them thoroughly according to the adopted theoretical framework. The last chapter of the thesis will then conclude the discussions of the thesis and to go back to address and to answer the four adopted research question and in the end, enlightening the readers on the aim of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework:

The notion of *omotenashi* runs back towards the deeply rooted Japanese culture that has been around the country since the beginning of its history. The explanation of *omotenashi,* in this sense, entails the readers to understand and grasp the essences of culture being preserved and practiced in the land of the rising sun. The first part of this section will provide readers with previous literatures written on the concept of *omotenashi* and then followed by a comprehensive exploration of the origins of omotenashi in Japanese culture history. The second part will focus on the in-depth analysis of the *omotenashi* concept to gain a deeper understanding on its various supporting elements. The third part of this chapter will touch upon a focused discussion on the theories of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" and to compare these two theories with the notion of *omotenashi* and to give the analysis upon the similarities between these two theories with the notion of *omotenashi*. The adoption and theoretical design of "experiencescape" and its operationalization will be given by the end of each corresponding sections of this chapter. The last section of this chapter will provide the readers with the summary of the whole literature review.

2.1. Past literatures

The discussion of *omotenashi*, as explained in the first chapter of this thesis, has begun ever since the early 2010s. One of the first few pioneers on the discussion of the notion is Nagao & Umemuro (2012) in which the authors explain about the elements of

constructions that uphold the notion of *omotenashi* itself. Following Nagao & Umemuro (2012) is Ikeda (2013) with the author's work titled "Omotenashi: Japanese Hospitality as the Global Standard" in which the author brought upon the discussion of the differences that set up *omotenashi* apart from the traditional concept of hospitality as known in the rest of the globe. Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka (2013) added upon the array of literatures of *omotenashi* through their discussions on how *omotenashi* would serve as one of alternative service techniques/tools that could be adopted by service industries to shorten the gap between customers' expectation and the performance of the service providers.

Although *omotenashi* gained its notorious attention from many scholars and practitioners alike since the beginning of 2010s, one major work was written by a Western scholar in which the author dictated his reflections and amazements towards the unique Japanese spirit of hospitality. In his work titled "What Japan Taught Me on The Essence of Hospitality", Thompson (2007a) explained how the level of hospitality that is being practiced in Japan in the form of *omotenashi* differs from the spirit of hospitality that is commonly practiced in the western part of the globe; although some elements of *omotenashi* exist in the service concept adopted by western countries, they are lacking the element of "personal feelings" and that *omotenashi* is able to fulfill this hole. Following this, Al-alsheikh (2014), in his work titled "The Origin of Japanese Excellent Customer Service" analyzed and explained deeply the origins of the concept; how it was stemmed from one of Japan's traditional tea ceremony or *chado* and how the concept has evolved throughout the various era. Joraku (2013), similar to what has been done by Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka (2013), touched upon how the implementation of *omotenashi* will result in extreme level of customers' satisfaction towards the business.

Despite all the positive impacts that could be found among various literatures written by the above-mentioned authors, the concept of *omotenashi* itself holds its own negative impacts that would be best described as, according to Ishidzuka (2017) excessive amount of emotional labor. Indeed, the utmost level of customers' satisfaction that was stemmed from the performance of *omotenashi* is paralleled with a certain degree of emotional fatigue exhibited by the service providers. Many Japanese media also brought up the discussion of how people are feeling stressed due to the expectations given to them by their surroundings and the upper management to always be perfect in everything especially when it comes to service performance. The next section of this literature review chapter will incorporate some, if not all, of the above-mentioned works to first explain the history of the notion of *omotenashi* itself and its origins in Japanese culture history.

2.2 The origin of *omotenashi*, the "all-understanding" concept of *omoiyari*

One of the most visible and distinct feature of Japanese culture lies in the Japanese people's capability to understand and sense the needs, emotions and feelings of others (Karasawa & Hirabayashi, 2013). These traits of understanding others, as explained by the authors, are known in Japanese as *Omoiyari*. The Japanese word *Omoiyari* could be separated into two parts, the first one being *omoi* and the second one being *yari* (Hara, 2006, p. 27). Hara (2006) further explained that *omoi* is equivalent to being "considerate and caring for others" in English and *yari* as the noun form of Japanese verb *yaru* which means to do or to send something to others (p. 27). In this context, as the author mentioned, *omoiyari* could be translated into "sending one's altruistic feelings to others" (Hara, 2006, p. 27). Despite this, however, it is difficult to concisely translate the whole meaning and essence of the word *omoiyari* into one specific English word, and thus, various explanations are needed to fully convey the meaning of the word to non-Japanese speakers (Hara, 2006; Travis, 1998; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Adding to Hara's (2006) explanation of *omoiyari*, Lebra (1976) described *omoiyari* as (Lebra, 1976, p. 38):

> *Omoiyari refers to ability and willingness to feel what others are feeling, to vicariously experience the pleasure or pain that they are undergoing, and to help them satisfy their wishes… without being told verbally*

Similar to the explanation given by Lebra (1976), Travis (1998), stated that the concept of *omoiyari* involves in the notion of understanding the "unspoken" and "unverbalized" feelings, desires, thoughts and wishes of others around the individual (Travis, 1998, p. 61). Furthermore, adding to this, Amanuma (2004) stated that *omoiyari* is the ability to predict and sense what others are feeling as well as to understand what has happened or might happen in the future to others (Amanuma, 2004). Travis (1998), in his attempt to explain the essence of *omoiyari*, further divided it into several components (p. 61):

> *X has omoiyari (X-wa omoiyari ga aru)*
> a. *X often thinks something like this of people*
> b. *I think I can know what this person feels/wants/thinks*
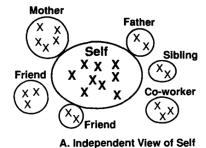> c. *If this person doesn't say it to me*

Travis (1998) explained that component (a) specifies the reflection of an individual's own perception towards the feelings, wants and thoughts of others while component (b) specifies the capabilities of an individual to understand others, and to suit one's ownself to be "in tune" with the others (p. 62). Component (c), as the author put it, serves as a critical part in the understanding of *omoiyari*, for it directs the fact that both components (a) and (b) are achievable without the involvement of any form of verbal communication. Lebra (1976) also explained that *omoiyari* is aimed towards providing pleasure and preventing discomfort and displeasure to the surroundings.

The importance of *omoiyari* could be assessed both from the eyes of the individuals and the eyes of the society. Uchida & Kitayama (2001) explained that *omoiyari* serves as one of the core concepts and values of Japanese society in which it provides the actors of the society with instruments to, adhering to the ideas conveyed by Lebra (1976), preventing social faux pas and at the same time, building up a good atmosphere throughout the whole interactions (Uchida, Kitayama, 2001). In the eyes of individuals, *omoiyari* enables one's ownself to act accordingly to the situations one is involved in and to equip one with the capability to assess and sense the needs, feelings and thoughts of others not only limited to social interactions but also to foster one's ownself to be better (Uchida, Kitayama, 2001).

The quest for fostering *omoiyari* could be done through training *sasshi*, a Japanese verb which is approximately equivalent to "guess" in English (Uchida & Kitayama, 2001; Hara, 2006; Karasawa & Hirabayashi, 2013). The term "guess", however, might not be able to comprise and convey the exact meaning of *sasshi*, for the essence of the word could be translated into English as "sensing", "assessing", "guessing" "feeling"; definitions which are in harmony with the essence of *omoiyari*, to understand the feelings of others, to be in tune with them without the involvement of any form of verbal interactions (Uchida & Kitayama, 2001; Travis, 1998). Through the involvement of *sasshi*, Uchida & Kitayama (2001) drew the conclusion that *omoiyari* could be explained as (p. 276)

> *Performing sasshi to understand others' feelings, to stand in the same position with the others. To see from their eyes and to be in tune, sympathetic and empathetic with those feelings of others. To suit one's self towards the interactions taking place in the society, to become a gear of the society*.

In relation to the analysis of *sasshi* in the concept of *omoiyari* in its role in defining the Japanese society, Markus & Kitayama (1991) explained that Japanese society is a collectivistic, inclusive and less-individualistic compared to the Western societies (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The authors explained that the concept of "self" in Japanese society tend to be unsubtle and inapparent compared to the Western societies; Japan is a society where each individual view themselves as being "interdependent" with the others and that each and every thought or acts that they convey, will affect their surroundings (p. 227). Markus & Kitayama (1991) further specified their concept of Japanese concept of "interdependent self" as could be seen in the following figure (p. 226):

Figure 1. Conceptual representations of the self. (A: Independent construal. B: Interdependent construal.)

Figure 1: Conceptual representations of the self

Taken from: Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological review, 98*(2), 224.

2.2.1 The application of *omoiyari* in Japan's service industry: *Omotenashi*

The discussion on the concept of *omoiyari* has shed some light upon one of the most critically viewed core values of Japanese society. *Omoiyari*, as explained in the previous paragraphs, acts as a driving force for both the individuals and the Japanese society itself, in which it equips its members with the capability to "feel", "sense" and "guess" others' feelings and thoughts without the involvement of any verbal

communications in order to "provide pleasure", "avoid displeasure" and "construct elusive ambience" (Lebra, 1976; Travis, 1998; Uchida & Kitayama, 2001; Karasawa & Hirabayashi, 2013). The application of the spirit of *omoiyari* in the field of service industries in Japan could be seen in the form of Japanese *omotenashi* attitude towards its customers.

The history of *omotenashi* stretches back to the ancient Japan where it was first known through the traditional cultural activity of Japan, the *cha-no-yu*, the tea ceremony. As explained by Al-alsheikh (2014), the concept of *omotenashi* was introduced by Sen-no-rikyu, one of the most famous figure in Japanese *cha-no-yu* (Al-alsheikh, 2014). Goto & Nakamura (2009) stated that the word *omotenashi* is the honorific language form of *motenashi* which harbors the meaning of "finishing the task by giving out everything that one's have". The context then, begun to develop as one of the most crucial principal in ways Japanese people uphold the idea of serving their customers (Goto & Nakamura, 2009; Aishima & Sato, 2015). The principle of *omotenashi* consists of three elements which are called as *shitsurai*, *furumai* and *shikake*. Al-alsheikh (2014), explained that *shitsurai* refers to the preparation of the environment in which the service will take place, *furumai* refers to the willingness of the host to be responsible in addressing all the needs of the guests and *shikake* refers to the moments of interactions throughout the service and to the degree of satisfaction of the customers.

The perfections performed by the hosts are aimed solely towards providing the customers with unrivaled degree of satisfaction, as Al-alsheikh (2014) explained, the spirit of *omotenashi* is deeply connected to the Japanese proverb of *ichigo ichie* "one time, one encounter" which means "I am grateful for the chance of meeting you, and because of this chance I have to do my best for we may never meet again" (p. 28). By utilizing this analysis, *omotenashi* is "the spirit of fulfilling guest's requirements by presenting super services from the core of the heart without expectation of any return, and the ability to actualize that idea into action" (Belal, Shirahada, & Kosaka, 2013, p. 29). Adding to this, Ikeda (2013) explained that with the heavy focus on degree of customer's satisfactions inside the business culture in Japan, *omotenashi* has been viewed as crucial towards the longevity of the business itself (Ikeda, 2013). In further assessment of the connection between *omotenashi* and the service quality, Sato & Al-alsheikh (2014) wrote that a large amount of Japanese tourism industries such as hotels and inns have been implementing and utilizing the concept of *omotenashi* to differentiate and distinct themselves from similar industries in the Western world. "The mind of *omotenashi* and

culture becomes attractive of the Japanese-style inn… the spirit of *omotenashi* is a service system unique to Japan that cannot be imitated by the West" (Sato & Al-alsheikh, 2014, pp. 5, 6).

In addition to the analysis done by Sato & Al-ashiekh (2014), Sato & Parry (2015) further explained that the spirit of *omotenashi* that was derived from traditional tea ceremony could be understood as one of the essences of "Japanese hospitality" (p. 521). The notion of *omotenashi*, similar to the concept of *omoiyari*, has also been used as a tool of education in many of Japanese service industries. In a review done by Nikkei Business Associe (2010), a majority of Japanese service companies such as hotels, traditional inns and hot springs have been using *omotenashi* to train their employees. As explained in the review (Nikkei Business Associe, 2010, p. 58):

> *It is said that the tea ceremony can help employees develop a caring, helpful attitude toward others in the workplace. Because you experience the role of serving and the role of being served, you learn to understand your partner's situation. You come to regard win-win exchanges with your partner as natural*

In the case of *omotenashi*, the notion of *omoiyari* has been extended to not only between individuals in the face of society, but also in the form of interactions between service provider and its customers. To finish the task by giving out all that one's has in order to gain the utmost degree of satisfaction from the customer as well as to create a productive, cheerful environment in the workplace, the spirit of *omotenashi* has found itself to be preserved since the ancient times and to be continuously utilized to further improve quality of service as well as establishing itself as a distinct color of the Japanese society. The next section of this chapter will discuss upon whether this distinct spirit of Japanese hospitality could be classified as a perfect and the ultimate spirit of hospitality.

2.2.2 *Omotenashi*, the ultimate spirit of hospitality?

The discussions upon the history of *omotenashi* as explained by Al-alsheikh (2014) that was stemmed from the ancient Japanese tea ceremony as well as its deep relation with the root of Japanese culture, the *omoiyari* on previous paragraphs have shed some light upon its unique and distinctive characteristics that set it apart with the traditional concept of "hospitality" known in the rest of the world. Indeed, the quest to

unveil whether the spirit of *omotenashi* could be aligned side-by-side with the traditional concept of "hospitality" has attracted a lot of local Japanese and international researchers to further investigate upon this matter.

Hayashida (2006) and Yamakami (2008) argued that the differences between the understanding of *omotenashi* and the traditional understanding of "hospitality" lies only with the translation of the words. Contrary to this, Thompson (2007b) in his book titled "The Spirit of Hospitality: Learning from the Japanese Experience" explained that there exist a major and great differences between the two in the essence of willingness to service harbored by the service provider or the service producers. Adding to what Thompson (2007b) has explained in his writings, Miyashita (2011) stated that the spirit of *Omotenashi* has extended itself way beyond notion of traditional "hospitality", the author took the example of the famous Japanese style inn or "Ryokan" known as the "Kagaya". Miyashita (2011) laid out the crucial elements of serving customers based on the spirit of *omotenashi* which includes detailed focus upon the décor of the room, the floor mat used in each of the guests' rooms, the exact position at which the servers have to stand, the articulation and the movement of how the servers are supposed to handle the tea until the details upon the facial expression of the customers and how the employees are supposed to improvise and cater to the needs of those customers on the specific given moments.

The detailed explanations given by Miyashita (2011) might not be enough to explain fully the heart and the essences of *Omotenashi*. An association in Japan called as the "Omotenashi Foundation" (2014), in their endeavor to further introduce and explain the essences of o*motenashi* to the world, has made distinct differences between the types of services that exist within the current zeitgeist. The organization called them the "Pyramid of Services" in the framework of "to constantly thinking about others' needs" which is constructed, from the bottom to the top as:

1. Moral: Moral is what the organization described as the least form of service in the framework of always thinking about what the others needs, moral put grave attention on the first-person point of view.

2. Manner: Manner, as the organization explained, "Basic rules that have to be abided as to not cause any feelings of uneasiness towards the others". Manner focuses gravely on how to not cause any feelings of discomfort and

displeasure and tend to stop on that point.

3. Service: Service is categorized by the organization as a "master-slave relationship" based on the Latin word "servitus". The organization also divided service into three different types which are service on the basis of people, service on the basis of goods and service on the basis of money. Service is also categorized as being able to be given to "anyone", "everywhere" and "anytime".

4. Hospitality: Hospitality is the consciousness that stemmed from a form of service on the basis of people, a form of "connecting with customers". Hospitality usually occurs within the moments of interaction between people regardless of any commercial settings. Hospitality, when done by businesses, usually refers to actions given to others (customers) without the expectation of receiving any compensation. Hospitality is categorized as "host-guest relationship"

5. Omotenashi: The highest form of service in which it retains all of the elements of general understanding of hospitality with the addition of "performing the right action on the right time", "to always constantly surprising the five senses of the customers even without the presence of the customer" and "to always give one's own full capacity and heart to serve and to please others without any expectations of receiving anything and without having any hidden intentions"

The explanations given by Miyashita (2011) and the Omotenashi Foundation (2014) might invoke clarity towards the differences between the traditional understanding of "hospitality" and *omotenashi*. As explained in the previous paragraphs upon the history and cultural growth of *omotenashi*, this unique Japanese spirit of hospitality put a gravity upon the capability of one to assess (*sassuru*) each of the situation and acts accordingly with one's full willingness and capabilities. Al-alsheikh (2014) refers to this as the *furumai* element of *omotenashi* and Omotenashi Foundation (2011), refers to this as the "heart and spirit of offering *omotenashi* to people". *Omotenashi*, in accordance to this, is a performance of service done by maximizing the utilization of the "software" of the service provider; the "feelings" and the "thoughtfulness" (Thompson, 2007a)

Different from the requirements of the traditional concept of "hospitality" as understood in the other part of the globe, a successful implementation of *omotenashi* necessitates various elements to be fulfilled in the specific medium where the service is performed (Nagao & Umemuro, 2012). The authors, in their work of analysis titled "Elements Constructing *Omotenashi* and Development of *Omotenashi* Evaluation Tool", described that in order for *omotenashi* to be maximized, some of the following factors have to be fulfilled (p.130) (see appendix A for full table):

Sense of easiness and peacefulness:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to evoke a strong feeling of peacefulness and easiness towards the customers. Through this, the customers will be able to feel relaxed and will then contribute towards the building of their overall experience of the service.

Sense of comfort:

Omotenashi must be evoking feelings of comfort towards the customer and must be performed in comfort by the service provider. Similar to the "sense of easiness and peacefulness", this "sense of comfort" aims to improve the overall experience of the customer in the service setting.

Sense of understanding host-guest relationship:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to understand the established relationship between him/herself with the guest on the ongoing moments of service. Related to both the "sense of easiness and peacefulness" as well as the "sense of comfort", by understanding the host-guest relationship that is established on the atmosphere of the service setting, service providers will be able to understand their own position and be able to improve their service quality.

Sense of sensitivity:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to be able to guess, to feel the atmosphere, to observe and to have insights on the feelings of the customers/guests and act accordingly to fulfill their needs. This particular "sense of sensitivity" is the element that would further

enable the service providers to provide the customers with comfort, peacefulness and easiness by adapting their service performance towards the needs of the customers on the time being.

Sense of humility:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always be humble both in the presence of the customers/guests and in their absence. This particular element aims to equip the service providers with the willingness and understanding that high-quality service should not only be performed in the presence of the customers/under observation of anyone higher in position, but also to be performed in the absence of the customers/any observation from anyone higher in position. This aims to teach that performance of high-quality service should be consistent and sustained at any moment.

Sense of difference in individuals:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to understand that everyone hopes for different types of service and to be able to answer to the customers'/guests' needs accordingly. This particular element is also connected to the "sense of comfort" and "sense of easiness" in which, by knowing that everyone needs different services, the service providers will be able to cater to their specific needs on that specific time.

Sense of uniqueness:

Omotenashi necessitates the service providers to think that everyone is special and that every acts of service given to them is uniquely tailored to their needs. Combined with the "sense of difference in individuals" and "sense of humility", service providers will be able to feel and sense the special needs of each of the customers and perform service tailored to those needs.

Sense of reciprocity:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to understand that the act of service is not only about the service provider, but it is also a reciprocal relationship between the host and the guest/customer. This particular elements dictates the role of customers themselves in building a plentiful service experience; the sole role of service providers themselves is

insufficient to build a bountiful service experience.

Sense of instantaneity:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to be able to know the various situations, various types of guests as well as moments that are happening in the moments of service interaction and to react and heed to them in an instant and spontaneous manner. This element, in the continuum of the previously-mentioned "sense of uniqueness", is aimed to equip the service providers to be able to act differently on various given service situations; to answer the various needs of the customers.

The pillars of "software" and "hardware":

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to take care of not only the "hardware" of the service place such as the décor and design of the place, but also to understand and to put grave attention towards the quality of the "software" of the service place such as the "thoughtfulness" and "spirit of serving" of the service providers.

Sense of attitude:

Omontenashi necessitates the service providers to harbor the sense of attitude and postures that would fit the Time, Place and Occasion (TPO) perfectly. This particular element, when combined with "sense of uniqueness" and "sense of instantaneity" will equip the service providers with the skills to understand and to read the "atmosphere" of the service setting and to suit themselves with those various service settings.

Sense of understanding from the guest:

Omotenashi necessitates, not only the host/service provider, but also the guest/customers to exhibit dignity, etiquette and to have sensitivity towards the service providers who are performing the act of service. This element, together with "sense of reciprocity" entails the role of customers in building a plentiful service experience; while the willingness of service providers are essential towards building the service experience, customers also have to fulfill their role to ensure that the experience will be upheld to its maximum degree.

Illimited to only the factors that are essential to be fulfilled in ensuring a successful implementation of *omotenashi*, Nagao & Umemuro (2012) also laid out the special characteristics that entail *omotenashi*. Some of these characteristics are, as explained by the authors (p.130) (see appendix B for full table):

Pursue of perfection:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always strive to perform their best to cater to the needs of the customers with all they have. This element is one of the most special and famous characteristic of *omotenashi* itself; the spirit is aimed towards equipping the service providers with the "sense of harmony" and the necessary hard and soft skills to maximize their service performance.

Sense of time respect:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to realize that the service interaction that is happening between the host and the guest is bound by the notion of time and that it has to be honored. The notion's special characteristic could also be explained through this "sense of time respect" in which service providers are expected to respect and to act in a hastily manner as to not waste the customers' valuable time.

Sense of preparation:

Omotenashi, in its wake to realize the "pursue of perfection", necessitates the service provider to, in advance, prepare all the essential elements that would be crucial in determining the success of the service. This specific characteristic of the notion in harmony with the "pursue of perfection", "supporting pillars of hardware and software" as well as the "sense of harmony", all for the grandiose aim of providing an unparalleled service quality towards the customers.

Sense of harmony:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to understand and comprehend all the elements that are included in the service and to harmonize them all. This is one of the most distinct special characteristics of *omotenashi* itself, this "sense of harmony" serves as one of the most essential elements to support the other elements such as "pursue of

perfection", "sense of uniqueness", "sense of instantaneity", "sense of preparation" and "sense of humility". Through this, the service provider is expected to understand the different elements that make up the on-going and to-come service interactions.

Sense of extraordinariness:

Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to give and to service the customers with something that is different with what they might find in their everyday life; to induce the temporary "touristic" feeling. In the realization of "pursue of perfection", *omotenashi* adopts a unique element through this "sense of extraordinariness" in which the service providers are expected to give out-of-ordinary service quality to treat the customers specially.

The explanations given by Nagao & Umemuro (2012) above might contribute substantially towards answering and unveiling the quest of whether this concept of Japanese hospitality could be understood as the ultimate spirit of hospitality. *Omotenashi* differs from the traditional sense of hospitality in the way that it incorporates and take into account, not only the necessary elements that should be performed by the service provider, but also the necessary elements from the side of the customers as depicted on the "sense of reciprocity", "sense of equality" and "sense of dignity". The concept also takes into account, at the same time, the attributing physical elements that are governing the service setting such as the design of the interior, the placement of tables and whether the service provider is able to present their own color and specialty. The next section of this chapter will take a look upon the concept of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" and how this unique Japanese concept of *omotenashi* could be laid side-by-side with the two concepts.

The various elements that made up *omotenashi* as explained by Nagao & Umemuro (2012) will be used in this thesis as one of the theoretical framework in analyzing the implementation of the concept of *omotenashi* in Indonesia. Mainly, these elements such as the "sense of readiness", "sense of attitude", "sense of reciprocity" and "sense of humility" will become the main fundamental factors in the analysis of the data obtained. They will be used to assess the effectiveness of the notion's implementation inside the local service setting and also to be used in analyzing the first research question of the thesis; to know whether the local service providers are having similar perceptions of *omotenashi* to those depicted throughout these underlying elements.

2.3 Servicescape and experiencescape

"Servicescape" is one of service management theory that incorporates and governs the elements of physical surrounding as an essential determinant factor of the success of a service interaction. Arnould, Price & Tierney (1998) explained that servicescape can be understood as the environment designed as a commercial place where an interaction between customers and service providers on the basis of service givingand-receiving exist. The authors stated that this physicalscape can come in the form of the designs of a restaurant and hotels, the insides of an aircraft, the design of an amusement park and a retail industry. In addition to what the authors have stated, Nilsson and Ballantyne (2014) mentioned that it is crucial for service providers to critically think about their service scape design and the layout that will suit their target market as it will be the first prominent factor that affects customers' expectation and satisfaction. Indeed, Nilsson and Ballantyne's (2014) idea in regard of the importance of servicescape has also been conveyed by Bitner (1992) and Shostack (1977) where the authors said that consumers tend to seek information and to build their perception as well as expectation about the quality provided by the service providers through the construction of the physical environment of the company/service setting.

Bitner (1992), in explaining how servicescape plays an important role, not only towards the perceptions of the customers, but also towards the performance of the service providers, stated that in the realm of interpersonal service, both the host/service provider and the guest/customers are involved in the service activity performed within the servicescape. Bitner further said "in interpersonal servicescape, special consideration must be given to the effects of the physical environment on the nature and quality of the social interaction between and among customers and employees" (p. 58). This explanation by Bitner could be understood as one of the propelling engine that drives scholars to further research and evolve the servicescape theory to understand that although customers' perception and expectation is driven by the presentation of the physical surrouding of the service setting, it is also crucial for the management of the company/service provider to incorporate the experience and performance of the front service provider in determining the end result of customers' satisfaction.

This desire of incorporating the experience of the service providers are explained by Sekhon & Roy (2015) as the "experiencescape" (Sekhon & Roy, 2015 in Park, 2015). The authors stated that "experiencescape differs from servicescape in that its foci are the

design and developed experiences, not the customers' own experiences." (p. 223). Further quoting the authors (p. 223):

> *The environment within which services are delivered is important for consumers, but the impact on service providers should not be overlooked. This is particularly important given that services are delivered by employees and the notion of co-creation, whereby services or products are created jointly by providers and consumers, can affect services providers' ability to make services homogenous*

Following this explanation, the authors further mentioned that it is the duty of the company to ensure the well-being of the service providers through the maximization of the physical service setting as well as through catering towards the demands of the service providers. As the author put it (p. 224):

> *By understanding the service experiencescape, service managers can design strategies that inform the service environment. For the service manager, the service experiencescape concerns the way in which the service is packaged and communicated to potential consumers to influence their decision making*

The importance of "experiencescape" could be understood as one of the essential elements that dictates the success of a company; by not only putting attention towards the satisfaction of the customers, but also towards the degree of satisfaction of the employees/service providers, companies would be able to alleviate and improve the overall experience of customers and service providers. "Experiencescape" might be pointing to one of the most important factor of service delivery, that is, sacrificing employees' demands for the sake of fulfilling the needs of the customers might never be wise to be done.

2.3.1 *Omotenashi* seen from experiencescape theory

The above-mentioned explanation by Arnould, Price & Tierney (1998) as well as Bitner (1992) and Shostack (1977) could be found on the element of *shitsurai* of *omotenashi*. As explained in the previous paragraphs by Al-alsheikh (2014), *shitsurai* entails the elements of preparation of everything that is connected towards the

performance of the service interaction. This idea of *shitsurai* is also explained by Nagao & Umemuro (2012) as the element that necessitates the service provider to always take into account all the physical surroundings and to understand how it will be impactful towards the evaluation of the company's/service providers' quality by the customers. Illimited to this, the notion of *shitsurai* is also followed by the element of *jitakukan* in which service providers are required to evoke feelings of comfortness as if they are being at home towards the customers at all possible time and the element of *tochikan* in which service providers are advised to incorporate the specialty of the local geographical area to further enrich the customers' experience.

The ideas of Sekhon & Roy (2015) as could be seen on the previous sub-heading on how experiencescape incorporates, not only the perceived experience of the customers, but also the perceived experience of the service providers/employees, resonates with the element of "sense of harmony" as depicted by *omotenashi*. As explained in the previous paragraph by Nagao & Umemuro (2012), the "sense of harmony" of *omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to understand and comprehend all the elements incorporated inside the service setting and to harmonize these elements as to provide the customers with an unparalleled service. This entails the company/service provider to also understand how the perception of the front service provider/employees is formed and affected by the surroundings of the service setting. As Sekhon & Roy (2015) explained, for the condition of the service environment is impactful towards both the perception of the customers and the service provider, it is the responsibility of the management to always assess and manage the environment and to always take into account the demands of the customers and the employees.

Shitsurai and the "sense of harmony" are not the only similarities between the unique concept of *omotenashi* and the traditional understanding of hospitality. As Sekhon & Roy (2015) further explained, service providers are required to devise a service delivery mechanism that could, at least, touch the needs of most customers. Even better, as the authors mentioned, tailor each of the service performance uniquely to each of the customer. This element of uniqueness as referred by the authors correlates with the "sense of uniqueness", "sense of extraordinariness" and "sense of inequality" of *omotenashi*. Reciting back upon the explanations of Nagao & Umemuro (2012), *omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to be able to tailor their services uniquely to cater each and every needs of the customers where it is possible and the notion also required the service provider to understand that every customers are different and as such, different

kind of services are essential to meet their expectations.

The idea of "service delivery" by Sekhon & Roy (2015), as could be seen from the previous sub-heading, also correlates with the notion of *nagare* as could be seen from *omotenashi*. *Nagare* is an element of *omotenashi* which directs the service provider to understand that service interaction is made out of a "flow" (Nagao & Umemuro, 2012). This "flow" is consisted of three different stages: *mukae* which explains that in the first step of service interaction, service providers should be welcoming the host/customers with warmheartedness, similar to the "sense of warmheartedness" . The second element is *motenashi* which refers towards the on-going interactions between the customers and the service provider; communications, the process of fulfilling the needs of the customers and the building of trust-relationship through tailored services and conversations between the customers and the host make up this process of *motenashi* (Nagao & Umemuro, 2012). The last one of the stage is referred to as the *okuri* which is to send off the customers and to finish the service interaction between the host and the customer in a graceful manner.

The similarities between *omotenashi* and the setting of physical environment and its effects towards the perceptions of the customers as could be seen in "servicescape" and the involvement and incorporation of employees as the front-line service provider and the customers as a form of co-creation in determining the quality of the service as stated by "experiencescape" might now enrich one's knowledge in understanding this unique spirit of Japanese hospitality. The next section of this thesis will provide readers with the knowledge upon the positive impacts and negative impacts of the spirit of *omotenashi*.

In correlation with the varying elements that have defined *omotenashi* as explained in the previous section, these two concepts of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" and their resemblance with the notion of *omotenashi* will be utilized as another major framework through which the author aims to unveil the remaining research questions. Similar to the explanation given on the similarities between the elements of *omotenashi* and its correlation with "servicescape" and "experiencescape", the analysis of the data presented in the chapter 4 of this thesis will also try to seek similarities between the perceived notion of *omotenashi* by the local service providers with the underlying theories and whether the notion is capable of instilling a positive experiencescape inside the local service setting.

2.3.2 The positive impacts of *omotenashi*

The explanations given upon the origins of *omotenashi* and its historical evolution as well as how it is deeply but at the same time, correlates and resonates with the service management theory of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" might shed some light upon the feasibility of its implementation in another cultural setting. One of the most desired positive impacts of implementing *omotenashi* is the improvement in customers' satisfaction, and indeed, this unique concept is able to achieve it through various ways.

One of the most apparent positive impact of *omotenashi* could be seen through the lens of the "servicescape" as it has been explained in the previous paragraphs. Citing back the works of Bitner (1990), the author proposed that dissatisfactions that occurred within a customer due to a service failure could be mitigated if the accident took place in a professionally designed environment and that customers tend to link the cause of service failure with something "unintentional and relatively temporary" (p. 73). The elements of "sense of preparation" by suiting the physical environment in order to evoke feelings of comfortness as if customers are being at home as depicted in *jitakukan (sense of home)* as well as the comprehensive understanding upon *shitsurai* could be helpful in mitigating possible service dissatisfactions and to, as the grand finale, provide the customers with the best possible service experience. It is also, extending from the scope of customers' point of view, could be expected to improve the working experience of the front-line service providers/employees.

An example of the "sense of preparation" in correlation with "servicescape" as it is in *omotenashi* could be seen through what Grondal (2017) explained as the "mindfulness towards the little things that customers might not even expect to get". Grondal (2017) explained that in most of the department stores in Japan, front-line service providers would cover customers' shopping bags with rain cover should it be raining outside after the customers finished their transaction. The process of knowing the weather condition outside, as the author described, is what made this Japanese spirit of *omotenashi* seems to be perfect; the employees would not take their time to stray away from the customers and to communicate with the other employees that it is raining outside and that they are supposed to be covering customers' shopping bags with rain cover, instead, the management would change the music that is being played inside the department store to alert the employees that it is raining outside. Grondal (2017) depicted this method of

utilizing the servicescape, in the form of change in music, as something meticulous and detailed; they are always striving to interact and to serve the customers with the spirit of *omotenashi* while at the same time, trying to grasp the conditions of the post-service performance through changing musics.

In its own entirety, the ultimate aim of *omotenashi* is to provide an unparalleled service quality towards the customers; to be mindful and to be cautious of the surrounding environments as well as to tailor the on-going process of service interaction to fit the needs of the customers without them having to ask as could be seen in the "sense of perfection" and "sense of reading the atmosphere" (Joraku, 2013). The spirit also aims to extend the service quality, not only to cover the current process of service interaction, but also to cater to the needs of the customers' post-service experience. This attribute, is able to, as explained by Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka (2013), shorten the gaps between customers expectation and the service providers' service performance. The three authors also mentioned that *omotenashi* would be able to address this conflicting gaps between the customers and the service providers by actively promoting the understanding of value co-creation, similar to what was explained in the previous paragraphs by Sekhon & Roy (2015), through its notions of "sense of reciprocity", "sense of dignity" and "sense of harmony".

This notion of addressing and shortening the customer's gaps and their expectation, however, might result in a higher expectation by the same customers on their recurring visits. To this, Nagao & Umemuro (2012) explained that the spirit of *omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to not only provide the customer with one time satisfaction, but to satisfy and "surprise" them on their second visit and the recurring visits afterwards. Ikeda (2013), refers to this change in expectations as the "form" and the real living example of the Japanese proverbs *ichi-go ichi-e*. As could be found in the above paragraphs on the concept of *omotenashi*, *ichi-go ichi-e* which means "every encounter is unique, and there will never be the same moment" correlates towards the very nature of service; service is intangible in nature, its form changes from time to time and it could also be ambiguous as the intangibility could be combined with other tangible elements surrounding the service process (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004; Levitt, 1981). As Ikeda (2013, p. 148) wrote:

> *"Form" is like a stage setting, and on a stage, various realities arise*
> *from interactions between performers and the audience. Trade realities,*

provided as services, are determined by interactions between producers and consumers based on the characteristics of service. The producer and the consumer of the service live in a different time and space and participate in their own stories; therefore, their stories appear once on the stage setting as the consumer educates the producer and vice versa

The enhancement in physical scape, shortening the gaps between customers' expectations and service providers' performance through the active engagement in value co-creation are some among the abundant positive impacts of *omotenashi*. To add towards these arrays of positive impacts and to complete what Sekhon & Roy (2015) advocated on their idea of "experiencescape", *omotenashi* also teaches and carefully explained its positive effects towards the internal side of the company; a phenomenon that might be known as the "internal marketing" (Gronroos, 1990, p. 7). Gronroos (1990) explained that one of the methods in improving service quality is through cultivating a certain culture of service, and to this, the author also added that internal marketing is useful in establishing the roles of employees inside the organization and to foster them to become "customer-conscious" employees. This very aim has been underlying the definition of *omotenashi*, the "sense of harmony" is also aimed towards the management of the business to understand the stakeholders and all the involving elements of the service process, and employee is one of the most important determinant factor.

As explained by Ikeda (2013), managements are able to utilize the Japanese concept of *kaizen* which means "improvement" or "changing to the better ways" to understand that mistakes and problems are part of the learning and growth process of the company; they exist to be embraced and to be learned from, they are the stepping stones towards success and through them, management is able to grasp a better understanding of the evolution in their service process. Illimited to this, *omotenashi* could also educate and instill the understanding that management has their own role in the success of the service process and that the employees, among themselves, also contribute towards substantial parts of the service success (Ikeda, 2013).

To fortify the adopted framework of the similarities between the elements of *omotenashi* with the underlying theories of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" as depicted in the previous section of this chapter, the author has decided to take upon these various positive impacts of *omotenashi* as a supplementary framework to further assess the notion's compatibility in its implementation inside the local Indonesian service setting.

This supplementary framework will act mainly as grounds for solid proofs of how the local service providers perceive their *omotenashi* training and to investigate the existence or inexistence of any positive impacts of *omotenashi* as depicted in the explanation of this section of the chapter.

2.3.3 The negative impacts of *omotenashi*

The positive impacts of *omotenashi* in its capability to address the needs of the customers as the external stakeholder and the employees as well as management as the internal stakeholders in the aim of improving the overall experiencescape, however, also come with some negative impacts that take place internally among the members. As explained by Lebra (1976), in order to constantly maintain the performance of *omoiyari* and later, of *omtenashi*, one has to suppress one's own ego. "*Omoiyari* requires suppression of Ego's own ideas or wishes if they are opposed to Alter's. This is manifested in the conventional form of communication where Ego tries not to assert himself unless Alter is found to agree with him" (Lebra, 1976, p. 24). This concept, in Japanese, is known as *honne* and *tatemae*, where *honne* stands for the "one's real self, one's real thoughts", "sincere deed that comes from the true inside" and *tatemae* stands for the "one's expression shown to others in the face of society", "superficial deed, in other words, a socially required behavior" (Sohn, Lee, & Yoon, 2016, p. 598).

The explanation given out by Lebra (1976) and Sohn, Lee & Yoon (2016) on the concept of suppression of ego that comes in the form of *honne* and *tatemae* could be put side-by-side with the theory of "emotional labor" that was introduced by Hochschild. Emotional labor could be understood as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display which embodies value and is usually used for commercial purposes" (Hochschild, 2012, p. 8). The management and shifting of emotions of an individual based on the given set of rules or situations in which one belongs is known as "emotion work" (Hochschild, 1979, p. 561). Hochschild (1979) also explained that there are two types of "emotion work", "surface acting" and "deep acting". "Surface acting" refers to the methods of emotional management through outer appearances such as voice tone, smiles and gestures, "surface acting" refers to emotions which are "not actually felt" while "deep acting" refers to the methods of emotional management through a critical change in one's own inner feelings for the sake of fully immersing one's ownself into the role one would like to show to others (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, pp. 92, 93).

The performance of "emotional labor", however, when performed too extensively, might result in an emotional turmoil inside the person, a phenomenon which was explained by Hochschild (2012) as "emotive dissonance". Hochschild (2012) further argued that the extensive performance of emotional labor posses certain threat to the individuals for they might develop a sense of "self-estrangement or distress" as time passes by (pp. 90, 91, 92). Another negative impacts that might happen to the individual after an extensive performance of emotional labor is, a phenomenon which is called as "burnout". "Burnout" is "a specific type of strain that reflects a belief that the resources for coping with stressful conditions are scarce or nonexistent, leading one to experience a sense of hopelessness, fatigue, and cognitive defeat" (Perrewé et al., 2002, p. 165)

The display of "surface acting" in the context of service-giving in the Japanese society could be traced back to the notion of *omotenashi*. Seymour (2000) explained that Japanese Geishas are required to change the tune of their voice when they are serving and accompanying their customers in order to provide a pleasant experience throughout the whole service interactions (Seymour, 2000). The author further explained that "deep acting" often takes place in major Japanese service industries such as the country's airline company; stewardess in major Japanese airline companies such as the All Nippon Airways (ANA) and Japan Airlines (JAL) are expected to have the capabilities to position themselves in the standpoint of the passengers to utterly be in-tune with them, to serve and to promote the spirit of Japanese hospitality, the spirit of *omotenashi*. However, as beneficial as *omotenashi* might be in the point of view of the customers, its performance which is channeled through the suppression of ego, has also resulted in a lot of emotional distress and burnouts towards many of the service actors.

In a research done towards the condition of emotional distress and levels of burnouts of Japanese psychiatrists, it is found out that many of them are feeling the necessity of having to distance their real self (*honne*) with the self that they are expected to show (*tatemae*), resulting in a certain level of emotional distress and burnouts. As could be seen in the table below (Umene-Nakano et al., 2013, p. 4):

Table 2. Means MBI scores and burnout rates.

	Mean ± S.D.	Low burnout	Average burnout	High burnout	P [a]
Emotional Exhaustion	18.9±11.4	396 (56.3)	160 (22.7)	148 (21.0)	<0.001
Depersonalisation	4.6±5.0	499 (70.9)	119 (16.9)	86 (12.2)	<0.001
Personal Accomplishment	26.2±11.1	81 (11.5)	116 (16.5)	507 (72.0)	<0.001

a Chi-squared test; the results of three burnout subsets were compared.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0055189.t002

Figure 2 Means MBI scores and burnout rates

Taken from: Umene-Nakano, W., Kato, T. A., Kikuchi, S., Tateno, M., Fujisawa, D., Hoshuyama, T., & Nakamura, J. (2013). Nationwide survey of work environment, work-life balance and burnout among psychiatrists in Japan. *PloS one, 8*(2), e55189

As explained by the authors, almost 21% of the correspondent answered that they are feeling a high level of burnout while 12% answered that they are dealing with a high level of depersonalisation and that 72% of them are experiencing a low level of personal accomplishment (Umene-Nakano et al., 2013, p. 3). Similarly to this, there have also been reports stating that high level of emotional distress and burnouts taking place inside Japan's service industry of home care due to the expected interactions and performances that have to be shown (Fujiwara et al., 2003).

Another phenomenon that involved intrapersonal problem happened in the year of 2016 where an employee of one of Japan's most famous and notorious advertising company "Dentsuu" committed suicide due to *karoushi* or overwork. In her note, she wrote "I have to maximize my brain's performance, to fully focus on all aspects in all time, there is no time to lose focus, not even a minute, this is the essence of service" (Sankei News, 2017). The discussions went into the spirit of *omotenashi*, where it is said that the strive for perfection in providing the best possible service towards the customers have given birth to the notion that "*Okyaku sama wa kami sama*" (the customers are god) (Sankei News, 2016, p. 5). This notion, in turn, as explained in the article, requires workers of many service providing companies in Japan to work over-time with little rest and they are also exposed to a lot of demands from both the internal side of the company on how they should serve their customers with all the best they have and the external side of the company on the one-on-one relationship between the service actor and the customer. As explained in the above paragraphs, a successful performance of *omotenashi* necessitates everyone involved upon the service interaction to understand their role as could be seen in "sense of reciprocity", "sense of harmony" and "sense of dignity". In the absence of these three crucial elements, *omotenashi* will still serve its purpose of

providing the unparalleled quality of customer service, but on the price of the emotional health of the service providers.

Indeed, the phenomenon of emotional labor inside the country has been discussed and researched a lot by, not only researchers from Japan, but also many others from the international world. In the Western world, the notion of emotional labor is mainly used to regulate employees in their attempt to satisfy the customers, in Japan, however, emotional labor is rarely discussed because its essences are taken into one of the factor that uphold the society in itself, "Japanese accept *tatemae* as a necessary factor in civilized life" (Sohn et al., 2016, p. 610). Adding to this, Seymour (2000) explained that the notion of *omoiyari* or putting others before one's ownself in the from of ego's detachment is expected, "In Japan, the gap between true intentions and feelings and the façade which one presents is accepted and valued as a way of helping people through social situations… The Japanese concept of *honne* versus *tatemae* allows them to see this dichotomy as a necessity of civilised life" (p. 169).

The explanations upon the negative impacts of this Japanaese hospitality spirit of *omotenashi* might now enlighten one upon the grave emotional distress that might be bestowed into each of the individuals/service providers. However, counting in the various positive effects of *omotenashi* and what it could bring towards both the satisfaction of the company and the customers, one might think of the methods and ways to modify this notion to minimize its negative impacts and to extract the best possible positive impacts.

These negative elements of *omotenashi* will be utilized as the last theoretical framework of the thesis. The author thinks that the completion of the assessment of the implementation of *omotenashi* in the local Indonesian service setting would be imperfect without incorporating these various negative elements as well as the existing obstacles. Similar to the main purpose of the framework of positive impacts of *omotenashi* and how it would act as grounds for solid proofs towards the notion's capability in realizing a positive experiencescape, this framework of negative impacts of *omotenashi* will also act as grounds for solid proofs of the existence or inexistence of any negative impacts as perceived by the local service providers. Finally, this framework of negative impacts will also help in answering the fourth research question of the thesis; to theoretically proof whether the implementation of *omotenashi* inside Indonesia only acts as a debilitating agent for the construction of a positive experiencescape.

2.4 Summary of literature review

This chapter 2 has touched upon the origins of *omotenashi* in Japanese culture history through the in-depth discussions upon how the concept was originated from *omoiyari*, that is, to always put others before one's ownself in the face of social interaction into the upcoming of *omotenashi* in the face of commercial setting. Through this, one could understand that the high-quality level of *omotenashi* as could be seen in the Japanese service interaction is attributable to the understanding of each of the members; by always putting others before one's ownself, one could contribute towards the construction of a meaningful and rich service interaction. The discussions of the origin of *omotenashi* has also been followed by an in-depth analysis of the supporting elements of the concept through which one could see that the success of the concept in producing an unparalleled level of customer service is not only dependent upon the performance of the service providers/managers, it is also dependent upon the roles and attitudes exhibited by the guests/customers.

Although the concept might sound distinct and special in the ears of many, *omotenashi*, when disected even further, was proven to be harboring similarities with other western theories of service management such as "servicescape" and "experiencescape". The element of *shitsurai, shikake* and *furumai* which were explained by Al-alsheikh (2014) and Ikeda (2013) ressonate with the thinking process of Sekhon & Roy (2015) in which the author explained that an ideal service experience is the one that takes into account both the satisfaction of the customers as well as the employees. This particular similarities have also shed some light upon how the application/implementation of *omotenashi* outside of Japan might contribute positively towards the construction of a meaningful "experiencescape" through the *omotenahshi*'s various positive effects such as being able to address the customers' gap and promoting internal marketing.

As much as the notion of *omotenashi* sounds appealing to be implemented, the notion also harbors its own arrays of negative impacts such as excessive amount of emotional labor as depicted by Hochschild (2012) as well as the emotional burden as explained through how the Japanese people themselves are required to be wearing a mask to cover their *honne* or one's true self and to show the *tatemae* or one's façade in undergoing the service performance. Although, theoretically speaking, *omotenashi* is able to improve the overall experiencescape of the service setting, it could also act as a major debilitating factor to the construction of a positive experiencescape.

Chapter 3: Methodology:

This chapter will be focusing upon the theoretical basis of the methods of data collection adopted by the author. This thesis follows qualitative methodology approach in its pursue of answering the main research aim as well as to answer the four research questions that have been laid out on the introduction chapter. The qualitative method is also chosen due to its capability to deeply explore the inner feelings of the incorporated stakeholders of specific natural phenomenon, which in this case, would be the experience and perceptions of the service providers (Bryman, 2012; Pope & Mays, 1995). This purpose would otherwise be narrowly achievable through the use of quantitative methods of which the data obtained would be more towards understanding the surface of the phenomenon, instead of extensively diving into the realm of the psychological and thinking of the stakeholders (Bryman, 2012). Apart from the above-mentioned advantages of adopting qualitative methodology approach, the author also aims to contribute positively towards the abysmal array of literatures in *omotenashi* from the perspective of the service providers especially in its current rocketing popularity; to understand the experiences of the service providers practicing the concept in a non-Japanese context and to analyze these perspectives to give a much fortified and balanced assessment towards the concept's application outside of Japan.

Furthermore, the author of this thesis has also decided to adopt the ontological approach of hermeneutics towards the thesis. The author has decided to view the phenomenon from an observer standpoint in which the results of the observation will then be interpreted using the author's own perception. Therefore, the study of this thesis could be understood as having the abductive reasoning for its aim is to understand, analyze and interpret the perspectives of the participants, which in this case, are the service providers who are practicing and implementing the concept of *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese cultural context (Bryman, 2012; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). The author adopts this specific method of reasoning and data collection for it correlates and resonates well with the explanation of the various elements of *omotenashi* as laid out in the previous chapter; the "sense of harmony", "sense of flow" and "pursuit of perfection" that defines the experience of both service providers and customers through the various interactions that are happening throughout the service moments as well as how the compelling elements of *omotenashi* would in turn, form the experiences of the service providers based on the "experiencescape".

This thesis will undergo the process of data collection through a mixed method of qualitative approach which comes in the form of field research/observation, semi-structured interview and focus group discussion for the aim of answering the four research questions presented. The reason behind the adoption of these mixed methods lies in its capability to imbue the author to provide an in-depth and naturalistic perceptions and understandings from the service providers (Bryman, 2012; Kozinets, 2010). Through these methods and the abductive reasoning, the author aims to provide the best possible explanation towards the phenomenon and to address the fact that there are elements which might be inexplorable and probably concealed by the participants in the process of data collections. The data obtained will then be analyzed using thematic analysis method in order to discover certain patterns or themes amongst the participants' perceptions and experience of practicing *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese cultural context. A further explanation towards each of the qualitative data collection method and other related considerations will be laid out in this following section.

3.1 Observation

The author has decided to first and foremost, undergo an extensive observation/field research to gain a preliminary understanding of the perceptions of the service providers towards the concept of *omotenashi* in their experience of daily practice. Marshall & Rossman (1989) explained that "observation is the systematic description of the events, behaviors and artifacts of a social setting" (p. 79). One of the advantages of undergoing observation as method for data collection lie in the method's capability to address the activities that might not be visible to the public or the activities which are perceived as normal (DeMunck & Sobo, 1998). DeMunck & Sobo (1998) further explained that observation also provide the researchers with a rich and detailed descriptions of the events that are happening on the field and to provide the researchers with possible questions to be asked towards the informants.

Observation method, in this sense, is adopted in order for the author to understand the process of service being done throughout the service setting by the local service providers in their *omotenashi* training. The method is also adopted for the sake of providing the author with a fundamental understanding of, in relation to the research questions presented in the introduction chapter of the thesis, the challenges and obstacles of the concept's implementation in a non-Japanese cultural context. This also correlates with the explanation upon the elements of *omotenashi*, particularly in the context of

"sense of honoring time", "sense of harmony", "sense of reciprocity", "sense of readiness" and "sense of inequality". Through observation, the author aims to gain a preliminary analysis through the adoption of abductive reasoning; the author try to interpret the result of the observation of the service providers' stance in the various context of *omotenashi* such as "sense of honoring time" and "sense of harmony" and try to come up with the best possible explanation towards these observed results in relation to the main research aim as well as the four research questions. Through "sense of harmony", the author aims to understand the communication and interactions between the service providers with their surroundings, especially the customers, the physical space as well as the internal marketers, that is, the other service providers. For the "sense of honoring time", the author aims to understand whether the application of *omotenashi* training in a non-Japanese cultural context is able to imbue the local service providers with the ability to response to the demands of the customers in a hastily manner.

Observation, in the context of "sense of reciprocity" and "sense of inequality", provide the author with fundamental findings of whether the local service providers are able to treat each and every customers uniquely and to find out the effects of the customers in their own role of building the "experiencescape" throughout the service setting. The last element, "sense of readiness" was observable through the design of the physical environment of the service setting, through the communication process between the service providers and the customers as well as the capability of the service providers to perform service recovery in case of service failure. The observations were done in two different types of service settings, one being Japanese restaurants in Indonesia and the other being Japanese apparel and retail store in Indonesia. The data that were obtained through this observation process was then analyzed to provide the author with preliminary understanding and hypotheses towards the experience of the service providers on their practice of *omotenashi* and was also transformed into possible questions that would be asked in the semi-structured interview. The observation took place in:

Place in Indonesia	Duration of Observation	Situation
Japanese restaurant A	54 mins	Not crowded
Japanese restaurant A	50 mins	Crowded with customers
Japanese café	62 mins	Crowded with customers
Japanese apparel store	45 mins	Crowded with customers
Japanese retail store	40 mins	Not crowded
Japanese restaurant B	30 mins	Not crowded

| Japanese restaurant C | 64 mins | Crowded with customers |

Figure 3 List of places for observation

The author adopted the participant observation method in both the Japanese restaurants and Japanese retail store for the author was participating as the customer while observing the service performance of the service providers under *omotenashi* training. Participant observation could be understood as being involved inside the setting of the studied elements as both observer and participant (Bryman, 2012; Kawulich, 2012). The authors further explained that participant observation, is beneficial as it allows one to understand the experience perceived by the participants through active engagement in activities which involve the participants themselves. This participant observation would then allow the author to explore more on the flow of interaction and to grasp the non-verbal expressions of the service providers as it is entailed by *omotenashi*. To further maximize the benefits of observation, the author has also decided to do it in the style of covert observation. Covert observation is a type of field observation of which those who are being observed are unaware of themselves being observed, in other words, it could be said that the observation occurs without the consent of the participants (Kawulich, 2012; Bryman, 2012).

Although its definition might entail sense of unethical considerations, covert observation is mainly used "in instances where knowledge of being observed would, in some way, encourage participants to change their actions or to act differently than they normally would" (Kawulich, 2012, p. 3). In this case, the author has decided to adopt the participant observation on top of covert observation to understand the immersion of the *omotenashi* training on the context of "sense of warmheartedness" and "pursuit of perfection"; the author would like to understand the effect of *omotenashi* training towards the constant service performance of the service providers, whether they are providing every customers with similar high-quality service or would such high-quality service be only given towards specific and special customers and whether their performance of service is based on the spirit of hospitality or whether it is based on a different ulterior motive. Further explanation on the ethical considerations of this chosen covert method will be laid out in the ethical consideration inside this chapter.

3.2 Semi-structured interview

The continuation of the above-mentioned observation method is the adoption of semi-structured interview method. As explained in the previous paragraphs, the

preliminary understanding and interpretation of the service providers' perception and stance towards *omotenashi* that were obtained from the observation through the utilization of abductive reasoning would then be further processed and turned into possible confirmation question to be asked in the interview process. May (2011) explained that interviews are able to imbue the researcher with capabilities to dig deeper and to enrich the data collection method through exploring the interviewees' opinions and experiences. The semi-structured interview method was specifically chosen to be carried out in this thesis for it stands *au milieu* of structured interview and the unstructured interview (May, 2011; Bryman, 2012). This special characteristic of semi-structured interview would then allow the author to have a pre-defined or guiding questions and the flexibility to gather and dig for deeper information by following-up the interviewees on their answers and to enable the author to clarify information given out by the interviewees (May, 2011). Bryman (2012) explained that semi-structured interview would enable the interview to evolve into a conversation in which the participants are allowed to talk freely about different subjects within the specific topic. The interviews were done with the following correspondents:

Name	Job	Interview Duration	Nationality
Interviewee 1	Floor Captain in a Japanese restaurant	50 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 2	Manager of a Japanese restaurant	38 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 3	Manager of a Japanese restaurant	28 mins	Japanese
Interviewee 4	HRD officer in a Japanese company	32 mins	InFdonesian
Interviewee 5	Legal consultant in an international firm	40 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 6	IT consultant in a Japanese company	48 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 7	Waitress in a Japanese restaurant	52 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 8	IT consultant in a Japanese company	40 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 9	Hotel staff in a business hotel	42 mins	Indonesian

Interviewee 10	Hotel staff in a 5-star hotel	38 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 11	Sales officer in a Japanese heavy-machinery company	35 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 12	Travel agent	32 mins	Indonesian
Interviewee 13	Beauty practitioner in a Japanese beauty salon	34 mins	Indonesian

Figure 4: List of interviewees' profiles

These characteristics of semi-structured interview are the main driving factor of its adoption as one of the data collection method for the thesis; the interviews are aimed towards providing the author with the opinions and experiences of the service providers in their daily practice of implementing the concept of *omotenashi* and it also allows the author to confirm the preliminary understandings of the service providers' perceptions towards *omotenashi* that were obtained through the observation method. The guiding questions/interview guide of this semi-structured interview follows what Bryman (2012) explained as a tool of which the main crucial questions and issues are listed as to keep the interview process relevant towards the essential data-collection process while maintaining the flexibility of the interviewees to talk and to be open about other subjects related to the topic. Among these correspondents, the author has decided to interview one Japanese manager (interviewee 3) to gain a deeper understanding upon the difficulties and expected outcome of the *omotenashi* training for the Indonesian service providers, as seen from his own point of view as a Japanese.

Following this logic, some of the main guiding questions of the interview undergone inside the thesis are comprised of the four research questions listed in the introduction chapter of the thesis as well as the various elements that define *omotenashi* as explained on the literature review chapter. The interview is also focused upon how the concept of *omotenashi* would be able to contribute positively towards the construction of the experiencescape in the service setting. This semi-structured interview would also be able to provide the author with insights upon the service providers' perception towards *omotenashi* in the context of the service delivery mechanism as explained by Sekhon & Roy (2015) on the previous chapter. To enhance the process of the interview, the author has also decided to, before the actual interview, undergo two pilot interviews in order to test the response and to see whether the guiding questions would be appropriate and

helpful in getting the answers that could be turned into a suitable data for the research (Silverman, 2013). It is to be noted as well that all interviews are electronically recorded and will be transcribed shortly for analysis purposes.

3.3 Focus Group Discussion

Apart from the above-mentioned qualitative methodology of observation and semi-structured interview, this thesis also adopted another separate method which comes in the form of a focus group discussion. According to Bryman (2012), focus group discussion is "a method of interviewing that involves more than one, usually at least four, interviewees" (p. 501). Focus group discussion is usually adopted for the sake of digging deeper towards the ways participants discuss certain issue(s) "as members of a group" rather than simply as individuals (Bryman, 2012, p. 501). In other words, as Bryman (2012) put it, researchers are usually interested in "such things as how people respond to each other's views and build up a view out of the interaction that takes place within the group" (p. 501). The researcher, in the context of focus group discussions, usually play the role of a moderator or facilitator in which the researcher will mainly be providing the table with guiding questions similar to semi-structured interview and to facilitate the discussions that arise among the participants (Bryman, 2012, Morgan, 1997).

The author's decision of adopting this specific method lies specifically in its capability to imbue the author with a better understanding towards the capability of the implementation of *omotenashi* inside the business in shaping the relationships between the service providers themselves; are they able to communicate and articulate their opinions and build a meaningful experience within the service setting. This correlates with the "sense of harmony" as stated in the literature review chapter in which *omotenashi* is supposed to be equipping the service providers with the ability to understand all the related elements that construct an unparalleled service quality. Not only this, the author has decided to adopt such method in order to confirm some of the opinions given out in the individual interview process, as a method of reassurance and to see whether the same individual that was interviewed before changes his stance in the face of another members. Lastly, this method is also chosen to assess the element of *honne* or one's own real self and *tatemae* or one's own façade; to see whether the service providers are experiencing the same debilitating element of *omotenashi*, the superficiality of service in the form of emotional labor.

The selected participants of the focus group discussion, based on Bryman (2012) is usually selected based on the criteria of their experiences of a certain phenomenon that has become the main focus of a research. In this case, the author of the thesis has chosen to ask for the cooperation of five staffs of a Japanese restaurant operating in Jakarta of which one of the members has also participated inside the semi-structured interview process beforehand. It is to be noted as well that the whole process of the focus group discussion is recorded electronically and will be then transcribed shortly to be utilized for data analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

The result of the above-mentioned qualitative data-collection methods are processed in this thesis using the thematic analysis technique. Braun & Clarke (2006) identified the technique as "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) that exist within data" (p. 79). Although the technique itself does not harbor a specific set of guidelines that governs its usability as well as any strongly rooted historical background compared to other methods, thematic analysis has been utilized by many even when the utilization of such method is not stated (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012).

Thematic data analysis usually started with getting the author to be familiar with the materials that are going to be analyzed which will then be continued with the selection of initial codes that are identifiable among the materials and then to classify various themes that connect the codes and, in the end, to review them and to attach different names for categorizing those data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012, Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Indeed, the importance of identifying the initial codes, or what is mainly known as "coding" is essential in the analysis of the whole data obtained; linking the data together will allow the researcher to summarize data, to identify reoccurring patterns within the data and also to help in the recognition of relationships among data obtained from various different sources (Saldana, 2009). These codes would later be categorized into several correlating themes through the process of examining possible relationships between the different codes as well as with the theoretical frameworks that are being used for the study (Bryman, 2012; Saldana, 2009). In the case of this thesis, the identifiable themes will then be compared with the framework of the elements of *omotenashi* and the elements of "experiencescape" as explained in the previous chapter. The analysis of the identifiable data, would also then correlates with the judgement and interpretation of the author for such process is not a straightforward; the explanation of the findings would act

as a representation of the author's interpretation of the phenomenon and the author's understanding of the participants' opinions (Saldana, 2009).

The application of thematic analysis inside this thesis is done through the following steps: at first, the author takes into account the various data obtained through the observation method on both the Japanese restaurants as well as the Japanese retail stores in Jakarta which was then transformed into several themes in accordance with the four research questions laid out in the introduction chapter of this thesis. The author also comes up with several possible best explanations of the various findings from the observation through the adoption of abductive reasoning which was then turned into various confirmation and verification questions to be asked on the semi-structured interview and the focus group discussion. Observation method is then followed by the semi-structured interview method in which the author inquires the participants about some of the findings obtained through the observation process as well as the guiding questions. The focus group discussion is aimed towards giving the author a better understanding on the observed interactions between the service providers and their surroundings, especially with the other service providers as well. These interviews are then transcribed and then, paired with the interview notes that the author made throughout the interview process and the field notes from observations, analyzed and highlighted. The author specifically looks for correlating codes or any similarities between the results of the three adopted methods and then compared with the adopted framework, which will then be explained in the next chapter of this thesis.

3.5 Research quality and credibility

Throughout the process of carrying out several of the qualitative data collection methods as described in the previous paragraphs, considerations towards the criteria of the research quality has also been constantly taken into account as to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the research (Bryman, 2012). The author would also like to stress the fact that the data presented inside this thesis especially those which are obtained through semi-structured interview and the focus group are comprised of personals opinions and these opinions also differ due to the differences in the experience and the perception of reality of the different participants (Bryman, 2012). To further enhance the quality of the research, the author will focus upon the various elements such as the trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability which were suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The author aims to provide the differences on the

emphasis between non-positivist and positivist approaches in the occurring research for taking the presumption of single social reality might evoke confusions (Bryman, 2012).

Bryman (2012) explained that credibility could be said as being similar to the internal validity in a way that it takes into account whether the findings of the research fits with the current situation in the social world. One possible method of increasing the credibility of a research is through the utilization of triangulation method, which, according to Howell (2013), is a method in which researchers are suggested to gather different perspectives from multiple sources using different data-collection methods for the sake of verifying the understanding of the said social phenomena. It is to be noted that, even though this triangulation method is widely associated with mainly quantitative researches, it has also been utilized inside qualitative researches (Bryman, 2012).

Following this logic, the credibility of this thesis is enhanced through the adoption of different data-collection method comprised of observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. The author also decided to, in order to further enhance the credibility of this thesis, gather data from different types of participants. The observation method governs the data obtained from restaurants and retail stores (in the form of apparel stores) while the semi-structured interview governs the data which are unobtainable through observations such as from the on-going process of legal consultation and from meetings between sales officer with the clients. The author hopes to provide the readers with a wider array of explanations on the perceptions of service providers towards *omotenashi* through their experience of implementing the concept in a non-Japanese cultural context as well as the various jobs ranging from hotel staff until beauty practitioner.

Similar to the element of credibility described above, transferability also refers towards the ability of a research findings to be applicable into another setting of the same study (Howell, 2013). This pursuit of transferability could be explained through the term "thick description" which refers to a performance of an in-depth, rich and deeply analyzed description of details of the findings (Howell, 2013; Ponterotto, 2006). This specific element of transferability is aimed towards providing the readers with a wider range of understandings of the perception of the service providers towards *omotenashi* in their experience of implementing the concept and how the differences in the said perceptions could be applicable in many different service types. Transferability, in this thesis, is achieved through in-depths, and rich explanation of the findings obtained from various

sources as well as through the inclusion of three different qualitative data-collection methods. The author hopes that the differences on interviewees' perceptions towards *omotenashi* that they have based on the types of their own performed service would act as an agent to help the readers to judge whether such perceptions of *omotenashi* will be the same for others in many different service types and settings.

The third element, dependability, according to Bryman (2012), suggests that researchers should be keeping solid and traceable records of evidence of the findings and development of the analysis so as to provide other researchers with the tangible proofs which are able to be utilized for future researches. This consideration, as Bryman (2012) further suggests, is ultimately aim towards increasing the trustworthiness of the research. Although the data-collection process through field observations, semi-structured interviews and focus group was not directly supervised and checked by other individuals *avant* the analysis of the findings, the justifications of such findings and the adoption of different methods used in this thesis were properly in-line with the ethical rules and other research procedures. The author hopes to uphold the dependability of the thesis through this method.

These several elements of research quality react well with the element of confirmability in which consideration towards subjective biases are addressed to provide a greater clarity and honesty of the study (Bryman, 2012; Silverman 2013). In this research, it is to be remembered that, as explained on previous paragraphs, perceptions, experiences and opinions of the different service providers who participated in the data collection method process, arise from their own view of reality; their previous experiences, their previous encounters and happenings that occurred throughout their journey of implementing the *omotenashi* concept could have produced certain biases and this matter should always be taken into consideration.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The ethical issue of the data collection process that have been carried out throughout the process of completing this thesis follows the various ethical considerations explained by Bryman (2012). The author mentioned that in the endeavor of producing a reliable research study, researcher should confirm that various ethical elements such as informed consent, privacy and confidentiality and explanations upon the potential risks to the participants should always be put up-front before every data collection process.

The element of informed consent in this thesis is achieved through communicating with the potential participants about the motive, the objective and the main questions of the thesis by the author. In case of asking for permission to interview and to do a focus group discussion with service providers from a restaurant or a retail business, the author firstly explain the background of the research and then inquire whether it would be possible for the service providers to be interviewed. The author also communicated his intention, motive and reasons behind the request for the interview towards the upper management to adhere with the procedures of the company as well as the ethical standards of research methods. On the beginning of the interview, permission request for electronic documentation of the semi-structured interviews and focus group has also been communicated towards the participants. Not to be forgotten, the element of confidentiality and privacy has always been upheld to its maximum value to ensure that none of the information would be given to any unrelated party(ies) and that their name and information would be concealed and the data obtained would only be used to progress with the thesis. Lastly, the anonymity of the participants will always be ensured through alteration of their names when they are quoted inside the analysis section of this thesis.

The observation, however, in its ethical considerations, differ from those of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. As explained in the previous paragraphs, the specifically adopted method of the observation is the covert observation. This specific method of covert observation has to deal with various ethical considerations such as lack of informed consent for the service providers were unaware of them being observed and in its wake, the violation of privacy (Bryman, 2012; Amstel, 2013; Kawulich, 2012). Despite these unethical elements, the author has decided to use the covert observation with the author/observer as participant to ensure the naturality of the observed, that is, to ensure that the service providers in both the restaurants and the apparel store are acting the way they are usually (Kawulich, 2012); service providers might sometimes change the way they behave and perform service to customers under specific observation. Further discussion on this ethical matter will be given in the next chapter of this thesis on the section of findings and data analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis:

This chapter will dive deeply into the findings obtained through the various methodologies listed in chapter 3 of the thesis. The findings are then presented in accordance to the main research aim as well as the supporting research questions. This

chapter will be divided into three sections which aim to answer each of the research questions respectively: the perceptions of non-Japanese (Indonesians) service providers towards the concept of *omotenashi* to answer the first research question, the various positive and negative impacts of *omotenashi* to the non-Japanese (Indonesians) service providers to answer the second and fourth research questions and lastly, the challenges that act as an impediment towards the maximization of the application of *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese context (in Indonesia) to answer the third research question.

4.1 Perceptions of *omotenashi*

The findings presented in this first part of the chapter will try to cater and to answer the first research question that has been laid out as the foundation of the thesis: to find out the perceptions of the non-Japanese service providers towards their *omotenashi* experience. These findings will also be aimed towards presenting the readers with a much deeper understanding of *omotenashi* by utilizing, not only the literatures as they are presented in the chapter 2, but also using the empirical data obtained. Throughout the interview and focus group data collection process, the author has found out that one of the most common understanding of *omotenashi* harbored by the non-Japanese service provider is that the notion equips them to be able to be more customer-centric and to be able to treat customers better and to focus everything on the customer. As interviewee 1 explained:

> *"for me omotenashi is to focus on the satisfaction of the customers… it is like giving a 5-stars hotel kind of service to the customers"*

In addition to what interviewee 1 has stated, interviewee 6 also explained:

> *"omotenashi is putting and giving everything that you have for the customers, I feel like omotenashi teaches me to put customer as number 1 in everything"*

Both of these opinions expressed by interviewee 1 and interviewee 6 adhere towards the explanation given by Sankei News (2016) and also many other Japanese scholars as depicted in chapter 2 of this thesis on the notion of *okyaku-sama ha kami sama* "customers are gods". Adding to this, the understandings of *omotenashi* by most of the interviewees could also be aligned side-by-side with what Nagao & Umemuro (2012) wrote as the "pursue of perfection"; to give the best of what one has for the sake of inducing an

unparalleled feeling of customers' satisfaction. This particular "pursue of perfection" could also be seen through what interviewee 7 mentioned as:

"*ever since I started my omotenashi training, I tend to always ask the customers about what they want, and I always try to fulfill their wishes as much as I can, I try to give them the best service possible*"

Apart from the opinions of these three interviewees, the author has also found out that some of the non-Japanese service provider view the notion of *omotenashi* as something that is detailed and meticulous, as explained by interviewee 11:

"*I feel like omotenashi is more towards putting attention to little things that we often do not even realize, something like saying "sorry" or even smiling*"

This element of detail as mentioned by interviewee 11 also corresponds towards the opinion exhibited by interviewee 8 in which he explained:

"*Omotenashi is not just about what I say, it is also about my facial expressions and other non-verbal expressions and I also think that this is the most important of all*"

Furthermore, adding to the element of non-verbal expressions, interviewee 9 who works in a business hotel in Jakarta explained her opinion as:

"*I think omotenashi focuses not only in things like, say for example, the design of the hotel, the quality of the room and all the amenities, omotenashi for me is how I can give the customers both a high-quality room and my sincere feelings in serving them*"

Different with what interviewee 9 explained, interviewee 12 who works in a travel agent explained that *omotenashi* is focused more towards the quality of the products being offered to the customers:

"*I always try to search and find places that have everything for the customers, things like 'halal' food, clean toilets, 'instagrammable' places and places not everyone visit. For me omotenashi is about a place that is complete with*

everything"

Among all of the interviewees, one explained that, for him, *omotenashi* is not just about the end result, it also takes into account the whole service interaction:

> *"Omotenashi is not just about producing good result… I think it is also about producing a good process, you know, good process always gives in good results"*

This particular statement is in line with the second fundamental element of *omotenashi* itself, the *shikake*; *omotenashi* focuses not just on the end result, but also towards the whole service process.

It could be understood that for some service providers, *omotenashi* is seen as a high-quality customer service; giving the customers everything that they have. For others, it is a detailed way of customer service in which elements of hardware, that is, the design of the service setting is in harmony with the sincere feelings of the service providers. These opinions expressed by the interviewees correspond towards several elements of *omotenashi* itself as explained by Nagao & Umemuro (2012) such as "sense of hardware and software" as well as *jitakukan* or "sense of home". Despite these positive views, however, one of the interviewees explained his opinion of *omotenashi* as indifferent with other types of customer service:

> *"I think omotenashi is the same with other types of customer service, we still focus on customers' satisfaction and so on"*

The various opinions exhibited by the interviewees upon their perceptions towards *omotenashi* could be attributed back to the non-positivism element; their views are based on their personal experience and each of them might have different experiences compared to the others. Through the data collection methods, the author concluded that *omotenashi* is well-received and well-perceived by most of the correspondents despite some who have expressed their perceptions of *omotenashi* as being indifferent with any other types of customer service.

4.1.1 *Omotenashi* as an agent for "internal marketing" – The analysis

The findings presented above in answering the first research questions upon the non-Japanese service providers' perceptions on *omotenashi* might be categorized as being able to instill a customer-focused image for the employees. These findings further has also further fortified what has been laid out in the discussion upon the positive impacts of *omotenashi* and its relation with the notion of experiencescape. As laid out by Sekhon & Roy (2015), one of the most important elements in ensuring a positive experiencescape is the existence of a certain "culture" inside the workplace. This resonated with what Gronroos (1990) explained as the "internal marketing": the application of *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese context has been proven to set a specific working culture and to shape the service providers into "customer-conscious" and "customer-centric" individuals.

Through these findings, the author has also analyzed that the application of *omotenashi* training might help in educating the non-Japanese service providers to be more aware of the "service flow" as stated by Sekhon & Roy (2015) in the formation of positive experiencescape as well as the explanation of Al-alsheikh (2014) on the importance of *shikake* or the overall process and the flow of the ongoing service interactions. This particular argument has also been mentioned by Sekhon & Roy (2015) in the formation of a positive experiencescape for it is important for the service providers to understand that the process of service delivery is essential in conveying the company's image to the customers.

4.2 *Omotenashi* as a "double-edged sword":

The second section of this chapter focuses on tackling and answering the second and the fourth research questions of the thesis mainly in the form of understanding the negative and positive impacts of *omotenashi* for the non-Japanese service providers as well as to know whether the notion's implementation helps in building better communication among the members of the company. Continuing upon the discussions on the perceptions of *omotenashi* as exhibited by the interviewees above, *omotenashi*, corresponding towards the discussions laid out in the literature review of this thesis, also exhibited a similar positive and negative impacts towards the local service providers. One of the most notable positive effects of the practice could be seen from how *omotenashi* enabled the non-Japanese service providers to improve their overall service quality. Both of these positive and negative impacts have also been categorized into "interpersonal"

and "intrapersonal".

4.2.1 Interpersonal effects

Through the observation method in several Japanese cafés and restaurants in Jakarta, the author has found out that *omotenashi* training enabled the service providers to articulate themselves better in terms of verbal communication; staffs were seen to be engaging the customers in conversations such as asking the quality of the food or mentioning the name of the food when they serve it on the table. The result of this improvement in service quality can be seen through the opinion of interviewee 1:

> *"Now I have to always be on standby even on my break time because most of the returning customers, they usually only want to be served by me, not by other staffs, they said that my service quality is better compared to the others"*

The opinion voiced out by interviewee 1 further amplified the theories laid out on the positive impacts of *omotenashi*, as explained by Omotenashi Foundation (2014), one of the most desired impacts of *omotenashi* training is that customers are willing to come back again and again to enjoy the high-quality of service. Adding to this, interviewee 5 who works as a legal consultant told the author:

> *"Omotenashi practice helps me in understanding my clients more, nowadays I usually listen to my clients without interrupting them and note every little details from what they told me"*

Furthermore, interviewee 13 who works as a beauty practitioner also explained how *omotenashi* improved her service quality:

> *"What I like about omotenashi is that I am able to ensure my customers that every process of the beauty care, every products and results are of high quality. Since the training, I am now used to always communicate with the customers before I proceed to the next steps"*

Interviewee 13 also added that *omotenashi* helped her in building up communication with the customers and to establish a trust relationship with them through detailing every process and to ensure that the customers are aware of everything that is

happening throughout the whole service process. However, the positive impact of *omotenashi* in terms of improving one's customer service quality has also become one of its main negative impacts in terms of building the experiencescape for *omotenashi* has also formed a distrustful and inconducive working atmosphere. This could be seen from what interviewee 1 expressed as:

> *"I like that many customers are happy with my performance, but since they only want to be served by me and not by any of my co-workers, my co-workers kind of hate me and they do not like me now"*

This particular negative point-of-view given by other members of the workplace might be able to be solved through a cooperative and communicative approach taken by the upper management members or the managers. *Omotenashi*, in this sense, might help in building up communication, not only between service providers with the customers, but also between the staffs and the managers. This particular positive effect was also reflected through the opinion of interviewee 9:

> *"The staffs are not the only ones that received omotenashi training, the managers also received the training and I feel like we are able to communicate much better, I feel that the we can tell the managers how do we feel about particular stuffs"*

The improvement of communication quality between the staffs and managers was also voiced out from other interviewees. Most of the correspondents expressed that they are able to reduce the emotional workload from their service performance by having two-way conversations with the managers. To this, interviewee 2 who is a manager in a Japanese restaurant said:

> *"Whether we success in giving the best customer service or not, it is not the only responsibility of the staffs, I as the manager also have my own responsibility to make sure that the staffs could enjoy and work happily"*

This specific synergy between the staffs and the managers in their cooperation to provide the best possible customer service as entitled by the notion of *omotenashi* correspond towards the element of "sense of harmony" and "sense of reciprocity" (Nagao & Umemuro, 2012). It is also, to an extent, directly contributing into a construction of a good experiencescape as explained by Sekhon & Roy (2015); while the staffs are acting

as one of the fore-front representative of the company, the managers should also play their own role in making sure that the service interaction starts well and finishes perfectly.

Despite the positive communication between the staffs and the managers, however, some interviewees also explained that they feel as if they are being controlled by managers for the sake of becoming a tool of customer service in its own entirety. Interviewee 10 who works in a famous 5-stars hotel vented out her anger by saying:

> *"All of us, the staffs, we are challenged to practice the high-quality customer service of omotenashi at all times to our customers, but I personally feel that the managers never listen to us, they just want us to work, work and work"*

While some have expressed their disappointment towards the communication problem as well as their treatment by the managers, many of the other correspondents expressed that they are thankful towards the *omotenashi* training given to them due to the fact that they are now able to better communicate with their own co-workers and upper management alike.

4.2.2 Intrapersonal effects

The practice of *omotenashi*, apart from being able to improve the overall quality of communication between the service providers, the customers and the managers, also helped its non-Japanese practitioners to become more aware, understanding, initiative and mindful towards the surroundings. Interviewee 6, continuing upon his explanation on how *omotenashi* has taught him to put the customers as the number 1, also expressed:

> *"I am more initiative than before. I used to just listen to what the customers want for their programs and finish it according to their demands, but now I think 'what would happen if this doesn't work?' and I always try to come up with several alternatives"*

Similar positive effects were also found through the semi-structured interview process, while interviewee 6 expressed that *omotenashi* training has helped him to be more initiative in his work as an IT consultant, most of the other interviewees expressed that *omotenashi* training helped them in improving their sensitivity, especially when it comes to time. As interviewee 13 explained:

>*"I learned how to respect time more, how can I deliver the service in time, be on time and how to not waste customers' time as well as my co-workers time"*

Adding to this, through the focus group interview, the interactions between all the group members were also focused on how *omotenashi* training helped them in better respecting customers' time. Some of them mentioned that they are now always on standby near the customers' table to swiftly answer when the customers raise their hands, to always communicate if there are any problems with the preparation of the food in order to ensure the comfort of the customers. The same phenomenon was also observed by the author through the participant-observation method, staffs tend to stand by the end of the dining hall where they can have an overview of the whole tables and when the customers are raising their hands, the staffs can heed to their call swiftly. Both of these positive effects of being more initiative and more respectful towards time resonate with the two elements of "sense of respect" and "sense of time respect" as mentioned by Nagao & Umemuro (2012).

Being initiative in coming up with several alternatives and being mindful towards time are not the only positive effects resulted in by *omotenashi* training towards the non-Japanese service providers. As mentioned by most members of the focused group interview, they have learned to be more understanding:

>*"We never know why a customer gets mad or why is our co-worker performing badly, maybe they are having a bad day, we don't know, but we always try to understand their situation, communicate with them"*

It could be seen that the positive intrapersonal effects given out by *omotenashi* training is deeply correlated to the other elements of service interactions; by trying to understand the situation, the customers and the other staff members, the staffs are able to build up a relationship realized by communication, not only with the customers, but also with their co-workers and managers. This is further supported through what interviewee 2 said:

>*"I always say to my staffs in the dining room 'if you cannot handle the situation anymore, call me, I will come and help you' and if they ever need any help, I come to them"*

The opinions of these several interviewees upon the positive effects of *omotenashi* especially in terms of becoming more understanding, more respectful of time and more initiative, once again resonate with the element of "pursue of perfection". From the standpoint of "experiencescape", *omotenashi* training in Indonesia has served in the realization of a much fruitful working experience; by being more understanding towards the surroundings, staffs and managers alike are inclined to be more communicative between one another and through this, a well-perceived service quality can be produced. It could also be said that, these whole positive effects are attributed to the notion of *omoiyari*; being mindful towards the surroundings and always putting others before one's ownself. Uniquely, there was one interviewee who explained how the training of *omotenashi* has changed himself who was timid into a much more communicative person. As interviewee 4 who works as an HRD officer said:

> *"I used to be timid, you know, I didn't really like talking to people, I feel shy, but my current work as a consultant plus the omotenashi training that my company gave me has made me more communicative now"*

The positive impacts of *omotenashi* training given out to the non-Japanese service providers might now shed some light upon how the notion does not only train these individuals to be better in their service performance, but also train them how to be better in the sphere of their own personal life. However, as much as the notion is positively impactful towards them, it has also exerted some negative impacts to the emotions of the non-Japanese practitioners. One of the most notable negative impacts, as explained by most of the interviewees, comes in the notion of emotional labor as explained by Hochschild (2012). As interviewee 10 said:

> *"Since omotenashi taught me to always think of the customers first before anything, I sometimes forgot about my own self and just focus on the others"*

Adding to this, other interviewees also expressed the same concern:

> *"I know that omotenashi is good for the customers, but I often feel tired of having to always put the customers first, especially when it comes to the over-demanding customers"*

Through these comments, it could be understood that the practice of *omotenashi*, when done too extensively, could potentially result in a burden of emotions to the non-Japanese service providers. Similarly, the author also discovered that the elements of *honne* or one's true self and *tatemae* or one's façade exist within the practice of *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese context. This could be seen through the comment of interviewee 10:

> *"My colleagues are not that good at the back to me and other colleagues as they are good and sincere in serving the customers on the front"*

Despite all of these comments upon the negative impacts of *omotenashi* training to the individual service providers, some correspondents, interestingly, commented on how their feeling upon the absence of any negative impacts of the training towards themselves. This could particularly be seen from the comments given out by interviewee 7 and 11 respectively:

> *"I do not feel any negative impacts of omotenashi, to be honest, I feel that it gave me a lot of positive impacts"*

> *"From my experience, I do not feel any negative impacts, it helps me to be more communicative, I heard from some of my colleagues that they feel it is too much, but not for me"*

Through the assessment of both the positive impacts and negative impacts of *omotenashi* training in terms of interpersonal and intrapersonal elements, it could be understood that each and every non-Japanese service provider are experiencing the application of *omotenashi* in, not only their service performance, but also their own sphere of social life. *Omotenashi* could be considered as a double-edged sword; it bestows the non-Japanese service providers with improvements in their performance and at the same time, putting an emotional burden.

4.2.3 Communication in *omotenashi* and the emotional burden – The analysis

Throughout the findings presented above, it could be said that the application of *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese context has proven itself to be positively contributing towards the construction of a positive experiencescape as laid out by Sekhon & Roy (2015) in terms of building up a two-way communication. The authors explained that the

construction of a positive experiencescape rely on both the front-line service providers as well the managers themselves who should be responsible in addressing all the correlating elements in ensuring excellent interactions between the staffs and the customers. In this sense, based on the findings presented above, it has been proven that the application of *omotenashi* improved the two-way communications between the employees and the managers, which in turn also improved the working environment. One of the finding also supported the idea of *kaizen* as laid out by Ikeda (2013) in which the managers are willing to understand the hardships and failures of the staffs and willing to work together to improve it. This very notion of improvement in communication has also resulted in the shortening of the customers' gap as exhibited by Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka (2013); when the service providers are willing to communicate with the customers throughout the "service flow", the quality of the service could be improved.

The notion of "service flow" as could be seen inside the *omotenashi* training has also further fortified what Sekhon & Roy (2015, p. 226) argued:

> *"Because service experiencescape is part of the service delivery mechanism, it is closely related to the concept of service quality. Any failures or gaps between delivery and consumer expectations can lead to a service gap that can influence future purchases. Thus, if the service delivery, including the service experiencescape, meets the expectations of individual consumers, then there is the potential to develop a long-term relationship"*

This improvement in communication, however, did not come cheap. As could be seen in the findings, some were explaining how they felt that they are feeling distanced from their own true self, a phenomenon of which Hochschild (2012) explained as "emotional labor". Indeed, it might be logical to say that when the service providers have to constantly put themselves in the position of the customers and to always think of the customers, they are exposing themselves to the dangers of what Hochschild (2012) put as the "emotional burden". *Omotenashi*, to some of the non-Japanese service providers, is taken as a tool that could be used to exploit themselves only for the sake of increasing customers' satisfaction. Despite this upholding emotional labor, the findings have also proven that for some of the non-Japanese service providers, the negative impacts of *omotenashi* practice are close to being non-existent; they advocated, most of the times, only on the positive impacts of the notion.

4.3 Challenges of applying *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese context

The third section of this chapter will delve deeply in the pursuit of answering the third research question of this thesis which is upon the challenges on the application of *omotenashi* in a non-Japanese context. The above-mentioned findings on various effects of *omotenashi* training towards the non-Japanese service providers might now give the readers a much better understanding upon its existence outside of Japanese cultural context. It is to be noted that the challenges that arose from thematic coding process of the data obtained through observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group interview are strongly connected and intertwined with the perceptions as well as effects of the *omotenashi* training as mentioned in the first and second section of this chapter.

4.3.1 Challenges originating from the staffs/managers

One of the most notable challenges of the application/implementation of *omotenashi* customer service in Indonesia is the inconsistent performance of the service providers. The author found out, through his observations in various Japanese restaurants and Japanese retail stores in Jakarta, is that the service providers are sometimes able to undergo *omotenashi* towards the customers and in other times, they are unable to do so. Furthermore, often times in some of the observed Japanese restaurants, the staffs were only giving their best if they are being monitored by their managers; this is the exact reason of why the author has decided to adopt the covert observation method and the covert observation method was also aimed to assess the element of "sense of humility". To this, interviewee 1 explained the phenomenon as:

> *"Some of my colleagues, they only serve the customers with their best only if they see that the customers might be able to give them something in return, mostly tips or when the manager is around"*

Interviewee 1's explanation is in synergy with what he explained earlier on his opinion of the negative impacts of *omotenashi*; his other colleagues are despising him for the fact that most of the customers only desire to be served by him, not by the others. This disharmony that is happening inside the workplace is impeding the maximization of the application of *omotenashi* and in turn, debilitating the whole experiencescape of the workplace that comes in the form of clashes between the staffs themselves. This particular phenomenon was further fortified through the comments of interviewee 2 who explained:

> *"One of the hardest factors of teaching my staffs omotenashi is that they tend to only do their work as they are stated on the job description, they don't like doing things outside of that"*

This feeling of dislikes shown by some of the staffs might prove that the application of *omotenashi* in Indonesia is still far away from being perfect, especially in terms of "sense of attitude", "sense of humility" and "sense of sensitivity". Adding to this, interviewee 7 explained:

> *"If you never learn how to understand others, it is almost impossible I think to do this omotenashi, you must have empathy at least"*

The above-mentioned challenges are attributable to the difference in culture between Japan and Indonesia; Japanese tend to exhibit what is mentioned by Nagao & Umemuro (2012) as "sense of others" while it is not as strong in Indonesia. Most of the interviewees stated that it is difficult to exactly understand what the customers need without having to ask them; although Indonesian culture dictates the importance of thinking about others, it is far from being similar to what is being practiced in Japan. Through one of the semi-structured interview, the author found out that one of the biggest obstacle of *omotenashi* training lies in the non-Japanese service providers to perform *sasshi* and "sense of reading the situation":

> *"We are not psychic, you know, and we cannot read minds as well, how can we know precisely what do the customers need without asking them?"*

Apart from the staffs themselves, managers also play a great role in the impediment of *omotenashi*'s application in Indonesia. As explained in the previous section of this chapter upon the negative impacts of *omotenashi* training to the service providers, one interviewee mentioned that the manager was utilizing her as a tool to satisfy the needs of the customers solely without looking at hers and her colleagues' needs as the service providers. Referring to the theory of experiencescape by Sekhon & Roy (2015), it is mentioned that managers held a crucial role in providing the customers with the best possible product and service and the staffs with the best possible working environment to ensure that everyone is being benefitted.

The assessment of these challenges stemmed from each of the non-Japanese service-providers as well as some of the managers might add to the discussion upon how the success of *omotenashi* is dependent upon the element of *omoiyari* itself; in the absence of *omoiyari*, it is proven to be difficult for the service providers to fully verse themselves in the way of this Japanese spirit of hospitality;. This could be seen through how interviewee 1 described his colleague as being "picky" when it comes to giving their best service performance; they are performing the opposite of *omotenashi* explained by Omotenashi Foundation (2014) in which *omotenashi* should be performed without expecting anything in return. Furthermore, the difficulties of cultivating *sasshi* or "to guess" inside a culture that does not advocate extensively the importance of thinking about the others compared to Japan also serves, yet as another apparition of how *omoiyari* is inseparable from the success of *omotenashi*.

4.3.2 Challenges originating from the customers

The challenges originating from the staffs and managers as mentioned above could not be separated from the context of service interaction. Indeed, while *omotenashi* focuses a lot on how the service providers are required to perform certain acts and how they should be behaving in front of their guests/customers, the element of "sense of reciprocity", "sense of dignity from the customers" and "sense of equality" as depicted by Nagao & Umemuro (2012) also played a great role in defining the challenges in the application of *omotenashi* inside Indonesia.

To this, most of the interviewees vented their anger on their feelings towards the customers that they have encountered by saying that their incapability of fully serving the customer with *omotenashi* spirit is also attributable towards the customers' own behavior inside the service interaction, as interviewee 1 said:

> *"I once served a customer who told me that she wants sashimi (raw fish), and I explained to her that it is raw fish and she said yes, she kept nodding her head saying that she knows that it is a raw fish, but after we gave it to her, she complained by saying 'why is it raw?', wouldn't you be angry if you were in my position?"*

Adding to this, interviewee 13 said:

> *"There was one customer who came to my beauty center, she fell asleep when I did the treatment for her, I did everything as normal, but because I was afraid of interrupting her sleep, I did not say anything to her, and she complained that I did not give her any treatment!"*

These two comments given out by both interviewees reflect one of the biggest challenges in the implementation of *omotenashi* in Indonesia; it is not rare to find customers who are, in a way, condescending towards the service providers. Many of the interviewees expressed that they dislike it the most and they feel discouraged the most when their effort of providing the customers with *omotenashi* is not appreciated at all by the customers. Interviewee 6 explained:

> *"Indonesians tend to get arrogant, what I mean by this is that the higher their position is or the cleverer they get, they think that the others, especially staffs/servers are lower than them and they look down on us"*

While the performance of the service providers is crucial in determining the success of the service interactions as mentioned by Sekhon & Roy (2015) according to the theory of experiencescape, the findings obtained through the research has also suggested that customers' role in being respectful towards the service providers is also inseparable from the success of the whole service interaction. *Omotenashi* training, in this sense, helped the non-Japanese service providers to improve their overall quality performance, however, in the absence of "sense of dignity by the customers" as mentioned by Nagao & Umemuro (2012), *omotenashi* might fire back and result in great emotional burden towards the service providers as explained by most of the interviewees in the previous section of this chapter.

4.3.3 Lack of resources

Apart from the challenges stemming from staffs and managers as well as the customers themselves, the author has also found out that the lack of resources and lack of *shitsurai* serves as yet another impediment towards the maximization of the application of *omotenashi* in Indonesia. As stated by one of the members of the focus group discussion:

> *"It is not that we do not want to do it exactly like it is in Japan, it's that we cannot do it, sometimes we do not have the things that we need such as not enough staffs to greet the customers in front or not enough money to improve our decoration"*

Adding to this, other interviewees also explained how customers are usually unhappy with their service due to the unavailability of certain necessities that uphold the efficiency of the overall service interactions. Interviewee 12 explained this problem:

> *"There was a customer that asked me to provide him with certain transportation modes on the destination, but we do not have that kind of service here, we tried to contact others to ask for this transportation but there was nothing… the customers got disappointed because he thought we are unprofessional"*

The same problem was also observed in some of the restaurants and retail stores, one of the most notable result is the lack of staffs. The service providers were unable to react on time, especially on busy hours where there were lots of customers; customers have to wait for a long time before a staff responded to their call and some of them were also seen as complaining due to the time needed to prepare their foods. This specific problem concerning the lack of resources correspond to the element of "sense of readiness" inside *omotenashi*; the notion cannot be fully implemented in the absence of the necessary supporting elements to ensure the highest possible quality of customer service.

4.3.4 *Omotenashi* in value co-creation and physical surroundings – The analysis

The analysis for the last section of this thesis is inseparable and deeply intertwined with the analytical results of the first and second chapter. The findings presented in this last section of the thesis has further supported the theoretical correlation between *omotenashi* and experiencescape itself: when two-way communications between the service providers and the customers could be made, service quality tend to improve throughout the "service interaction" (Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka (2013). Though so, the findings in this last section has also proven that such element of value co-creation as explained by Sekhon & Roy (2015) in ways the notion is able to contribute to the positive construction of positive experiencescape is being hindered by the unsupportive and somehow "illogical" customers. Unlimited to this, it could also be seen that when the service providers are unwilling to be initiative in engaging a conversation with the

customers as suggested by Joraku (2013), it is highly possible that this would be translated as a bad image in the minds of the customers and would affect their future re-usage of the service. This, in turn, would be impeding the final purpose of value co-creation process itself and will violate what Ikeda (2013) explained as the "form"; the capability of the service providers to grasp the idea of the service flow and will leave both the customers and the service providers in their own different universe.

The notion of value co-creation was not the only observable results of *omotenashi*'s implementation in a non-Japanese cultural context, it has also been proven that the notion was able to improve the physical surroundings of the service setting. This, in turn, will then help with the improvement of what Bitner (1992) explained as the "servicescape": *omotenashi* is able to instill its pivotal element of *shitsurai* in which it entails the importance for the service managers to analyze and take into full consideration the existence of physical surrounding such as the decoration, design and the availability of other physical objects in ensuring a beneficial service interactions both for the customers and the front-line service providers. However, based on the findings, it is difficult for several correspondents to improve the physical surroundings of their service setting due to the unavailability of resources such as financial or human resources. Seen from the perspective of experiencescape as laid out by Sekhon & Roy (2015), this lack of resources might also affect the overall perceptions of the customers towards the business, customers might complain more which in turn will affect the emotional condition of the service providers and the business could also lose any potential customers due to their unreadiness.

Chapter 5: Discussion:

This chapter of the thesis will provide the readers with a much more in-depth discussion upon the findings of the research as stated in the previous chapter with the underlying theoretical framework of *omotenashi* and servicescape as well as experiencescape to formulate and to provide several answers towards the main research aim of the thesis, that is, to gain a deeper understanding of *omotenashi* and to analyze its implementation in a non-Japanese cultural context. The discussion will also be heavily based on the element of "sense of harmony", "sense of reciprocity" and "*furumai*" or the willingness to serve.

5.1: *Omotenashi* in "experiencescape": Willingness, respect and understanding

Remembering back on the findings presented on chapter 4 upon the positive impacts of *omotenashi* training to the non-Japanese service providers, it could be understood that the concept is heavily evoking and teaching how they should be respecting the customers as depicted in "sense of time respect", "sense of humility", "sense of dignity" and "sense of attitude" by Nagao & Umemuro (2012) and how they should be more understanding towards the customers throughout the service interaction. These correspond heavily to one of the three most important elements of *omotenashi*, the *furumai* or willingness to serve the customers.

From the point of view of experiencescape as stated by Sekhon & Roy (2015), the element of understanding and respect play a great role in the realization of a beneficial and positive working environment; the respect shown by the service providers to the customers contribute towards the customers' overall degree of satisfaction while the respect shown by the managers play a grave role in ensuring that the surrounding elements are positively affecting the quality of interactions between the service providers and the customers. This however, referring to the results presented in the previous chapter, might not always be the case in Indonesia, although both staffs and managers have undergone the *omotenashi* training, some still took it as a tool to solely increase the overall satisfaction of the customers without taking into account the gravity of the service providers; a phenomenon that could be understood as the lack of "sense of equality" (Nagao & Umemuro, 2012). Despite this imbalance, some correspondents have also explained that they felt an increase in communication between themselves as the service providers as well as the managers, as interviewee 9 said:

> *"It is not that difficult for us to communicate with the managers, we know each other well, and they know what we are facing in our daily work"*

Adding to this, interviewee 1 told the author:

> *"My manager told me this 'always treat the customers as king, but if they don't deserve to be treated so, then treat them otherwise'"*

Both interviewee 1 and 9 were not the only correspondents that expressed how they are happy to see the improvements of communication with their managers; many others have

also expressed that the ambience of the workplace improved significantly through their *omotenashi* training.

All-in-all, *omotenashi* training inside Indonesia also taught upon the fact that the cultivation of understanding others and respecting others would be in vain without the existence of willingness inside each of the individuals taking part in determining the success of the service. While Sekhon & Roy (2015) and Bitner (1992) advocated the notion of experiencescape and servicescape to be focusing heavily on the roles of service providers and managers in synchronizing and giving the best possible service for the customers through different methods, little was mentioned upon the role of customers inside the determinant factor of the service's success. This thesis has attempted to contribute to the expansion of both these theories by trying to incorporate the element of customer as depicted inside the notion of *omotenashi* by Nagao & Umemuro (2012); "sense of reciprocity", "sense of dignity from the customers", "sense of equality" and "sense of humility" shown by the customers serve as an additional supporting element that would further perfect the theory of experiencescape. It is undeniable that managers and service providers are responsible for the construction of a good servicescape/service setting for the sake of customers' satisfactions, however, it should also be noted that the customers' have their own role in ensuring an effective and mutually beneficial interaction.

Willingness, in this sense, work in three-ways: willingness of the service providers/staffs to give their best to serve the customers, willingness of the managers to ensure that the staffs are contented with their experience inside the workplace and willingness of the customers to also respect the service providers/staffs as they provide them with everything that they have. The absence of one of these elements, as shown in the findings, would translate into negatively impacting the emotional state of the service providers; condescending customers and uncaring managers tend to cause an extensive amount of emotional labor for the service providers/staffs. It is this very reason that act as the biggest reason behind the formation of what Hochschild (2012) advocated as the "emotional labor"; when a non-Japanese service provider has to always put a mask, put others before them all the time and no one being able to understood them, it is logical to see if the service interactions become disastrous (Hochschild, 2012). This element of willingness also contributed extensively to a lot of other theories such as "value co-creation" as explained by Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka (2013), Omotenashi Foundation (2014) as well as Sekhon & Roy (2015); should the customers are unwilling to perform two-way communications with the service providers to improve the overall service quality,

values might not be co-created, instead, it might be co-destructed. It could also be said that through willingness in understanding and respecting all the members of the service interactions, not only could the application of *omotenashi* shorten the customers' expectation gap, it could also shorten the employees' expectation gap with the management.

5.2: *Omotenashi* in "experiencescape": Focus on harmonious relationship

The above mentioned element of willingness, understanding and respect, when exhibited by all of the participating parties in the realization of a positive experiencescape, will also result in the fact that every service interactions rely on a mutually beneficial relationship rather than a "master-slave" relationship (Sekhon & Roy, 2015; Joraku, 2013; Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka, 2013; Ikeda, 2013). This could be seen through the negative effects of *omotenashi* practice to the non-Japanese service providers; feelings of being used as a mere tool of increasing customer satisfaction and feelings of being despised by one's own co-workers because customers o nly demanded to be served by one person. In the absence of "sense of respect" by either one of the service providers/staffs, the customers or the managers, the constructed relationship would rather be classified as "master-slave" relationship: managers exerting their force to the service providers for them to work harder and harder for the sake of customers' satisfaction, customers condescending the efforts of the service providers without appreciating any that they have done or even other co-workers disrespecting each other, such relationship tend to only create a distrustful and disharmonious working place and will only add to the emotional burden of the service providers (Hochschild, 2012; Sekhon & Roy, 2015).

The findings presented in the previous chapter also fortify this element of harmonious experiencescape, for those correspondents who are working with co-workers who are understanding and managers who would like to listen to their voices as front-line service providers, the effects of *omotenashi* training was found out to be benefiting the construction of the overall experiencescape although problems might exist due to the absence of "sense of dignity by the customers" (Nagao & Umemuro, 2012; Sekhon & Roy, 2015). For those correspondents who are working with co-workers who are displaying a resemblance of *tatemae* (façade) in front of the customers and *honne* in front of the colleagues as well as managers who are treating them as tools for the sole purpose of increasing customers' satisfaction topped by disrespectful customers, omotenashi was found to be debilitating the construction of the overall experiencescape (Lebra, 1976;

Sohn, Lee & Yoon, 2016). This harmonious relationship supported by willingness, understanding and respect also applies to the each of service providers themselves; due to the negative impacts of *omotenashi* which was explained by most of the correspondents as an emotional burden, it would be wise for the service providers to be in harmony with their own lives. To this, interviewee 6 said:

> *"When you work in service industries, you will meet people like disrespectful managers or customers, whether you want it or not"*

This particular comment is in tune with the element of "sense of readiness"; *omotenashi* could also be said as being able to imbue the non-Japanese service providers with the understanding of everything that could happen in their service performance and to prepare them to face the ever-changing nature of service itself (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). In conclusion, the application of *omotenashi* contributes to the construction of the overall experiencescape under the condition that everyone taking part inside the service interaction is willing to exhibit what Nagao & Umemuro (2012) explained as the "sense of reciprocity", interactions between service providers and the customers as well service providers and managers has to be constructed from a mutual communication between the two parties. In the absence of this "sense of reciprocity", *omotenashi* will only serve as a tool to control, a tool of "master-slave" relationship.

5.3 *Omotenashi* in the "experiencescape" of society: The philosophy of life

In a further assessment of the application of *omotenashi* in Indonesia through the various data collected, it could be understood that the training of *omotenashi* has resulted in, not only improvements in terms of service performance, but also in terms of how the non-Japanese service providers behave and act in the face of society. As explained on the previous chapter, to some, *omotenashi* training has made them more respectful and understanding towards others, to another, *omotenashi* helped them in becoming more communicative and more mindful of time. Indeed, should one refers to the literature review of this thesis, it could be seen that the construction of *omotenashi* as a spirit of hospitality is based on the very foundation of the Japanese culture itself, the *omoiyari*. *Omoiyari*, in its own entirety, is said to be the ontology of the Japanese culture where interactions between members of society is based on mutual respect, understanding and putting others before one's ownself (Lebra, 1976). This particular notion of interactions between individuals were then translated into *omotenashi* under the setting of

commercialization. The basics of service interaction then is, according to this explanation, the interaction among humans as members the society. Interviewee 13 explained:

> *"I just want to be respected by the customers as well, I think the service providers also deserve to get some respects as we are respecting the customers"*

This particular comment made by interviewee 13 has successfully addressed what Nagao & Umemuro (2012) explained as the "sense of equality" where the condition of the relationship between the service provider and the guest/customers should be equal and this also served as another proof that in the construction of a positive experiencescape as explained by Sekhon & Roy (2015), communication and interaction between the managers, customers and front-line service providers is essential and inseparable.

Humans, as a social being, are said to be in need of socializing with the others; many philosophers and intellectuals alike have also advocated on this very form of interactions. Perhaps one of the most common understanding upon this interaction is the fact that humans are encouraged to treat the others the way they would like to be treated back. In this sense, the notion of *omotenashi* might have helped in contributing towards the re-thinking process of service in its own epistemology, the amelioration of human interactions in the form of understanding each others, being mindful towards others as well as respecting others might in itself serves as a key in improving the level of customer service. In conclusion, the application of *omotenashi* in Indonesia, might have helped the service providers to be a better member of the society through the elements of "sense of respect", "sense of reciprocity" and "sense of dignity". It could be understood that the local service providers have been trained on how to exhibit *omoiyari* into others through the implementation and application of *omotenashi*.

Chapter 6: Conclusion:

The final concluding chapter of this thesis will be focused on summarizing the whole flow of information listed starting from chapter 1 until the end result of chapter 5. This section will be constructed into three sections, first one being the answers to each of the research questions laid out in the beginning of this thesis, the second one being the answer to the main research aim of this thesis and the last one being research limitations of the said thesis as well as recommendations by the author for future researchers who would like to further explore and develop this specific field of the application of

omotenashi outside of Japan

6.1 Answers to research questions

The first part of this thesis has dived into the discussion upon the origins of the concept of *omotenashi* itself, starting from how it came in the form of *omoiyari*, that is, one essential culture of the Japanese culture itself until the application of *omoiyari* in various commercial settings, which was later known as *omotenashi* itself. Further, this thesis has also given out detailed information on the explanation of both *omoiyari* and *omotenashi* especially on the special characteristics and the necessary elements required to ensure the maximization of *omotenashi* training such as the "sense of time" and "sense of humility". Additionally, the information upon the general understanding of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" as well as the comparison between these two concepts with the notion of *omotenashi* has also been given out in the thesis. Lastly, both positive and negative impacts of the application of *omotenashi* has also been explained meticulously in the purpose of giving the readers with a heightened sense of understanding of *omotenashi* itself.

Through chapter 4 and 5, the author has also laid out all the findings that were found using various qualitative data collection method that came in the form of observation, semi-structured interviews as well as focus group discussion in their relation to answering the four research questions of this thesis:

RQ1. How do employees perceive/think of *omotenashi* practice?

As could be seen on the first section of chapter 4, the perception of the local non-Japanese employees towards their *omotenashi* practice could be understood as varying. Some voiced that they are happy with the introduction of *omotenashi* into their workplace for the notion has been successful in changing their mind and working culture into a much more "customer-centric" and "customer-conscious" as explained by Gronroos (1990). For the others, *omotenashi* is about taking into account the small details such as smiling, saying "sorry" or even the gestures of the body and the non-verbal expressions throughout the service interaction. Apart from these, there were also those who explained that *omotenashi* is all about building up a good service process from the beginning until the end and there was also one who said that *omotenashi* is all about providing the perfect hardware such as the design, the decoration, the easiness in transportation and other

supporting physical objects. This specific perception on the importance of physical surroundings further proved that *omotenashi* could act as an agent in improving the experiencescape of the service setting through the amelioration of the servicescape element (Bitner, 1992; Sekhon & Roy, 2015). However, the findings obtained also found out that there were others who perceive *omotenashi* as being indifferent with any other types of customer service and that they do not feel anything special from practicing it.

RQ2. What are the impacts of *omotenashi* in daily service performance?

&

RQ4. Does the practice of *omotenashi* help in constructing a good working experience?

Building up on the answers towards the first research question of this thesis, the second research question of this thesis has also been laid out in the second section of the thesis' chapter 4. The answer to this specific research question comes in two forms: *omotenashi* has positively and negatively impacted the daily service performance of the local non-Japanese (Indonesian) service providers. One of the most notable positive impacts of *omotenashi* is the fact that it is able to improve the communication skill of the local service providers. As could be seen from the findings presented in chapter 4, many of the correspondents answered that they have become more communicative with their own co-workers and even their managers; this also works vice-versa, the managers are also able to communicate better with their front-line service providers in ensuring the construction of a positive experiencescape for everyone (Sekhon & Roy, 2015). This, in turn, prompted a higher level of value co-creation inside the service setting for front-line service providers are willing to build up communication with the consumers in pursuit of providing the customers with all they need and the managers being willing to cater to the needs of their staffs (Belal, Shirahada & Kosaka, 2013). Further, the application of *omotenashi* has also prompted the non-Japanese manager and service providers alike to re-evaluate more of the physical surrounding of the service setting or the servicescape that would influence the overall service interaction.

However, the findings have also proven that in several cases, the practice of *omotenashi* brought upon disharmonious relationship among the co-workers; several co-workers might hate the others due to the fact that customers only would like to be served by specific personnel. In other cases, the practice of *omotenashi* was also used merely as a tool to improve the overall customer by the managers. This would then be manifested

into one of the strongest negative impacts of *omotenashi* in its application in a non-Japanese cultural context, that is, the high degree of emotional labor as explained by Hochschild (2012). Through the findings, it was found out that there were some correspondents who felt burdened and distanced from their own real selves as well as some who explained that they tend to not think about themselves because they are used to think about the others first. This is further topped by the fact that some of the correspondents were saying that they felt being used by their managers merely as a tool to improve the overall customers' satisfaction through the application of *omotenashi*. In conclusion, the implementation of *omotenashi* has both helped in the construction of a good working experience as well as bad working experience.

RQ3. What are the obstacles and challenges of implementing *omotenashi* in the daily service performance?

The answers towards this third research question are also deeply connected and intertwined with the rest of the research questions presented above. The challenges themselves come from three sources: one that is originated from the managers and the service providers themselves, one being from the customers who hold a crucial part in determining the construction of a good experiencescape and the last one being from the lack of resources to maximize the degree of *omotenashi*'s implementation in Indonesia. To point, one of the biggest challenges and obstacles from the side of the service providers/managers themselves lies in the absence of any willingness to serve and the lack of empathy as could be seen from the findings in chapter 4. From the customers side, it is the condescending attitude towards the service providers which in turn, prompted a high degree of emotional labor. Lastly, the lack of resources also act as another major impediment to the maximization of *omotenashi*'s implementation in Indonesia, in the sense that customers are feeling dissatisfied due to the unavailability of certain service elements in the service setting such as the lack of transportation as could be seen in the findings presented.

6.2 Answers to main research aim

The discussions that have been built up from the past literature analysis, the fundamental elements of *omotenashi* and the positive impacts of the notion has shed some enlightenment on the fact that *omotenashi* is expected to imbue the service providers who practice it to be more aware and understanding towards the customers. Not to be forgotten,

omotenashi also specified, not only the responsibility and the required actions that should be done by the service providers to ensure the highest quality of service possible, it also entailed the suggested behavior that could be done by the customers to further improve the quality of service interactions under the element of "sense of dignity from the customers". Furthermore, through the comparison that has been made between the vast theories of "servicescape" and "experiencescape", readers could understand that *omotenashi* is able to be utilized as a tool to improve the overall experiencescape quality of the service setting. However, one should not also disregard the possible negative impacts of *omotenashi* practice that mostly come in the form of a high degree of emotional labor.

Through the findings and the results of the analysis, this thesis has contributed towards the lack in empirical data in determining the success and applicability of *omotenashi* outside of Japan. *Omotenashi*, in its application in Indonesia, has been well received by many local non-Japanese service providers for it has allowed them to be more "customer-conscious". It has also helped some of the correspondents to be more communicative and be willing to engage the customers in conversations to improve the overall quality of the service. Despite this, the application of *omotenashi* has also brought with it, a high degree of emotional labor and has also been used by some managers merely as a tool to improve customers' satisfaction without thinking about the needs of the service providers. It is to be noted also that the application of *omotenashi* in Indonesia is mostly hindered by the lack of willingness to serve and understanding from both the service providers and the managers, the condescending customers as well as the lack of resources.

6.3 Research limitations and further research possibilities

This thesis has been able to take into account the detailed explanation of the concept of *omotenashi* and to compare it with the two theories of "servicescape" and "experiencescape" which were then used as the main theoretical framework in analyzing the empirical data obtained from various local non-Japanese (Indonesian) service providers on their perceptions and experiences of applying *omotenashi* into their daily service performance. Albeit this, however, the thesis has only been able to research on the concept's applicability inside Indonesia as one example among many other countries outside of Japan. Moreover, this thesis has only been able to explore on the phenomenon by looking at it through a neutral point-of-view in striving to find out the various effects the notion brought into the local non-Japanese service context. This thesis is lacking the

element of possible various recommendations that could be done in terms of, for example, human resources training and other possible managerial strategies to maximize the application of the concept in non-Japanese cultural context.

It is also to be noted that this thesis is lacking a certain point-of-view through the lens of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensional Analysis in further assessing the existing challenges and obstacles in the endeavor of *omotenashi*'s application inside Indonesia compared to the concept's success in Japan that might be attributable to the differences in some cultural values shared between the two countries. This specific Hofstede's CDA could also be utilized to act as the first step in knowing the possibility and effects of the application of *omotenashi* in other various non-Japanese service setting around the globe.

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Appendix A: Elements Needed for *Omotenashi*

Elements needed for *Omotenashi*	Description
Sense of easiness and peacefulness	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to evoke a strong feeling of peacefulness and easiness towards the customers
Sense of safety	*Omotenashi* must be performed in a safe environment
Sense of comfort	*Omotenashi* must be evoking feelings of comfort towards the customer and must be performed in comfort by the service provider
Sense of the form and the way	*Omotenashi* is a performance of service that comes in several forms and could be done in various ways as it is stated on the service manuals of the company/place
Sense of understanding host-guest relationship	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to understand the established relationship between him/herself with the guest on the ongoing moments of service
Sense of sensitivity	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to be able to guess, to feel the atmosphere, to observe and to have insights on the feelings of the customers/guests and act accordingly to fulfill their needs
Sense of humility	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to always be humble both in the presence of the customers/guests and in their absence
The heart	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to have the heart to respect and honor the guests/customers

Sense of difference in individuals	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to understand that everyone hopes for different types of service and to be able to answer to the customers'/guests' needs accordingly
Sense of naturality	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to always undergo a performance of act towards the customers/guests
Sense of uniqueness	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to think that everyone is special and that every acts of service given to them is uniquely tailored to their needs
Sense of reciprocity	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to understand that the act of service is not only about the service provider, but it is also a reciprocal relationship between the host and the guest/customer
Sense of instantaneity	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to be able to know the various situations, various types of guests as well as moments that are happening in the moments of service interaction and to react and heed to them in an instant and spontaneous manner
The supporting pillars of "software" and "hardware"	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to take care of not only the "hardware" of the service place such as the décor and design of the place but also to understand and to put grave attention towards the quality of the "software" of the service place such as the "thoughtfulness" and "spirit of serving" of the service providers

Sense of attitude	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service providers to harbor the sense of attitude and postures that would fit the Time, Place and Occasion (TPO) perfectly
Sense of equality	*Omotenashi* necessitates that the condition of the relationship between the service provider and the host and the customers as the guest to be equal
Sense of timing	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service providers to understand that the performance of a service act could be taken as positive at a time and be taken as a total negative at other times
Sense of others	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service providers to always put themselves into the place of the guests/customers and to think from their perspective and to act based on their perspective as well
Sense of inequality	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service providers to know that customers/guests would not like to know that they are being treated differently from the others and that the service providers must not evoke the feelings that the customers/guests are being treated differently at the same time (on the face of other customers)
Sense of the linkage between mind and action	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service provider to always being thoughtful towards the customer/guest and to always base their performance of service act on the spirit of service
Sense of purpose	*Omotenashi* necessitates the service providers to know the purpose and the desires of the guest/customer and to be able to act accordingly in order to fulfill them

Sense of understanding from the guest	*Omotenashi* necessitates, not only the host/service provider, but also the guest/customers to exhibit dignity, etiquette and to have sensitivity towards the service providers who are performing the act of service

Appendix B: Special Characteristics of *Omotenashi*

Special Characteristics of *Omotenashi*	Description
The pursue of perfection	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always strive to perform their best to catter to the needs of the customers with all they have
Sense of relaxation	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to treat their customers as to make them feel comfortable as much as possible
Sense of communication building	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to be engaged in an active conversation with the customers as to tailor the service specifically to their needs
Sense of time respect	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to realize that the service interaction that is happening between the host and the guest is bound by the notion of time and that it has to be honored; to act efficiently as not to waste the customers' time
Sense of preparation	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to, in advance, prepare all the essential elements that would be crucial in determining the success of the service
Sense of trust-relationship	Omotenashi, is based upon the trust relationship between the host and the guest. This spirit of Japanese hospitality

	will also help in the process of building and fortifying the trust-relationship between the host and the guest
Sense of harmony	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to understand and comprehend all the elements that are included inside the service and to harmonize them all as to produce an unparalleled service quality
Sense of originality	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to modify and tailor the methods and ways of providing service to their own personality. Omotenashi is furthermore enriched when one brings out their color
Sense of reading the situation	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to not only listen towards the needs of the customers, but to also guess and provide the customers with what they need even before they request for such services to be given to them and to suggest other possibilities
Sense of warmth	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always perform services towards the customers with warmheartedness
Sense of extraordinariness	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to give and to service the customers with something that is different with what they might find in their everyday life; to induce the temporary "touristic" feeling
Sense of "good betrayal"	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always come up with ideas and to service the customers as to evoke feelings of "good betrayal"; customers are expected to think "I never expected you would service me with this kind of good

	quality"
Sense of nervousness	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always think of new creative ideas as to evoke feelings of "excitement as to what is going to come" towards the customers
Sense of jitaku or being at home	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always service the customers in a way that will evoke feelings of them being served at their own home; to induce feelings of comfortness
Sense of shitsurae	Omotenashi necessitates the service provider to always take into account all the physical surroundings of the service settings: the building, the décor, the space that is presented and conveyed by the service setting as well as the products that are being offered inside the service setting
Sense of tochikan or local specialties	Omotenashi will be further enriched should the service provider also incorporate the elements of the local geographical factors such as the local cultural design or local special products into their service setting

Appendix C: Interview Guiding Questions

Interview and focus group discussion guiding questions:

1. Could you please introduce yourself?
2. How long have you been practicing *omotenashi* for your daily service work? How long were you trained in *omotenashi*?

I.   Questions on perceptions of *omotenashi*:

3. What do you think of *omotenashi* practice?
4. Do you think it is different with the Indonesian customer-service style or any other customer service style?
   - If it is, in what ways are they different?
5. Do you like the idea of *omotenashi*? If yes, why do you like it?
   - What do you like the most from *omotenashi*? Why do you like it?
   - What do you dislike the most from *omotenashi*? Why do you dislike it?
6. Do you think that every service providers in Indonesia should learn *omotenashi* and practice it in their work? Why do you think so?

II.   Questions on the impacts of *omotenashi* in service performance:

7. Did you feel any changes in your service performance since you started learning and practicing *omotenashi*?
   - If yes, what are those changes?
   - Do you feel that you have become better now since you started practicing *omotenashi*?
8. What do you think are the impacts of *omotenashi* that you have experienced? It could be both positive and negative impacts
   - What do you think is the biggest positive impacts that you have felt since you started practicing *omotenashi*?
   - What do you think is the biggest negative impacts that you have felt since you started practicing *omotenashi*?
9. Have you ever heard any of your co-workers saying that they are experiencing the same impacts since they started practicing *omotenashi*?

III.   Questions on the challenges and obstacles of applying *omotenashi* in Indonesia:

10. Based on your experience, do you think it is hard to practice and perform *omotenashi* in your daily work-life in Indonesia?
11. If there any difficulties, what are those?
    - Do you think that your co-workers are making it difficult/easy for you to practice *omotenashi* in your workplace?
    - Do you think that your clients/customers are making it difficult/easy for you to practice *omotenashi* in your workplace?
    - Do you think that your superiors/managers are making it difficult/easy for you to practice *omotenashi* in your workplace?
12. What is the most difficult challenge or obstacle that you have faced in your experience in practicing *omotenashi*?
    - Or do you think that everything is fine in your practice of *omotenashi* in Indonesia?

IV.   Questions regarding whether *omotenashi* helps in building a good working place

13. Do you think that your working experience or workplace has improved since you started your *omotenashi* training?
    - If yes, why do you think so?
    - If no, why do you think so?
14. In what ways do you think you want your *omotenashi* practice to change in order to improve your overall working experience?

V.   Other questions
15. If there is anything that you can/want to change from your *omotenashi* practice, what would it be?