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Brand experience of Thai consumers towards Let's Relax Spa and Massage

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**BRAND EXPERIENCE OF THAI CONSUMERS TOWARDS
LET'S RELAX SPA AND MASSAGE**

Miss Sasachol Chumnanvej



**An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Communication Arts) in Strategic
Communication Management
Faculty of Communication Arts
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2023**

ประสบการณ์ตราสินค้าของผู้บริโภคชาวไทยที่มีต่อ Let's Relax Spa and Massage



สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาวิทยาศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
สาขาวิชาการจัดการการสื่อสารเชิงกลยุทธ์
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Independent Study Title	BRAND EXPERIENCE OF THAI CONSUMERS TOWARDS LET'S RELAX SPA AND MASSAGE
By	Miss Sasachol Chumnanvej
Field of Study	Strategic Communication Management
Thesis Advisor	Assistant Professor SUTHILUCK VUNGSUNTITUM, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts (Communication
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ศศชล ชำนาญเวช : ประสบการณ์ตราสินค้าของผู้บริโภคชาวไทยที่มีต่อ Let's Relax Spa and Massage. (BRAND EXPERIENCE OF THAI CONSUMERS TOWARDS LET'S RELAX SPA AND MASSAGE) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ศศ. ดร.สุทธิลักษณ์ หวังสันติธรรม

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจประสบการณ์ตราสินค้าของผู้บริโภคชาวไทยใน 4 มิติ ที่มีต่อ Let's Relax Spa and Massage โดยดำเนินการด้วยวิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพโดยทำสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกผ่านการสัมภาษณ์แบบตัวต่อตัวและบนระบบออนไลน์กับกลุ่มตัวอย่าง 9 คน ใช้เทคนิคการสุ่มกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเฉพาะเจาะจงเพื่อให้มีความหลากหลายกลุ่มตัวอย่างของผู้ใช้บริการ Let's Relax Spa and Massage อายุระหว่าง 27-33 ปี โดยใช้แนวคำถามปลายเปิดเป็นเครื่องมือของการเก็บข้อมูล ประสบการณ์ของแบรนด์ ประกอบด้วยมิติทางสัมผัส ทางอารมณ์ ทางพฤติกรรม และทางปัญญาตามงานวิจัยของ Brakus et al. (2009) ถูกนำมาใช้ในการสำรวจประสบการณ์ตราสินค้าของผู้บริโภคต่อ Let's Relax Spa and Massage และ 7Ps ของการตลาดบริการเพื่อทราบความคิดเห็นทั่วไปของกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่มีต่อแบรนด์ ผลการศึกษาพบว่ากลุ่มตัวอย่างมีประสบการณ์ตราสินค้าโดยรวมที่ดีต่อ Let's Relax Spa and Massage โดยมีประสบการณ์ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับประสาทสัมผัสและพฤติกรรมที่เป็นบวก มีประสบการณ์ที่โดดเด่นในทางประสาท เสียง และการสัมผัสรสสัมผัส นอกจากนี้กลุ่มตัวอย่างทุกคนล้วนพูดถึง Let's Relax Spa and Massage กับผู้อื่นในทางที่ดี อาทิ ปัจจัยที่ควรมาใช้บริการที่นี้ อย่างไรก็ตามถึงแม้ว่ากลุ่มตัวอย่างส่วนใหญ่จะมีประสบการณ์ทางอารมณ์ที่ดี บางคนยังมีข้อโต้แย้งเกี่ยวกับบริการจากพนักงานซึ่งอาจทำให้พวกเขาผิดหวังเล็กน้อย กลุ่มตัวอย่างมีประสบการณ์ทางด้านปัญญาน้อยที่สุดเนื่องจากพวกเขาไม่ได้รับข้อมูลจากแบรนด์เท่าที่ควร อย่างไรก็ตามสิ่งนี้ก็ไม่ทำให้ประสบการณ์แบรนด์โดยรวมเปลี่ยนแปลงมากนัก ผลการศึกษายังแสดงให้เห็นว่าในส่วนที่เกี่ยวข้องกับสถานที่ ผู้เข้าร่วมมีความรู้สึกที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage เป็นแบรนด์ที่ตั้งอยู่ในทำเลใจกลางเมืองที่สามารถพวกเขาสามารถเข้าถึงได้ง่าย และในแง่ของการบริการ (ผลิตภัณฑ์) สิ่งของทางกายภาพ เช่น การตกแต่งของสถานที่ และกระบวนการในการให้บริการถือว่ามีความเหมาะสมหากพิจารณาปัจจัยในด้านของราคา อย่างไรก็ตามพวกเขาคิดว่าปัจจัยด้านพนักงานและการส่งเสริมการขายยังเป็นสิ่งที่สามารถปรับปรุงให้ดีขึ้น



สาขาวิชา การจัดการการสื่อสารเชิงกลยุทธ์
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6588015628 : MAJOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT
 KEYWORD Brand Experience, Millennials, service marketing, spa and massage,
 D: In-depth interview

Sasachol Chumnanvej : BRAND EXPERIENCE OF THAI CONSUMERS
 TOWARDS LET'S RELAX SPA AND MASSAGE. Advisor: Asst. Prof.
 SUTHILUCK VUNGSUNTITUM, Ph.D.

This study aimed to explore the brand experience of Thai consumers toward Let's Relax Spa and Massage across four dimensions. Using qualitative methodology, nine participants were purposively selected for on-site and online in-depth interviews, ensuring diversity based on specific criteria. The participants, actual consumers aged 27-33, shared their experiences using open-ended questions guided by Brakus et al.'s (2009) brand experience dimensions and the 7Ps of service marketing. The findings indicated an overall positive brand experience, particularly in sensory and behavioral aspects, with outstanding experiences in sight, sound, and taste senses. While most participants had a positive affective experience, some expressed disappointment with staff service. Intellectual experience was relatively low due to insufficient brand information, but it minimally impacted the overall brand perception. Regarding the place, participants perceived Let's Relax Spa and Massage as strategically located and reasonably priced, offering a premium service experience. Elements such as people and promotion were identified as areas for improvement in the participants' perception.



Field of Study:	Strategic Communication Management	Student's Signature
Academic Year:	2023	Advisor's Signature

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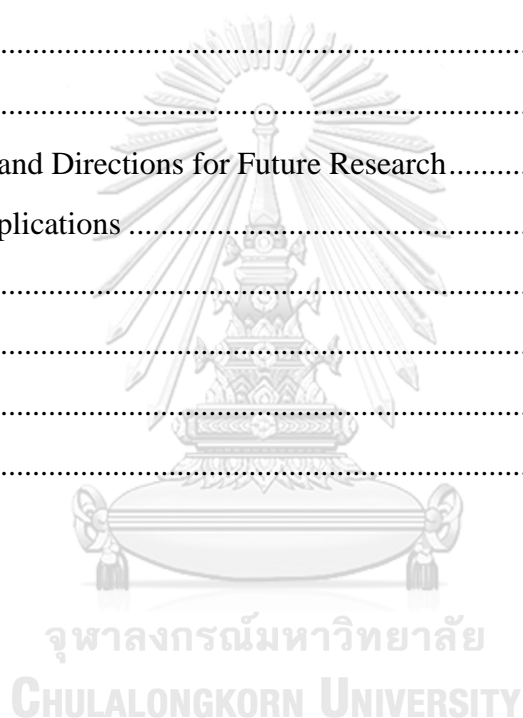
Last but not least, I express my gratitude to myself for persevering on this journey. As a 28-year-old woman juggling work and studies simultaneously, I am proud to declare that I have achieved one of my lifetime goals—earning my master's degree at Chulalongkorn University. No more sleepless nights—laughter out loud!

Sasachol Chumnanvej

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Significance of the study

The spa and massage industry in Thailand is highly esteemed for its exceptional services, catering to both local and international customers. Due to the immense popularity of this industry among tourists, it can not only generate a substantial income but also lead to the advent of Wellness Tourism (Sawasdee Thailand, 2023). A key factor behind the industry's remarkable growth is the strong support from the government (Rungruangkollakit, 2020). In 2022, Thailand secured the fourth position among the world's most favorite travel spots following the United States, the United Kingdom, and India (The Nation, 2022). Among the experiences highly desired by visitors, Thai massage emerged as one of the top activities (Sawasdee Thailand, 2023). Referring to the paper of A. Sangthong and T. Sangthong (2016), the prediction for the Thai spa and massage industry scenario in 2030 will be the trend in the future which will lead to the occurrence of foreign investments and business collaborations that will have an impact on all parties involved.

According to the study by Chumchuen in 2015, the global economic and political conditions are leading to stress among individuals in Thailand. The Thai population, particularly millennials with a fast-paced lifestyle, are increasingly seeking venues to alleviate stress and enhance well-being (SCB EIC, 2018). Therefore, the spa and massage industry, perceived for its potential to provide relaxation and stress relief, is gaining traction among this demographic. Furthermore, referring to the SCB Economic Intelligence Center Survey conducted in 2022, it was

revealed that Thai Generation Y, or Millennials, exhibit a penchant for leisurely pursuits beyond their professional commitments. In their pursuit of relaxation, this demographic distinctly favors indulging in chic travel experiences, frequenting trendy cafes, and expressing a particular predilection for spa and massage experiences, setting them apart in their preferences when compared with other generations.

In the past, people might have thought of Thai spas and massages as places primarily for tourists seeking wellness. However, after recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now more noticeable that the Thai population, especially Generation Y, has become more aware of using spas and massage as effective ways to relieve stress. Consequently, it becomes their lifestyle as mentioned in the survey of SCBEIC (2022).

In 2020, the spa and massage industry had an estimated market worth 35 billion baht, experiencing an annual growth rate of 8%. This sector is poised for exponential expansion, driven not just by the tourism sector but also by the rising demand for stress alleviation (Marketeer, 2020). In 2019, approximately 3,500 establishments were registered with the Ministry of Health, indicating the presence of entrepreneurs. However, the total number of entrepreneurs across all establishments exceeded 40,000. Nevertheless, Let's Relax Spa and Massage, operating under the umbrella of Siam Wellness Group or Spa, is the exclusive 4-star Thai Boutique Day Spa chain that has been publicly traded on the Thai stock market since 2014. Siam Wellness Group manages diverse spa brands tailored to specific customer demographics. For instance, RarinJinda Wellness Spa caters to A- to A+ customers, whereas BaanSuan Massage, a 3-star massage shop, targets C+ to B+ customers.

Currently, the market capitalization of Siam Wellness Group stands at 10.6 billion baht (as of 6 October 2023).

Let's Relax Spa and Massage under Siam Wellness Group or SPA, a 4-star Thai Boutique Day Spa chain, originated as a modest massage shop in Northern Thailand back in 1998. Its inception was driven by the owner's strong commitment to redefining the reputation of Thailand's massage industry, which had previously lacked transparency. As of today, Let's Relax Spa and Massage has expanded its operations to encompass over 40 branches strategically positioned across major Thai cities such as Bangkok, Chiangmai, Phuket, Pattaya, Samui, and even internationally in countries such as China and Myanmar. Furthermore, this spa chain has earned acclaim for its outstanding, top-tier massage and spa packages, delivered by certified therapists skilled in various techniques, including Thai massage, aromatherapy oil massage, and foot massage. Let's Relax Spa and Massage's uniqueness is defined by its convenient locations, the warm embrace of Thai hospitality, the appealing aesthetics of its branches, and the delightful provision of Thai treats such as mango sticky rice, crispy coconut rolls, and herbal beverages after each session. Customers typically engage with the massage for around 1-2 hours when opting for a single service spending up to 1,600 Baht, or up to 4 hours when indulging in a complete treatment experience spending up to 4,900 Baht. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Let's Relax primarily catered to a customer comprising foreigners earning a monthly income ranging from 30,000 to 75,000 Baht (Siam Wellness Group, 2017). However, to sustain operations during the pandemic, it became crucial to establish trust among customers, particularly among Thai, as the primary customer base, the Chinese, was unable to access Thailand during that period. Let's Relax Spa and Massage adopted

pioneering measures by introducing 100% ATK (Antigen Test Kit) services, utilizing saliva tests. This initiative aimed to underscore the concept of "A place you can trust" (Brand Buffet, 2021), enhancing the appeal for Thai consumers. This strategic move targeted the secondary consumer group, particularly resonant given the predominantly Thai presence of Let's Relax Spa and Massage locations. Additionally, they introduced cost-effective packages like the Let's Relax Pass Holder through online platforms, enabling customers to select packages tailored to their preferences at more budget-friendly rates. In 2017, Let's Relax Spa and Massage earned recognition as one of the top 50 brands in Asia by the World Brand Congress, and it has consistently received accolades for its spa services ever since.

In terms of marketing communication, to enhance the overall experience while using spa and massage services, it is important to empathize with the brand experience of consumers. As mentioned by i2i Marketing (n.d.), crafting a brand experience serves as a valuable instrument for establishing emotional bonds with brands. Understanding the emotional motivators and enhancing them is crucial for forging enduring connections with the consumers. It is imperative to acknowledge the rapid evolution of the wellness industry and the growing significance of consumers prioritizing their well-being in their daily lives. Sahin et al. (2012) conducted a study examining the correlation between brand experience and service quality within a relational framework. They placed particular emphasis on comprehending the connecting role of brand relationship quality and the intention to repurchase. The outcomes of their research suggest that brand experience holds greater importance than traditional brand elements when it comes to shaping and nurturing meaningful, enduring relationships with consumers. In addition, when there is a strong level of

affection for the brand, the influence of brand image on perceived service quality and purchase intention is more pronounced. On the contrary, when the degree of brand affection is low, the impact of brand image on perceived service quality and purchase intention becomes less significant. (Liao et al., 2022).

Regardless of the growth of the wellness trend in Thailand, the insight into Thai millennials' consumer behavior in spas and massage businesses is limitedly mentioned. This study aims to explore the brand experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's customers, particularly Thai millennials to highlight consumer behavior trends. In addition, it will offer actionable insight to businesses that seek to improve their offerings on the enhancing demand for relaxation and stress relief services.

1.2 Research objectives

1. To explore the brand experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's

Thai consumers

1.1. To explore the sensory experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customers

1.2. To explore the affective experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customer

1.3. To explore the intellectual experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customers

1.4. To explore the behavioral experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customers

1.3 Research questions

1. What is the brand experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai consumers

1.1. What is the sensory experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customers?

1.2. What is the affective experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customers?

1.3. What is the intellectual experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customers?

1.4. What is the behavioral experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai customers?

1.4 Scope of the study

This exploratory research is conducted with a qualitative approach, using an in-depth interview method to explore the brand experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's actual customers. This in-depth interview was conducted with 9 participants which is based on the previous study by Giannakopoulos et al. (2021). The sample size was able to achieve sufficient in-depth understanding and thematic saturation in the findings. These participants are selected with a judgmental sampling method, focusing on Thai millennials both male and female, aged between 27 and 37 years old, living in Bangkok, Thailand, and using the service at Let's Relax Spa and Massage at least 3 times in the past 6 months to ensure that they are the actual customers of Let's Relax Spa and Massage. The in-depth interview is conducted from 15 to 31 October 2023.

1.5 Operational definitions

Service Marketing defined by Zeithaml et al. (2006), refers to the promotion and sale of services, which are intangible offerings provided by businesses to meet customer needs and require specialized strategies and approaches. These methods are tailored to market services effectively, despite their intangible nature. However, there are four characteristics of service.

- **Intangibility** refers to the fact that services cannot be seen, touched, felt, or tasted before they are purchased.
- **Heterogeneity** refers to those services that are highly variable because they depend on who provides them, when and where they are provided, and to whom they are provided.
- **Inseparability** refers to those services that are often produced and consumed simultaneously, meaning that customers are actively involved in the service delivery process.
- **Perishability** represents those services that cannot be stored or inventoried like physical products.

Brand experience defined by Brakus et al. (2009) represents the internal consumer responses, sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses provoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments. In this study, the four dimensions of brand experience will be measured.

- **Sensory Dimension** (*sense*) represents an individual's five senses which are sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste.
- **Affective Dimension** (*feel*) refers to consumers' emotional connections with a brand or a site. It relates to emotions that are generated by brands.
- **Behavioral Dimension** (*act*) refers to processes that involve the body as a whole such as physical actions during an experience.
- **Intellectual Dimension** (*think*) refers to the customer's intellectual stimulation and learning during an interaction.

Millennials refers to individuals born between 1980 and 2000 (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011), who grew up in a digital age (Kaifi et al., 2012). They make up 21.9% of Thailand's total population and have the largest share of the working-age population compared to other groups (Marketthink, 2021). Most Millennials prefer being single and living independently without any companionship. Those in relationships often choose to live together without getting married or having children.

1.6 Expected benefits from the study

1. The results from this study are expected to extend the knowledge and emphasize the brand experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Thai consumers. They can be utilized to explain the insight of actual customers of Let's Relax Spa and Massage, focusing on Thai Millennials who increasingly use the service.

2. The result from this study can be beneficial for brand marketers or whoever works in marketing communication fields in any business segment, particularly in the spa and massage sector to build a positive impact of brand experience, and perceived service quality on target customer's purchase intention more strongly.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this study is to explore the brand experience of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's Millennial customers who are regular customers of Let's Relax in Bangkok branches. Therefore, this chapter will review the related past articles, journals, or books that are related to the concepts as follows;

1. Brand Experience
2. Service Marketing
3. Millennials

2.1 Concept of Brand Experience

In today's business world, brands serve as crucial assets that guide organizations strategically. With escalating competition, the commoditization of products, and the prevalence of well-informed customers, businesses are now emphasizing the enjoyable aspects of their offerings (Beig & Nika, 2019). Moreover, an experience is crafted when a company deliberately employs services, stages, and props to engage individual customers, creating a memorable event (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Brakus et al. (2009) argued that experiences can stem not only from products or services but also from brands. Even though the idea of experience concerning senses, emotions, thoughts, actions, and relationships has existed since ancient times, it was only in 1982 that Holbrook and Hirshman introduced this concept into marketing literature (Bapat & Thanigan, 2016). Consequently, the concept of brand

experience has found relevance within the context of hospitality. Beig and Nika (2019) highlighted the significance of brand experience, asserting that businesses must meticulously consider every facet of it to enhance brand value. They emphasized that brand experience offers businesses multiple opportunities for delightful customer interactions, marking a shift toward experiential marketing, infusing a hedonic quality into marketing activities. This approach fosters personal engagement and dual interactions between customers and brands (Beig & Nika, 2019). The primary goal of experiential marketing is to establish a memorable connection between a brand and its consumers. This connection helps the brand differentiate itself apart from competitors, developing brand value, and shaping the purchasing choices of future customers. Carù and Cova (2003) also insisted that brand experience is essential due to its significant impact on consumer perceptions and behavior. Research in this area provides valuable insights into how consumers engage with brands on an emotional and experiential level, influencing their preferences, loyalty, and purchasing decisions.



Definition of Brand Experience

Understanding the concept of brand experience necessitates a firm grasp of the term "brand." As defined by the American Marketing Association, a brand constitutes a name, term, sign, symbol, or amalgamation intended to identify the goods or services of a single seller or a group of sellers (Keller, 2012). Aaker (1996) further posited that a brand encompasses the collective impressions consumers form about a product, service, or company. It encompasses diverse components like the brand name, logo, design, advertising, and overall reputation, all of which collectively shape consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward the brand. Bapat and Thanigan (2016)

perceived a brand as a bundle of functional benefits delivered by products or services to customers. However, as emphasized by Kotler et al. (2012), a brand is more than symbols or names. It embodies the broad spectrum of thoughts and emotions consumers associate with a company, product, or service. A brand encapsulates the unique identity of an organization, molding how consumers perceive it and distinguishing it from competitors. Nonetheless, the role of a brand has evolved significantly. Consumers now seek experiences within brands, moving beyond functional benefits to find daily enjoyment within the brand itself.

Various scholars have delved into the exploration of brand experience. Cambridge Dictionary defines brand experience as something that occurs to individuals and affects their feelings (Ungarala, 2021). Pine and Gilmore (1998) conceptualized brand experience as arising from diverse interactions between a customer and a brand. In their framework, it extends beyond the tangible product or service, encapsulating the emotional and intellectual impact a brand has on its customers. Additionally, Brakus et al. (2009) defined experience as the internal, subjective, and behavioral responses triggered by brand-related stimuli integrated into a brand's design, identity, packaging, communication, and environment. Brand-related elements like names, signage, logos, marketing materials, and physical settings such as websites and stores significantly contribute to a brand's identity and design (Brakus et al., 2009). The brand experience unfolds when consumers engage with or encounter these brand-related components. However, experiences can vary in valence, strength, and intensity. In other words, some experiences can be positive, some are more potent than others, and some can be negative. According to Brakus et al. (2009); Hulten (2009); Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010), brand experience envelops a wide array of

consumer experiences, including emotional, contextual, symbolic, and non-utilitarian elements. Brand experiences occur across a range of consumer interactions with the brand, including product research, shopping, and product or service consumption (Arnould, et al., 2002; Brakus et al., 2009; Holbrook, 2000).

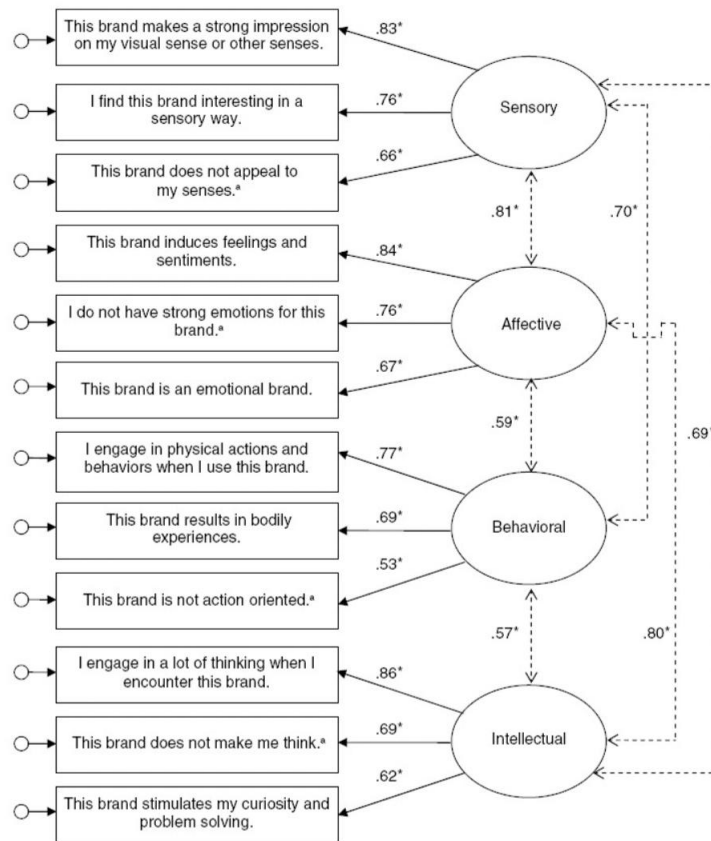
Dimensions of Brand Experience

Brakus et al. (2009) proposed that brand experience consists of four dimensions including sensory experience, affective experience, behavioral experience, and intellectual experience. They are based on a previous study on the experience of Schmitt (1999).

1. Sensory Experience involves the stimulation of consumers' senses by the brand. It encompasses visual elements, sounds, textures, tastes, and smells associated with the brand. Sensory experiences create a unique and memorable ambiance, enhancing customers' perception of the brand and creating a sensory bond between the consumer and the product or service.
2. Affective experience delves into the emotional responses elicited by the brand. It includes feelings, moods, and emotions evoked during interactions with the brand. Positive affective experiences can create a deep emotional connection with the brand, fostering brand loyalty and enhancing customer satisfaction. Brands that evoke positive emotions are more likely to be remembered and recommended by customers.

3. Behavioral experience focuses on the actions and behaviors of consumers in response to the brand. It encompasses various customer interactions, including purchasing decisions, product usage, brand advocacy, or changes in consumer lifestyle (Beig & Nika, 2019). Positive behavioral experiences can lead to increased customer engagement, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Brands that provide seamless and enjoyable interactions tend to create strong customer loyalty.
4. Intellectual experience pertains to the cognitive aspects of brand interaction. It involves consumers' understanding of the brand's features, benefits, and unique selling propositions. Intellectual experiences enhance brand knowledge and contribute to informed purchasing decisions. Brands that effectively communicate their value propositions and benefits create positive intellectual experiences, influencing consumer attitudes and preferences.

Figure 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis: The Four-Factor of Brand Experience Model



Source: Brakus, J. J., Schmitt, B. H., & Zarantonello, L. (2009). Brand Experience: What Is It? How Is It Measured? Does It Affect Loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 73(3), 52-68.

Brand Experience and Customer Purchase Intention

Customer benefits from perceived advantages gained through a product or service, focusing on how their needs are met (Amenuvor et al., 2019). According to findings by Desfitrina et al. (2019), a customer's evaluation of a product or service, whether conscious or subconscious, is shaped by their experiences. Subsequently, post-usage encounters significantly influence customers' intentions regarding repurchasing, reuse, and recommendations to others. Therefore, customer experiences can either positively

or negatively impact behavioral intentions. As a result, experience marketing has gained significant traction among marketers and scholars aiming to establish meaningful connections with customers and consumers (Schmitt, 1999; Homburg et al., 2017; Le et al., 2019; Zhuang et al., 2020).

Research conducted by Wu et al. (2012) in the Chinese spa industry revealed that customer experience plays a favorable role in encouraging repeat purchases. Moreover, the study by Ruenrom and Pattaratanakun (2018) highlighted the influence of color and its intensity, a visual element within the sensory dimension, on customers' intentions to purchase relaxing services. They recommended that businesses in the relaxation service sector should employ consistent colors instead of varying ones to enhance customer purchase intention.

2.2 Service Marketing

Marketing initially evolved from a model centered around goods and manufacturing, which emerged during the Industrial Revolution. In addition, due to the definition given by the American Marketing Association (2013), Marketing, in the context of business, refers to the activities, processes, and strategies employed to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. It involves understanding customer needs and preferences, developing products or services that fulfill those needs, promoting them effectively, and building long-term customer relationships. Marketing encompasses a wide range of activities, including market research, product development, pricing, distribution, advertising, and customer relationship management. However, over time,

marketing has expanded its scope to encompass exchanges beyond just manufactured products (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Vargo and Lusch (2004) stated that the early phase of the service industry occurred between around 1950 and 1980. During this time, there was extensive discussion about the definition of services and the distinction between services and goods. Fisk et al. (1993) referred to this period as a phase of gradual emergence, commonly known as the "Crawling Out" stage. The service became increasingly related to the marketing terms. Service can be defined in various terms. For instance, Lovelock (1991) declared the service as a process or performance rather than a thing. However, in terms of marketing, as defined by Solomon et al. (1985), service marketing refers to the marketing of activities and processes rather than objects. In addition, service, in the context of business and marketing, also refers to intangible activities or benefits that one party provides to another. These activities are often a result of interactions between the service provider and the service consumer and are intended to satisfy the customer's needs or desires (Zeithaml et al., 2009). Therefore, service marketing refers to the marketing activities and strategies specifically tailored to promote and sell services offered by businesses to meet the needs of their customers. Unlike tangible products, services are intangible and experiential, making their marketing unique. Service marketing focuses on understanding customer needs, designing service offerings, setting appropriate pricing, and creating effective promotional and distribution strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and build long-term relationships (Kotler & Kelly, 2016).

In the context of service marketing, there are several key elements that are essential for delivering high-quality services. These elements are often referred to as the 7Ps of Services Marketing, which include:

1. Product (Service) refers to the core offering that fulfills a customer's need or desire. It's the primary service being provided.
2. Price is the amount customers are charged for the service. Pricing strategies need to consider the perceived value of the service to customers.
3. Place represents the location and methods used to make the service accessible to customers. This can include physical locations, online platforms, or a combination of both.
4. Promotion refers to the marketing and communication strategies used to promote the service to the target audience. This can involve advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and other promotional activities.
5. People are the employees and personnel involved in delivering the service. Their skills, attitudes, and interactions with customers significantly impact the service experience.

6. Process represents the procedures, mechanisms, and flow of activities that customers go through while receiving the service. A well-designed process ensures efficiency and a positive customer experience.
7. Physical Evidence refers to the tangible cues and physical elements that serve as evidence of the service being delivered. This includes the physical environment, service materials, brochures, and any other tangible aspects that customers can see or touch.

These elements are crucial in designing, delivering, and managing services effectively, ensuring a positive customer experience and customer satisfaction.

Service Marketing in Spa Context

Service marketing in the context of a spa refers to the specific strategies and techniques used to promote and sell spa services. Spa services typically include various wellness and relaxation treatments, such as massages, facials, body treatments, and other beauty and health-related services. Service marketing in a spa context focuses on creating a unique and enjoyable experience for customers, attracting new clients, and building long-term relationships with existing ones.

In spa service marketing, the emphasis is on creating a serene and calming atmosphere, offering personalized and high-quality treatments, and ensuring exceptional customer service. Marketing efforts often involve showcasing the expertise of the spa therapists, highlighting the spa's ambiance and facilities, and promoting special offers or packages to attract customers.

Key aspects of service marketing in a spa context may include following.

1. Atmosphere refers to creating a tranquil and inviting ambiance with soothing colors, comfortable furnishings, and relaxing music to enhance the overall spa experience.
2. Personalization represents the terms of tailoring spa treatments to meet individual customer preferences and needs, offering customized services for a more personalized experience.
3. Customer Service refers to the training staff to provide excellent customer service, ensuring clients feel valued and well-cared for throughout their spa visit.
4. Promotions are the offering of promotions, discounts, or loyalty programs to attract new customers and retain existing ones.
5. Online Presence is when utilizing online platforms and social media to showcase spa services, customer testimonials, and special promotions, making it easier for potential clients to find information and book appointments.
6. Word-of-mouth represents when encouraging satisfied customers to share their positive experiences and recommend the spa to friends and family, leveraging word-of-mouth marketing.

7. Quality of Treatments refers to ensuring that the spa treatments are of high quality, using skilled therapists and premium products to deliver effective and enjoyable services.

Effective service marketing in the spa industry combines these elements to create a holistic and appealing spa experience, encouraging customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive referrals.

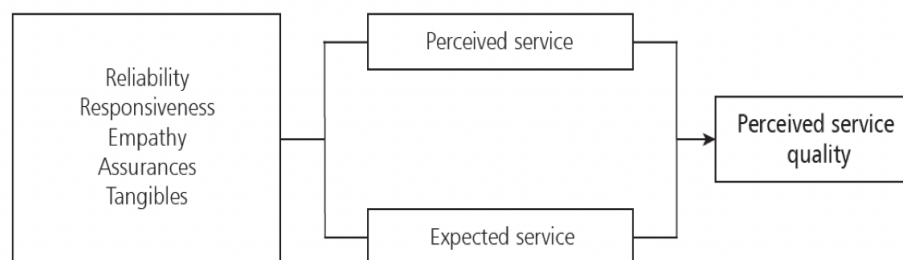
The SERVQUAL model

SERVQUAL or the American model (Figure 2.3) introduced by Parasuraman et al. in 1985 refers to service quality as the difference between the expected level of service and customer perceptions of the level received (Parasuraman et al., 1985), utilized for evaluating service. The purpose of this model is to serve as a diagnostic method for uncovering broad areas of weaknesses and strengths in the quality of service a company delivers. The elements of this model are common for various services as well as can be applied within different industries (Bhat, 2012).

Parasuraman et al. (1991) emphasized that this scale had evolved into a primary tool within the services marketing field for gauging both quality and customer perspectives on service quality across various service domains. Originally, Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed ten components of service quality which are reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer, and tangibles. To form the SERVQUAL measurement scale, Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed a set of inquiries aimed at

evaluating a service based on specific attributes that encompassed ten fundamental elements. Respondents were requested to provide assessments for the service in terms of both their expectations and the actual performance they encountered. After the analysis and categorization of the collected data, a revised scale was administered to a second sample. During this testing phase, questions were examined, resulting in a 22-question (item) scale that now assesses five primary dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles, for both expectations and performance. In total, 44 questions were employed to gauge both expectations and performance, with 22 questions dedicated to each aspect. Notably, the dimensions of reliability, tangibles, and responsiveness remained distinct, while the remaining seven components were consolidated into two dimensions, assurance and empathy. These five dimensions encapsulate five distinct and interconnected facets of service quality (Asubonteng et al., 1996).

Figure 2 *SERVQUAL model*



Source: Adapted from Parasuraman et al. (1988)

Source: Polyakova, O., & Mirza, M. (2015). Perceived service quality models: are they still relevant? *The Marketing Review*, 15 (1), 59-82.

1. Tangibles pertain to the physical aspects of the service encounter, including the appearance of facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. Specific attributes under tangibles include cleanliness, appearance, equipment condition, and the professionalism of service personnel.
2. Reliability reflects the ability of the service provider to consistently deliver services accurately, dependably, and as promised. Key attributes in this dimension include reliability in service delivery, consistency, accuracy, and the provider's ability to keep promises.
3. Responsiveness involves the willingness and ability of the service provider to assist customers promptly and address their needs and concerns. Attributes under this dimension include promptness, willingness to help, and a sense of urgency in resolving customer issues.
4. Assurance is about the competence, courtesy, credibility, and trustworthiness of the service personnel. It encompasses attributes such as the knowledge and skills of employees, their courtesy and politeness, and the level of trust customers have in the service provider.
5. Empathy relates to the provider's ability to understand, care for, and provide personalized attention to the customer's specific needs and circumstances. Attributes in this dimension include the provider's ability to listen, understand, and make customers feel valued.

However, the study of Sangpikul (2022), focuses on the assurance dimension of the SERVQUAL model because it is often criticized for its ambiguity in interpretation as well as the consideration in the COVID-19 pandemic context asserted that apart from employee knowledge and courtesy, assurance in relation to the spa service quality may also include other attributes regarding employee competence such as skills and experience in massage, product attributes such as quality of spa product, and certain process like secure transactions.

Service Quality in Massage and Spa Context

The study of Snoj and Mumel (2002), referred to the importance of service quality elements in health spas in the Slovenian context using the SERVQUAL instrument with its five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. They compared their own studies in 1991 and 1999 by using the service quality components according to the dimensions developed by Parasuraman et al. It can be seen that different timeframes can lead to different results. In the study in 1991, the dimension of “Reliability” ranked first but fell into the second rank in 1999. In 1999 research, “Empathy” became the first rank instead. However, in both research, “Tangibles” was in the lowest rank.

Moreover, the study of Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch (2014) referred to the Customers’ Perception of Service Quality for Spa Establishments in Thailand with a sample of foreigners. The result of this study indicated that the level of actual service was higher than the level the customer expected, producing positive gap scores based on the gap service quality model which means the gap between the expected service

and the actual performance by Parasuraman et al. (1985). This implies that the actual perceived service for all the dimensions overall exceeded the level of service that customers expected, resulting in the customers feeling positive about the service they were provided.

In the investigation conducted by Puangniyom and Choibamroong (2021) concerning spa experience management, spa service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty within Bangkok's day spa industry, the focus was primarily on the connection between spa service quality and customer satisfaction. Their findings revealed a positive correlation between spa service quality and customer satisfaction. Interestingly, the study demonstrated that while service quality positively influences customer satisfaction, it does not significantly impact the brand loyalty of customers utilizing day spas in Bangkok.

2.3 Millennials

Hartman and McCambridge (2011) defined Millennials as individuals born between 1980 and 2000. More than 23% of the global population is comprised of Generation Y or Millennials, and this generation is predominantly concentrated in the Asian continent, making up 24% of the world's population. They are inclined to become a significant workforce and consumer group (MSCI, 2020). In Thailand, they make up 21.9% of Thailand's total population and have the largest share of the working-age population compared to other groups (Marketthink, 2021). Most Millennials prefer being single and living independently without any companionship.

Those in relationships often choose to live together without getting married or having children.

Generation Millennials, the first to grow up amidst the rapid expansion of ICTs (Pedró 2011), is characterized by their adeptness in technology, ability to multitask, ease in collaborative work, and tendency to seek parental guidance for decision-making, as described by Tyler (2017). They prefer structured settings and avoid ambiguity. Additionally, Alsop (2008) observed that Millennials often perceive themselves as indispensable, having high expectations for recognition and attention. Mawhorter (2017) noted that Millennials commenced their careers during one of the most severe economic recessions, facing challenging conditions in the labor and housing markets. They encountered difficulties in finding employment and postponed significant life events (Garikapati et al. 2016). Therefore, this cohort is the most stressed generation, in whom the demands of work and fast-paced lifestyles leave little time for exercise or healthy meals (Aetna, 2013; American Psychological Association, 2018; Goldman Sachs, 2018; Kumar, 2017) even some academic source declared that Millennials have a health-conscious, defining being healthy as eating right and exercising (Moyer et al., 2020).

Millennials towards Spa Service

In today's complex geopolitical and economic environment, the research conducted by NPD Group (2019) emphasized the significance of spa operators targeting Millennials, who engage in various self-care practices, including indulging in spa services. According to statistics, over half of Millennials and 72% of Millennial parents reported receiving a massage in the past year (as of 2019). However, their

loyalty to specific brands was relatively low, as they preferred experimenting with new services. Many Millennials in the study expressed interest in exploring offerings from competitors. Moreover, almost three-quarters of Millennial parents and 63% of all Millennials indicated that the right promotional offers could influence them to switch massage service providers. As stated by Mondok (2020), Generation Y or millennial travelers are known for their focus on wellness, preferring tailored experiences over material possessions and valuing personalized services and modern conveniences. They have a particular affinity for spa tourism, presenting an ongoing challenge for wellness providers striving to meet their demands. As these individuals transition into mature adulthood, their commitment to wellness remains, potentially shaping their travel choices. Moreover, a study conducted by the International SPA Association Foundation (2016) concentrated on Millennials' views and inclinations regarding the spa sector, shedding light on their motivations for utilizing spa services. The research indicated that 32% of Millennials seek spa services to alleviate stress, while 20% simply desire self-indulgence or pampering. Lastly, research conducted by Imwittaya & Kantabutr (2021) regarding the motivations of Thai Millennials in Chiang Mai province towards wellness tourism revealed that these individuals primarily seek Thai massage services for body relaxation. They also utilize natural remedies for body detoxification and consider these services as rewards for their diligent studying or hard work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The exploratory research is based on a qualitative methodology aiming to explore the brand experience of millennials using Let's Relax Massage and Spa's service in Bangkok. The data for this study were gathered through in-depth interviews, which are also referred to as long or semi-structured interviews (Jimenez et al., 2019). These interviews allowed for a detailed exploration of participants' personal experiences, how they make meaning of these experiences, their thought processes, and unspoken assumptions about life and society in general (Healey-Etten & Shane Sharp, 2010). In addition, Creswell (2017) suggested that to acquire such in-depth understanding, which encompasses familiarity with the culture, language, and context influencing each stage of the research process, it is necessary for the researcher to establish a close connection with the participants. The objective of conducting an in-depth interview is to gather comprehensive information that provides insights into an individual's viewpoint and understanding of a specific subject, matter, or procedure (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). This chapter describes the method that was used in this research including the details about the research sample and sampling method, the steps taken in each phase, the process of collecting and analyzing data, as well as an evaluation of the study's validity and reliability.

3.1 Research Sample and Sampling Method

A judgmental or purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that participants were qualified to participate in this study. This technique can lead to the selection of participants who represent a wide range of perspectives, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Marshall, 1996). The sample size range for qualitative research with the in-depth interview method should be between eight to ten interviews (Mason, 2010). For this study, a total of 9 participants were selected. 9 participants are referred to the previous study of Giannakopoulos et al. (2021). The sample size was able to achieve sufficient in-depth understanding and thematic saturation in the findings. Prior to participant selection, a prerequisite screening was conducted (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). In this study, potential participants must be actual consumers of Let's Relax Massage and Spa and be in the millennial generation aged between 27 - 37. Therefore, potential participants must have met the following selection criteria.

1. Participants must be Thai, living in Bangkok, Thailand,
2. Participants must at the age between 27 - 37 years old.
3. Participants must have used the services at Let's Relax Massage and Spa at least 3 times within the last 6 months.

3.2 Research Instrument

The study used an open-ended questions guideline (see Appendix A) as the research instrument. The question guideline consisted of sets of questions based on the adaptation from the previous study of Kitichaiwat (2018) and Pornsineethirathana

(2019) for brand experience. The questions guideline was separated into three main sections, each section covered a variable related to Let's Relax Massage and Spa.

The first section of the interview process consisted of the participant's self-introduction and collection of demographic information including age, gender, occupation, educational level, and range of monthly income. This served as both an icebreaking and an opportunity to establish rapport in one-on-one interviews. The researcher began with basic questions that were easy for participants to answer. Simple questions like these were effective in engaging participants early in the conversation, as people are generally more willing to respond when discussing personal aspects, as noted by Rubin and Rubin (2012).

The second section is a general question that refers to the personal factors of participants and their behavior while using Let's Relax Spa and Massage's services. In addition, it covers the questions to ensure that the participants are the actual customers of Let's Relax Spa and Massage such as the selection of services at this venue.

The third section focused on exploring consumers' brand experiences with Let's Relax Massage and Spa. During this part of the interview, participants responded to open-ended questions regarding their brand experiences. Notably, the questions intentionally narrowed down the dimensions of brand experience; sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral aspects (as outlined by Brakus et al., 2009). These open-ended questions allowed participants the freedom to fully express their

thoughts and experiences. The question format for this section was adapted from prior research conducted by Kitichaiwat (2018).

3.3 Procedures

This section outlines the steps taken by the researcher before, during, and after conducting the in-depth interviews. Describing these steps helps streamline the research process, enabling the researcher to allocate time and resources efficiently, leading to time and effort savings, as emphasized by Bernard (2017).

Pre-in-depth interview:

1. Identifying potential participants for the in-depth interview through the researcher's personal network.
2. Screening potential participants based on selection criteria and recording their contact details.
3. Contacting the selected participants to confirm their availability and scheduling the interviews for the period between October 15 and 31, 2023.
4. Checking participants' availability for at least three days and inquiring about their preference for either on-site or online interviews.
5. If participants prefer on-site interviews, arranging appointments. For online interviews, asking about their preferred online meeting platform: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet.
6. For on-site interviews, ensuring that the interview location is discreet to avoid interruptions. Preparing necessary equipment such as paper, pens, and voice

recorders, and arriving at the interview room at least 15 minutes before the session. For online interviews, testing the meeting platforms in advance and preparing essential equipment for the focus group discussion, including a notebook, pens, and a computer charger.

7. Reviewing the open-ended question guideline in a semi-structured format to become familiar with it and gain a clear understanding of the questions used during the in-depth interview.

During the in-depth interview:

1. Commencing with self-introduction.
2. Explaining the in-depth interview settings, including the interview topic, overall details, duration, and any relevant rules.
3. Seeking participants' consent for either voice recording (for on-site interviews) or meeting recording (for online interviews).
4. Making efforts to establish a comfortable atmosphere for participants, as individuals may be hesitant to provide answers if they feel tense or uneasy (Indeed, 2023).
5. Starting with a broad conversation to allow participants to freely express their thoughts.
6. Recording or taking notes during the interview, focusing on key statements and nonverbal cues from participants.
7. Explaining the questions slowly in case the participants did not understand clearly

8. When the allotted time is up, concluding the interview and expressing gratitude to the participants.

Post-in-depth interview:

1. Summarizing key data immediately after the in-depth interview
2. Verifying information obtained during interviews as necessary
3. Transcribing and/or reviewing collected data
4. Analyzing all interview data
5. Translating the data obtained from Thai to English

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research places a strong emphasis on understanding topics deeply within their context, valuing the richness of gathered data. This stands in contrast to quantitative research, where validity is primarily judged through statistical measures. Demonstrating the quality of research is crucial, necessitating the establishment of both validity and reliability in the outcomes (Hayashi et al., 2019). However, qualitative research often receives criticism for lacking scientific rigor. Critics cite insufficient justification for chosen methods, lack of transparency in analytical procedures, and findings being perceived as personal opinions susceptible to researcher bias (Rolfe, 2016). In qualitative research, 'truth value,' a term coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), equates to validity. It encompasses the multiple realities existing within a study, acknowledging the influence of researchers' personal experiences and perspectives that might introduce methodological bias. It demands an

honest and accurate representation of participants' viewpoints. Additionally, consistency, crucial for qualitative research's reliability, is achieved when methods are trustworthy and transparent. The researcher's decisions are meticulously recorded and comprehensible, allowing an independent researcher to arrive at similar or comparable conclusions. In this study, the researcher adapted strategies from Noble and Smith's (2015) previous research to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings:

1. Maintaining meticulous records, providing a clear decision-making trail, and ensuring consistency and transparency in data interpretations
2. Acknowledging personal biases that might influence the findings
3. Introducing a comparison case to identify similarities and differences across accounts, ensuring diverse perspectives are represented
4. Engaging with others, including the project advisor and committee members, to validate the questions asked in the study

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The in-depth interviews were conducted using both on-site and online meeting platforms, including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet, within the timeframe of October 15-31, 2023. According to the study of DiCicco and Crabtree (2006), in-depth interviews should last from 30 to 60 minutes each, depending on the subject matter and context. Therefore, the duration of this in-depth interview was approximately 30 minutes. During these interviews, data were collected in the form of written notes and audio recordings to facilitate the researcher's understanding,

following the approach advocated by Dilshad and Latif (2013). The transcription of the data from voice recording, video recording, and interviewer's notes occurred promptly after each interview session, as recommended by McGrath et al. (2019). This immediate transcription allowed the researcher to commence the identification of analytical patterns and discern similarities and distinctions among the experiences of different interviewees.

The data analysis was conducted by thematic analysis with the primary purpose of systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting on patterns or themes within the data, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the research topic or question (Creswell, 2012). The steps required for this data analysis are generating initial codes to label or tag specific portions of the data aiming to encapsulate the essence of the information conveyed in the data and searching for patterns or themes within the data by grouping together codes that share similarities. Themes are overarching concepts or ideas that arise from the data and offer meaningful insights into the research topic, reviewing and refining the themes to ensure they accurately represent both the content and context of the data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The outcomes derived from 9 comprehensive interviews are outlined in this chapter, focusing on the brand encounter with Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Aligned with the research objectives, the chapter is segmented into sections. The initial part covers the demographic details of the participants, followed by the second part, which explores general behaviors when engaging with Let's Relax Spa and Massage by referring to 7Ps of Service Marketing. The final section centers on the participants' brand experience with Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

4.1 Demographics of Participants

As outlined in the methodology, individuals eligible for the interview sessions needed to belong to the millennial generation, specifically aged between 27 and 37, and live in Bangkok, Thailand. Additionally, participants were required to have utilized the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage at least three times within the past six months. The nine chosen participants for the research fell within the age range of 27 to 33, comprising six females and three males, all of whom were regular users of Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Regarding their occupations, five participants identified as entrepreneurs, three as company employees, one of the 3-company employees was a banker, and one was a freelance graphic designer. To ensure a diverse and comprehensive dataset, the researcher selected participants based on these specified profiles.

1. *Participant 1*: 30 years old, male, a banker, master's degree, income range of above 50,000 Baht/ month
2. *Participant 2*: 27 years old, female, an entrepreneur, bachelor's degree, income range of above 50,000 Baht/ month
3. *Participant 3*: 29 years old, female, an entrepreneur, bachelor's degree, income range of above 50,000 Baht/ month
4. *Participant 4*: 28 years old, female, a Company employee, master's degree, income range of 25,000-30,000 Baht/ month
5. *Participant 5*: 29 years old, male, an entrepreneur, bachelor's degree, income range of above 50,000 Baht/ month
6. *Participant 6*: 27 years old, female, an entrepreneur, master's degree, income range of above 50,000 Bath/ month
7. *Participant 7*: 33 years old, male, an entrepreneur, bachelor's degree, income range of above 50,000 Baht/ month
8. *Participant 8*: 28 years old, female, a Company employee, bachelor's degree, income range of 30,000-35,000 Baht/ month
9. *Participant 9*: 29 years old, female, a freelance graphic designer, bachelor's degree, income range of 30,000-35,000 Baht/ month

4.2 Perception of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's 7Ps of Service Marketing

The outcomes from the general inquiries concerning participants' overall behavior toward Let's Relax Spa and Massage are presented in this section of the study. The findings are categorized into seven main topics by referring to 7Ps of

Service Marketing, exploring their opinion towards price, place, promotion, product, people, process, and physical evidence.

Price

The exploration of the consumer's perception towards the price of Let's Relax Spa and Massage was mentioned in this section. The findings pertaining to this aspect have been categorized into only one theme for a comprehensive understanding.

Theme 1: Premium Experience on a Budget

The thematic essence extrapolated from the outcomes is intertwined with the judicious pricing of services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage, aligning seamlessly with the quality of services rendered. Participants collectively agree that they enjoy a premium experience with the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage without having to incur excessive costs.

“I love that the therapist here is not talkative which allows me to have some rest so that I can have a good experience on budget.”

(Participant 2)

“...Having aroma massage here, I feel like I have a premium experience, but it costs around a thousand something.”

(Participant 3)

“I spend not more than 1,000 per session but I was treated well. They served me the best mango sticky rice.”

(Participant 4)

According to the feedback received, participants hold a collective positive sentiment towards Let’s Relax Spa and Massage, particularly in terms of pricing. This positivity is linked to the perceived fairness of the pricing, especially when compared with the premium-quality services experienced by the participants.

Place

This topic pertains to participants’ opinions regarding the location of Let’s Relax Spa and Massage’s branches. The outcomes related to this area have been grouped into only one primary theme.

Theme 1: Prime location with convenient accessibility

The primary theme extracted from the findings pertains to the convenient and well-suited placement of Let’s Relax Spa and Massage, seamlessly harmonizing with the urban lifestyles of the participants. The spa's location was also perceived as strategically positioned, facilitating effortless visits, particularly for participants residing near the establishment. The unanimous consensus among participants underscores the perceived excellence of Let’s Relax Spa and Massage's prime location.

“I have just 10 minutes walk from my place.”

(Participant 1)

“I live in Thonglor area. Let’s Relax Spa and Massage has two branches that are really near to my place, allowing me the convenience of either walking or a short 5-minute drive from my home.”

(Participant 2)

“I often meet my clients in central Bangkok like Siam; therefore, I always choose Let’s Relax Spa and Massage after the meeting because of its prime location and the availability of parking facilities.”

(Participant 3)

“My routine revolves around the Siam area, and I found that its branches are conveniently located in various prime areas that I occasionally visit.”

(Participant 6)

“I can use BTS to have a massage. It suits me because I don’t have my own car.”

(Participant 9)

Based on the feedback received, there is a shared positive sentiment among participants regarding Let’s Relax Spa and Massage’s strategic location. This positivity is attributed to its advantageous central location which matches with the

participants' urban lifestyle, facilitating convenient access via both public transportation and private vehicles.

Promotion

This subject revolves around the evaluation of promotions including advertising, or other promotional activities offered by Let's Relax Spa and Massage as perceived by participants, aiming to discern whether it stands as a pivotal factor influencing customer attraction and purchase intention. The findings in this domain have been categorized into one prominent theme.

Theme 1: No promotional information given by the brand

The second theme derived from the results is connected to participants who do not actively seek or engage with information about Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Participants mentioned that they had never been provided with information about the brand's features, such as recommendations for promotions or the benefits of the oil used during treatment.

“I sought the best deal, but the reception staff failed to recommend me.”

(Participant 1)

“I don't know the benefit of the oil being used during my aroma massage session.”

(Participant 3)

“I have never known about the price promotion.”

(Participant 5)

According to the results, there is a collective unfavorable sentiment among participants concerning Let’s Relax Spa and Massage's marketing communication instruments, such as advertising or other promotional tools, perceived as insufficient.

Product

This topic centers on participants' assessments of Let’s Relax Spa and Massage offerings, encompassing staff services, complimentary snacks, and Let’s Relax Lifestyle products. The objective is to know whether these factors play a significant role in influencing customer attraction and purchase intention. The outcomes in this sphere have been classified into three discernible themes.

Theme 1: Suitable Single Treatment Offering

This theme clarifies that the majority of participants usually opt for a single treatment during each visit to Let’s Relax Spa and Massage. They unanimously agree that focusing on a specific treatment, such as Thai Massage, head massage, or aroma massage, effectively relieves them from stress and pain. Additionally, participants express a preference for concentrating on specific areas, making comprehensive

packages with various treatments unnecessary. Moreover, they believe that opting for individual treatments is more time-efficient given their time limitations.

“I enjoy having aroma therapy here. It is suitable for my limited time”

(Participant 3)

“Each time I come, I choose only one treatment at a time either head massage or aroma massage.”

(Participant 4)

“Only Thai massage here can relieve my pain and stress.”

(Participant 9)

Theme 2: Let’s Relax Spa and Massage’s post-treatment snacks make Let’s Relax Spa and Massage Outstanding

The second theme discerned from the results pertains to the product which refers to post-treatment snacks offered by Let’s Relax Spa and Massage. The participants highlighted that the post-treatment snacks are the key factor that makes Let’s Relax Spa and Massage distinguish from its competitors and influences their continued preference for Let’s Relax Spa and Massage.

“Let’s Relax Spa and Massage’s Crispy Coconut Roll is the best.”

(Participant 2)

“Mango sticky rice makes me always come back to Let’s Relax Spa and Massage.”

(Participant 3)

Theme 3: Let’ Relax Lifestyle products cannot attract my interest

This theme explains that most participants do not show interest in Let’s Relax Lifestyle products, including personal care and hair care items. They find the scents not unique enough for regular use, and the packaging lacks appeal to capture their attention.

“I don’t think it can attract my attention. The packaging is too simple.”

(Participant 3)

“I prefer to buy the personal care that looks fancier.”

(Participant 4)

“I tried the sample product, but I don’t think its fragrance is attractive.”

(Participant 8)

Based on the obtained results, participants share a positive overall sentiment regarding Let’s Relax Spa and Massage's offerings, encompassing spa and massage services, as well as post-treatment snacks. Nonetheless, it's noteworthy that Millennial participants exhibited a lack of interest in the Let’s Relax Lifestyle product, attributing this disinterest to its perceived lack of uniqueness.

People

This subject focuses on participants' evaluations of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's personnel, encompassing both reception staff and therapists, with a specific focus on their skills, attitudes, and interactions that may influence the overall service experience. The results within this area have been organized into a singular prominent theme.

Theme 1: There is room for improvement in staff service.

This theme drawn from the results pertains to participants' perspectives on the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage, particularly concerning the staff and therapists. Some participants mentioned that there is potential for enhancement in the services provided by the staff and therapists, which could elevate the overall experience at Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

“...Low engagement of the therapist. I mean she didn't ask me about my preference. She works like a robot. Anyway, she did her job on massaging well.”

(Participant 1)

“I dislike when I cannot make an appointment when I have pains and aches. The staff did not try to find the available time slot for me.

(Participant 2)

“I ask her to massage harder, but she cannot.”

(Participant 7)

Derived from the gathered feedback, participants hold an unfavorable view of Let's Relax Spa and Massage regarding the spa's personnel. Specifically, they highlighted shortcomings in the standard massage technique and the staff's willingness to assist, expressing that these aspects fell short of meeting their expectations.

Process

This topic centers on participants' assessments of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's service processes, covering both reception staff and therapists. It delves into the evaluation of service procedures. The findings within this domain have been categorized into one notable theme.

Theme 1: Its Standard procedure makes me trust.

This theme concerns participants' viewpoints regarding the service protocol administered by the staff at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. A significant number of participants express confidence in Let's Relax Spa and Massage, attributing it to the consistent and high-quality service procedure they encounter consistently, commencing from the reception and extending through the post-treatment phase.

“Because it is a big spa chain, I truly believe that Let's Relax Spa and Massage has a strong procedure for training to ensure the efficiency of its therapists

(Participant 1)

“Let’s Relax Spa and Massage has a good reputation. I trust in its services.”

(Participant 5)

“Whenever I use the service at Let’s Relax Spa and Massage even in different branches, the services are consistent. So, I can trust in its services that would never disappoint me.”

(Participant 8)

Derived from the collected feedback, participants maintain a positive outlook on Let’s Relax Spa and Massage in terms of the spa's process, perceived as its standardized procedure. This particular aspect is identified as a key factor in instilling trust, especially among Generation Y participants.

Physical Evidence

This subject revolves around the participants' appraisals of the tangible facets of Let’s Relax Spa and Massage, encapsulating all the service materials within the establishment. The outcomes within this realm have been systematically organized into a singular noteworthy theme.

Theme 1: Venue cleanliness

The discerned theme emanating from the outcomes is linked to the conspicuous perception of participants regarding the physical evidence of Let’s Relax Spa and Massage. This encompasses the cleanliness of the venue, including all service

materials. Participants conveyed that their inclination to exclusively choose Let's Relax Spa and Massage is rooted in a lack of trust in the cleanliness standards of other establishments.

“I have never used the services elsewhere because I trust only the cleanliness of Let's Relax.”

(Participant 5)

“I am concerned a lot about hygiene.”

(Participant 6)

Based on the gathered feedback, participants uphold a favorable viewpoint regarding the physical evidence of Let's Relax Spa and Massage, encompassing the venue and all service materials. The cleanliness of the venue is notably and widely perceived by them.

Themes associated with the participants' general behavior and the 7Ps in Service Marketing while utilizing the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage were identified through thematic analysis. As depicted in Table 4.2, commonalities in keywords and phrases derived from participants' responses were consolidated into themes.

Table 1 Participant's Perception on Let's Relax Spa and Massage's 7Ps in Thematic Analysis

7Ps	Themes	Keywords & Phrases
Price	1) Premium Experience on a Budget	“...Having aroma massage here, I feel like I have a premium experience, but it costs around a thousand something.”
Place	1) Prime location with convenient accessibility	“My routine revolves around the Siam area, and I found that its branches are conveniently located in various prime areas that I occasionally visit.”
Promotion	1) No promotional information given by the brand	“I have never known about the price promotion.”
Product	1) Suitable Single Treatment Offering	“I enjoy having aroma therapy here. It is suitable for my limited time”
	2) Let's Relax Spa and Massage's post-treatment snacks make Let's Relax Spa and Massage Outstanding	“Mango sticky rice makes me always come back to Let's Relax Spa and Massage.”
	3) Let' Relax Lifestyle products cannot attract my interest	“I don't think it can attract my attention. The packaging is too simple.”
People	1) There is room for improvement in staff service.	“I ask her to massage harder, but she cannot.”
Process	1) Its Standard procedure makes me trust.	“Because it is a big spa chain, I truly believe that Let's Relax Spa and Massage has a strong

		procedure for training to ensure the efficiency of its therapists
Physical Evidence	1) Venue cleanliness	“I have never used the services elsewhere because I trust only the cleanliness of Let’s Relax.”

4.3 Brand Experience of Thai Users Towards Let’s Relax Spa and Massage

This study section outlines the results concerning consumers' experiences with the Let’s Relax Spa and Massage brand. The in-depth interview question for this part was adapted from a previous study conducted by Kitichaiwat (2018). The outcomes are organized into four sections corresponding to the four dimensions of brand experience explored by Let’s Relax Spa and Massage: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions. The sensory dimension is discussed in relation to individuals' five senses, encompassing sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. The affective dimension focuses on the emotions evoked by brands. The intellectual dimension encompasses participants' understanding of the brand's features, benefits, and unique selling propositions. The behavioral dimension involves the actions and behaviors of consumers in response to the brand, encompassing various interactions such as purchasing decisions, product usage, brand advocacy, or changes in consumer lifestyle (Beig & Nika, 2019). The findings, derived from in-depth interviews, are detailed under each dimension as follows.

Sensory Dimension

The study delved into the sensory dimension of the brand experience, considering sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste provided by Let's Relax Spa and Massage. This dimension covers the overall ambiance and atmosphere, including specific scents, sounds, or visual elements. Participants were questioned about how their five senses are engaged when availing services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. The results for this dimension are categorized into five themes.

Theme 1: Sight: Relaxing Decoration

The first theme identified from the results is linked to participants' perceptions of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's decor. Participants unanimously concur that the decoration of Let's Relax Spa and Massage contributes to a tranquil environment with its warm tones and contemporary Thai style.

“Let's Relax Spa and Massage's decor gives me a chill. It seems simple but I can know that they delicately select its construction material and its furniture.”

(Participant 2)

“...Contemporary Thai style but makes me relaxed.”

(Participant 5)

“I love how they decorate in minimal style with the warm tone of decoration.”

(Participant 7)

Theme 2: Smell: Nice but not unique

The second theme derived from the results is associated with participants' views on the scent at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Participants can remember the aroma, noting it as pleasant but not particularly distinctive or having a signature scent.

“I perceive that the scent there is good, but it doesn't make me remember that scent.”

(Participant 3)

“The fragrance induces relaxation for me, yet I only recall it as a general aromatic scent.”

(Participant 4)

Theme 3: Sound: Appropriate instrumental music at the right volume level

The third theme identified from the findings relates to participants' perspectives on the sound ambiance at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Participants unanimously affirm that the instrumental music employed by this brand is fitting and avoids being overly Thai traditional in style. Furthermore, it is played at an optimal volume level, providing participants with a conducive environment to relax during their treatment sessions.

“Although the venue is in the busy area located near BTS, the music here can distract me from the chaos.”

(Participant 1)

“I love how wisely they select the background music. It’s not too traditional. It gives me the modern vibes.”

(Participant 3)

“...Appropriate sound volume. I can have some rest during the treatment session.”

(Participant 8)

Theme 4: Touch: Average massage technique

The fourth theme uncovered from the results concerns participants' opinions about the touch or massage techniques delivered by therapists at Let’s Relax Spa and Massage. In general, participants expressed satisfaction with the standard of massage style, although the therapists do not employ any extraordinary massage techniques. Nevertheless, participants still experience a sense of relaxation during the session.

“...Nice but I cannot recall the techniques that they used. I had slept for the whole session.”

(Participant 1)

“They gave me just a standard massage technique. I think in terms of the price, it should be better.”

(Participant 2)

“Their massage style makes me relieved from the stress.”

(Participant 9)

Theme 5: Taste: Best test ever!

The final theme revealed from the findings pertains to participants' perspectives on the flavor of the products at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. This aspect specifically delved into the snacks or drinks provided at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Participants unanimously concur that the snacks and beverages offered are outstanding. These refreshments stand out as one of the primary reasons why they continue to choose the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

“I love the crispy coconut roll here so much. I buy it anytime I go to Let's Relax.”

(Participant 2)

“Mango Sticky Rice makes me always come back to Let's Relax Spa and Massage.”

(Participant 3)

“They just served the best post-treatment snacks.”

(Participant 8)

Following the interviews regarding the sensory experience, there is a consistent positive sentiment among participants regarding Let's Relax Spa and Massage. This positivity is linked to the soothing decor, resulting in a positive visual experience for users, along with the pleasant aroma and calming instrumental music

that contributes to the participants' relaxation during services, even though they may not be exceptionally unique. Furthermore, despite providing a standard massage technique, participants expressed satisfaction with the acceptable quality of the massage. Ultimately, the standout factor that distinguishes Let's Relax Spa and Massage from others is the taste of the refreshments, including hot tea, crispy coconut rolls, and mango sticky rice.

Affective Dimension

The research explored the affective dimension of the brand experience, examining the emotions elicited by the Let's Relax Spa and Massage brand. This dimension encompasses participants' emotions, both positive and negative. As per the literature review, positive affective experiences have the potential to establish a profound emotional bond with the brand, fostering loyalty and augmenting customer satisfaction. The outcomes for this dimension are classified into three themes.

Theme 1: I am satisfied with the overall elements.

The initial theme derived from the findings is associated with participants' favorable views on the ambiance of Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Participants collectively agree that the overall environment, including the elegant yet understated decor, the optimal temperature within the venue, and the background music, contributes to their positive experience. Additionally, participants expressed satisfaction with the post-treatment snacks. Lastly, they are impressed by the strategic location, facilitating easy access.

“I love the crispy coconut roll here so much. I buy it anytime I go to Let’s Relax.”

(Participant 2)

“I love its prime location which suits my urban lifestyle.”

(Participant 7)

“I like its decoration, especially in the treatment room. It is Instagramable which allows me to post on social media.”

(Participant 9)

Theme 2: Let’s Relax Spa and Massage’s loyal customers

The second discerned theme from the findings is associated with participants exhibiting steadfast loyalty to Let’s Relax Spa and Massage. Participants uniformly communicated a lack of trust in other spa establishments that were unfamiliar to them, and as a result, they maintained their preference for Let’s Relax Spa and Massage.

"I have never used massage services anywhere else if it's not Let's Relax Spa and Massage."

(Participant 6)

"I used to face difficulties scheduling appointments at Let’s Relax. However, I chose not to receive a massage elsewhere because I lack trust in other places."

(Participant 8)

Theme 3: There is room for improvement in terms of service personnel

The second theme drawn from the results pertains to participants' perspectives on the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage, particularly concerning the staff and therapists. Some participants mentioned that there is potential for enhancement in the services provided by the staff and therapists, which could elevate the overall experience at Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

“I dislike when I cannot make an appointment when I have pains and aches. The staff did not try to find the available time slot for me.

(Participant 2)

“I was disappointed by the service from the therapist the first time that I used the service at Let's Relax because she failed to massage as per my preference”

(Participant 3)

Following the interviews on the affective experience, a diverse range of sentiments emerged among participants concerning Let's Relax Spa and Massage. This sentiment is intricately tied to the comprehensive elements, encompassing visual aesthetics, sensory experiences, auditory components, and overall facilities that contribute to participant satisfaction. Moreover, they had been a loyal customer because their preference towards the brand changed to brand loyalty. However, a subset of participants identified areas for improvement in how they are treated by

reception staff and therapists. Addressing and refining these aspects could significantly enhance the overall customer experience with the brand.

Intellectual Dimension

The study explored the intellectual dimension of the brand experience, emphasizing the cognitive aspects of engagement with Let's Relax Spa and Massage. This dimension involves participants' comprehension of the brand's features, including benefits and unique selling points. The findings for this dimension are organized into two themes.

Theme 1: Brand features engagement

This theme identified from the results is related to participants' interaction with the features of Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Participants noted that their engagement with the brand was influenced by the promotional information provided by the reception staff. Additionally, a participant typically peruses the physical information about the usage and benefits of the Onsen whenever she uses the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage at a specific branch.

“Whenever I go to Let's Relax Onsen at Grand Centre Point Thonglor branch, I usually read the information about the benefits of the Onsen. I think it is useful for a person like me.”

(Participant 2)

“The promotional information makes me think about how worth the package is.”

(Participant 3)

Theme 2: No information given by the brand

The second theme derived from the results is connected to participants who do not actively seek or engage with information about Let’s Relax Spa and Massage.

Participants mentioned that they had never been provided with information about the brand's features, such as recommendations for promotions or the benefits of the oil used during treatment.

“I sought the best deal, but the reception staff failed to recommend me.”

(Participant 1)

“I don’t know the benefit of the oil being used during my aroma massage session.”

(Participant 3)

“I have never known about the price promotion.”

(Participant 5)

Following the interviews on the intellectual experience, most participants did not receive information about the brand's features directly from the brand, although a few did. In general, they believed it would enhance their experience if both the reception staff and the therapists offered useful information or provided an introduction before the treatment.

Behavioral Dimension

The research delved into the behavioral dimension of the brand experience, focusing on how participants engage with Let's Relax Spa and Massage. This dimension encompasses participants' purchasing decisions and their advocacy for Let's Relax Spa and Massage. The results for this dimension are categorized into two themes.

Theme 1: The brand changes how I behave.

This theme uncovered from the results is connected to participants' decision-making process when purchasing services from other establishments. Participants explained that they meticulously consider the service elements offered by other brands, including the perceived value in relation to the price. If there is a perceived mismatch between the service and the price, they are inclined not to use the service from that establishment. Furthermore, some participants altered their behavior, as exemplified by Participant 1.

“Previously, I normally go to the massage venue with my sister. But right now, I realize that I can go alone when using services at Let's Relax because it is easily accessed.”

(Participant 1)

“I am more attentive to how the therapist provides the massage session.”

(Participant 5)

“I don’t use the services at the places that cannot offer a reasonable price.”

(Participant 8)

Theme 2: Advocacy of Let’s Relax’s benefit

This theme unveiled from the results relates to participants' advocacy for the Let’s Relax Spa and Massage brand. Participants unanimously agreed on the fairness of the price when reflecting on the experience they gained with each use of services at Let’s Relax Spa and Massage. Additionally, concerning convenience, participants highlighted the ease of access.

“It is worth to advocate about its reasonable price.”

(Participant 1)

“You can come here by BTS.”

(Participant 3)

“...Best experience on a budget”

(Participant 8)

Themes related to consumers' brand experience with Let’s Relax Spa and Massage were developed through thematic analysis. As illustrated in Table 4.3, commonalities among keywords and phrases extracted from participants' responses were condensed into themes.

Table 2 Brand Experience in Thematic Analysis

Dimension	Themes	Keywords & Phrases
Sensory	1) Sight: Relaxing Decoration	“Let’s Relax Spa and Massage’s decor gives me a chill.”
	2) Smell: Nice but not unique	“...I only recall it as a general aromatic scent.”
	3) Sound: Appropriate instrumental music at the right volume level	“...Appropriate sound volume. I can have some rest during the treatment session.”
	4) Touch: Average massage technique	“They gave me just a standard massage technique. I think in terms of the price, it should be better.”
	5) Taste: Best taste ever!	“They just served the best post-treatment snacks.”
Affective	1) I am satisfied with the overall elements.	“I love its prime location which suits my urban lifestyle.”
	2) Let’s Relax Spa and Massage’s loyal customers	“I have never used massage services anywhere else if it's not Let's Relax Spa and Massage.”
	3) There is room for improvement in terms of service personnel	“I ask her to massage harder, but she cannot.”
Intellectual	1) Brand features engagement	“The promotional information makes me think about how worth the package is.”
	2) No information given by the brand	“Seeking the best deal, but the reception staff failed to recommend me.”
Behavioural	1) The brand changes how I behave.	“...more attentive to how the therapist provides the massage session”
	2) Advocacy of Let’s Relax’s benefit	“It is worth to advocate about its reasonable price.”

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a thorough recapitulation of the research findings, followed by a discussion aligning with the research objectives. It encompasses a summary and analysis of consumers' brand experience with Let's Relax Spa and Massage. The chapter outlines the limitations of the current study and suggests avenues for future research. Concluding this chapter, practical implications drawn from the study are presented.

5.1 Summary

Qualitative data were gathered between October 15 and October 31, 2023. Nine participants underwent in-depth interviews to gain insights into their experiences with the Let's Relax Spa and Massage brand. The interview was structured into three segments: the initial part focused on participants' demographic details, the second part delved into general questions about their behavior when using the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage linked with its 7Ps, and the final section explored consumers' brand experience with Let's Relax Spa and Massage. The key findings for each section are summarized below.

Perception of Let's Relax Spa and Massage's 7Ps of Service Marketing

Participants were inquired about their general behaviors while availing services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage, which can be correlated with Let's Relax Spa and Massage's 7Ps of Service Marketing: price, place, promotion, product,

people, process, and physical evidence. In each category, participants offered insights into their specific opinions within the context of Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

Regarding the elements of price, place, product, process, and physical evidence, participants held a positive perception. The strategic location of Let's Relax Spa and Massage branches, facilitating easy access through both private and public transportation, constituted the sole theme for the place aspect: (i) Prime location with convenient accessibility. Additionally, participants positively acknowledged the reasonable pricing of Let's Relax Spa and Massage, aligning seamlessly with the premium products provided. Overall, participants expressed satisfaction with the individual treatments tailored to their preferences. However, the inclusion of complementary post-treatment snacks and Let's Relax Lifestyle products, such as personal care and haircare items, presented a mixed response. While the first two product categories garnered satisfaction, the lifestyle products failed to capture interest due to perceived lack of uniqueness in scent and packaging. Consequently, the theme for the price aspect was identified as (i) Premium Experience on a Budget, and the product-related themes included (i) Suitable Single Treatment Offering, (ii) Let's Relax Spa and Massage's post-treatment snacks make Let's Relax Spa and Massage Outstanding, and (iii) Let' Relax Lifestyle products cannot attract my interest. The process, encompassing service procedure, received positive feedback, with participants acknowledging Let's Relax Spa and Massage's strong standard procedures that fostered trust. Hence, the theme for this aspect was defined as (i) Standard procedure makes me trust. Lastly, physical evidence, including the venue and service materials, garnered positive perceptions primarily due to cleanliness, leading to the sole theme: (i) Venue cleanliness.

On the contrary, in terms of people and promotion, participants expressed less favorable views, citing room for improvement in service personnel. The theme for the people aspect was identified as (i) There is room for improvement in staff service, while the theme for promotion was (i) No promotional information given by the brand.

Customer's Brand Experience towards Let's Relax Spa and Massage

Participants were requested to elaborate on their encounters with Let's Relax Spa and Massage across four dimensions, as conceptualized by Brakus et al. (2009). These dimensions encompassed the sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral aspects. Within each dimension, participants provided insights into their specific experiences within the context of Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

In the realm of *sensory experiences*, participants engaged with Let's Relax Spa and Massage through the five senses: sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. Delving into the visual aspect, participants found the venue's decoration, characterized by a contemporary Thai modern and minimal style with a soothing color palette, to evoke a profound sense of relaxation. As for the fragrance within the venue, participants described it as pleasant but not distinctive enough to be easily recalled. Regarding the auditory experience, participants expressed contentment with the background music, noting its appropriateness and deviation from overly traditional Thai styles, maintaining an agreeable volume level.

When it came to the tactile dimension, participants reported a standard massage technique employed by therapists at Let's Relax Spa and Massage, which, while not extraordinary, induced a sense of relaxation during the session. Finally, in the realm of taste, participants unanimously praised Let's Relax Spa and Massage for delivering an exceptional post-treatment culinary experience. The offerings, including hot tea, mango sticky rice, and crispy coconut rolls, were identified as standouts that set Let's Relax Spa and Massage apart from others, leaving a lasting impression on every participant.

Overall, participants conveyed favorable sentiments regarding the sensory dimension. Thematic analysis revealed five key themes from the findings, encompassing (i) Sight: Serene Decoration, (ii) Smell: Pleasant yet not distinctive, (iii) Sound: Appropriate instrumental music at optimal volume, (iv) Touch: Standard massage technique, and (v) Taste: Exceptional culinary experience, deemed the best ever!

Concerning the *affective dimension*, participants collectively expressed contentment with various facets of Let's Relax Spa and Massage, encompassing the ambiance, ambient temperature, music, and after-treatment refreshments. Moreover, they had been a loyal customer because their preference towards the brand changed to brand loyalty. Nevertheless, a subset believed that enhancements, particularly in the staff and therapist interactions, could elevate their emotional connection to Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Two discernible themes emerged from the findings: (i) I am satisfied with the overall elements, (ii) Let's Relax Spa and Massage's loyal customers, and (iii) There is room for improvement in terms of service personnel.

Within the *intellectual dimension*, a subset of participants engaged in cognitive processes during their interactions with Let's Relax Spa and Massage staff. This reflective engagement was evident, for example, when participants considered promotional information relayed by reception staff or when reading physical materials. Conversely, the majority of participants had not received direct information from the brand about its features, including promotions and the benefits of treatment oils. Consequently, two distinct themes emerged from this dimension: (i) Engaging with Brand Features and (ii) No information given by the brand.

Lastly, within the *behavioral dimension*, participants detailed their interactions with the brand and the subsequent shifts in their behavior post-experience at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. When it comes to purchasing decisions, participants now meticulously weigh service elements provided by other brands against perceived value and pricing considerations. Moreover, the strategic location of Let's Relax Spa and Massage led to changes in behavior, as one participant transitioned from having massages with a companion to going alone. Notably, participants actively advocate for the brand, highlighting the affordability of Let's Relax Spa and Massage compared to the quality of the experience and emphasizing the brand's convenient accessibility. These findings are divided into two key themes: (i) The brand changes how I behave, and (ii) Advocacy of Let's Relax's benefit.

5.2 Discussion

The following section delves into the study's discoveries. The initial part scrutinizes consumers' general conduct within the context of their generational age and the service marketing scenario. The concluding part scrutinizes consumers' brand experience with its four dimensions concerning Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

Millennial Generation's Perception of Let's Relax Spa and Massage 7Ps Service Marketing

Apparently, Millennial participants, often recognized as a generation grappling with heightened stress levels due to their fast-paced lifestyles (Aetna, 2013; American Psychological Association, 2018; Goldman Sachs, 2018; Kumar, 2017), frequently turn to Let's Relax Spa and Massage, or similar massage venues, as a means to seek relief from stress and alleviate pain. This trend aligns with the insights from Imwittaya and Kantabutr's study (2021), highlighting that Millennials perceive spa and massage services as integral to body relaxation and view them as rewards for their dedicated work endeavors. Notably, while Let's Relax Spa and Massage initially targeted foreign consumers, predominantly Chinese, the current trend indicates a growing awareness among Thai individuals, particularly Millennials, who are now considered secondary target customers. This demographic increasingly recognizes the efficacy of spas and massages as effective stress-relief methods, transforming it into a lifestyle choice, as justified by the SCBEIC survey (2022). This shift entails a consideration of the product, encompassing massage services, along with a focus on a convenient location that aligns seamlessly with their urban lifestyle.

It becomes evident that Millennials place significant emphasis on the "place" element, considering it the most influential factor that motivates them to engage with the services offered at Let's Relax Spa and Massage. The accessibility of the spa's locations appears to be a crucial factor driving Millennial patronage. Simultaneously, the participants recognize the value of reasonable pricing coupled with premium service offerings. This underscores the importance of both geographical accessibility and affordability as key determinants in service marketing strategies, contributing to participant satisfaction with Let's Relax Spa and Massage and fostering continued usage. This observation aligns with the insights from Kotler and Kelly's study (2016), which highlighted the role of service marketing in elevating customer satisfaction and cultivating enduring relationships.

From the feedback about the spa personnel, participants voiced criticism regarding the service provided by staff, particularly noting a deficiency in personalized attention. Despite acknowledging the need for improvement, participants opted not to switch to alternative spa and massage venues. The capacity to comprehend or care for consumers aligns with the concept of "Empathy" in the SERVQUAL model. The findings suggest a shift in the significance of empathy among present-day Thai Millennials, in contrast to the findings of a prior study by Snoj and Mumel in 1999, which indicated that empathy held the highest priority. Contemporary Thai Generation Y appears to place greater emphasis on tangible aspects such as the venue's aesthetics, cleanliness, and the professionalism of service personnel.

Customer's brand experience towards Let's Relax Spa and Massage

The research outcomes, coupled with insights from earlier studies, contribute to an enhanced understanding of the brand experience among Millennial customers across the sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions. The ensuing discussion delves into the brand experience associated with Let's Relax Spa and Massage.

Commencing with the *sensory dimension*, which was perceived as the most important dimension for Thai Millennials, five discernible themes materialized: (i) Sight: Relaxing Decoration, (ii) Smell: Nice but not unique, (iii) Sound: Appropriate instrumental music at the right volume level, (iv) Touch: Average massage technique, and (v) Taste: Best taste ever, Regarded as the Best. Primarily, themes (i), (iii), and (v) garnered positive evaluations from participants. Participant 3's remark, "Mango Sticky Rice makes me always come back to Let's Relax Spa and Massage," aligns with Desfitrina et al.'s (2019) study, emphasizing the impact of post-service brand experience on repurchase intentions. Additionally, participants' positive perceptions of the visually pleasing ambiance at Let's Relax Spa and Massage, characterized by relaxing decor and warm color tones, correlate with Ruenrom and Pattaratanakun's (2018) findings, underscoring the influence of color on customer purchase intentions in the spa and massage industry.

In terms of the affective dimension, the data revealed two prominent themes: (i) My overall satisfaction with the elements, (ii) Loyalty among Let's Relax Spa and Massage's customers, and (iii) There is room for improvement in terms of service

personnel. Themes (i) and (ii) suggest that a positive affective experience has the potential to foster brand loyalty. In essence, the findings imply a tendency for consumers to engage in repeat purchases, aligning with the observations made in Wu et al.'s study (2012). Interestingly, the results from this study indicated that Millennial participants exhibited loyalty to Let's Relax Spa and Massage, contradicting the general trends observed in Millennials. Typically, Millennials display relatively lower brand loyalty, often exploring offerings from competitors, as noted by the NPD Group (2016). Despite participants placing less emphasis on staff or therapist interactions and prioritizing the overall tangible experience, they acknowledge that heightened attention to detail or a more personalized service approach within the spa and service industry could enhance their satisfaction. This sentiment aligns with Alsop's (2008) findings, noting that Millennials tend to view themselves as valuable and have elevated expectations for acknowledgment and personalized attention. Additionally, when the service provider demonstrates concern and is capable of addressing the customer's needs, it corresponds to the "empathy" dimension in service quality. In line with the research conducted by Snoj and Mumel (1999), participants emphasize the significance of empathy, defined as the ability to understand customers and make them feel valued, as a crucial aspect of their experience.

In the realm of intellectual experience, two distinctive themes surfaced: (i) Engaging with Brand Features and (ii) No information given by the brand. The majority of participants expressed a lack of information provided by the brand, such as promotional recommendations and treatment introductions. While some engaged with the brand, they prioritized the overall experience over specific details. This

contrasts somewhat with the findings of Brakus et al. (2009), which suggest that intellectual engagement can bolster brand knowledge, impact purchase decisions, and influence customer preferences.

Lastly, the findings of the behavioral dimension unveiled two key themes: (i) The brand changes how I behave, and (ii) Advocacy of Let's Relax's benefit. Participants generally hold a positive outlook on this dimension, experiencing a shift in their behavior post-services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage, placing heightened emphasis on value considerations. Moreover, they actively endorse the brand, emphasizing its affordability relative to the quality of experience and underscoring the brand's convenient accessibility. These outcomes align with the insights from Beig and Nika (2019), highlighting the correlation between positive behavioral experiences, increased customer engagement, repeat patronage, and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Furthermore, the behavior of customers is notably influenced by the brand experience, as highlighted by Caru and Cova (2020).



5.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The lack of diversity in participants' occupation, income, and age in this set of in-depth interviews is considered the research's limitation. The participants in this study fall within the age range of 27-33 years, with the majority being entrepreneurs and having incomes surpassing 50,000 Baht. To introduce a broader spectrum of responses and perspectives, it would be beneficial to include participants from

different generational cohorts in future studies. This would enhance the overall representativeness and richness of the data.

The final constraint relates to the chosen research methodology. While the qualitative approach employed in this study yields in-depth and valuable insights, the limited sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future research endeavors could consider adopting a quantitative approach with statistical data, enhancing the ability to generalize results to a larger population. This approach would be particularly beneficial for gaining a broader understanding of trends and patterns in brand experiences.

In future research endeavors, employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches concurrently can offer a more thorough and nuanced comprehension of the research question or issue at hand. The integration of these two methodologies not only facilitates a more comprehensive understanding but also enhances the dynamism of the overall research process.



5.4 Practical Implications

Based on the study's findings, participants showcased positive brand experiences with Let's Relax Spa and Massage. Particularly within the *sensory dimension*, they were notably impressed by the calming decor, well-curated background music, and the delightful taste of post-treatment snacks. It can be inferred that the Thai minimal contemporary style and warm color tones of Let's Relax Spa and Massage services' décor resonate well with Millennials, contributing to a relaxed

atmosphere. The inclusion of post-treatment snacks, such as mango sticky rice, enhances the brand's memorability among customers. Therefore, it is crucial for Let's Relax Spa and Massage to prioritize maintaining consistent product quality, especially concerning taste, to further solidify its appeal to this demographic. However, aspects related to smell and touch, while viewed positively, did not emerge as standout features. Consequently, spa and massage service marketers could enhance the overall experience by emphasizing specific customer senses, such as introducing a signature scent in the venue or incorporating unique massage techniques. This approach aims to create a distinctive and memorable ambiance that sets the brand apart from others.

The outcomes related to the *affective dimension* were overwhelmingly positive. Participants expressed contentment with various elements offered by Let's Relax Spa and Massage, particularly its ambiance. Moreover, their preference can lead to brand loyalty. However, the findings underscored an opportunity for enhancement in the area of staff and therapist interactions. Notably, participants perceived a lack of engagement and minimal intention for customer consultation among the staff. While this was not deemed a major concern due to the overall positive elements provided by Let's Relax Spa and Massage, there is a recognized potential for improvement. This suggests that Millennials value personalized services even within the framework of standardized and tangible aspects. To enhance customer recall and recommendations, marketers should prioritize staff interactions with customers. Regular evaluations or customer surveys post-treatment can provide valuable insights, and more frequent training sessions for customer service and therapists can contribute to continuous improvement.

The results pertaining to the intellectual dimension revealed a limited intellectual experience provided by Let's Relax Spa and Massage. The majority of participants perceived that the brand's benefits and unique selling points were communicated at a suboptimal level. In instances where information was needed, participants often had to seek it out independently online. This insight, particularly from the Millennial perspective, underscores the significance of staff recommendations in areas such as promotional information and services. Therefore, it is imperative for spa and massage service marketers to prioritize the cognitive aspects of brand interaction. Even amid busy schedules, reception staff should offer personalized recommendations on promotions and treatments. Moreover, therapists should provide pre-treatment introductions to enhance customer understanding and engagement with the services they are about to receive.

Finally, the findings from the behavioral dimension elucidate those participants are now discerning in their purchasing decisions, carefully evaluating service elements offered by other brands in terms of perceived value and pricing considerations. Additionally, participants exhibit positive brand advocacy, unanimously highlighting the affordability of Let's Relax Spa and Massage in relation to the quality of the experience and emphasizing the brand's convenient accessibility. This implies that marketers can strategically underscore these aspects when promoting the brand, acknowledging their importance to Millennials. Successfully emphasizing these elements has the potential to enhance repeat purchases and generate positive word-of-mouth within this demographic.

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APPENDIX



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX A

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDELINE

Section 1: Demographics/ ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคล

1. Age/ อายุ
2. Gender/ เพศ
3. Occupation/ อาชีพ
4. Educational level/ ระดับการศึกษาของคุณ
5. Range of income/ รายได้ต่อเดือนของคุณอยู่ในช่วงประมาณเท่าใด

Section 2: General questions/ คำถามทั่วไป

1. Nowadays, there are various types of spa and massage services available. Why did you choose to use the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage? / ในปัจจุบันมีร้านที่ให้บริการสปาหรือนวดหลายรูปแบบให้เลือก ทำไมคุณถึงเลือกใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Massage and Spa
2. Besides Let's Relax Spa and Massage, have you used massage or spa services elsewhere? / นอกจาก Let's Relax Massage and Spa คุณได้ใช้บริการนวดหรือสปาที่ใดบ้างหรือไม่
3. What are the exact factors to motivate you to use the services at Let's Relax Spa and Massage? / อะไรเป็นปัจจัยที่แท้จริงที่ทำให้คุณอยากไปใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage
4. Which Let's Relax Spa and Massage location do you frequently visit for services? And why don't you want to switch to another branch? / Let's Relax Spa and Massage สาขาใดที่คุณใช้บริการบ่อยที่สุด และเพราะอะไรคุณถึงไม่เปลี่ยนไปใช้บริการที่สาขาอื่นบ้าง
5. How often do you use the service at Let's Relax Spa and Massage for 1 month? / คุณใช้บริการ Let's Relax Spa and Massage บ่อยแค่ไหนในระยะเวลา 1 เดือน
6. Who do usually go to Let's Relax Spa and Massage with? and why? / คุณมักไปใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage กับใคร และเพราะอะไร
7. How do you go to Let's Relax Spa and Massage? / คุณเดินทางไปใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage อย่างไร
8. What are the services that you use at Let's Relax Spa and Massage? / คุณใช้บริการใดที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage บ้าง

9. Do you buy any massage or spa packages from Let's Relax Spa and Massage? and what do you buy? / คุณได้ซื้อแพคเกจนวดหรือสปาที่ Let's Relax Massage and Spa หรือไม่ หากซื้อ คุณซื้อแพคเกจใด
10. Have you ever purchased the product from Let's Relax Lifestyle such as skincare or haircare products? If yes, why do you purchase? / ไม่ทราบว่าเคยซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ของ Let's Relax Lifestyle เช่น ผลิตภัณฑ์ดูแลผิวกายหรือผลิตภัณฑ์ดูแลเส้นผมหรือไม่ หากเคย ทำไม่คุณถึงเลือกซื้อ
11. If you were to invite a friend who has never used the services at Let's Relax Massage and Spa, what would you tell your friend? / ถ้าให้คุณชวนเพื่อนที่ไม่เคยมาใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Massage and Spa คุณจะบอกเพื่อนของคุณว่าอย่างไรบ้าง

Sections 3: Brand Experience of Thai Millennials towards Let's Relax Spa and Massage/ ประสบการณ์แบรนด์ของ Thai Millennials ที่มีต่อ Let's Relax Spa and Massage

1. Can you please share your overall experience with Let's Relax Spa and Massage?/ อยากให้คุณช่วยแชร์ประสบการณ์โดยรวมที่คุณมีต่อ Let's Relax Spa and Massage
2. How would you describe the ambiance and atmosphere at Let's Relax Spa and Massage?/ อยากให้คุณช่วยอธิบายบรรยากาศที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage
3. Can you recall any specific scents, sounds, or visual elements that made your experience memorable? / คุณพอจำกลิ่น เสียง หรือองค์ประกอบภายนอกอื่นๆ ที่ทำให้คุณประทับใจขณะใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage ได้หรือไม่
4. How did you feel emotionally during and after your sessions at Let's Relax Spa and Massage? / คุณรู้สึกอย่างไรขณะใช้บริการและหลังใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage
5. Were there any specific moments that made you particularly satisfied or disappointed? / คุณเคยมีประสบการณ์อะไรที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage ที่ทำให้คุณรู้สึกพอใจหรือไม่พอใจหรือไม่
6. Can you describe your interactions with the staff at Let's Relax Spa and Massage?/ ช่วยอธิบายว่าคุณมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับพนักงานที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage อย่างไร
7. Did the staff's behavior and service meet your expectations? Please provide examples./ พฤติกรรมและการให้บริการของพนักงานที่ Let's Relax Spa and Massage ตอบสนองความคาดหวังของคุณหรือไม่ หากสามารถตอบสนองความคาดหวังของคุณได้ รบกวนช่วยยกตัวอย่างให้ฟัง

8. After using the services at Let's Relax Massage and Spa, have you noticed any changes in your behavior? If yes, how have your behaviors changed? / หลังจากที่ได้ใช้บริการที่ Let's Relax Massage and Spa ไม่ทราบว่าคุณมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงพฤติกรรมบ้างหรือไม่ หากมี เปลี่ยนแปลงอย่างไร
9. What knowledge or information did you gain about the services or the brand during your visits? / คุณได้รับความรู้หรือข้อมูลใดที่เกี่ยวกับบริการหรือแบรนด์ของ Let's Relax Spa and Massage ขณะเข้าใช้บริการ
10. Were there any unique offerings or services that you found intellectually stimulating? / ไม่ทราบว่ามึบริการใดของ Let's Relax Spa and Massage ที่สามารถทำให้คุณครุ่นคิดหรือพิจารณาเป็นพิเศษหรือไม่
11. What are the elements in Let's Relax and Spa that make you happy? / สิ่งใดใน Let's Relax Spa and Massage ที่ทำให้คุณมีความสุขเมื่อมาใช้บริการ และทำให้อยากกลับมาใช้บริการอีกครั้ง



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