



Received: 16 August 2024

Revised: 27 September 2024

Accepted: 29 September 2024

# PRESENTATION OF LOCAL THAI CULTURE THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING AFFECTING THE DECISION TO USE CAFE BUSINESS SERVICES

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(This article belongs to the Theme 1: Business Performance, Competitiveness, and Sustainability)

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## Abstract

The objective of this research was to investigate the causal variables of experiential marketing and service quality affecting the decision to use cafe business services. The study was conducted with population living in Phuket province who used to use the cafe business services. The results of multiple regression analysis revealed that experiential marketing, which includes sensory experience, emotional experience, experiential thinking, experiential action, experiential relationship on the decision to use cafe business service, aimed to test hypotheses H1a-H1e found that all 5 aspects of experiential marketing significantly influenced the decision to use cafe business service at the 0.01 level. Hence, the hypotheses H1a-H1e were accepted. However, the independent variables of experiential marketing in all five aspects collectively predict and explain the dependent variable, which is the decision to use cafe business services, with an efficiency of 49.0%. Service quality, which includes tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy relationship on the decision to use cafe business services, aimed to test hypotheses H2a-H2e found that all 5 aspects of service quality significantly influenced the decision to use cafe business services at the 0.05 level. Hence, the hypotheses H2a-H2e were accepted. In this case, the independent variables from all four business innovation aspects jointly predict and explain the dependent variable, which is customer loyalty to coffee shop businesses, with an efficiency of 57.0%.

**Keywords:** Experiential Marketing, Service Quality, Decision to Use, Cafe Business

**Citation Information:** Prathumthong, C., & Prasomthong, N. (2024). Presentation of Local Thai Culture through Experiential Marketing Affecting the Decision to Use Cafe Business Services. *Asian Administration and Management Review*, 7(2), 282-291. <https://doi.org/10.14456/aamr.2024.41>

## **Introduction**

The coffee shop business, commonly referred to as “café” by the general public, has become widely popular, resulting in rapid expansion into various areas. Originating from economic urban districts and other significant locations, there are no fewer than three cafés within a single district. This phenomenon indicates a growing demand from consumers, some of whom visit solely for coffee, while others seek relaxation, using cafés as spaces for reading, meetings, or social gatherings (Thaisom, 2014). Furthermore, a report from Kasikorn Research Center (2018) analyzed the potential of the café business, capturing the attention of new entrepreneurs and forecasting its limitless growth trajectory. This has led to an influx of new entrants in the café sector, increasing competition while also resulting in a high business closure rate, given the diverse choices available to consumers. Consequently, operators must devise strategies to differentiate themselves and foster consumer loyalty. In establishing strategies to respond to customer needs, one noteworthy approach is experiential marketing. This strategy differs from traditional marketing, which often emphasizes product features and benefits, by focusing on enhancing customer experience, both physical and psychological experiences. The concept posits that experiential marketing goes beyond merely highlighting product characteristics and advantages; it also connects to individual identities and interests derived from each consumer's experiences (Kotler & Keller, 2011; Schmitt, 1999). The dimensions of these experiences encompass: 1) sensory experiences, 2) emotional experiences, 3) experiential thinking, 4) experiential action, and 5) experiential relationship. Additionally, service quality is crucial for service-based businesses. Parasuraman et al. (1985) defined service quality as the outcome between perceived and expected service from the customer. Since services are intangible, assessing service quality is more challenging than evaluating product quality. Evaluation occurs during service delivery and its outcomes, influencing customer perceptions of service quality through a comparison of perceived service delivery with customer expectations. Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed a tool called SERVQUAL to assess service quality, summarizing it into five dimensions: 1) tangibles, 2) reliability, 3) responsiveness, 4) assurance, and 5) empathy.

Phuket is a popular destination for both Thai and foreign tourists, known for its rich cultural and historical narrative that features intriguing stories and unique traits. According to the Fine Arts Department, the province boasts diverse ancient historical sites and districts, with distinctive cultural elements such as cuisine, dialects, and customs. Moreover, the region is home to a multi-ethnic population, speaking various languages and practicing different religions, beliefs, and faiths. Given the prominent characteristics outlined above, various service businesses incorporate these identities and cultures into their marketing strategies through experiential formats to engage customers. Therefore, the researcher aims to study how to Presentation of local Thai culture through experiential marketing affecting the decision to use cafe business services in Phuket province. The objectives were: 1) test the impact of presentation of local Thai culture through experiential marketing on decision to use cafe business services in Phuket; 2) test the impact service quality on decision to use cafe business services in Phuket. The findings will contribute to the development of experiential marketing strategies by integrating unique Thai identities and cultures, as well as enhancing service quality, ultimately leading to decisions in favor of utilizing café businesses or related sectors.

## **Literature Review**

### **Presenting Thai Culture through Experiential Marketing**

The Ministry of Culture stated that; Thai culture signifies a noble way of life that has been passed down through generations, representing human achievements in various aspects including material, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. Local culture serves as a distinctive identity for its community. Cultural continuity is sustained through human learning from the

past to the present, continually evolving and being created anew. Notably, important aspects of Thai culture that are esteemed internationally and evoke pride among Thais today include: 1) Thai language, which has had its own script since the Sukhothai era, established by King Ramkhamhaeng the Great in 1283, later undergoing revisions and developments due to interactions with various countries across economic, social, and cultural realms, gradually evolving into the Thai language we recognize today; 2) Religion, with the majority of Thai citizens practicing Buddhism, a religion that has long coexisted with the Thai community, influencing the development of other cultural aspects; Buddhist teachings guide the lives of Thais, with traditions and rituals dedicated to Buddhism consistently present in both collective and personal contexts; 3) Traditional attire, the attire of Thai people has its own distinct style and has evolved over a long period. Different forms of dress are adopted depending on the era and various occasions. Ranging from the Sukhothai period to the present, many people now dress in a globalized manner akin to Western styles or current fashion trends. However, the majority of Thais still cherish traditional Thai attire, as evidenced by campaigns encouraging the wearing of Thai silk or traditional Thai clothing during various ceremonies and even in daily life. This showcases an element of uniqueness that is admired by other nations, and 4) Arts and Crafts are considered an important aspect of Thai wisdom, representing works created for aesthetic beauty and bringing joy to the heart. Predominantly, these creations are inspired by Buddhism and exhibit respect and loyalty towards the monarchy, as seen in temple art, unique traditional Thai houses, and significant Thai artistic expressions such as architecture, sculpture, painting, performing arts, music, and literature.

Experiential marketing refers to a marketing strategy that differs from traditional marketing, which focuses on the features and benefits of a product as a strategy to enhance customer experience. This includes both physical and emotional experiences. This concept believes that experiential marketing doesn't only emphasize the features and benefits of a product, but also connects with the identity and interests from the individual experiences of each consumer. There are five aspects of experiential marketing strategies as follows (Kotler & Keller, 2011; Schmitt, 1999): 1) Sensory Experience (Sense): This refers to businesses aiming to create experiences for customers through the five senses: Sight, Sound, Scent, Taste, and Touch. It's to cater to the diverse needs of customers and stimulate their interest, making them more receptive to what the business offers, leading to positive feelings and attitudes towards the products and services. 2) Emotional Experience (Feel): This is where businesses aim to create experiences that impact the emotions and feelings of customers. The goal is to foster a positive attitude, leaving customers impressed and confident about the product, leading to pride in their purchases. This also nurtures a sense of commitment to the product and an unconditional acceptance of it. 3) Experiential Thinking (Think): This refers to businesses aiming to create a cognitive experience for customers. They aim to impart knowledge and understanding about their products and services and focus on providing creative problem-solving solutions. 4) Experiential Action (Act): This is where businesses aim to provide a direct experience to customers by motivating them to participate in marketing activities. It promotes customers to express their opinions and offers opportunities for customers to exchange views. This can lead to an adjustment in customer attitudes and behaviors in alignment with business objectives. 5) Experiential Relationship (Relate): Here, businesses intend to foster personal relationships and extend them to various groups of people. They aim to connect customer thoughts with others, leading to the integration of ideas, emotions, and behaviors. This approach ignites a trend of acceptance and effectively builds trust in the product.

This research study focuses on presenting local Thai culture through experiential marketing, which includes sensory experiences, emotional connections, cognitive insights, actions, and associations related to local Thai culture.

### **Experiential Marketing and the Decision to Use Services**

Research related to experiential marketing and loyalty: Lekcharoen (2016) studied experiential marketing in relation to the loyalty of talk show viewers. The research found that all aspects of experiential marketing are related to the loyalty of those who watch talk shows. Furthermore, Puvattanasin & Nurittamont (2017) investigated experiential marketing and the quality of relationships that influence customer loyalty at S&P bakeries in Bangkok and its surrounding provinces. They found that experiences marketing related to emotional experience, experiential action, and experiential relationship significantly influence bakery customer loyalty at a statistical significance level of 0.01. This is consistent with the findings of Phasuk et al. (2022) who studied how experiential marketing impacts the decision of Thai tourists to revisit Pattaya. The results of the research on the experiential marketing model that influences repeat tourism in the Pattaya city area for Thai tourists revealed that, based on confirmatory factor analysis, the experiential marketing model consists of sensory experience, emotional experience, experiential thinking, experiential action, and experiential relationship. This model has a significant impact on the loyalty towards tourist destinations. The synthesized literature led to the hypotheses H1a-H1e follow:

H1a: Experiential marketing in terms of sensory experience affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H1b: Experiential marketing in terms of emotional experience affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H1c: Experiential marketing in terms of experiential thinking affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H1d: Experiential marketing in terms of experiential action affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H1e: Experiential marketing in terms of experiential relationship affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

### **Service Quality and the Decision to Use Services**

Service quality is the outcome derived from the perception and expectations of service users. As services are intangible, assessing service quality is more challenging than evaluating product quality. Service quality evaluation occurs during the service delivery process and the results of that service. Customer perception of service quality stems from customers' evaluation processes, where they compare their perceptions of service delivery against their expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed a tool for assessing service quality called SERVQUAL (Service Quality), which summarizes five dimensions of service quality assessment: 1) Tangibles, which involve physical aspects of services that are observable and can be experienced, including equipment, personnel, and the use of symbols; 2) Reliability, defined as the ability to provide services that meet the promises made to clients, ensuring that each service delivered is accurate, appropriate, and consistent, fostering a sense of trust; 3) Responsiveness, which indicates the service provider's readiness and willingness to serve, as well as the ability to promptly address the clients' needs; 4) Assurance, which involves the provider's skills, knowledge, and ability to deliver services and meet client needs with politeness; and 5) Empathy, characterized by the ability to care for and attend to clients according to their diverse requirements.

A literature review on service quality and clients' service usage decisions reveals that Tayanuwat (2020) studied the service quality affecting the decision to use low-cost airlines, finding that service quality significantly impacts the decision to use domestic low-cost airlines at a statistical level of 0.05 in terms of responsiveness, empathy, tangibles, and assurance. This is consistent with the findings of Sombultawae (2018), who studied the quality factors influencing repeat purchases of food products through the "Food Panda Application," identifying that all five dimensions of service quality, including tangibles, reliability,

responsiveness, assurance, and empathy significantly influenced the decision to repurchase food products through the service through the "Food Panda Application with a statistical significance. Furthermore, it aligns with the research of Srivichai (2023), which examined the service quality affecting the decision to use restaurant services in Lamphang Province. The findings indicate that the quality service factors reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness positively affect the decision to use restaurant services in Lamphang Province with statistical significance. The results also correspond with the research conducted by Chienwattanasook & Thungwha (2019), which investigated the impact of service quality on the decision to reuse services among transportation providers. The findings revealed that Thailand Post Co., Ltd.'s service quality in terms of tangibility and assurance significantly influenced customers' decisions to reuse services ( $p < 0.05$ ). For Kerry Express (Thailand) Co., Ltd., service quality in terms of reliability and responsiveness also had a significant effect on customers' decisions to reuse services ( $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, SCG Yamato Express Co., Ltd. demonstrated that service quality in responsiveness, assurance, and empathy significantly influenced customers' decisions to revisit their services ( $p < 0.05$ ). The literature synthesis led to hypothesis 2 H2a-H2e

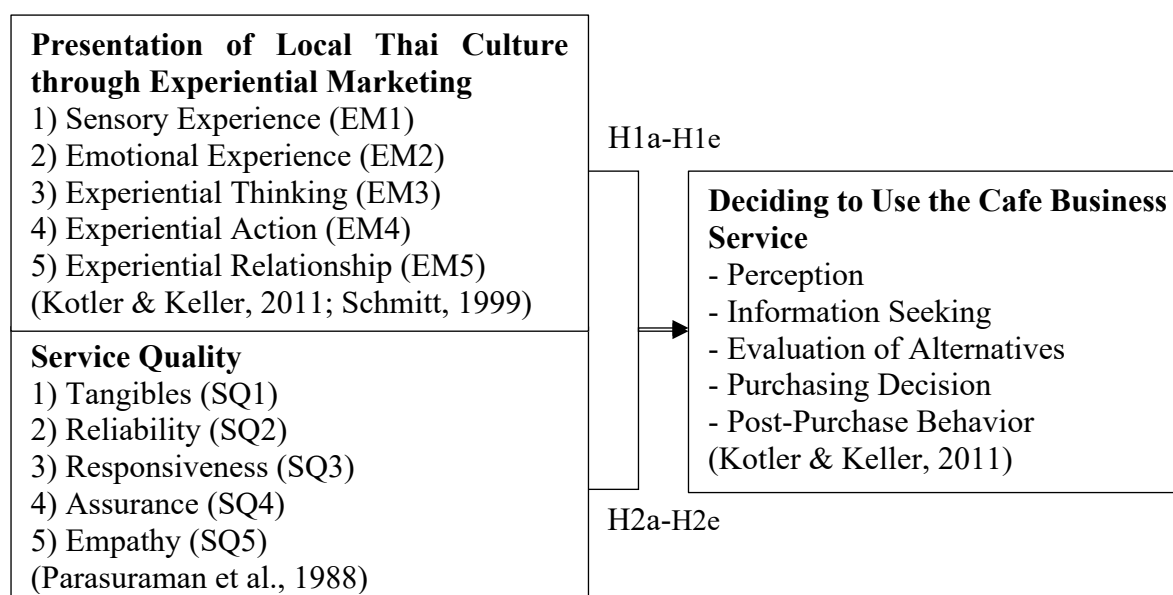
H2a: Service quality in terms of tangibles relationship affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H2b: Service quality in terms of reliability relationship affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H2c: Service quality in terms of responsiveness relationship affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H2d: Service quality in terms of assurance relationship affecting the decision to use cafe business services.

H2e: Service quality in terms of empathy relationship affecting the decision to use cafe business services.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## Research Methodology

This research aimed to study causal variables of Presentation of local Thai culture through experiential marketing affecting the decision to use cafe business services in Phuket province. The population used in the study were people who use the cafe business who live in Phuket province. As the exact number of the population was unknown, the sample size was determined

using W.G. Cochran's formula at a 0.05 error level, resulting in a sample size of 385 individuals (Cochran, 1977). The research tool used was a questionnaire, designed according to the research objectives, conceptual framework, and operational definitions. Tool for quality assurance research, consisting of 1) Content validity by 3 experts. The index of consistency using the IOC technique (Index of Item-Objective Congruence) found that each aspect had a value between 0.67-1.00, which was considered consistent and could be used (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). 2) The reliability test found that the value was 0.956, which had to be greater than 0.70 so it was acceptable (Hair et al., 2014) 3) The discrimination of power by means of correlation between questions and total scores of the whole questionnaire (Item-Total correlation) found that it was between 0.67-1.00.

Enter method of multiple regression analysis was used for data analysis, which can be written in the form of an equation as follow:

Equation 1 - The decision to use cafe business services.

The decision to use cafe business services =  $\beta_0 1 + \beta_1$  sensory experience +  $\beta_2$  emotional experience +  $\beta_3$  experiential thinking +  $\beta_4$  experiential action +  $\beta_5$  experiential relationship +  $\varepsilon$

Test of effects of experiential marketing regarding sensory experience, emotional experience, experiential thinking, experiential action, experiential relationship on the decision to use cafe business services according to hypothesis H1a-H1e

Equation 2 - The decision to use cafe business services.

The decision to use cafe business services =  $\beta_0 2 + \beta_6$  tangibles +  $\beta_7$  reliability +  $\beta_8$  responsiveness +  $\beta_9$  assurance +  $\beta_{10}$  empathy +  $\varepsilon$

Test of effects of business innovation regarding tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy relationship on the decision to use cafe business services according to hypothesis H2a-H2e

## Research Results

Analysis of correlation coefficients to determine the relationship between independent variables used in research found to be between 0.224-0.519, which is less than 0.80 (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). It showed that the independents had no relationship and could be used in prophecy. In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of independent variables was between 1.192-2.229, which did not cause Collinearity problems as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Correlation Between Variables Analysis

Variables	EM1	EM2	EM3	EM4	EM5	VIF
Mean	4.04	3.80	3.93	4.00	3.80	
S.D.	0.316	0.410	0.493	0.690	0.619	
EM1	1					1.192
EM2	0.224*	1				1.233
EM3	0.257**	0.252**	1			1.420
EM4	0.202**	0.464**	0.259**	1		2.229
EM5	0.240**	0.327**	0.289**	0.519**	1	2.187

\*\*statistically significant at .01; \*statistically significant at .05

The results of the study indicated that the multiple regression analysis of experiential marketing regarding sensory experience, emotional experience, experiential thinking, experiential action and experiential relationship on the decision to use cafe business services. It was found that, all five dimensions of experiential marketing were found to significantly impact the customer loyalty in cafe business with the statistical significance level of 0.01 ( $\beta = 0.063$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) ( $\beta = 0.245$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) ( $\beta = 0.265$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) ( $\beta = 0.326$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )

respectively. Therefore, hypotheses H1 a-H1 e were accepted. These five dimensions of experiential marketing collectively had a predictive power and explained 49.0% of the variance in customer loyalty in cafe business, as detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2** Multiple regression analysis of experiential marketing on the decision to use cafe business services

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable the decision to use cafe business services
1) Sensory Experience (EM1)	0.063** (0.004)
2) Emotional Experience (EM2)	0.348** (0.000)
3) Experiential Thinking (EM3)	0.245** (0.000)
4) Experiential Action (EM4)	0.265** (0.001)
5) Experiential Relationship (EM5)	0.326** (0.000)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.490
Maximum VIF	2.568

\*\*statistically significant at .01; \*statistically significant at .05

Analysis of correlation coefficients to determine the relationship between independent variables used in research found to be between 0.218-0.641, which is less than 0.80 (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). It showed that the independents had no relationship and could be used in prophecy. In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of independent variables was between 1.651-2.690, which did not cause collinearity problems as shown in Table 3

**Table 3** Correlation Between Variables Analysis

Variables	SQ1	SQ2	SQ3	SQ4	SQ5	VIF
Mean	4.20	4.27	4.40	4.22	4.36	
S.D.	0.621	0.650	0.609	0.576	0.500	
SQ1	1					1.651
SQ2	0.612**	1				2.166
SQ3	0.399**	0.609**	1			2.211
SQ4	0.240**	0.402**	0.402**	1		2.402
SQ5	0.641**	0.320**	0.218**	0.260**	1	2.690

\*\*statistically significant at .01; \*statistically significant at .05

The results of the study indicated that the multiple regression analysis of service quality regarding tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy relationship on the decision to use cafe business services. It was found that, all 5 dimensions of service quality were found to significantly impact on the decision to use cafe business services with the statistical significance level of 0.05 ( $\beta = 0.142$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) ( $\beta = 0.408$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) ( $\beta = 0.172$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) ( $\beta = 0.168$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) ( $\beta = 0.264$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) respectively. Therefore, hypotheses H2a-H2d were accepted. These 4 dimensions of service quality collectively had a predictive power and explained 57.0% of the variance in the decision to use cafe business services, as detailed in Table 4.

**Table 4** Multiple regression analysis of service quality on the decision to use cafe business services.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable the decision to use cafe business services
1) Tangibles (SQ1)	0.142** (0.002)
2) Reliability (SQ2)	0.408** (0.000)
3) Responsiveness (SQ3)	0.172* (0.018)
4) Assurance (SQ4)	0.168** (0.001)
5) Empathy (SQ5)	0.264** (0.004)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	5.70
Maximum VIF	2.180

\*\*statistically significant at .01, \*statistically significant at .05

## Conclusion and Discussion

The results of the study indicated that the multiple regression analysis of experiential marketing regarding sensory experience, emotional experience, experiential thinking, experiential action, experiential significantly influenced on the decision to use cafe business services. This aligned with conducted by Lekcharoen (2016) studied experiential marketing in relation to the loyalty of talk show viewers. The research found that all aspects of experiential marketing are related to the loyalty of those who watch talk shows. Furthermore, aligned with conducted by Puvattanasin & Nurittamont (2017) investigated experiential marketing and the quality of relationships that influence customer loyalty at S&P bakeries in Bangkok and its surrounding provinces. They found that experiences related to emotional experience, experiential action, and experiential relationship significantly influence bakery customer loyalty at a statistical significance level of 0.01. This is consistent with the findings of Phasuk et al. (2022) who studied how experiential marketing impacts the decision of Thai tourists to revisit Pattaya. The results of the research on the experiential marketing model that influences repeat tourism in the Pattaya city area for Thai tourists revealed that, based on confirmatory factor analysis, the experiential marketing model consists of sensory experience, emotional experience, experiential thinking, experiential action, and experiential relationship. This model has a significant impact on the loyalty towards tourist destinations.

The results of the study indicated that the multiple regression analysis of service quality regarding tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy relationship on the decision to use cafe business services. It was found that, all 5 dimensions of service quality were found to significantly impact on the decision to use cafe business services, this aligned with the research conducted by Tayanuwat (2020) studied the service quality affecting the decision to use low-cost airlines, finding that service quality significantly impacts the decision to use domestic low-cost airlines at a statistical level of 0.05 in terms of responsiveness, empathy, tangibles, and assurance. This is consistent with the findings of Sombultawae (2018), who studied the quality factors influencing repeat purchases of food products through the "Food Panda Application," identifying that all five dimensions of service quality, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy significantly influenced the decision to repurchase food products through the service through the "Food Panda Application" with a statistical significance. Furthermore, it aligns with the research of Srivichai (2023), which examined the service quality affecting the decision to use restaurant services in



Lamphang Province. The findings indicate that the quality service factors reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness positively affect the decision to use restaurant services in Lamphang Province with statistical significance.

### Suggestions

- 1) From the findings that experiential marketing influenced on customer the loyalty in cafe business. Therefore, cafe businesses should focus on experiential marketing as follows. 1.1) Create experiences for customers through the five senses: Sight, Sound, Scent, Taste, and Touch. It's to cater to the diverse needs of customers 1.2) Create experiences that impact the emotions and feelings of customers. The goal is to foster a positive attitude, leaving customers impressed and confident about the product, leading to pride in their purchases. 1.3) Create a cognitive experience for customers. They aim to impart knowledge and understanding about their products and services and focus on providing creative problem-solving solutions. 1.4) Provide a direct experience to customers by motivating them to participate in marketing activities. 1.5) Foster personal relationships and extend them to various groups of people.
- 2) From the findings that service quality influenced on the decision to use cafe business services. Therefore, cafe businesses should focus on business innovation as follows. 2.1) Tangibles, which involve physical aspects of services that are observable and can be experienced, including equipment, personnel, and the use of symbols. 2.2) Reliability, defined as the ability to provide services that meet the promises made to clients, ensuring that each service delivered is accurate, appropriate, and consistent, fostering a sense of trust; 2.3) Responsiveness, which indicates the service provider's readiness and willingness to serve, as well as the ability to promptly address the clients' needs; 2.4) Assurance, which involves the provider's skills, knowledge, and ability to deliver services and meet client needs with politeness; and 2.5) Empathy, characterized by the ability to care for and attend to clients according to their diverse requirements.

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**Data Availability Statement:** The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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