

ASSESSMENT 1

LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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PROGRAMME	IUMW : BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (DUAL AWARD)		
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ACADEMIC HONESTY / REFERENCING	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission, you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited, or quoted to complete this assessment.		

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills	20	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills	20	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	25	
4. Practical Application Skills	25	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice (marks taken from the Presentation)	10	

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)	%
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1.0 Identification and Exploration of the Problem

The location I chose for this task is Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon in Bandar Country Homes, Rawang, Selangor, Malaysia. I personally walked in the salon and had a conversation with the salon owner about the difficulties she has running the business. Since October 2020 the present shop has been in operation, following the owner who ran another shop at Kundang. The salon provides various hair and beauty services, including haircuts, styling, hair treatments, bridal makeup, facials, waxing, threading, manicure, pedicure and body massage.

Based on my interview and observation, the major concern that I found in this business is competition from local businesses. People have a variety of options with numerous beauty salons located in Country Homes. The owner said that the clients often compare her rates along with services with other salons. Other customers also ask about the product and treatments she offers since other salons might offer other treatments and products. This puts pressure on the owner to provide good-quality services while keeping her prices competitive.

However, when customers think mostly about price, new and existing customers may be hard to win over when there is competition. I've also noticed the salon is on the upper floor making it less convenient for some older clients. The owner will have to take on most of the day to day operations of the salon, which can also be a challenge when the day is busy with walk-in customers and appointments.

In order to make people interested in their products, the owner conducts regular promotions and special promotions, especially for Merdeka and Mother's Day/Women's Day. Overall, competition affects the owner's pricing decisions, customer choices and the sustainability of the business within the local beauty industry.



Figure 1.0: Interview with the owner of Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon, Rawang



Figure 1.1: Interior of Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon, Rawang



Figure 1.2: Exterior and location of Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon, Rawang

2.0 Academic Exploration and Problem Definition

2.1 AI Provider and Prompts Used

To complete this task, I utilized ChatGPT (OpenAI) to gain insights into the literature available for the competition problem that was identified at Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon.

The prompt for this activity is: “Explain how there is a lot of competition for a small beauty salon to keep customers when they compare prices, services and products with competitors; draw on academic concepts and terminology.”

Prompt 2: “With the latest academic work about beauty salons, explain how the service quality, price, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty can impact competitiveness.”

Prompt 3: “Using academic concepts, give a clear problem definition to a small beauty shop with high local competition and customer price comparison.”

2.2 Selected AI Output: Terminology, Concepts and Findings

Service quality, price competitiveness, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and perceived value are the key concepts identified. Service quality is about customers' assessment of the quality of services rendered, and price competitiveness is about customers' comparison of prices to competing options. Customer satisfaction is an assessment of the overall experience of the customer and customer loyalty is the desire of a customer to return to the same business.

Academic research proves the significance of these ideas in the beauty business. In Malaysia, Yeo et al. (2020) revealed that the most important factor influencing the intention to visit facial spa service centers was service quality. This was followed by the price and brand image. Choi and Park (2022) found that the quality of beauty salon services affected the perceived value and word-of-mouth intentions. Moreover, a positive effect of customer satisfaction can impact customer trust and loyalty (Cho & Park, 2024).

2.3 Problem Definition

Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon are struggling to be competitive and retain customers in a local market where there are multiple other salons customers can use. People often shop around for the best value for money, products and treatment, before making a choice, which puts pressure on a business to offer competitive prices and service.

2.4 Explanation, Justification and Verification

These concepts were chosen because they are most similar to the information gathered in my interview with the owner of Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon. The owner stated that buyers of her services "compare the prices, services, products and treatment procedures with other salons on a regular basis. Hence, not only competition, but also customers' perception of quality, price and value is involved in the choice of a salon.

This is confirmed by academic research. Service quality can influence customers' perceived value and word-of-mouth intentions in beauty salons (Choi & Park, 2022). Another way in which customer satisfaction can boost customer trust and loyalty to a beauty salon is by making the customer feel valued and appreciated. Another way in which customer satisfaction can help to build customer trust and loyalty to a beauty salon is that the customer feels valued and appreciated (Cho & Park, 2024).

I didn't take the information provided by AI on face value. I reviewed the authors, publication years, the journal and the research results of the original academic sources. I also had a conversation with the salon owner to compare these data with. This verification minimized the potential for relying on fabricated or overly simplified AI information, and offered an academic foundation for problem definition.

3.0 Research Question and Research Approach

3.1 AI Provider and Prompts Used

I developed a research question and appropriate research approach using ChatGPT (OpenAI).

Prompt 1: “Research a question about the choice of beauty salon in Rawang.”

Prompt 2: “Recommend an appropriate research strategy, method and sampling technique.”

Prompt 3: “Suggest factors for a beauty salon questionnaire.”

3.2 Selected AI Output

Research Question: What factors influence customers' choice of beauty salons in Rawang, Malaysia?

A quantitative research method and a structured questionnaire could be employed in the proposed study. Rawang beauty salon clientele may be asked about things such as service quality, price, location, cleanliness, promotions, social media and online reviews. A positivist approach would be suitable as the study is trying to gather quantifiable data and to compare the significance of various factors. A realistic way of obtaining appropriate respondents in the local area may be to use convenience sampling. The questionnaire could include questions using a likert scale, which helps to obtain numerical results that can be compared and analysed (Fathonah, 2025).

3.3 Explanation and Justification of the Research Question

I chose this research question because it arose directly from the problem I found during my interview with the owner of Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon. The owner said customers often shop around among salons for the best price, best services, best products, and best treatments. Hence, the research question takes into account some factors other than price.

The question is restricted to the area of Rawang, Malaysia to make the research work and within the local business context. Kim and Jin (2022) discovered that the elements of

professional competence, price and customer relationships were related to consumer behaviour and satisfaction. Park (2023) also revealed the effect of location characteristics and service quality on beauty salon customer satisfaction and revisit intention. Thus this research question enables the study of various influences on customer choice within a particular local area.

3.4 Explanation and Justification of the Research Approach

I chose quantitative research because it enables the collection of responses from customers visiting the beauty salon that can be compared numerically. The study is about measurable information about factors influencing customers' choice so a positivist philosophy is suitable. Beauty Salon studies have employed quantitative questionnaires to explore service quality and customer reactions (Kim & Park, 2022).

The data required would be primary data which is obtained from a structured questionnaire that is designed using google form by adult users who have used beauty salon services in Rawang before. The same is done by Firdiyanti and Purwanto (2023) who used Google Forms to explore service quality and customer satisfaction. The questionnaire will contain questions on Likert Scale of service quality, price, location, cleanliness, promotion, social media and online reviews.

Respondents would be contacted via local contacts and online community networks and these would be convenience samples. This idea is a realistic one for a student project because it is not the large scale study that is needed, but simply the local respondents.

4.0 Summary Research Proposal

4.1 Research Question

What factors influence customers' choice of beauty salons in Rawang, Malaysia?

4.2 Definition of Key Terms

The significant terms of this study are customer choice, service quality, price, location, cleanliness, promotions, social media and online reviews. Customer choice is the preference and need of a customer to choose one beauty salon over the other (Saputri et al., 2024).

Service quality is the customer's evaluation of the quality of the services a salon provides. The level of professionalism and convenience in beauty salon services can affect customer satisfaction (Park, 2023). Location indicates how easy it is for customers to get to the salon and how convenient it is, which can also impact customer satisfaction (Park, 2023). Price is the cost to the customer and the reasonableness to the customer. Social media also applies because people can find out about the salons and hairstyles in social networking sites (Lee & Park, 2024).

4.3 Explanation and Justification of the Research Question

This research question developed from my interview with the owner of Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon. Customers often shop around for price, services, products and treatment options when deciding which salon to use. For this reason, I chose factors because there are a number of factors customers might take into account when deciding on the salon.

The findings from Park (2023) suggest that the satisfaction level and revisit intention of customers were related to the location of the salons and the service quality. This will help to take a look at a number of factors instead of just price. The research also focuses on the identified business problem and the proposed study is manageable as the focus is also on Rawang, Malaysia.

4.4 Proposed Research Design

The study design that would be used in the proposed study is the quantitative cross-sectional research design. Because numerical responses can be obtained to compare the various factors that influence customers' choice of a salon, a quantitative design is appropriate. Firdiyanti & Purwanto (2023) conducted a quantitative study focused on the service quality and customer satisfaction of beauty salon customers by using questionnaires.

A cross-sectional design is suitable because data would be gathered from subjects at one point in time rather than tracked over time. This design would enable the study to gather and analyze customer feedback effectively. Thus, it offers a practical method in exploring the determinants of beauty salon selection among the customers of beauty salons in Rawang area.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the repeatability of research measures. The same structured questionnaire, instructions and five-point Likert scale will be given to all participants. In hair-salon questionnaire research, Lee and Park (2024) have conducted analyses of customer responses using reliability analysis.

Validity is the extent to which the questionnaire measures the concepts that it is supposed to measure. Based on the earlier beauty salon research (Park, 2023), questions would be directed straight to the quality of the services, price, place, cleanliness, and the social media. There will also be a small pilot test before distribution to pick out and enhance unclear questions.

4.6 Research Methods and Data Collection

The primary data will be gathered by using a structured Google Forms questionnaire to the adults who have ever used beauty salons services in Rawang. Firdiyanti and Purwanto (2023) also took data through surveys using Google Forms from customers who went to the beauty salon.

The survey would start with demographic questions and then proceed to questions based on a 5-point Likert Scale related to service quality, price, location, cleanliness, promotions, social media and online reviews. Social media is relevant because customers can gain information

about the salon using social networking platforms (Lee & Park, 2024). The results could then be analysed to determine what factors are most important in customers' selection of salons.

4.7 Sampling, Access and Permissions

Convenience sampling would be used because it would allow a student researcher to be able to reach suitable beauty salon customers in Rawang in a realistic manner. The local contacts and online community networks could provide a source of respondents. Beauty-salon research recently shows the feasibility of gathering survey data from actual salon customers (Artika et al., 2023).

If it's approached through a salon, the salon owner's permission would be obtained first. Voluntary participation, informed consent, no unnecessary identifying information would be collected, and responses would be kept confidential.

5.0 Research Proposal Presentation (Slides & Video Link)

1. Slides

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16MFfoIO-BiYlmXhWtnOwlax7iXbBFLPR/view?usp=drive_link

2. Video Link

- <https://canva.link/fu3w2zl9n5mcgbb>
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gx0biNZYL1iqRLMPG-teEJxtDS00gDsx/view?usp=drive_link

6.0 Gibbs' Reflective Cycle



Figure 6.0.1: Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (adapted from Gibbs, 1988).

6.1 Description

For the assignment, I looked into a true business problem of Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon in Rawang, Malaysia. Interviewed the owner and found that local competition was the primary issue. I then started to research and explored the scholarly literature then used ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas and generated a research question about customer selection of salons. I also suggested a quantitative questionnaire-based approach and had to make a presentation to convey my research proposal.

6.2 Feelings

When I first started out interviewing a real business owner and finding a real problem, I was a bit nervous. But, a conversation with the proprietor gave me more confidence and more knowledge of her experience. I also developed an interest in making a comparison between her situation and academic research. I gained confidence as I went along with the tasks.

6.3 Evaluation

A good thing about this assignment was to have explored a real enterprise in the local area, not just academic information. The interview enabled me to draw conclusions on the impact of competition in the small beauty salon in Rawang. Utilizing AI proved helpful in generating ideas for research and academic concepts. But I found out that sometimes AI-generated content is not always accurate. The key hurdle was identifying appropriate academic resources and determining the reliability of the fact-based data produced by AI.

6.4 Analysis

This experience gave me insight into doing research and that it is not simply a matter of gathering information. I was able to recognise a business problem, conduct literature search, formulate a research question and choose a research approach. One other important thing that I learned was to relate academic results with a local business result. A salon in Rawang was the geographical area where I studied, and the project was relevant to that area. The process improved my communication, research and critical-thinking skills. These skills will be useful in my future career as I will have to analyse information, communicate effectively, evaluate evidence, and make well supported professional decisions.

6.5 Conclusion

In general, this assignment enhanced my research process knowledge and the linkage of academic research and business issues. I have learned from interviews that they offer important information and I have found academic literature to support my observations. I also acquired how to make use of AI in an accountable manner by verifying details. I would make better preparations in the future before researching.

6.6 Action Plan

For the future, I would ask more detailed questions to gather more information from business owners during the interview. I will look for academic sources first and take great care to ensure that information that is suggested by AI is correct. I will also develop new AI prompts and validate the answers using reputable academic sources. In addition, I hope to refine the design and delivery of my questionnaire, a skill that will allow me to continue my studies and further my career.

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3. Cho, H., & Park, E. (2024b). Relationship between Customer Satisfaction, Customer Trust, and Loyalty of Beauty Salon Consumers. *Journal of the Korean Society of Cosmetology*, 30(2), 345–355. <https://doi.org/10.52660/jksc.2024.30.2.345>
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9. Fathonah, E. N. (2025). Impact of service quality and price on customer satisfaction: a case study of Salon Waxinc in Jakarta. *Journal of Business Management and Social Studies*, 4(2), 89–96. <https://doi.org/10.53748/jbms.v4i2.97>

10. Saputri, D. A., Istanto, Y., & Wisnalmawati, W. (2024). The effect of service quality on customer loyalty through satisfaction and trust as mediators (survey of nail art brand customers “it’s rare” Yogyakarta). *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 22(2), 2138–2151. <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.22.2.1630>

Appendix

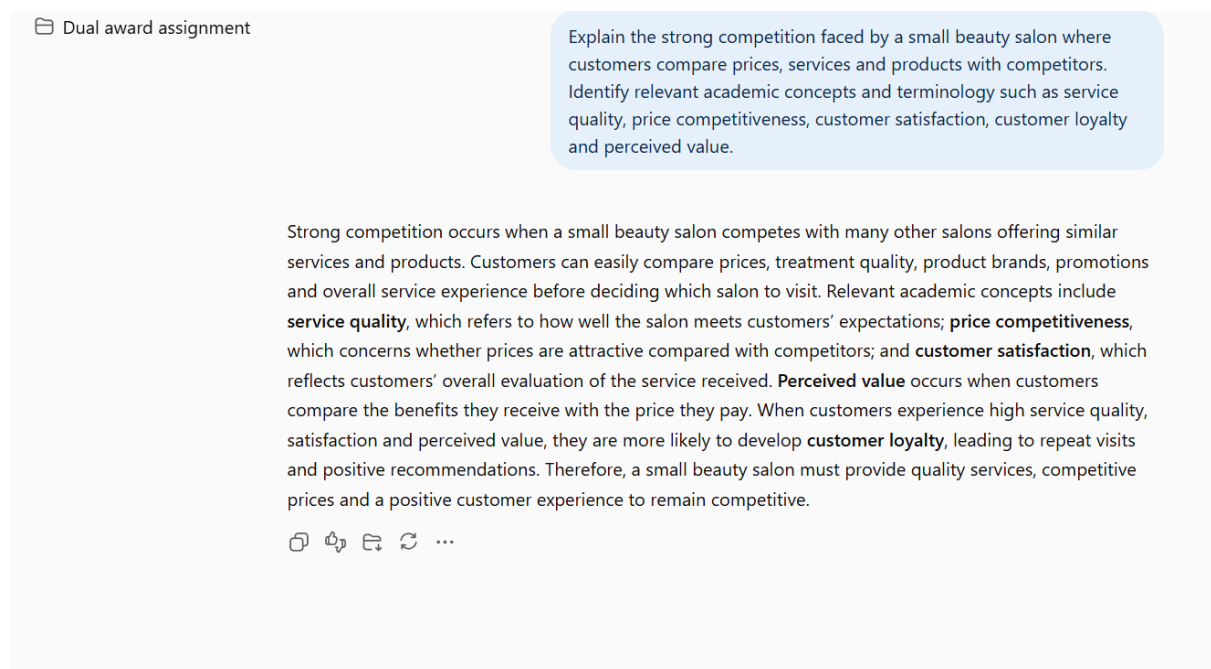


Figure A1: ChatGPT prompt and response used to identify academic concepts and terminology related to the competition problem in Task 2.

Using recent academic research on beauty salons, explain how service quality, price, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty can influence the competitiveness of a small beauty salon. Suggest relevant academic sources that I should independently verify.

Yes. For your **Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Salon assignment**, you can connect the problem of strong competition directly to these academic concepts.

Edit



A small beauty salon operates in a highly competitive environment because customers can compare the quality of services, prices, products and overall experience offered by different salons. **Service quality** is therefore an important factor in maintaining competitiveness. Research on beauty salons shows that elements such as reliability, professionalism and employees' service can influence customer satisfaction (Park, 2023). When customers believe that employees are professional, trustworthy and able to provide consistent services, they are more likely to be satisfied and continue using the salon.

Price competitiveness is also important because customers may compare the prices of treatments and products with competing salons before making a decision. Recent salon research indicates that price can positively influence customer satisfaction, while its effect on loyalty may occur indirectly through satisfaction (Amanda et al., 2026). Therefore, a small salon does not necessarily need to offer the lowest price, but its customers should feel that the price is reasonable for the quality and benefits they receive.

This relationship can also be understood through **perceived value**, which reflects customers' evaluation of what they receive compared with what they give up, particularly money and time. Beauty-salon research has connected service quality with customers' perceived value and their willingness to recommend the salon to others (Choi & Park, 2022). Therefore, good treatment results, professional service and appropriate pricing can increase the value customers perceive from visiting a small salon.



Customer satisfaction is especially important because it can contribute to **customer loyalty**. Tambayong and Tan (2022) found that beauty-parlour service-quality dimensions positively influenced customer satisfaction and that satisfaction positively influenced loyalty. More recent research on beauty-salon consumers has also examined the close relationship between satisfaction, trust and loyalty (Cho & Park, 2024). Loyal customers are valuable to a small salon because they are more likely to revisit and maintain their relationship with the business.

Overall, these concepts suggest a competitive pathway for a small beauty salon: **better service quality + appropriate pricing → stronger perceived value and customer satisfaction → greater customer loyalty → improved competitiveness**. Therefore, a small salon such as Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Salon can compete not only through price but also through professional service, consistent treatment quality, customer relationships and value for money.

For sources to independently verify before putting them in your final reference list, I would start with these four:

1. Park, H. J. (2023) — *The Effect of Personal Service Quality in One-person Beauty Salon on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty: Focused on Small Business Education Subjects*. *Journal of Distribution and Logistics*, 10(2), 63–81. This is particularly relevant because it specifically examines **one-person/small beauty salons**. 
2. Cho, H. M., & Park, E. J. (2024) — *Relationship between Customer Satisfaction, Customer Trust, and Loyalty of Beauty Salon Consumers*. *Journal of the Korean Society of Cosmetology*, 30(2), 345–355. DOI: 10.52660/JKSC.2024.30.2.345. 
3. Tambayong, M. M. M., & Tan, P. H. P. (2022) — *The impact of service quality attributes of beauty parlors towards customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and trust*. *JPPPI (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 8(3), 817–827. DOI: 10.29210/020221574. 
4. Choi, J. Y., & Park, E. J. (2022) — *The Relationship Between the Quality of Beauty Salon Service and Perceived Value and Word of Mouth*. *Journal of the Korean Society of Cosmetology*, 28(2). DOI: 10.52660/JKSC.2022.28.2.194. This one is useful specifically for **service quality + perceived value**. 



Figure A2: ChatGPT prompt and response used to explore academic research on service quality, price, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in relation to beauty salon competitiveness.

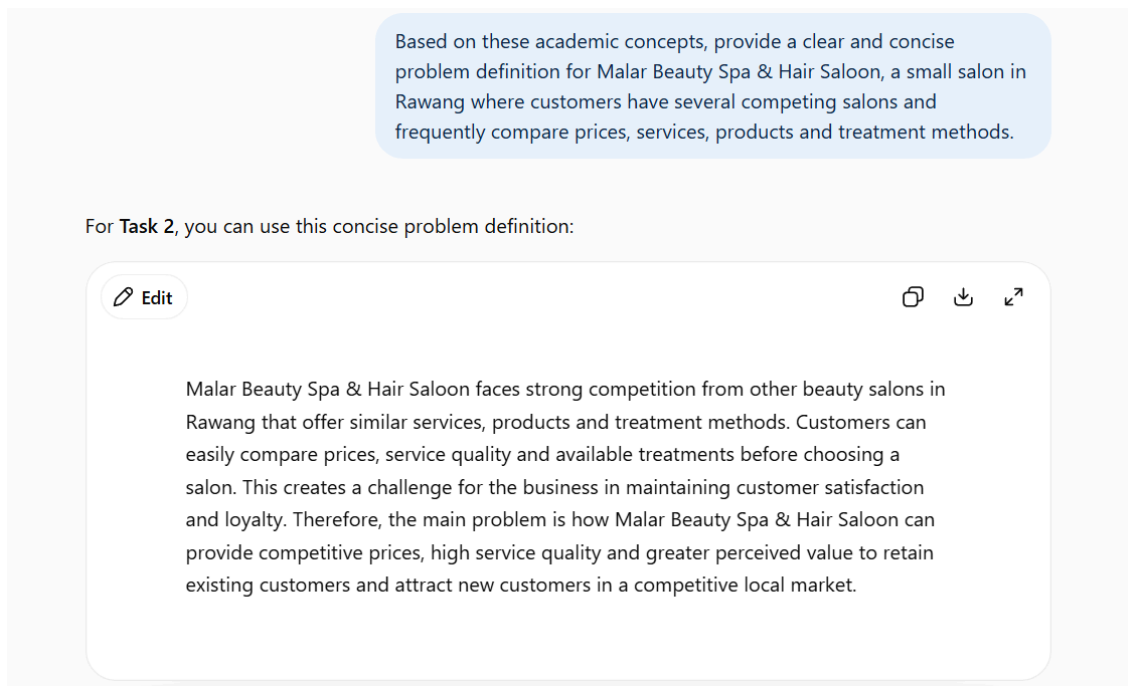


Figure A3: ChatGPT prompt and response used to develop the problem definition for Malar Beauty Spa & Hair Saloon in Task 2.

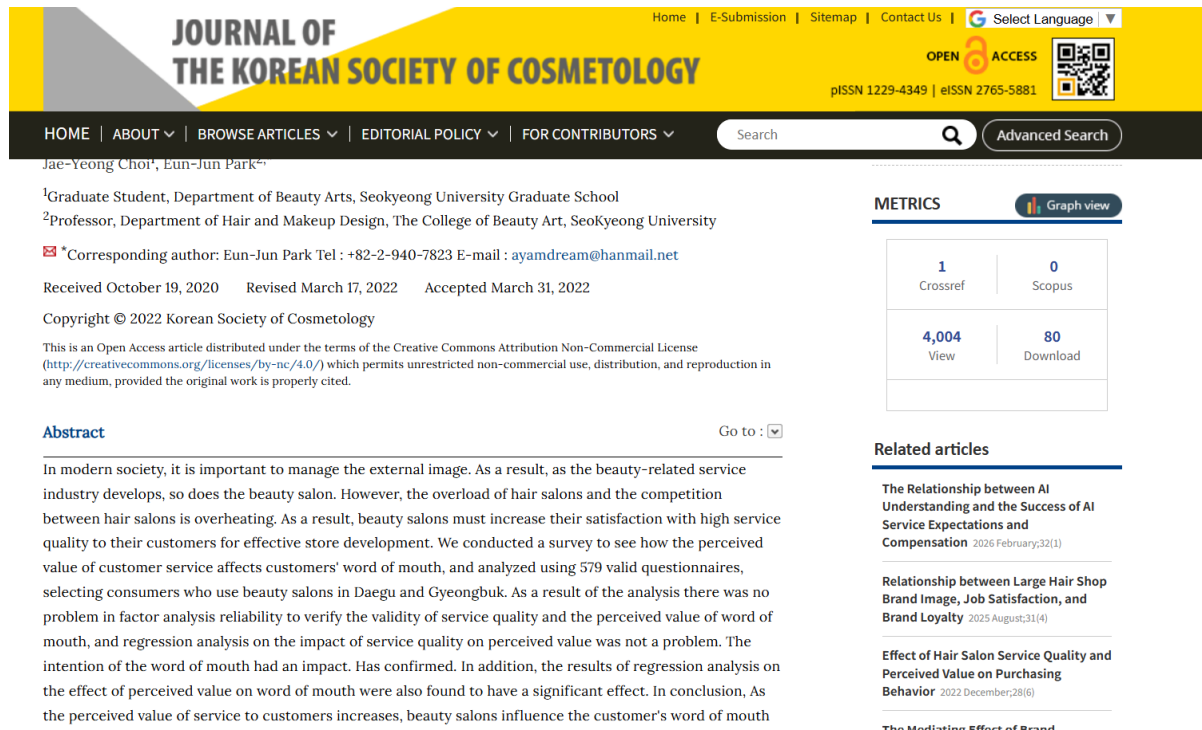


Figure A4: Academic journal source used to verify the AI-generated information on beauty salon service quality, perceived value and word-of-mouth intentions (Choi & Park, 2022).

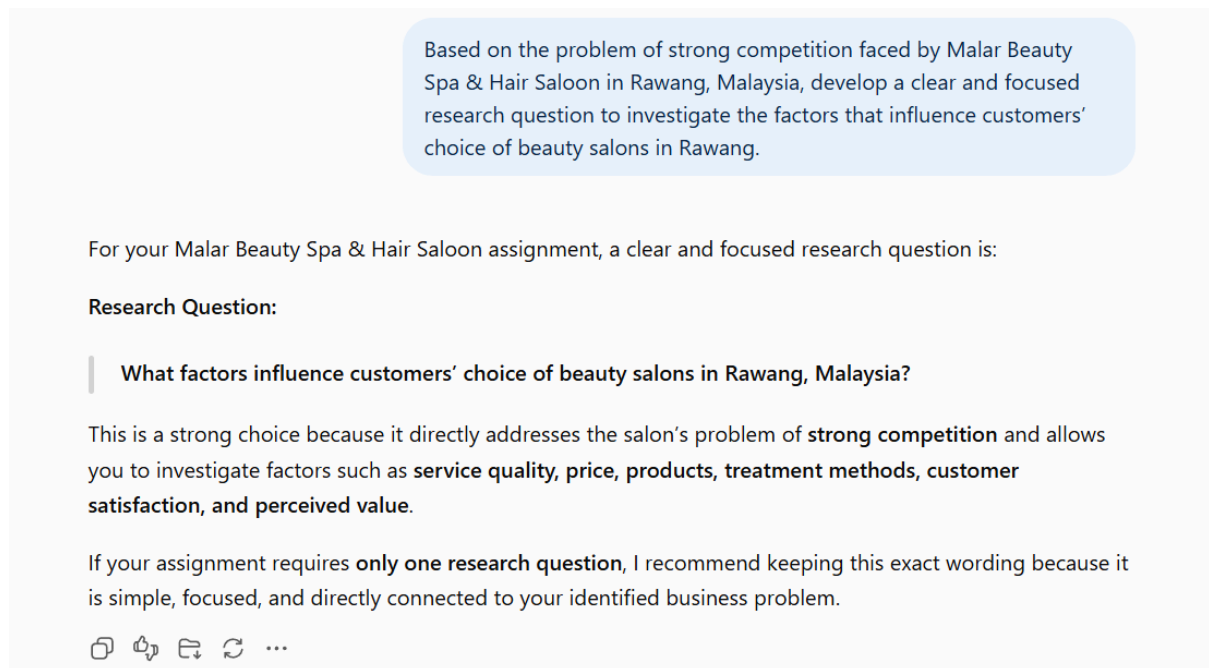


Figure A5: ChatGPT prompt and response used to develop the research question for Task 3

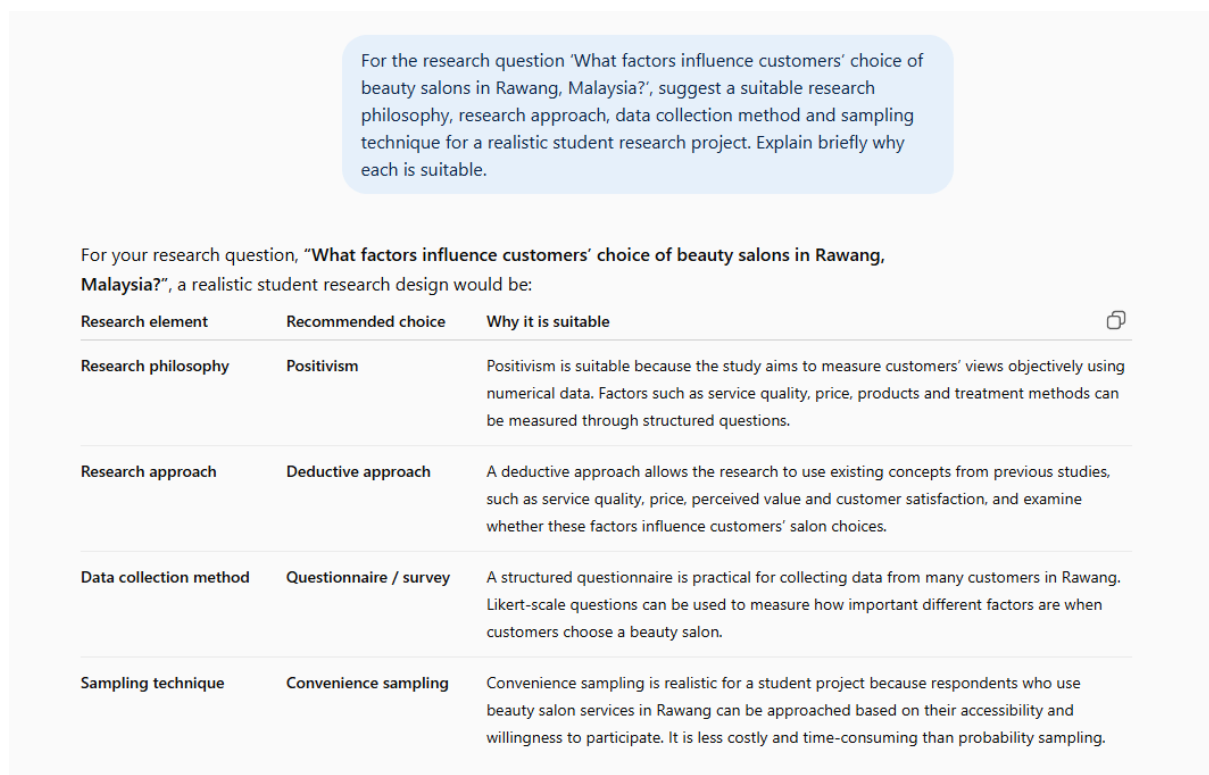


Figure A6: ChatGPT prompt and response used to explore the research philosophy, research approach, data collection method and sampling technique for Task 3.

For a questionnaire investigating what factors influence customers' choice of beauty salons in Rawang, Malaysia, suggest relevant factors that could be measured, including service quality, price, location, cleanliness, promotions, social media and online reviews.

For your research question, **"What factors influence customers' choice of beauty salons in Rawang, Malaysia?"**, these are suitable factors to measure in your questionnaire.

Factor	What it measures	Example questionnaire item
Service Quality	Professionalism, staff skills, friendliness and reliability	"The quality of service influences my choice of beauty salon."
Price	Affordability, reasonable pricing and value for money	"I compare prices before choosing a beauty salon."
Location & Convenience	Accessibility, distance, parking and convenience	"A convenient location influences my choice of beauty salon."
Cleanliness & Hygiene	Clean environment, equipment and hygienic practices	"Cleanliness and hygiene are important when I choose a beauty salon."
Promotions & Discounts	Discounts, packages, loyalty rewards and special offers	"Promotions and discounts influence my choice of beauty salon."
Social Media	Salon content, photos, videos and information on social platforms	"Social media content influences my decision to choose a beauty salon."
Online Reviews	Ratings, customer comments and recommendations online	"Positive online reviews influence my choice of beauty salon."

For a student project, I would recommend using a 5-point Likert scale for these statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree → 2 = Disagree → 3 = Neutral → 4 = Agree → 5 = Strongly Agree

Figure A7: ChatGPT prompt and response used to identify questionnaire factors for the proposed research in Task 3.

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Section Marketing Management

Enhancing Consumer Satisfaction: The Impact of Retail Ambiance and Service Quality in the Beauty Industry

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Figure A8: Academic source used to verify the AI-generated research approach proposed for Task 3 (Firdiyanti & Purwanto, 2023).

