

# A Descriptive Survey of Atmospheric Music Broadcasting in Hot Spring Hotels and Its Further Marketing Strategy

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## Abstract

The survey purposes are to preliminarily understand the current situation of atmospheric music broadcast in hot spring hotels and why these choices of music were made. We reviewed literatures regarding applied music and music types, and applied questionnaire, participant observation and unstructured interviews with hotel staff who broadcast music in the unique, famous and historic Guanzihling hot spring region of Taiwan. Results show that music is often broadcast in public areas, such as lobby and restaurants. On the contrary, there was no music broadcast in private areas, such as guest rooms and private thermal baths. Light music is the primary music choice. Music types is chosen without rules by staff who have no basic trainings in music. Possible marketing strategies for future studies include the staff trainings and construction of hotel's own hot spring music database, and better marketing of hotel's unique multi-sensory brand image through its distinctive and pleasant music.

## Keywords

Guanzihling hot spring, applied music, music type, hot spring music, hotel brand image

## Introduction

Ever since Kotler (1973) emphasized the importance of the environmental atmosphere where exchanges and services take place, physical surroundings have been widely explored (Jeon et al., 2016). Given that such artificial physical surroundings often determines the difference between business success and failure, the term “servicescape” suggested by Bitner (1992) has been coined to emphasize the importance of service environments (Jeon et al., 2016). In recent years, many researches on service quality have suggested that servicescape such as spatial esthetics or atmospherics in tourism and leisure environments have a great influence on consumer behavior and satisfaction (Areni, 2003; Bitner, 1992; Jeon et al., 2016; Kotler, 1973; Mandila & Gerogiannis, 2012; Meng et al., 2018; North & Hargreaves, 1998; Odeh & As'ad, 2014; Spies et al., 1997; Teng & Lin, 2006).

Atmospherics consist of many elements, such as color, brightness, shape, size, music, odor, softness, smoothness, and temperature (Mandila & Gerogiannis, 2012, p. 290). Among them, the atmospheric music is especially important in perceiving the atmosphere of service

environments, and accordingly it has attracted considerable attention from academia, as implied by the term “musicscape” (Jeon et al., 2016; Oakes & North, 2008). Atmospheric music is also called “background music” or “ambient music.” It is played at a relatively low volume to create ambient feelings while also filling the empty air between people to protect their private conversations (Areni, 2003; Jeon et al., 2016). It has broad and narrow definition as follows (Wang, 2008). The broad definition refers to music that is closely related to people's lives and is one of the background elements of people's living environment. For example, there is background music broadcast in public spaces in cities (Meng et al., 2018) and in hotel restaurants. The narrow definition refers to

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the environmental music that designed for a specific environment based on relevant theories or models. For example, Eno (1978) created an environmental music work, *Ambient 1: Music For Airports*, for relieving the anxious and stressed atmosphere in the airport. Atmospheric music allows people to integrate into the space they situated. And even if people do not take notice of the music around them, music can still affect them. Therefore, we can say that music is a simple tool to create the atmosphere for specific activities and spaces (Tang & Vezeau, 2010).

Taiwan is a young orogen located in the western Pacific between the Eurasian Plate and the Philippine Sea Plate (Chen et al., 2003, 2019), and contains many geothermal resources and underground water. When the underground geothermal water spews out through fractures or pores of faults, or is pumped out from artificial wells, it becomes “hot spring.” In Taiwan, there are various types of hot springs, such as carbonated spring, sodium bicarbonate spring, sulfur spring, and the unique hot muddy spring (Chen et al., 2012). Studies show that going to a hot spring can relax people’s bodies and even keep their beauty, and therefore, it has become a quite popular choice among tourism and leisure activities in Taiwan (e.g., Chen & Li, 2017; Chen et al., 2012; Han et al., 2018). People going to a hot spring would normally require not only to relieve physical fatigue, but also to obtain spiritual satisfaction. If they are on a journey far away from home, going to a hot spring can also eliminate their unfamiliarity and nervousness (Kim & Park, 2017; Ross, 1994).

Studies show that when people go to a hot spring, the atmospheric music seems to be able to enhance the relaxing effects (e.g., Loureiro et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2018). Michel et al. (2017) also suggested that hot spring hotel managers should consider to design and integrate atmospheric music with hot spring elements in every individual service space, such as lobby, restaurants, and public thermal pool within their hotels to have positive effects on customers’ responses. However, compared with many researches focusing on service environments including supermarkets, restaurants/cafeterias/bars, shopping malls/department stores, banks, and coffee/wine shops (e.g., Areni, 2003; Jeon et al., 2016; Mandila & Gerogiannis, 2012; Meng et al., 2018; North & Hargreaves, 1998; Teng & Lin, 2006), only a few studies have mentioned the use of atmospheric music in spa environments (e.g., Lo et al., 2015; Loureiro et al., 2013). This leaves gaps for more empirical studies in the context of atmospheric music applications in service spaces within hot spring hotels.

Given that the prior literature overall supports the potential for music application in producing positive customer reactions, atmospheric music in service spaces can

potentially have diverse and important applications in hot spring hotel management. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to preferentially undertake a preliminary survey of the current situation of atmospheric music broadcast in hot spring hotels before conducting in-depth studies of atmospheric music applications such as the appropriate atmospheric music types or database generated from customers’ feedback by electroencephalogram (EEG) technology. And thus, in this study, we mainly focused on the current situation of atmospheric music broadcast in hot spring hotels in Taiwan. We aim to preliminarily investigate and understand the following survey questions:

SQ1: What types of atmospheric music were currently broadcast in hot spring hotels in Taiwan?

SQ2: What were the decision criteria for choosing atmospheric music?

Finally, we will suggest the appropriate atmospheric music types by proposing a preliminary hot spring music list suitable to broadcast in each individual service space in hot spring hotels. We will also suggest the possible prospects about advanced hot spring music applications and sensory hot spring hotel marketing for the future in-depth studies.

## Literature Review

### *The Relationship Between Music Application and Consumer Emotion and Behavior*

Listening to music can make many people forget about worry and relieve tension in life (Miranda & Claes, 2009; Sakka & Juslin, 2018). In recent years, the application of music has been extended from a traditional form of pure art to modern applications, such as medical treatment (Austin, 1998; Tang & Vezeau, 2010; Vik et al., 2018), emotion (Miranda & Claes, 2009; Sakka & Juslin, 2018; Schubert, 2007) and consumer behavior (Areni, 2003; Mandila & Gerogiannis, 2012; Meng et al., 2018; North & Hargreaves, 1998; Teng & Lin, 2006). We can say that when music is based on traditional music, performs through modern music technology (Teoh, 2012) and is applied to real life with specific practical properties, it is in the field of “applied music” (Hargreaves & North, 1999; Tsai, 2013).

Music with attractive melody and slow tempo such as *Nocturnes* by Frédéric François Chopin (1810–1849) can make people feel warm and calm. However, even music with simple melody and normal tempo such as *O Fortuna* in *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff (1895–1982) can still make people feel powerful and inspiring as long as it’s dynamics changes intensely (Huang, 2012). Studies also show that listening to music with soft melody and

slow tempo such as Adagio in G minor by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) or Taiwanese song *Wife* (Taiwanese translation: *Gie Ao*) sung by Jody Chiang (Taiwanese singer) can keep people's brain waves calm and stable (Balasubramanian et al., 2018; Shih & Chiang, 2004). It means that people are relaxing with lower stress and their overall emotion are in the state of ease.

In the tourism and leisure industry, atmospheric music can stimulate people's emotions and further influence their consumer behavior. Studies show that music with soft melody, soft volume, slow tempo, and lower pitch can reduce people's anxiety and slow down their movement in space (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002; Lin et al., 2015; Magnini & Parker, 2009; Sullivan, 2002; Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). For example, in high-end or fine dining restaurants, this type of atmospheric music can extend customers' time spending in the restaurant, and lead them to spend more money (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). Moreover, music with short phrases, powerful and fast tempo and higher pitch can make people feel happy and excited and further speed up their movement in space. For example, in budget restaurants, such as all-you-can-eat buffet cafeterias, this type of atmospheric music can reduce the average amount of time people spend for a meal (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002).

From above, it can be seen that music is one of the important elements that creates environment atmosphere for tourism and leisure activities. Therefore, learning and understanding what combination of music elements (melody, tempo, pitch, dynamics, phrases, and so on) are most comfortable and appropriate for electing consumers' positive emotions and behaviors should be the priority for tourism and leisure industry managers (Blackmon, 2001). And we believe that this work could start from comprehending the introductory knowledge of musical types and history (Olson, 2008).

### *Introduction to Music Types*

According to the music history and research fields (Booth & Kuhn, 1990; Fuld, 2000), music types can be generally classified into three basic categories: western art music, folk music, and popular music (Booth & Kuhn, 1990; Fuld, 2000; Olson, 2008).

Western art music refers to the styles and genres that have been inherited from western art music and classical tradition, and is characterized by compositional sophistication, virtuosity on the part of individual musicians, and use of standardized musical notation (Olson, 2008). Folk music can be understood as the traditional music of any particular ethnical group or community that is passed down through informal ways from one generation to the next (Olson, 2008). Popular music refers to

any form of music that is mass produced and distributed to large audiences through films, television, or online for commercial purposes (Olson, 2008), such as blues, Jazz, Rock and roll, Country, Soul and Hip hop. In addition, popular music also includes Light music with through-composed feature, Crossover music, and ambient music.

### *Guanzihling Hot Spring Region*

Hot spring hotel can be considered as a type of resort hotel located in geothermal area providing not only ordinary resort hotel services and social contact for customers, but also indoor and outdoor hot spring services and surrounding hot spring attractions services. Guanzihling hot spring region (120°29'48.9"E, 23°20'31.0"N) is located in Baihe, Tainan, southern Taiwan. Its unique hot muddy spring with proposed health benefits (Lin et al., 2013) is the only one in Taiwan and has been famous throughout Taiwan and Japan more than a century. Due to the unique, famous and historic hot muddy spring, and the energetic hot spring business (Chen & Li, 2017), this study takes Guanzihling as the test site to conduct the preliminary survey.

### **Research Methodology**

After reviewing related literatures, we conducted a pre-participant observation in the selected hot spring hotels to design the questionnaire. Then, we applied the questionnaire survey, in-depth participant observation and in-depth interviews in the sampled hotels.

Participant observation is a widely used methodology in a variety of disciplines as a tool for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures in qualitative research (Kawulich, 2005). The insider's view can reduce the observer's interference in the observed situation and avoid unnecessary defense from the observed, so he can obtain more authentic information (Tung, 2015). In this exploratory study, the main purposes of participant observation were to listen and to record the atmospheric music in every individual service space within the selected hotels. Furthermore, through interaction with staff who broadcast atmospheric music, we could not only learn and record the music types they broadcast, but also understand why the music was chosen.

A questionnaire survey is a method with a set of written questions and other prompts used for acquiring information from respondents. Its format includes close-ended, open-ended or both (Bird, 2009). Close-ended questions limit the respondent to a set of alternatives being offered, while open-ended questions allow the respondent to express an opinion without being influenced by the researcher (Reja et al., 2003). In view of their different format, close-ended questionnaires are typically difficult to

**Table 1.** Essential Service Spaces Comparison of the Guanzihling Hot Spring Hotels.

Essential service spaces	Mutsun Spring Resort	Toong Mao Spa Resort	The King's Garden Villa	Lin Kuei Yuan Hot Spring Resort
Lobby	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guest room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public thermal pool	No	Yes	Yes	No
Private thermal baths	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Restaurant (indoor)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Restaurant (outdoor)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Meeting room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hotel architecture styles	Japanese-style	Modern Taiwanese-style	European-style	American-style

construct but easy to analyze whereas open-ended questions are easy to construct but difficult to analyze (Bird, 2009). In this study, in order to quickly obtain the music types currently broadcast in every individual service space within hot spring hotels and the reason why these types of music are chosen, we adopted close-ended questions to design the questionnaire.

A qualitative interview is a consultation for interviewer to understand interviewee's experiences, viewpoints and thought process by directing interviewee in responding to a particular research topic (Stuckey, 2013; Turner, 2010). It provides interviewer a way of inner look at why interviewees behave in the way they do (Stuckey, 2013). Depending on the degree of control the interviewer possesses (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017), interviews can be categorized into four common types including informal, unstructured (or in-depth), semi-structured and structured interviews (Stuckey, 2013; Turner, 2010). In this study, for further clarification and understanding of the results obtained from the questionnaire survey and participation observation, we adopted unstructured interviews with the hot spring hotel staff who broadcast the atmospheric music, and manually analyzed the qualitative interview data without using any computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (QDA) software (Smit & Scherman, 2021).

## Results and Discussion

### *The Selection of Representative Hot Spring Hotels in Guanzihling*

According to the statistical data announced by Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communications (M.O.T.C.), Republic of China (Taiwan), there are 29 certified hot spring hotels in accordance with the Hot Spring Act in Guanzihling. Studies show that the volume of online consumer reviews has significant impacts on hotel reservation intentions, hotel facility performance and hotel price, and further influences the hotel occupancy rates (Cezar & Ögüt, 2012; Lee et al., 2016; Lockyer, 2005; Viglia et al., 2016;

Ye et al., 2009). Therefore, among the 29 hot spring hotels in Guanzihling, we applied three qualitative criteria to decide the representative hotels including (1) online consumer reviews, (2) hotel facility performance, and (3) hotel occupancy rates. Information of online consumer reviews was according to the top three online review websites, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Google, which host 71.4% of total online reviews (Revinat, 2017). The data of hotel facility performance was based on the contents of the hotels' official websites including the number of rooms, the type of restaurants and in/outdoor hot spring facilities. The hotel occupancy rates was based on the announced data by Tourism Bureau, M.O.T.C., Republic of China (Taiwan). After excluding the hotels that seldom broadcast atmospheric music and the comparison of the rest hotels in accordance with the three criteria mentioned above, we found that there were only four hotels broadcasting music in the service spaces. They were "Mutsun Spring Resort (Mutsun)," "Guan-zi-ling Toong Mao Spa Resort (Toong Mao)," "The King's Garden Villa (The King's)" and "Guanling Lin Kuei Yuan Hot Spring Resort (Lin Kuei Yuan)." These four hotels all also had positive online consumer reviews, well hotel facility performance, and high hotel occupancy rates, and thus we finally selected them to be our survey objects.

Studies show that tangible facilities and hardware equipment are important indices of service quality of hot spring hotels (Chen & Li, 2017; Hsieh et al., 2008). For a hot spring hotel, tangible service spaces including lobby, guest rooms, public thermal pool, private thermal baths, restaurants (indoor and outdoor) and meeting (or conference) rooms are essential (Rutes et al., 2001) and their performance may influence customer preferences for hotel selection (Lockyer, 2005). Therefore, we simply compared whether or not the four selected hot spring hotels provide the essential service spaces mentioned above by searching their official websites and in the mean time briefly described the architecture styles of the four hotels. The results are summarized in Table 1.

In general, the vast front courtyard, building architecture and furnishing in Mutsun are Japanese-style. In addition, next to the hotel building, there are indoor and outdoor terraces designed for customers to take the mountain-view. Each area in Toong Mao is spacious with modern Taiwanese-style. There are also various styles of indoor and outdoor thermal pools and several types of conference rooms for customers to choose according to their purposes and the number of people. The King's applied European-country style to design its hotel, and they also have various styles of thermal pools, SPA and fitness facilities. Lin Kuei Yuan is designed as an American-style community with its hotel rooms constructing as an individual villas with front courtyards and backyard lawns.

### *Results and Analysis of the Questionnaire Survey*

Before questionnaire survey, we built up the mutual trust relationship on this exploratory study with the four selected hot spring hotels by telephone and personal visits. And on the days before and after the questionnaire survey, we conducted two times of participant observations in every service space within the hotels. Then the results of participant observations were used for questionnaire design, especially the music type options (please refer section 2.2 for the detail of music types), and further for assisting the comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire survey.

The close-ended questionnaire designed in this study is named "Questionnaire for music types that are broadcast in Guanzihling hot spring hotels." For quickly obtaining the music types currently broadcast in every individual service space within hot spring hotels and the reason why these types of music are chosen, we developed the questions based on the essential service spaces (Rutes et al., 2001) and the music types (Olson, 2008). This questionnaire consists of three close-ended questions (questionnaire question, QQ), including "QQ1: What service spaces are there within the hotel?," "QQ2: What music types are broadcast in the hotel?" and "QQ3: What is the reason for choosing to broadcast those types of music?." The nine service space options for QQ1 are: Lobby, Guest rooms, Public thermal pool (with SPA), Private thermal baths, Indoor restaurants, Outdoor restaurants, Coffee area (or house), Leisure tea sipping area and Meeting (or conference) rooms. The 12 music types options for QQ2 are: None, Western art music, Popular music, Blues, Country, Light music, Jazz, Hip-hop, Rock and roll, Crossover music, Ambient music, Folk music. The six options for QQ3 are: Its interpretation is moving and resonating; The sale of the music album is good; Its marketing campaign attracts me; It is able to relax the body and mind; No particular reason and Others (Please

state...). The duration of conducting the questionnaire survey was during the winter vacation (from January to February, 2015) which was the high season of hot spring tourism in Taiwan. All the questionnaires were answered by the staff who are responsible for choosing and broadcasting music in service spaces within the hotels. The results are summarized in Table 2.

*Analysis of frequency of broadcasting music at different service spaces.* In Table 2, we can generally categorize the service spaces into public and private spaces. Public spaces include lobby, public thermal pool, indoor and outdoor restaurants, coffee area, leisure tea sipping area and meeting rooms, and private spaces include guest rooms and private thermal baths. To exam the frequency of broadcasting music in different service spaces, the research results show that every hotel have music broadcast in lobby area; three out of the four selected hotels broadcast music in coffee house; half of the four selected hotels broadcast music in their restaurants (indoor and outdoor) and tea sipping area; one out of the four hotels broadcast music in public thermal pool, private thermal baths and meeting rooms; and none of the four hotels broadcast music in their guest rooms.

For further analysis, we group service spaces where customers can rest and socialize with other people, including restaurants (indoor and outdoor), coffee bar and tea sipping areas together and name it "catering area." This study found that there is a higher tendency for the four selected hotels to broadcast music in lobby and catering area. Studies show that atmospheric music can be used as an aid for defining, forming or enhancing hotel image (Herrington & Capella, 1994; Michel et al., 2017). Therefore, most hot spring hotels tend to broadcast music in public spaces. On the contrary, there is a lower frequency of broadcasting music in private spaces, especially in the guest rooms. No music has been seen to be broadcast in guest rooms for the reason of respecting each customer's personal preferences. In addition, although a number of hotels attempt to enhance the relaxing effects of hot springs by broadcasting atmospheric music (Loureiro et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2018), respecting customer's personal space (Hall, 1966) and individual difference are the utmost important rules for hotels. Therefore, most hotels tend to have no music while customers enjoy the hot spring bath.

*Analysis of types of music broadcast at different service spaces.* To learn what types of music are often broadcast at different service spaces in hot spring hotels, we exam the frequency of music types broadcast in the selected hotels. Table 2 shows that three out of the four selected hotels broadcast Light music; half of the four selected hotels broadcast Western art music; and one out of the

**Table 2.** Results of “Questionnaire for Music Types That Broadcast in the Guanzihling Hot Spring Hotels.”

Service spaces	Mutsun Spring Resort	Toong Mao Spa Resort	The King's Garden Villa	Lin Kuei Yuan Hot Spring Resort
Lobby	Light music, Jazz, Folk music	Western art music, Light music	Light music, Ambient music	Western art music, Popular music, Country
Guest rooms	None	None	None	None
Public thermal pool	None	None	Light music, Ambient music	None
Private thermal baths	None	Western art music, Light music	None	None
Indoor restaurants	None	Western art music, Light music	Light music, Ambient music	None
Outdoor restaurants	Light music, Jazz, Folk music	None	Light music, Ambient music	None
Scenery coffee area	Light music, Jazz, Folk music	Western art music, Light music	Light music, Ambient music	None
Leisure tea sipping area	None	Western art music, Light music	None	Western art music, Popular music, Country
Meeting rooms	None	None	None	Western art music, Popular music, Country
Reason for choosing	It is able to relax the body and mind.	It is able to relax the body and mind.	It is able to relax the body and mind.	It is able to relax the body and mind.

Note. Please refer section 2.2 for the detail of music types.

four hotels broadcast Jazz, Folk music, Ambient music, Popular music and Country. All the music broadcast in the hotels composed of soft melody and slow tempo that can make customers be relaxing and relieving (Balasubramanian et al., 2018; Shih & Chiang, 2004).

The most frequent broadcast music type in the hot spring hotel is Light music, especially in lobby and catering area. Light music can be defined as a type of easy listening popular music that is featured of quietly lush arrangements of standard popular songs and light classics and is regularly characterized as smooth and relaxing, often due to its slower tempo (Keightley, 2018). Secondly, Western art music of diverse forms is also widely broadcast in service spaces, especially the music with smooth melody, soft volume and slow tempo. To avoid customers feeling tired caused by repeatedly hearing the same styles of music for a long time, the hotels also constantly broadcast other types of music such as Jazz, Ambient music, Popular music and Country. In addition, some hotels broadcast Folk music or Country to match their architecture style. These types of music can not only create unique atmosphere to highlight the architecture feature (Table 1), but also eliminate customers' unfamiliarity and nervousness (Kim & Park, 2017; Ross, 1994).

### Results and Analysis of the Participant Observation

Table 3 is a cross-hotel summary of music that was broadcast while we were conducting participant observation in the service spaces within the selected hotels. Lisa Ono Jazz and Japanese folk music broadcast in Mutsun

fully create a harmonious atmosphere and resonate with its Japanese-style architecture. Piano Light music or plucked string instrument Classics are the primary music styles broadcast in Toong Mao. The King's broadcast assorted Ambient music that consists of various nature sound to create the atmosphere for customers to merge into the European-style surroundings. Lin Kuei Yuan selectively broadcast Country music with the combination of various Western classic oldies songs to match its unique American-style accommodation.

### Results and Analysis of the Unstructured Interviews

We developed the interview topics based on the results in Tables 2 and 3, and the interaction with staff who broadcast atmospheric music in participation observation. Concurrently, every hotel manager of the selected hotel appointed and authorized only one staff for the interview. Therefore, although only one interview in each hotel is tiny, however, we believe it should be able to achieve the saturation due to the authorization of the hotel managers. The demographics of the four interviewees are summarized in Table 4.

The unstructured interviews cover three topics including Topic 1: Do you usually notice music news? Topic 2: What styles of music do you like? And Topic 3: What types of music do you think is more suitable for the environment of hot spring hotels? The brief summaries and analysis of the interview results are as follows.

Topic 1: Do you usually notice music news?

**Table 3.** Summary of Music Broadcast in the Service Spaces (Li & Chen, 2018).

Service spaces	Music styles	Music list
Lobby	Light music	1. Bandari—Silence With Sound From Nature: Imagine, 2. Bandari—Mist: The First Snowflakes, 3. Kevin Kem—The Enchanted Garden
	Western art music	1. Debussy—Piano sonata “Rêverie,” 2. Pachelbel – Canon, 3. Edelweiss from Movie “The Sound of Music” Guitar version, 4. Bach—Air on the G String, 5. Greensleeves—English ballad
	Jazz	Lisa Ono—Bossa Hula Nova
	Ambient music	WIND MUSIC—The Forest Show: Elves of the Night
	Folk music	Japanese-style BGM (background music)
Public thermal pool & Private thermal baths	Light music	1. Bandari—Silence With Sound From Nature: Imagine, 2. Bandari—Mist: The First Snowflakes, 3. Kevin Kem—The Enchanted Garden
Catering area (indoor and outdoor restaurants, coffee and tea sipping areas)	Light music	1. Bandari—Silence With Sound From Nature: Imagine 2. Bandari—Mist: The First Snowflakes 3. Kevin Kem—The Enchanted Garden
	Western art music	1. Debussy—Piano sonata “Rêverie,” 2. Pachelbel – Canon, 3. Edelweiss from Movie “The Sound of Music” Guitar version, 4. Bach—Air on the G String, 5. Greensleeves—English ballad
	Jazz	Lisa Ono—Bossa Hula Nova
	Ambient music	WIND MUSIC—The Forest Show: Elves of the Night
	Country	1. The Carpenters—Yesterday Once More, 2. Bertie Higgins—Casablanca

**Table 4.** Table of Demographics of the Interviewees.

Interviewee code	Age	Years of working in hotels	Music accomplishment
Miss A	28	3 years	None
Miss B	35	8 years	None
Miss C	52	10 years	None
Mr. D	40	6 years	None

Miss A: Yes, I usually notice it. I always keep up with the new famous popular songs. However, I think these types of music are not suitable to be broadcast in hot spring hotels.

Miss B: I often sing popular songs with friends. Can this be seemed as a notice to music?

Miss C: No. Usually I just listen to the music I like.

Mr. D: No. I like all types of music. I am not particularly interested to any specific type of music.

In summary, all the staff who are responsible for choosing and broadcasting music for the hotel have no any basic training in music. Although they usually listen to music and are interested in it, the popular music they are personally interested in is purely for entertainment purpose and is mostly not suitable for the environment of hot spring hotels.

Topic 2: What styles of music do you like?

Miss A: For myself, I like fast tempo music, but it seems not compatible with the atmosphere of hot spring hotels.

Miss B: I am used to like all the latest popular music. Especially Kulilay Amit’s songs (Taiwanese singer) are my favorite.

Miss C: I like the style of old Taiwanese songs. But I do not broadcast them in the hotel.

Mr. D: I like all the music so that I do not exclude any music style.

In summary, each staff who are responsible for choosing and broadcasting music for the hotel has his own favorite music style. Nevertheless, the music styles they like are not related to the music styles that are proper for the hot spring hotels. Furthermore, due to lack of any specific rules or SOP, the music they broadcast are almost random selections from music that are often heard in daily life.

Topic 3: What types of music do you think is more suitable for the environment of hot spring hotels?

Miss A: It should be the music that sounded softer and unburdened.

Miss B: A customer once told me that the purpose for him to visit this hot spring hotel was to relax, so I feel that music with soft volume and slow tempo should be more suitable.

Miss C: I have never thought about it before. Perhaps the atmospheric music that can match the architecture style is better.

Mr. D: The customers always say that they come to relax and to relieve stresses, so I think music that can make customers relax are important.

In summary, all these staff who are responsible for choosing and broadcasting music for the hotel can observe their customers’ needs and understand their consumer motivations. Although they have broadcast music in the hot spring hotels for years, they only have relatively narrow knowledge (i.e., relaxation music)

regarding the more suitable types of music to be broadcast in the hotel to satisfy customers' needs and perhaps to enforce customers' preferences to the hotels.

## Conclusion and Further Prospects

### Conclusion

Hot spring tourism in Taiwan has a long history of more than 120 years since the "Tiangouan" in 1896 (Lin, 2015). Culture of going to a hot spring has also gradually transformed from personal thermal bathing into family tourism and leisure activities. Because both music and hot spring have the effect of releasing stress, broadcasting atmospheric music in hot spring environment can further enhance the relaxing effects of hot springs. This exploratory study chooses the unique, famous, and historic Guanzihling as the test site. The survey purposes are to explore the current situation of atmospheric music broadcast and to propose the possible further prospects of atmospheric music applications in hot spring hotels through conducting quantitative questionnaire survey, qualitative participant observation and unstructured interviews. The comprehensive conclusions are as follows.

*Music broadcast is tailored to local conditions.* To answer SQ1, hot spring hotels in Guanzihling commonly utilize music to create an atmosphere that allows customers to release stress. In addition, hotels usually have various interior designs and decorations in different service spaces inside of the hotel which may be different from the image created from the exterior architecture design. Hotel managers therefore may broadcast different types of music in order to match the atmosphere and functionality in each service space. Most hot spring hotel managers tend to broadcast music of soft volume and slow tempo in public spaces to create a comfortable and gentle atmosphere. On the contrary, there is a lower tendency to broadcast music in private spaces for the reason of respecting customers' different preferences.

Furthermore, for more scientifically being tailored to local conditions, we suggest that to establish a scientific hot spring music database would be help. Atmospheric music that can enhance the relaxing effects of hot springs can be defined as the "hot spring music." In this study, in addition to consider the characteristics of the service spaces within hotels, we propose that atmospheric music should be broadcasted more scientifically toward the direction of cognitive psychology of music (Tsai, 2013). It means that the influences of music elements such as melody, volume and tempo should be considered comprehensively to fit or further improve the customers' physiological conditions at various times of a day. For example, in the lobby during forenoon, Chopin's piano

waltz or Bach's piano concerto can invigorate customers. In the western restaurant during afternoon, the waltz or concerto by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) or Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) may be able to create an atmosphere that enhances customers' appetite. In the bar at night, music of Franz Seraphicus Peter Schubert (1797–1828) or Achille-Claude Debussy (1862–1918) playing with saxophone or guitar can calm and relax customers' mind and body (Liu & Mao, 2006). Therefore, we propose that to construct a "scientific hot spring music database" for the service spaces by professionals who have training in music theory and music cognitive psychology will be helpful.

In this study, we have systematically categorized music into Western art music, Folk music, and Popular music categories and propose a preliminarily music playlist composed of several current styles and pieces of music for the service spaces within hotels based on the results that obtaining from the qualitative participant observation and questionnaire survey (Table 3). Although this proposed music list (Table 3) is generated qualitatively from literature review and the current situation survey and can be considered as the prototype of the hot spring music database. However, how should the "relaxing effects" of hot spring integrated with atmospheric music be measured or quantified to further verify the "effects of hot spring music"? Many studies in the connections of cognitive psychology and brain wave science (EEG; Balasubramanian et al., 2018; Banerjee et al., 2016; Bhattacharya & Petsche, 2001; Shih & Chiang, 2004) have conducted quantitative researches on the effects of music on relaxation. Therefore, in the near future, we can expect to apply these scientific methods in hot spring hotels to evaluate the effects of the current proposed music pieces in order to reinforce the scientificity and significance of the hot spring music database and to respond to the increasing demand of fine hot spring experiences (Lin et al., 2009). We believe that the customers' EEG biofeedback will be the best decision-making indicators for the building of the scientific hot spring music database.

*Staff who are responsible for broadcasting music in the hotel are not specialist.* To answer SQ2, because the staff who are responsible for choosing and broadcasting music in the hotel are not music specialists, they tend to subjectively choose the music with smooth melody, soft volume, slow tempo and higher broadcast rate such as Light music and Western art music. Sometimes, to prevent customers from feeling tired or sleepy, other types of music such as Jazz, Ambient music, Popular music and Country will be broadcast occasionally. In addition, these types of music chosen to be broadcast are almost



randomly selected from music that is often heard in daily life without any specific rule or SOP.

However, for the staff who are responsible for broadcasting music in the hotel, we suggest that to implement hot spring music training should be necessary. The hot spring music education requires step-by-step training from the characteristics of service spaces within hotels to the styles and pieces of music in the hot spring music database. Thus, in terms of the practice in hot spring hotels, we propose that there should be a training course specifically on the hot spring music database. Through the instructions of the professionals who are familiar with the hot spring music database, the staff who are responsible for choosing and broadcasting music in the hotel will be able to not only enrich their own musical literacy, but also improve the qualities of their hot spring music choice.

### Possible Further Prospects

After understanding the current situation of atmospheric music broadcast in hot spring hotels, possible further prospects for the future in-depth studies of atmospheric music applications are proposed as follows.

Sound, including music can be regarded as one of the sensory marketing strategy (vision, audition, olfaction, haptics, and taste) that engages consumers' sense of hearing (Krishna, 2012; Rathee & Rajain, 2017; Sayadi et al., 2015) and affects hotel customers' perception of hotel's brand personality (Magnini & Parker, 2009; Magnini & Thelen, 2008; Su & Reynolds, 2017). Therefore, for the further in-depth studies, we suggest that topic of marketing by integrating applied music into hot spring hotel could be an advanced management strategy. Music can be consciously applied by hotels to create brand personality to distinguish its brand (Hultén et al., 2009), and most hotels are completely aware that music is regarded as strategy for improving customers' brand recognition (Sayadi et al., 2015). Thus, in this study, we propose that if a hot spring hotel integrates applied music as part of its brand personality, customers may build up a certain degree of brand recognition in their minds by experiencing the powerful healing effect from hot spring with embedded hot spring music. Moreover, the hotel can further develop hotel spring music related products, such as hot spring music CDs or DVDs for customers to buy or rent. Then customers will be able to play the music they choose while they are relaxing in the guest rooms or the private thermal baths.

Sensory branding is marketing's next frontier in the hotel industry (Lee et al., 2018). In this study, we suggest a preliminary hot spring music list as the prototype of the hot spring music database and propose that by adopting this music database, hotel manager may be able

to create a unique brand image of hot spring hotel, provide multi-sensory experiences of hot spring (haptics and olfaction) with applied music (audition) for the customers. We believe that the unique multi-sensory brand-experiences should be able to appeal to customers' senses and enhance the brand recall in customers' minds.


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