

Art and Transport: Background Music at the Train Stations in Java Island, Indonesia

Ainun Rahmawati¹, Dewanti Dewanti², Danang Parikesit², Paul Timms³, Yvonne Barnard³

¹Politeknik Keselamatan Transportasi Jalan/PKTJ, Tegal, INDONESIA

²Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, INDONESIA

³Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds, UNITED KINGDOM

E-mail: ainunrahmawati@pktj.ac.id

| Submitted: January 02, 2024 | Revised: January 17, 2024 | Accepted: May 19, 2024 |

| Published: September 22, 2024 |

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, music plays an essential role in train stations. Many train stations offer music in various forms. This study focuses on the background music, defined as music prepared and recorded in advance by the train station manager and played at certain times with a specific duration in the stations. The songs or musical instruments played in Java Island, Indonesia, are folk songs that reflect the identity of each region. The objectives of the study are to analyse the background music selection in the train station globally, to identify the purpose of background music used in the train stations from the railway company perspective, to identify the criteria and characteristics of folk songs used as background music, and to analyse the passengers' perspective on background music at the train station. The research utilised a qualitative case study research methodology. The methods used include online research and literature reviews to answer the first objective regarding background music selection at train stations globally. Then in-depth interviews with rail service providers and the rail service users. The conclusions obtained are: 1) the Japan Railway Company create unique melodies for each line and station to help the train passengers remember specific locations and lines and guide the passengers to steps and orderly queues during peak hours; 2) KAI's purpose in playing background music at the station is for additional services for passengers as well as a sign that the train has arrived and to provide a regional identity as one of the local cultures.

Keywords: background music; Train Station; Art; KAI's; local cultures.

INTRODUCTION

Hagen and Oort (2019) emphasized the importance of comprehending the specific types of quality that railway passengers seek and are prepared to embrace as a means to attain the desired level of quality. Furthermore, they elucidated that assessing client needs' quality across many tiers of quality proves advantageous, as depicted in Figure 1.

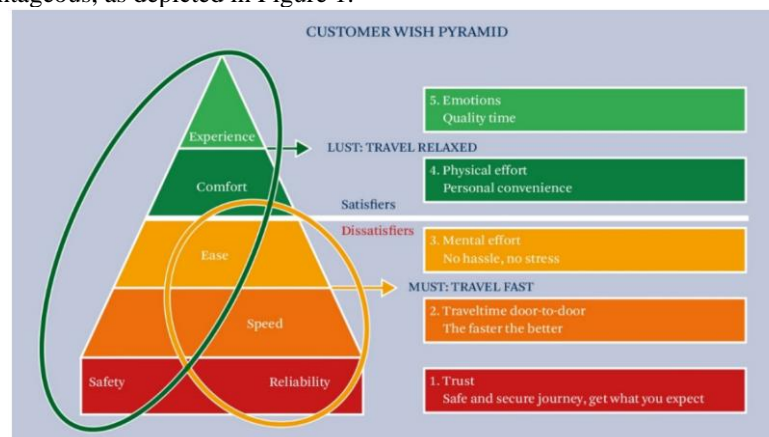


Figure 1. Improving Railway Passengers Experience: Two Perspectives. (Hagen and Oort, 2019)

The hierarchical structure of the several quality dimensions is illustrated in Figure 1. Hagen and Oort (2019) explained that at a station, passengers can either moving or remain staying. When passengers moving, the factors of speed and convenience assume paramount importance, however, when the passengers staying, such as waiting in the train station or being seated on a moving train, the essential considerations shift towards comfort and experiential aspects (Hagen and Oort, 2019). In summary, the lower tier of the pyramid pertains to the efficient utilisation of time or Hagen and Oort (2019) addressed it as 'time well saved', referred to as dissatisfiers, while the upper tier, known as satisfiers, focuses on the effective allocation of time or Hagen and Oort (2019) addressed it as 'time well spent'.

According to Hagen (2011), fulfilling the need for a pleasant experience is contingent upon various factors, including visual elements such as architecture, design, and material colours, as well as intangible variables like light, smell, and sound (including noise and music). These factors undoubtedly impact the overall quality of the experience (Hagen, 2011) as also can be seen in Figure 1 that comfort and experience are included in the satisfier category. In this thesis, research was conducted on the background music factors played at train stations in Indonesia, to determine the objectives of the service provider and user perceptions of the background music at the train station as one of the experience factors under the customer satisfaction pyramid initiated by Hagen (2011).

Music has become something that is easily accessible to everyone and freely available in the last decade, making it possible for everyone to choose music and songs that are suitable for various situations and conditions, for example, relaxing songs to provide comfort or songs to arouse spirit in the morning (Schwartz et al., 2017). Nowadays, music also plays an essential role in train stations. Many train stations offer music in various forms, such as background music played centrally at the station or live music played by street performers. In Indonesia, many train stations, especially big stations, serve both types of music. In this study, the focus is on the background music only, defined as music prepared and recorded in advance by the train station manager and played at certain times with a specific duration in the stations.

This research aims to identify the reason and the characteristics of background music played in the train stations on Java Island, Indonesia. The objectives of the study are to analyze the background music selection in the train station globally and to identify the purpose of background music used in the train stations from the railway company perspective in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

Methodology to Identify Background Music Globally

A data search was carried out about the background music played at train stations globally around the world to then be compared with the implementation by the Railway Company in Indonesia. The purpose of conducting online research is to find out the reasons for playing background music globally throughout the world, to then be used as a comparison and its efficiency in the next objective. Data collection is carried out online, both from academic journals, news, articles, information from official websites, and any review or comments on related social media. Searches over the internet are observed using the Google search engine. The keywords used are "background music at the train station" and "train station jingle and melody". While searching on social media platforms, hashtags are used to narrow down search results, for example #musicatthestation #trainjingle and #trainmelody.

After the first screening by observing the background music played at the stations, Japan was chosen as the case study for the first objective because it has similar characteristics to the background music played at train stations in Indonesia. In Japan, the melodies played at train stations tend to be different for each region, adapted to the identity of the area or certain lines on the train service. For example, when a train is on the Chuo line, the jingle played was different from that of a train arriving on the Yamanote line. Observations online in other countries, such as France, the background music that is played is a melody that is played uniformly on almost all stations regardless of the identity of each region. Thus, Japan was chosen to be the case study for the first objective, and data collection was carried out online.

Methodology to Identify The Purpose of Background Music Used in the Train Stations from The Railway Company Perspective in Java, Indonesia.

To answer the second objective, the data collection method used was online research and interviews with KAI employees.

a. Online Research

Before conducting in-depth interviews, data collection was carried out regarding the background music played at long-distance train stations in Indonesia. It was known that there are 9 Operational Areas (DAOP) for long-distance (inter-city) train services on the island of Java, Indonesia. The map below is showing the long-distance rail services in Indonesia which are divided into 9 DAOPs.

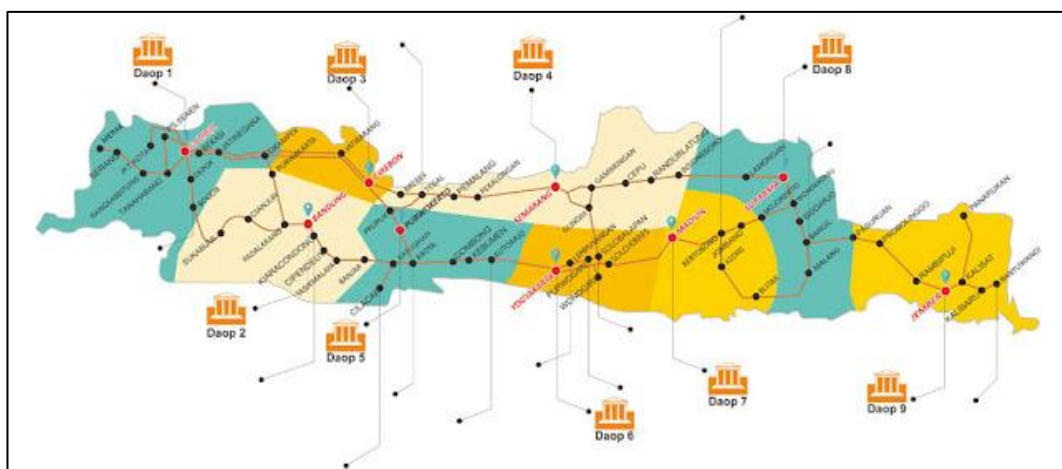


Figure 2. Map of Long-Distance Rail Services in Java Island, Indonesia (kereta-api.co.id, 2023)

b. In-Depth Interview with Indonesian Railway Company (KAI)

The in-depth interview with the railway service provider aimed to answer objective two, which was the purpose of background music at the train stations. The informants interviewed are employees from professional contact who are in charge of selecting background music at PT KAI (Indonesian Railway Company). Even though there are nine different operational areas, two people were chosen to represent PT KAI centrally. An interview was conducted with two PT KAI employees appointed to represent the company in the selection of background music at stations on Java Island.

Interview was conducted online using Zoom or Google Meet media for around 35 minutes. The questions were related to the company's perspective regarding the background music selection at the station and the purpose of playing the songs. Because the type of interview is an in-depth interview with a semi-structured interview, open questions were used to accommodate additional questions during the interview. A semi-structured interview was used in this study because the research questions were explored spontaneously, and the respondents represented experts in their fields. The answers can guide to develop additional questions to make the result more robust with broader components.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Background Music at The Train Station in Japan

This study focuses on the case study of Japan to examine the use of background music in countries other than Indonesia. The background music played at train stations in Japan bears numerous resemblances to that of Indonesia in terms of characteristics and presentation. The following are

some samples of numerous areas in Japan that play background music at train stations according to the character of each region.

a. Takadanobaba Station, Tokyo, Japan.

This section discussed the background music played in Takadanobaba Station, Tokyo, Japan. Takadanobaba Station, located in Tokyo-Shinjuku Ward, is considered the birthplace of Astro Boy, one of the most popular anime cartoons and the first to be televised in Japan. Therefore, the background music played at Takanobaba Station is the Theme Song from the Japanese Cartoon Series Astro Boy. In Japan, many train stations play background music, which is also called a 'hassha merodi / 発車メロデー' — literally has a meaning for the melody of a train's departure (Asada and Sturmer, 2018).

Minoru Mukaiya, a composer of Japanese train jingles, stated that many people are getting on the trains in metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. It is necessary to get people on and off quickly, and the background music will help create an orderly line because trains come and go in a short time (Asada and Sturmer, 2018). Furthermore, Mukaiya also said that it was essential to provide an identity for a location as a marker aid for passengers who had to remember where to get on and off when boarding the train, given Japan's very congested railway system (Asada and Sturmer, 2018). Based on the above data, it can be concluded that train companies in Japan use background music as a form of identity for a train station. They mark a location, in this case, a train station, based on regional identity.

b. Chuo Line and Yamanote Line, Tokyo, Japan

In addition to making special melodies for certain regions that have strong identities, Japanese companies also make melodies for each line. For example, in Tokyo, trains on the Chuo Line and the Yamanote Line have different melodies played upon the arrival of the train.

According to Minoru Mukaiya, who is known as the father of train melodies in Japan, in an interview covered by The Straits Times Asia (2018), he said that the melodies he created for train stations had their own identity and were packaged in a story. For example, Hassha Merodi in the Kyoto area, which is known as one of the ancient cities in Japan, deliberately packaged it in the nuances of Japanese culture with melodies that are calm and tend to be polite to the ear. On the other hand, when he creates melodies for busy stations in Tokyo, such as the Toyoko Line, which has quite a high incline because it is underground, he composed melodies that make train users feel like they are climbing a mountain. His melodies tend toward a lively Crescendo with rising notes to provide rhythm in the busy Shibuya Station.

Moreover, Nuenen (2020) observed that the melodies played at train stations in Japan also sometimes represent seasons or celebrations at a time. For example, during Winter 2018, Shibuya Station plays the Jingle Bell melody from November 15 to December 25, Japan Time to liven up the Christmas atmosphere at the train station. To conclude, melodies at train stations in Japan have become an identity, both to represent the characteristics of a region or certain railroad service lines and to celebrate something. Background music in Japan plays an important and inseparable role in train services.

The Purpose of Background Music Use at The Train Station in Java Island, Indonesia

Based on interviews with the Indonesian Railway Company (PT KAI), there are 16 songs in total which played as background music in 9 DAOPs in Java Island, Indonesia. The purpose of playing the background music, according to the results of the interview with PT KAI, is explained in the following points:

a. Gives a nostalgic impression to passengers

Based on the interview, the main purpose of playing background music at train stations on the island of Java is to give the impression of nostalgia and memories of a location, most of which are hometowns or places that are frequently visited so that they have their own memories about that place. This nostalgic feeling is not only presented to the train passengers but also to the pick-

ups at the train station, who are usually passengers' family, friends, and relatives. So, both passengers and pick-ups feel and create memories when the background music is played at the train stations.

- b. One of KAI's reformation targets to improve its service since 2009

The Indonesian Railway Company underwent a major bureaucratic reform and system overhaul in 2009. Previously, almost anyone, with or without a ticket, could board a train without checking from officials. Traders are free to roam the station and even get into the carriages to sell along the way. But in 2009, strict rules began to be enforced; passengers who did not have tickets were not allowed to enter the platform area and board the train. One of the reform targets at that time was to improve long-distance train services to all passengers, including playing background music at stations as an indicator of improving passenger service.

- c. Introducing local culture to tourists

Apart from local residents, passengers of long-distance trains in Java island were also dominated by tourists, both local and international tourists. Playing background music at the train station also aims to introduce Indonesian culture, especially local and regional culture, to tourists. So that tourists feel different vibes when travelling in different areas. For example, when travelling in DAOP 2, tourists were presented with melodies from Sundanese land, which are, of course, very much different, both from the character of the music and the musical instruments played at DAOP 9, which is located in the eastern part of Java Island. Thus, the existence of different identities in each of these regions gives a diverse impression of culture in Indonesia.

- d. Provides the identity of each DAOP

The song that is played in each DAOP describes the identity in that area. Therefore, there are not the same songs played in different DAOPs, even if they are in the same province. In fact, in several DAOPs, for example, in DAOP 6, there are two different songs even though they are still in the same operational area. This shows the richness and diversity of culture in Indonesia. The central government of the Indonesian Railway Company does not regulate in detail the selection of songs that represent each region. The song selection policy is fully given to each DAOP to represent culture and culture in each region.

- e. Signal to passengers that the train has arrived.

The last purpose of playing background music at the train station is to give a signal for passengers to get ready because this is a sign that the train has arrived and is ready to depart again. The waiting time for the train at each station varies, so it runs the risk of making passengers negligent about the train schedule at the station. Many factors lead to this negligence. During night hours, for example, passengers are prone to falling asleep and not realizing the arrival of a train. Another example during rush hour of the day, crowded stations can be a potential for passengers to be less aware of the train's arrival schedule. So, it is hoped that playing this background music can increase passenger alertness when they want to travel by train.

Reflection and Interpretation

The result might suggest that the song arrangement can be applied at all stations, both large and small stations throughout DAOP on Java Island. Even though the authority is in each Operational Area, the central PT KAI can urge all DAOPs to be more serious about working on background music in each region. To make it easier to provide information for tourists, the Indonesian Railway Company service can provide an additional screen containing information about the song being played as one of the innovations.

Based on the results of an interview with PT KAI, the main purpose of playing background music at the train station is to increase passenger satisfaction. This has a positive correlation with the theory from Van Hagen et al. (2010) in the railroad customer satisfaction pyramid, as explained in Chapter Three that the top peak of the pyramid is experience. When passengers get a pleasurable experience, which includes station architecture and facade, station design, cleanliness, interior materials, interior colour, and intangible factors such as light, scent, and sound (both noise and music), these factors

affect the quality of experience of train passengers. Furthermore, another purpose is to be a sign that passengers must be alert because the train will arrive soon and continue their journey again in a short time. This is also in line with Goldstein's theory (2017), which explains that one of the purposes of playing background music in public spaces is to give attention, both positive and negative. Attention from background music that is negative tends to be a distraction from the listener's recent activity, but in this case study, the distraction of background music playing at the station can have a positive impact, which is to make users aware of the activity being carried out, and they need to be vigilant because the train will soon come. Aside from that, the fact that jingles are played at train stations in Japan supports the theory put forth by Leman et al. (2013) that background music has a strong correlation with pedestrian rhythm and speed because certain types of music can activate the mind to increase speed, while other types of music can also relax the mind to decrease speed in response to the stimulus of the metronome. As stated by Zeng et al. (2019), "Rhythm is a potential method to improve pedestrian flow," indicating that background music played at stations has excellent potential to improve pedestrian flow and aid in setting up station flow, even though PT KAI has not used background music as a tool to regulate the walking speed of passengers as done by Japan.

Implications

The data contribute to a clearer understanding of the main purposes of playing background music by railway service providers and train passengers as service users. There are similarities between the Japan Railway Company and the Indonesian Railway Company in conveying the objectives of playing melodies at the stations, e.g. providing regional identity, improving service, and providing signals as assistance to passengers for train arrival and departure times. In contrast, Japan use jingles at train stations as a means to manage passenger movement by strategically aligning the rhythm and beats of the jingles with the desired pace and steps of the passengers, thereby ensuring they walk in sync with the intended rhythm set by the service provider. This is due to the presence of numerous stations in Japan that experience exceptionally high demand and have a dense volume of passengers. By employing a specifically designed jingle, the rhythm can be modified to align with the intended flow determined by the service provider. However, the background music planning for KAI has not yet aligned with that particular direction. In the future, this can be achieved by optimizing custom-made jingles to enhance station efficiency and passenger movement, aligning with KAI's preferences as a train service provider. Moreover, these results should be taken into account when considering how to improve rail services. Indonesia is very rich in culture and regional culture, so in the future, the concept of presenting traditional songs can be maintained and enriched by regular reshuffles to increase public knowledge about the culture of the region. It can also be educative and relaxing at the same time so that the level of customer satisfaction will increase in the future.

CONCLUSION

After conducting analysis and subsequent discussion, the conclusions obtained are: 1) the Japan Railway Company create special melodies for each line and station to help the train passengers to remember specific locations and lines and guide the passengers to steps and orderly queues during peak hours through the rhythm of these melodies, 2) KAI's purpose in playing background music at the station is for additional services for passengers as well as a sign that the train has arrived and to provide a regional identity as one of the local cultures.

REFERENCES

- Agustin, D. 2011. Penurunan Rasa Cinta Budaya dan Nasionalisme Generasi Muda Akibat Globalisasi. *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora*. 4.
- Asada, Y., and Sturmer, J. 2018. Why So Many Japanese Train Stations Play Different Jingles. ABC News. [Online]. 3 February. [Accessed 6 May 2023]. Available from: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-03/the-story-behind-japanese-train-station-jingles/9390452>
- Behrendt, F. 2010. Mobile sound: media art in hybrid spaces. *Thesis*. University of Sussex
- Berger, J. and Heath, C. 2007. Where Consumers Diverge from Others: Identity Signaling and Product Domains. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 34(2), pp.121-134.

- Bhandari, P. 2023. Triangulation in Research | Guide, Types, Examples. *Scribbr*. Retrieved December 5, 2023, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/triangulation/>
- Delve, H. L., and Limpaecher, A. 2023. What Is Researcher Triangulation in Qualitative Analysis? <https://delvetool.com/blog/researcher-triangulation>
- Fan, Y., Wong, I.A. and Lin, Z. 2023. How folk music induces destination image: A synthesis between sensory marketing and cognitive balance theory. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. **47**, p101123.
- Gibson, C. and Davidson, D. 2004. Tamworth, Australia's 'country music capital': place marketing, rurality, and resident reactions. *Journal of Rural Studies*. **20**(4), pp.387-404.
- Goldstein, B. 2017. Music & the Brain: The Fascinating Ways Music Affects Your Mood and Mind. [Online]. 27 July. [Accessed 10 August 2023]. Available from: <https://www.dailygood.org/story/1613/music-and-the-brain-the-fascinating-ways-music-affects-your-mood-and-mind-barry-goldstein/#:~:text=Research%20indicates%20that%20music%20stimulates,of%20joy%20from%20the%20music.>
- Hagen, M. and Oort, N. 2019. Improving Railway Passengers Experience: Two Perspectives. *Journal of Traffic and Transportation Engineering*. **7**.
- Hulyer, J. 2018. [Online]. Inside The Booming Business of Background Music. 6 November. [Accessed 12 August 2023]. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/nov/06/inside-the-booming-business-of-background-music>
- Leman, M., Moelants, D., Varewyck, M., Styns, F., van Noorden, L., & Martens, J. P. 2013. Activating and relaxing music entrains the speed of beat synchronized walking. *PloS one*, **8**(7), e67932. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0067932>
- Lidskog, R. 2016. The role of music in ethnic identity formation in diaspora: a research review. *International Social Science Journal*. **66**(219-220), pp.23-38.
- Liu, C. Kang, J. Xie, H. 2020. Effect of Sound on Visual Attention in Large Railway Stations: A Case Study of St. Pancras Railway Station in London, Building and Environment. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2020.107177>.
- Lonsdale, A.J. 2020. Musical taste, in-group favoritism, and social identity theory: Re-testing the predictions of the self-esteem hypothesis. *Psychology of Music*. **49**(4), pp.817-827.
- Marshall, S.R. and Naumann, L.P. 2018. What's your favorite music? Music preferences cue racial identity. *Journal of Research in Personality*. **76**, pp.74-91.
- Nettl, B. 2023. Folk Music. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. [Online]. 10 August [Accessed 12 August 2023]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/art/folk-music>
- Nuene, T. 2020. On Japanese Train Songs: The Trains of Japan are The Apex of Its Hospitality. *Medium*. [Online]. 17 January. [Accessed 6 May 2023]. Available from: <https://tomvannuene.medium.com/on-japanese-train-songs-290a0f1c12aa>
- Patton, M. Q. 1999. Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, **34**(5 Pt 2), 1189–1208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.00106>
- Rentfrow, P.J. and Gosling, S.D. 2003. The do re mi's of everyday life: the structure and personality correlates of music preferences. *Journal of personality and social psychology*. **84**(6), p1236.
- Rentfrow, P. J., Goldberg, L. R., & Levitin, D. J. 2011. The structure of musical preferences: a five-factor model. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, **100**(6), 1139–1157. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022406>

Schwartz, R. W., Ayres, K. M., Douglas, K. H. 2017. Effects of music on task performance, engagement, and behaviour: A literature review. *Psychology of Music*, **45**(5), 611–627. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735617691118>

Souza, L. 2020. The Value of Music in Public Places. [Online]. 5 October. [Accessed 11 August 2023]. Available from: <https://rebelbuzz.medium.com/the-value-of-music-in-public-places-ae0d3a064eb9>

Urry, J. 2016. *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society*. Routledge.

van Hagen, M. 2011. Waiting experience at train stations. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Twente, Delft. <https://doi.org/10.3990/1.9789059725065>

Whiteman, R. 2020. *Structuring social relationships: Music-making and group identity*. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.58083>

Wind, S. 2014. Making Everyday Mobility: A qualitative study of family mobility in Copenhagen.

Wright, S. 2022. Musical Terms: What is folk music?. BBC Music. [Online]. 27 September. [Accessed 11 August 2023]. Available from: <https://www.classical-music.com/features/musical-terms/what-is-folk-music/>

Wrótny, M. and Bohatkiewicz, J. 2020. Impact of Railway Noise on People Based on Strategic Acoustic Maps. *Sustainability*. **12**(14), p.5637.

Yarwood, R. and Charlton, C. 2009. ‘Country life’? Rurality, folk music and ‘Show of Hands’. *Journal of Rural Studies*. **25**(2), pp.194-206.

Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L. and Parasuraman, A. 1993. The Nature and Determinants of Customer Expectations of Service. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. **21**(1), 1–12.

Zeng, G., Schadschneider, A., Zhang, J., Wei, S., Song, W. and Ba, R. 2019. Experimental study on the effect of background music on pedestrian movement at high density. *Physics Letters A*. **383**(10), pp.1011-1018.

Zhuang, M., Zhang, H., Li, P., Shen, C., Xiao, X. and Zhang, J. 2023. Connecting tourists to musical destinations: The role of musical geographical imagination and aesthetic responses in music tourism. *Journal of Tourism Management*. **98**, p104768.

Zweigenhaft, R. 2008. A Do Re Mi Encore: A Closer Look at the Personality Correlates of Music Preferences. *Journal of Individual Differences*. **29**, pp.45-55.