

## Prioritization Approach to Music's Role in Destination Experience Design

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### Abstract

As tourism increasingly embraces multisensory experience design, music has emerged as a vital yet under-theorized component of destination environments. This study develops and tests a comprehensive framework that captures six key dimensions of music's role in shaping Destination Experience Quality (DEQ): Thematic Music Integration, Live Music Availability, Cultural Congruence, Emotional Resonance, Music-Induced Sense of Place, and Soundscape Quality. Drawing on experiential marketing theory, the model was empirically tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with data from 350 tourists. Results confirm that all six dimensions significantly influence DEQ, with Thematic Music Integration and Cultural Congruence emerging as the most impactful. Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) further identifies Emotional Resonance as a high-leverage yet underperforming construct. The study contributes to experiential tourism theory by positioning music as a strategic design element and offers actionable insights for destination planners seeking to optimize musical experiences that elevate visitor satisfaction, memory, and place attachment.

*Keywords:* destination experience quality, music in tourism, experiential design, thematic music integration, cultural congruence, importance–performance map analysis (IPMA), partial least squares (PLS-SEM), soundscape, emotional resonance, tourist satisfaction

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## Introduction

In contemporary tourism, destinations compete not only on the basis of natural beauty or architectural heritage but increasingly on the quality of multisensory experiences they offer. Music, in particular, has emerged as a potent driver of visitor engagement: it shapes mood, underscores cultural narratives, and generates lasting memories in ways that static visuals alone cannot. From curated background playlists in boutique accommodations to large-scale music festivals that attract international audiences, musical programming has become integral to destination branding and emotional resonance (Lu et al., 2022).

Despite the evident popularity of music-based offerings, scholarly understanding of which specific musical dimensions most effectively enhance the holistic destination experience remains underdeveloped. Prior investigations have tended to focus on isolated phenomena—such as the economic impact of festivals, the sociocultural benefits of live street performances, or the therapeutic effects of ambient music in wellness settings but lack a unified, comparative framework (Liu et al., 2018). Consequently, destination managers often disperse resources across a variety of music-related initiatives without clear guidance on their relative contribution to Destination Experience Quality, defined here as tourists' overall affective, cognitive, and sensory appraisal of a place.

To address this gap, the present study adopts a prioritization approach, integrating six theoretically grounded dimensions of music's role in destination design: Thematic Music Integration, Live Music Availability, Cultural Congruence, Emotional Resonance, Music-Induced Sense of Place, and Soundscape Quality. Drawing on the Stimulus–Response framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and experiential marketing theory, we hypothesize that each dimension positively influences Destination Experience Quality. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), we quantify the strength of these relationships, and through Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016), we identify high-impact yet underperforming elements. This dual-method approach not only advances theoretical understanding of music in experiential tourism but also provides actionable insights, enabling destination stakeholders to strategically allocate resources and optimize musical components for maximum visitor satisfaction.

## Literature Review

### Music and Experiential Tourism

Experiential tourism foregrounds the creation of memorable, emotionally resonant encounters through the activation of multiple senses (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Music, as a dynamic aural stimulus, can profoundly shape these encounters by influencing mood, evoking cultural narratives, and reinforcing place identity in ways that visuals alone cannot (Packer & Ballantyne, 2011). Early work on sonic branding demonstrated how background music in retail and hospitality settings alters perceived atmosphere and consumer behavior (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990). In tourism, soundscape research has shown that both programmed and ambient sounds affect wayfinding, perceived crowding, and overall comfort (Pijanowski et al., 2011). Yet, despite music's recognized power to enhance immersion and satisfaction, there remains a lack of integrative models that position diverse musical roles within a unified experiential framework (Liu et al., 2018).

## **Music Roles in Destination Experience Design**

Building on the experiential tourism foundation, six distinct roles that music can play in shaping destination experience have been proposed (Liu et al., 2018). These roles span from strategic programming to spontaneous, ambient encounters:

### ***Thematic Music Integration***

Thematic Music Integration involves the deliberate curation of music that aligns with the thematic, historical, or cultural identity of the destination. For example, ambient soundtracks in museums or heritage sites can reinforce narrative immersion, while local instrumental genres used in promotional media can symbolically anchor a destination's brand identity. Research in experiential marketing highlights that multisensory congruence—such as matching music to spatial themes—can enhance memory recall, emotional engagement, and perceived authenticity. However, the extent to which such integrations contribute to tourists' holistic evaluation of their destination experience is yet to be robustly quantified.

### ***Live Music Availability***

Live Music Availability captures the presence and accessibility of live performances—ranging from formal concerts to spontaneous street busking. Live music is often cited as a key attractor for urban tourism and festival-based travel. It not only offers entertainment but also facilitates social interaction, local economic activity, and cultural immersion. Prior studies suggest that live performances significantly enhance perceived vibrancy and emotional arousal within destinations, yet their relative importance in shaping destination experience quality, when compared with other musical elements, remains understudied.

### ***Cultural Congruence***

Cultural Congruence refers to the perceived authenticity and appropriateness of the music relative to the local cultural context. Tourists often interpret congruent musical experiences—such as traditional folk music in rural settings or indigenous sounds at heritage sites—as markers of cultural legitimacy and depth. Conversely, music perceived as out of place or overly commercial may disrupt immersion. Theories of cultural consumption and place-making emphasize the role of congruent aural cues in enhancing perceived authenticity, a key dimension of experience quality.

### ***Emotional Resonance***

Emotional Resonance concerns the degree to which music elicits meaningful affective responses in the listener. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), emotional reactions mediate how environmental stimuli, including music, influence behavioral outcomes like satisfaction, recommendation, and revisit intention. Music's ability to evoke nostalgia, joy, serenity, or exhilaration can shape a tourist's evaluation of a destination at both conscious and subconscious levels. Yet few studies have measured this dimension in the context of broader experiential evaluations.

## **Music-Induced Sense of Place**

Music-Induced Sense of Place captures how specific sounds and musical compositions contribute to forming or reinforcing a destination's spatial identity. A distinct soundscape—whether created intentionally through curated playlists or organically through environmental music—can contribute to spatial legibility and emotional attachment. Destinations such as Nashville or Vienna are often associated with particular genres, reinforcing both place brand and visitor memory. This construct links to the broader literature on place attachment and auditory geography.

## **Soundscape Quality**

Soundscape Quality pertains to tourists' evaluation of the overall aural environment, including both musical and non-musical elements. This includes clarity of sound, balance between ambient noise and music, and the absence of auditory pollution (e.g., construction, traffic, or overlapping sound sources). High-quality soundscapes have been shown to promote emotional restoration, comfort, and sensory pleasure in both urban and nature-based settings. In contrast, poor soundscapes can undermine even the most visually appealing environments.

Together, these six dimensions provide a holistic lens for analyzing music's role in destination experience design. They reflect both intentional curation and spontaneous environmental qualities, spanning affective, cultural, and sensory domains. By modeling their influence on Destination Experience Quality, the present study offers an integrated framework that informs both theory and practice in experiential tourism design. The following section presents the proposed hypotheses.

## **Hypotheses Development**

Building on the theoretical frameworks of servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992), and experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999), this study posits that each music-related construct positively contributes to tourists' overall Destination Experience Quality (DEQ). DEQ is conceptualized as a multidimensional evaluation encompassing affective satisfaction, sensory immersion, cultural connection, and place-based meaning.

Thematic Music Integration enhances the perceived coherence and narrative immersion of a destination. When music aligns with the spatial or cultural theme of a destination, it reinforces tourists' sense of presence and amplifies memory encoding. Live Music Availability contributes to emotional arousal, social interaction, and cultural vitality, offering a dynamic layer of authenticity and unpredictability. Cultural Congruence influences the authenticity judgment tourists make about the destination. When music is perceived as culturally appropriate, it fosters deeper affective and cognitive evaluations. Emotional Resonance captures music's capacity to generate powerful personal and emotional reactions. Given that emotion is a primary driver of experience satisfaction and memory formation. Music-Induced Sense of Place reflects how well music evokes spatial belonging or destination identity. Destinations that sonically distinguish themselves may cultivate greater attachment and distinctiveness in tourists' mental maps. Soundscape Quality, as a background contextual factor, contributes to tourists' sensory comfort and aesthetic pleasure. Well-managed aural environments reduce cognitive overload and enhance relaxation. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H 1: Thematic Music Integration (TMI) is positively associated with Destination Experience Quality.
- H 2: Live Music Availability (LMA) is positively associated with Destination Experience Quality.
- H 3: Cultural Congruence (CCG) is positively associated with Destination Experience Quality.
- H 4: Emotional Resonance (EMR) is positively associated with Destination Experience Quality.
- H 5: Music-Induced Sense of Place (MSP) is positively associated with Destination Experience Quality.
- H 6: Soundscape Quality (SSQ) is positively associated with Destination Experience Quality.

The following section outlines the methodological approach for testing these hypotheses through PLS-SEM and the strategic prioritization of elements using Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA).

## Methods

### Measurement Development

All constructs in this study, including the dependent variable Destination Experience Quality (DEQ), were modeled as first-order reflective constructs. This specification is consistent with prior literature where psychological and perceptual constructs—such as emotional resonance or perceived experience quality—are understood to be reflected in their observable indicators rather than causing them. Six predictor constructs were operationalized to represent music's role in destination experience design: Thematic Music Integration (TMI), Live Music Availability (LMA), Cultural Congruence (CCG), Emotional Resonance (EMR), Music-Induced Sense of Place (MSP), and Soundscape Quality (SSQ) (Zhuang et al., 2023).

Each construct, including DEQ, was measured using three reflective indicators, adapted from established scales in tourism marketing, soundscape assessment, and music psychology (Zhuang et al., 2023). Items were framed to capture tourists' perceptions during or immediately following their most recent music-influenced travel experience. A 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) was used for all items.

To ensure content validity, the initial item pool was reviewed by three experts in destination design and music tourism. A pilot test was then conducted with 30 respondents, resulting in minor wording adjustments to enhance clarity and cultural applicability across global destinations.

### Data Collection

A structured online survey was distributed between March and April 2025 via tourist databases and social media groups dedicated to cultural travel. Respondents were eligible if they had visited a music-influenced destination (e.g., known for live music, cultural soundscapes, or festivals) within the last 12 months. After cleaning and excluding incomplete responses or failed attention checks, a final sample of 350 valid responses was retained.

The sample was geographically diverse from different parts of Thailand. Demographically, respondents were 52% female, 48% male, and ranged in age from 20 to 55, with varied levels of travel frequency and musical interest.

### **Data Analysis Strategy**

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for model testing via SmartPLS 4. This method is appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study, the reflective measurement model, and the emphasis on prediction (Hair et al., 2021). We first test the measurement model. For indicator reliability, all outer loadings were expected to exceed 0.70. Items below 0.50 would be considered for deletion. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was required to exceed 0.50. For discriminant validity, the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was used. All HTMT values had to fall below 0.85.

Then, the bootstrapping method (5,000 subsamples) tested the significance of the path coefficients (hypotheses). The model's explanatory power was evaluated using  $R^2$  for Destination Experience Quality.

### **Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)**

To identify strategic priorities for experience design, Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) was conducted following Ringle and Sarstedt (2016). This method supplements PLS-SEM by plotting each predictor's total effect on DEQ (importance) against its mean latent variable score (performance). A grand mean split generated a two-dimensional matrix categorizing the constructs into four quadrants:

- Quadrant 1: High Importance, High Performance – maintain excellence
- Quadrant 2: Low Importance, High Performance – possible overinvestment
- Quadrant 3: Low Importance, Low Performance – minimal priority
- Quadrant 4: High Importance, Low Performance – strategic focus needed

This approach allowed the study to move beyond statistical significance toward managerial relevance, offering destination planners data-driven insights for prioritizing musical elements in experience design.

## **Results**

### **Measurement Model Assessment**

All constructs in this study, including the dependent variable Destination Experience Quality (DEQ), were conceptualized as reflective and underwent rigorous psychometric assessment to verify their validity and reliability. Consistent with the recommendations of Sarstedt et al. (2021), the standardized loadings for all indicators exceeded the 0.70 threshold and were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, confirming satisfactory indicator reliability across all measurement items (see Table 1).

Convergent validity was established through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with all constructs reporting AVE values above the recommended minimum of 0.60. This demonstrates that a substantial proportion of the variance in the observed variables is explained by their corresponding latent constructs. Additionally, both Cronbach's alpha and

Composite Reliability (CR) values for each construct exceeded the 0.70 criterion, confirming robust internal consistency and construct reliability.

To verify discriminant validity, the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was employed. All HTMT values remained well below the conservative cutoff of 0.85, indicating that each construct is empirically distinct from the others in the model. Furthermore, the direction and strength of inter-construct correlations were theoretically sound and aligned with extant literature on music, environmental stimuli, and experiential tourism. Collectively, these results confirm the soundness of the measurement model and provide a solid foundation for proceeding to the evaluation of the structural model.

**Table 1**  
*Measurement Model Assessment*

Construct	Indicator	AVE	rho_a	$\hat{w}_i$	$\hat{\lambda}_i$
Thematic Music Integration (TMI)	TMI1: Music played in public spaces matched the theme or mood of the destination.	0.877	0.801	0.38	0.894
	TMI2: The use of music was thoughtfully integrated into various parts of the destination (e.g., attractions, hotels).			0.355	0.881
	TMI3: The musical ambiance enhanced the storytelling or narrative of the place.			0.383	0.91
Live Music Availability (LMA)	LMA1: I had multiple opportunities to enjoy live music during my visit.	0.872	0.78	0.358	0.879
	LMA2: Live music performances were well-publicized and easy to access.			0.429	0.904
	LMA3: The live music experiences contributed to the uniqueness of the destination.			0.344	0.866
Cultural Congruence of Music (CCM)	CCM1: The music I heard reflected the local culture and traditions.	0.879	0.801	0.383	0.912
	CCM2: Musical performances helped me understand the destination's cultural identity.			0.384	0.899
	CCM3: The musical elements felt authentic rather than overly commercialized.			0.35	0.874
Emotional Resonance of Music (ERM)	ERM1: The music I encountered evoked positive emotions during my visit.	0.877	0.801	0.357	0.903
	ERM2: I felt emotionally connected to the music I heard at the destination.			0.39	0.913
	ERM3: Some musical experiences during my trip were emotionally memorable.			0.37	0.868
Music-induced Sense of Place (MSP)	MSP1: The music made the destination feel more distinctive and memorable.	1.061	0.806	0.551	0.949
	MSP2: Certain sounds or songs now remind me of this destination.			0.395	0.917
	MSP3: Music helped me feel a stronger attachment to the place I visited.			0.14	0.824
Soundscape Quality (SSQ)	SSQ1: The music and ambient sounds around the destination were pleasant.	0.883	0.799	0.409	0.907
	SSQ2: The volume and tone of the music were appropriate and non-intrusive.			0.377	0.895
	SSQ3: The sound environment contributed to my comfort and enjoyment.			0.332	0.879
Outcome Variable: Destination Experience Quality (DEQ)	DEQ1: Music enhanced the overall quality of my experience at the destination.	0.969	0.941	0.347	0.972
	DEQ2: I was satisfied with the role music played during my visit.			0.339	0.968
	DEQ3: Music was a meaningful part of my destination experience.			0.345	0.971

Note.  $\hat{w}_i$  = estimated weights,  $\hat{\lambda}_i$  = estimated loadings, VIF = Variance Inflation Factor, and AVE = Average Variance Explained

## Structural Model Results

The structural model was assessed to evaluate the hypothesized relationships between six music-related constructs and the outcome variable, Destination Experience Quality (DEQ). Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the model revealed that all six paths were statistically significant at the 0.05 level or better, supporting all proposed hypotheses and highlighting the multifaceted role of music in enhancing destination experiences. Thematic Music Integration (TMI) exhibited the strongest influence on DEQ ( $\beta = 0.563$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), affirming its central role in reinforcing narrative immersion and perceptual coherence at the destination. This result suggests that music intentionally aligned with the destination's theme or identity meaningfully enhances affective and cognitive appraisals among visitors.

Cultural Congruence of Music (CCM) also showed a substantial positive effect ( $\beta = 0.435$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the perceived cultural appropriateness and authenticity of musical elements contributes significantly to visitors' perception of experience quality. This supports the premise that music acts as a symbolic cue, reinforcing place-based authenticity and cultural depth.

Emotional Resonance of Music (ERM) was likewise a strong predictor ( $\beta = 0.362$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), consistent with the theoretical expectation that emotionally evocative music enhances satisfaction and memory encoding, core components of experiential value. While Live Music Availability (LMA) had a comparatively smaller effect ( $\beta = 0.122$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), it was still statistically significant, suggesting that the presence of live musical experiences—formal or spontaneous—adds a dynamic and socially engaging layer to destination experiences. Similarly, Music-Induced Sense of Place (MSP) ( $\beta = 0.102$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) and Soundscape Quality (SSQ) ( $\beta = 0.065$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ) were both positively associated with DEQ, though with modest effect sizes. MSP highlights music's capacity to reinforce spatial identity and place distinctiveness, while SSQ reflects the value of coherent, non-intrusive acoustic environments in promoting sensory comfort.

Collectively, the model demonstrates that music exerts a significant and multidimensional influence on Destination Experience Quality. The relative strength of TMI, CCM, and ERM suggests that emotional and symbolic dimensions of music carry more weight than logistical or ambient aspects in shaping visitor satisfaction. These findings provide empirical grounding for a more strategic deployment of musical elements in destination design.

**Table 2**

*Structural Model Assessment (n = 350)*

Relationship	Estimate	p-value
TMI -> DEQ	0.563	0.001
LMA -> DEQ	0.122	0.001
CCM -> DEQ	0.435	0.001
ERM -> DEQ	0.362	0.001
MSP -> DEQ	0.102	0.003
SSQ -> DEQ	0.065	0.019

*Note.* Thematic Music Integration (TMI), Live Music Availability (LMA), Cultural Congruence of Music (CCM), Emotional Resonance of Music (ERM), Music-induced Sense of Place (MSP), Soundscape Quality (SSQ), Outcome Variable: Destination Experience Quality (DEQ)

## **IPMA Results**

To augment the insights derived from the structural model, the study applied Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) to identify which musical dimensions offer the most strategic leverage for enhancing Destination Experience Quality (DEQ). Unlike traditional path modeling, which only assesses the magnitude and significance of causal relationships, IPMA juxtaposes each construct's importance (total effect on DEQ) against its performance (mean latent score), enabling destination planners to prioritize interventions more effectively (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016).

Following the methodology outlined by Henseler (2020), the average importance and performance scores were used to generate a two-axis matrix. Constructs were then categorized into four strategic quadrants:

### ***Quadrant 1 – Maintain Excellence (High Importance, High Performance): TMI, CCM***

Thematic Music Integration (TMI) and Cultural Congruence of Music (CCM) emerged as both high-performing and highly influential predictors of DEQ. These findings underscore the success of current destination strategies that align musical themes with place identity and ensure cultural relevance. Destination managers should continue investing in these dimensions, maintaining their current quality while exploring further innovations in narrative-driven and culturally embedded music programming.

### ***Quadrant 2 – Possible Overinvestment (Low Importance, High Performance): LMA***

Live Music Availability (LMA) showed relatively high performance but lower importance compared to other constructs. While live performances are appreciated and well-executed, their marginal contribution to DEQ suggests potential overinvestment. Resources currently allocated to frequent or large-scale live music offerings could be partially redirected to more impactful areas without significantly compromising visitor satisfaction.

### ***Quadrant 3 – Lower Priority (Low Importance, Low Performance): SSQ, MSP***

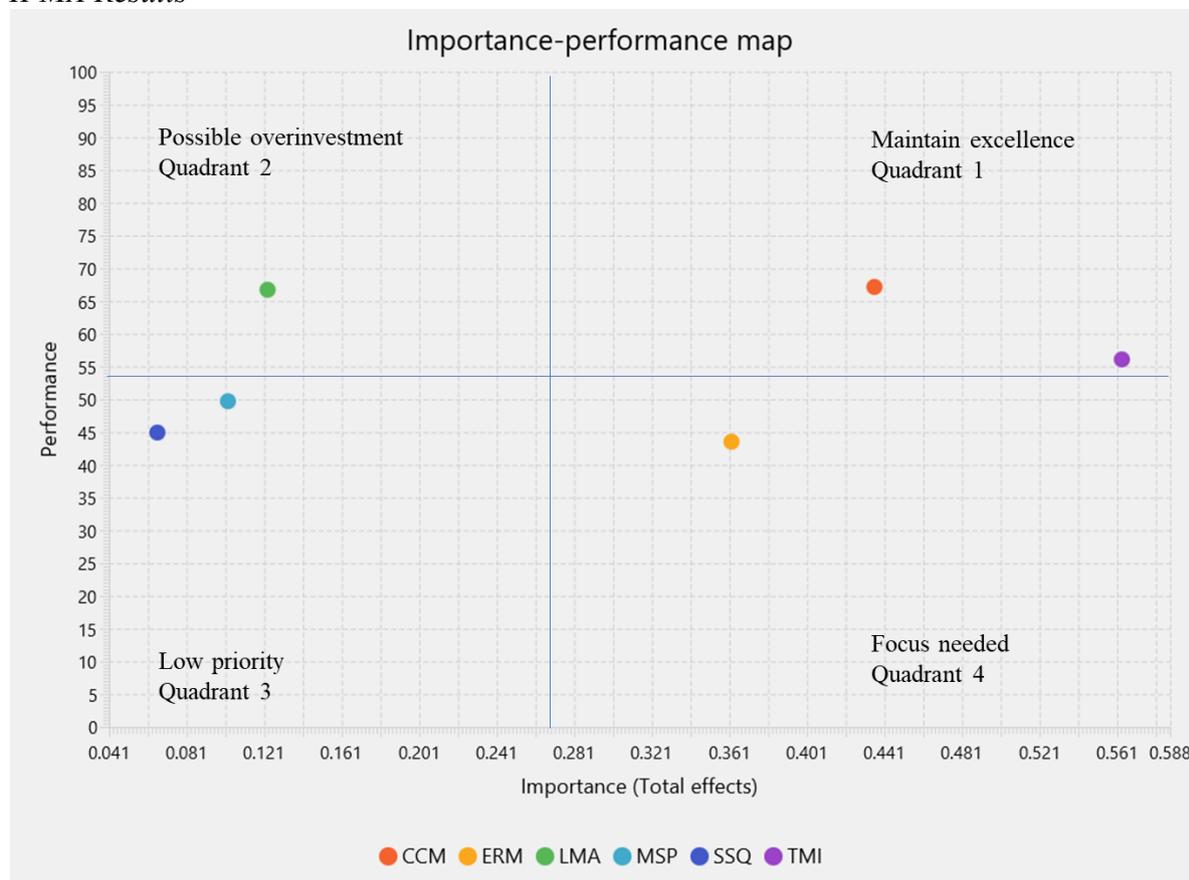
Soundscape Quality (SSQ) and Music-Induced Sense of Place (MSP) were identified as both low in importance and low in performance. These dimensions, while conceptually relevant, appear to play a more background role in shaping visitors' overall destination appraisal. Given their limited influence, improvements in these areas may not substantially enhance DEQ and may be deprioritized in the short term unless part of broader sensory experience strategies.

### ***Quadrant 4 – Strategic Focus Needed (High Importance, Low Performance): ERM***

Emotional Resonance of Music (ERM) stands out as a high-impact yet underperforming construct. Despite its strong influence on DEQ, performance levels lag behind other dimensions. This suggests a key leverage point for destination enhancement. Efforts to curate emotionally compelling musical experiences—through nostalgic cues, emotionally evocative compositions, or participatory music moments—could yield disproportionately high gains in destination satisfaction and emotional attachment.

These findings illustrate the practical utility of IPMA in guiding destination managers toward evidence-based prioritization. In particular, investments that boost emotional resonance and preserve thematic and culturally aligned music experiences are likely to generate the most meaningful improvements in perceived destination quality.

**Figure 1**  
*IPMA Results*



## Discussion and Implications

### Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on multisensory experience design in tourism by proposing and empirically validating a comprehensive framework for understanding music's role in shaping Destination Experience Quality (DEQ). Unlike previous research that examined musical elements in isolation—such as the impacts of live performances or soundscapes—this study integrates six distinct dimensions into a unified model that reflects music's cognitive, affective, symbolic, and environmental influence on tourists.

The findings underscore the theoretical value of approaching music not merely as entertainment, but as an experiential design tool embedded within the destination's sensory architecture. Thematic Music Integration and Cultural Congruence were identified as the most influential dimensions, affirming theories in experiential marketing that emphasize the importance of conceptual alignment and symbolic meaning in shaping consumer evaluations (Schmitt, 1999). These dimensions reinforce the idea that music, when thoughtfully

integrated into the spatial and cultural fabric of a destination, enhances narrative coherence, authenticity, and memory formation.

Moreover, the inclusion of Emotional Resonance and Music-Induced Sense of Place extends the literature on affective destination design. These constructs capture the emotional and spatial qualities of musical stimuli, offering new pathways for exploring how music contributes to sense-making, attachment, and immersion. The application of Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) also represents a methodological contribution, demonstrating how perceptual and statistical priorities can be combined to inform more strategic tourism development models.

### **Practical Implications**

For practitioners in destination management, tourism marketing, and experience design, this study provides data-driven insights on how to strategically allocate resources across musical components to enhance overall visitor satisfaction. The high impact and high performance of Thematic Music Integration and Cultural Congruence suggest that destination stakeholders should prioritize context-sensitive music programming—whether through curated playlists, heritage-aligned performances, or branding elements that integrate local sound traditions.

Emotional Resonance, while highly important, showed relatively lower performance, pointing to a key leverage point. Destination managers could consider investing in emotionally rich and diverse soundscapes—such as genre-specific zones, nostalgic musical cues, or immersive audio experiences—that tap into the affective dimensions of memory and mood. This is particularly relevant in settings that aim to differentiate themselves through emotional engagement rather than functional amenities.

Live Music Availability, although well-executed, had a modest impact on DEQ. This implies that while live performances are appreciated, their contribution to holistic experience quality may be secondary to more immersive or culturally embedded elements. Event planners should continue to offer live music but consider how it complements rather than defines the broader destination experience.

Finally, Soundscape Quality and Music-Induced Sense of Place, though lower in importance and performance, should not be disregarded. These background elements contribute to ambient comfort and spatial identity, particularly in wellness, heritage, or ecotourism settings. Improving acoustic planning, reducing noise interference, and maintaining sound consistency across touchpoints can incrementally enhance the perceived quality of place.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relies on self-reported, cross-sectional data, which restricts causal inference. Longitudinal studies or real-time experience sampling could yield deeper insights into the temporal dynamics of music in shaping destination impressions. Second, the operationalization of musical constructs was intentionally broad to capture diverse settings; however, this may overlook nuanced factors such as personal musical preferences, genre specificity, or lyrical content.

Third, the sample was drawn from a limited set of geographic contexts, potentially affecting generalizability. Cultural differences in musical interpretation, symbolism, and emotional

expression warrant future cross-cultural validation of the model. Finally, while the study focuses on tourists' perspectives, incorporating insights from local communities, musicians, and planners could enhance the ecological validity and ethical grounding of music-driven design strategies. Future research should also explore interactions between music and other sensory modalities—such as scent, taste, or tactile elements—to assess the synergetic effects of multisensory design on destination experience quality. Additionally, qualitative approaches could enrich understanding of how tourists narrate, interpret, and remember musical encounters across different types of destinations.

### **Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process**

The author declares that no AI or AI-assisted technologies have been used to generate, refine, or correct the content in the manuscript. The ideas, design, procedures, findings, analyses, and discussion are originally written and derived from careful and systematic conduct of the research.

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