

Construction Logic and Verification of Wellness Space Based on Five-Tone Sound Healing

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Abstract: *This study addresses the homogenization of traditional homestays and the rising urban demand for deep physical and mental rehabilitation. Rooted in the five-tone healing theory of Huangdi Neijing (The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon), it proposes an integrated wellness tourism framework that combines intangible folk music, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) five-element practices, and immersive spatial design. Moving beyond hardware stacking, the framework emphasizes a tangible, participatory, and verifiable experiential loop, validated via a minimum viable product (MVP) model. The findings suggest that the core competitiveness of such immersive heritage wellness spaces lies in translating cultural theory into embodied experience, rather than relying on technological spectacle.*

Keywords: *Five-tone sound healing; Immersive space; Wellness tourism accommodation; Intangible folk music; Productization path*

1. Introduction

The Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Initiative clearly advocates developing TCM health tourism and non-pharmacological physical and mental intervention services^①. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has continuously released policies to facilitate the integration of intangible cultural heritage with rural accommodation and urban short-stay vacations.

Policy support provides fundamental momentum, yet market changes serve as a more direct driving force. Modern young and middle-aged urban professionals endure long-term high-pressure work, suffering from prevalent sub-health issues such as insomnia, anxiety and endocrine disorders. The 2023 National Health Insight Report indicates that 95% of respondents report at least one health complaint^②. Travel demands have shifted from simple overnight stays to comprehensive physical and mental recovery. Conventional homestays that only provide lodging can hardly satisfy such compound demands.

Most culture-themed homestays merely adopt Chinese-style decorative elements on the surface, lacking in-depth, participatory and functional experiential content. The separation between cultural value and wellness functions weakens their core market competitiveness.

As a non-pharmacological therapeutic approach with a history of over 2,000 years, five-tone healing correlates the five musical modes (Jue, Zhi, Gong, Shang, Yu) with human internal organs. It regulates qi and blood and relieves emotional distress through sound wave resonance, supported by a complete theoretical system and emerging modern physiological research evidence^[1]. Integrating musical acoustics, TCM wellness, architectural environmental design and tourism operation, this paper summarizes design strategies and implementation approaches for five-tone healing in immersive wellness accommodation environments. It offers practical references for conceptual transformation of other cultural tourism innovation projects.

^① State Council. Notice on Issuing the Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Initiative: Guo Fa (2016) No.32[EB/OL]. (2016-10-25)

^② Dxy Doctor. 2023 National Health Insight Report[R]. 2023

2. Core Theoretical Foundations and Industrial Development Logic

2.1 Theoretical Core and Modern Research Progress of Five-Tone Sound Healing

The theoretical origin of five-tone healing derives from the classic statement in Huangdi Neijing: each of the five tones corresponds to a natural property, which links to one internal organ. The Jue mode (Wood) nourishes the liver, the Zhi mode (Fire) nourishes the heart, the Gong mode (Earth) nourishes the spleen, the Shang mode (Metal) nourishes the lungs, and the Yu mode (Water) nourishes the kidneys. Folk music in specific modes generates resonant sound frequencies that produce graded therapeutic effects on corresponding visceral systems^[2].

Distinct from Western music therapy, which mainly relies on emotional stimulation via melodies, five-tone healing combines physiological responses triggered by sound vibration with traditional Chinese aesthetic standards and preventive healthcare philosophies.

Relaxing Yu-mode music elevates alpha brainwave proportion, reduces skin electrical response and inhibits cortisol secretion, thereby alleviating anxiety^[1]. Upbeat Zhi-mode pieces enhance heart rate variability and relieve depressive moods, while resonant Gong-mode melodies stabilize gastrointestinal peristalsis and ease fatigue and bloating caused by spleen deficiency^[2]. Nevertheless, existing relevant studies mostly focus on clinical intervention effects, with limited discussions on the transformation and application of five-tone healing in daily living and vacation scenarios.

From the perspective of music psychology, scholars have pointed out that sound's emotional impacts depend not only on musical modes but also on contextual factors including listening surroundings, individual expectations and cultural backgrounds^[5]. This conclusion theoretically supports the extension of five-tone healing from clinical wards to daily living spaces. Although online music applications lower access thresholds for five-tone playlists, they lack the multi-sensory synergistic advantages unique to offline spaces. Without coordinated visual, olfactory and tactile stimuli, the therapeutic effects of auditory input are significantly weakened. This creates a key differentiated advantage for offline immersive wellness accommodation.

2.2 Theoretical Evolution and Wellness Transformation of Immersive Spatial Design

Immersive spatial design aims to eliminate the binary boundary between visitors and spaces, constructing fully enclosed, participatory sensory fields. Contemporary immersive projects have shifted from technical spectacle to experiential depth. Simple stacks of sound, light and electronic devices fail to sustain customer attraction; instead, profound cultural connotations and interactive participation become core competitive factors^[6]. Wellness-oriented immersive spaces follow design logic entirely different from entertainment-focused ones. They adopt mild, soothing and harmonious design languages rather than intense visual shocks^[3].

For wellness accommodation immersive spaces proposed in this research, the core design objective is physical and mental relaxation instead of surprise or visual stimulation. Auditory experience centers on customized five-tone folk music; visual perception relies on soft light projection and five-element themed color palettes; olfactory experience is matched with TCM herbal aromatherapy; tactile perception is activated via sound wave conduction equipment; gustatory experience is delivered through seasonal medicinal cuisines. The five senses function independently while interconnected by musical melodies, forming an integrated wellness experience loop.

2.3 Market Logic of Wellness Tourism Accommodation Industry

China's wellness tourism market continues to expand rapidly. When statistics include elderly care and travel services, the overall wellness industry market scale exceeds 10 trillion RMB^[8]. Post-pandemic consumer research reveals that 69.5% of young and middle-aged tourists regard in-depth immersive experience as their primary travel demand. They are willing to pay a premium of 20% to 40% for mid-to-high-end accommodation with professional cultural and wellness services^[7]. Such dramatic demand shifts contrast sharply with homogenized supply among traditional homestays.

Three mainstream related products in the market all carry inherent defects. First, traditional hot spring wellness hotels prioritize physical therapy without profound traditional folk music culture. Second, ICH Chinese-style museums only offer one-time instrument viewing without accommodation or long-term recuperation services. Third, ordinary culture-themed homestays lack standardized,

professional wellness service systems. The market gap between these three categories creates viable differentiated space for five-tone healing immersive accommodation. Homestays relying merely on lodging or single cultural symbols face growth bottlenecks. Premium products must achieve breakthroughs in cultural depth, service professionalism and interactive experience^[4].

3. Construction Framework of Immersive Wellness Space with Five-Tone Healing

3.1 Wellness-Oriented Functional Design of Accommodation Spaces

Guest rooms constitute the core component of tourism accommodation. The five-tone and five-element philosophy should not be simplified into superficial decorative stickers, but transformed into embodied spatial functions. This framework divides guest rooms into two tiers: basic 12-temperament rooms and high-end folk music themed suites, catering to diverse consumer groups and experience depths.

Basic temperament rooms are designed around ancient twelve temperament pipes including Huangzhong and Dalü. Upon check-in, the system automatically matches sound field modes corresponding to guests' daily schedules and physical conditions. Projected texts of ancient temperament manuscripts flow across wall surfaces, while aromatherapy, bedding patterns and herbal sachets adopt matching five-element herbal formulas. The design enables guests to receive continuous low-frequency sound wave immersion throughout their stay, rather than a one-off ceremonial experience.

High-end themed suites adopt narrative design logic. The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove Suite draws inspiration from Wei-Jin literati culture, equipped with an intelligent winding stream tea table that dispenses tea synchronized with Drunken Song (Jiu Kuang). In the early morning, bamboo fragrance and Ruan instrument harmonic sounds wake up guests gently. The Boya and Ziqi Suite revolves around the bosom friend cultural narrative. A sound-sensing wall in the corridor requires two visitors to produce coordinated vocal sounds; when their pitch matching rate reaches 80%, a holographic projection reconstructs the historical scene of Boya meeting Ziqi by the Han River in the Spring and Autumn Period. Five hidden guqin tablature magnetic stickers are scattered across the suite; visitors who collect all five can exchange commemorative badges, encouraging tourists to engage with guqin tablature ICH through gamification.

All guest rooms are equipped with low-noise sound wave mattresses embedded with low-frequency vibration modules matching designated musical modes. Slow Yu or Gong-mode music automatically plays during sleeping hours. The entire accommodation process delivers lightweight sound therapy intervention, without requiring guests to enter dedicated wellness rooms for conditioning.

3.2 Trinity Functional Layout of Public Spaces

Public areas undertake dual functions: dynamic inheritance of intangible folk music and standardized delivery of sound therapy courses. The overall layout follows a trinity logic: diagnosis, experience and creation.

The sound medicine diagnosis desk serves as the starting point of the whole experience process. Based on TCM syndrome differentiation, it generates personalized five-tone healing prescriptions according to visitors' emotional status, sleep quality and physical conditions, matching exclusive folk music playing durations and tonal modes. This customized scheme avoids uniform background music playback and realizes personalized wellness services.

Egg-shaped sound-insulated independent therapy cabins are divided into three types: Guqin meditation cabins, empty drum mindfulness cabins and ethnic musical instrument VR cabins. Supported by agarwood, five-element herbal aromas and graphene acupoint thermal compresses, visitors can complete 30–60 minutes of enclosed sound wave meditation without external disturbance. VR cabins simulate virtual ethnic folk music scenarios, triggering 4D environmental feedback during performance, integrating cultural popularization with recreational experience.

The ensemble courtyard is planned following the eight categories of traditional musical instruments from the Zhou Dynasty, with instruments classified into Metal, Stone, Silk, Bamboo and other categories displayed in separate zones. Suspended magnetic exhibition brackets reduce visual oppression, and palm vein recognition unlocks digital commentary for each instrument. The courtyard

regularly holds folk music salons and seasonal sound therapy workshops to attract visitor participation. A handicraft area provides DIY five-tone herbal sachet activities, extending auditory healing to tactile and olfactory interactive experience via matched TCM formulas. For instance, Earth-mode Gong tone corresponds to spleen nourishment with *Atractylodes macrocephala* and dried tangerine peel; Wood-mode Jue tone matches mint for liver soothing and qi regulation.

3.3 Experience Loop of Supporting Wellness Services

As a vital component of five-sense perception, gustatory experience forms perfect synergy between five-tone music and 24-season medicinal cuisine. Shang-mode music paired with lung-moistening lily and pear soup is served in autumn, while Jue-mode melodies accompany liver-soothing green herbal dishes in spring. Matching five-tone folk music cycles play during daily meals and afternoon tea. In dry Autumnal Equinox, the kitchen prepares lily pear soup to moisturize the lungs, accompanied by Shang-mode works including Misty Green Waves and Plum Blossom Melody.

Professional five-tone healing rooms deliver combined services: rhythm massage, sound wave meditation and live folk music performance. Massage techniques align with plucking and striking rhythms of traditional instruments. Guzheng plucking-style manipulation relieves shoulder and neck tension, accompanied by Fisherman's Song at Dusk to enhance relaxation. Sound wave mattresses paired with long Guqin notes facilitate deep relaxation, while impromptu live folk music serves as background soothing therapy.

4. Product Transformation and Light-Asset Market Verification Framework

4.1 Strategic Shift toward Minimum Viable Product

A complete immersive accommodation system integrates lodging, catering, wellness and cultural activities. This research decomposes the grand conceptual blueprint into independently testable minimal units, extracting the core product: standardized 60-minute Five-Tone Mindfulness Meditation Course. Instead of investing heavily in full-scale homestay construction at the initial stage, the project adopts low-cost cooperative operation to conduct market trials.

This strategy borrows the minimum viable product concept from internet product design and applies it to cultural and creative project implementation. High-concept cultural projects frequently fall into the trap of polished yet untested plans. The core value of MVP lies in transforming high-risk full-scale investment into low-cost single-point experiments^[9].

4.2 Standardized Product Design of Meditation Courses

The 60-minute standardized Five-Tone Mindfulness Meditation Course consists of four segments:

- 1) 10-minute cultural introduction: Visualized illustrations explain the wellness logic of five tones;
- 2) 5-minute physical and mental preparation: Guided breathing and posture adjustment;
- 3) 35-minute immersive meditation: Sequential listening to Jue, Zhi, Gong, Shang and Yu modes, with corresponding visceral emotional analysis, curated music playback and mindfulness guidance to direct bodily perception;
- 4) 10-minute sharing session: Visitors exchange experiential insights and receive digital five-tone wellness playlists for continuous home therapy.

This course operates as an independent experiential product through cooperation with existing urban wellness spaces and cultural venues. The research team supplies standardized course packages, professional instructors, audio materials and guidance scripts, while partner venues provide physical spaces and customer channels. Partners gain value-added cultural services, and the team acquires authentic user feedback data with minimal capital input. Both sides leverage their comparative advantages to achieve mutual benefits.

4.3 Trial Design Logic and Evaluation Indicators

A controlled trial scheme is adopted for market verification. Participants are divided into two groups: the experimental group receives the complete five-tone meditation course, and the control

group undergoes conventional light music relaxation only. Quantitative indicators including satisfaction score, emotional self-evaluation and repurchase intention, alongside qualitative feedback, are compared to verify the unique therapeutic value of traditional folk music five-tone healing.

Electronic questionnaires are distributed after each course to collect quantitative ratings and qualitative suggestions. Partial participants are invited for short semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth experiential information.

5. Existing Challenges and Optimization Strategies

5.1 Superficial Transformation of Theoretical Concepts

The primary obstacle in translating five-tone healing theories into operable spatial experience is balancing scientific rigor and accessible presentation. Many market projects themed on five-tone healing merely adopt superficial color schemes and instrument symbols without professional standards for tonal matching and sound field design. Such projects become shallow photo-taking attractions without tangible wellness effects. The spread of conceptual dilution damages the credibility of the entire industry.

This problem originates from the structural knowledge gap among spatial designers: most practitioners master aesthetic design yet lack professional knowledge of five-tone therapy and human acoustics.

5.2 Structural Shortage of Interdisciplinary Professionals

The industry requires interdisciplinary practitioners who integrate three capacities: folk music performance, five-element TCM wellness knowledge, immersive event organization and homestay operation. Currently, talent supply fails to meet market demands. Folk music majors lack wellness expertise, TCM practitioners are unfamiliar with traditional instruments, and homestay service staff receive no systematic training for sound therapy courses. Furthermore, interdisciplinary sound therapists require long cultivation cycles, and talent shortage directly hinders standardized service implementation.

5.3 Mismatch between Upfront Investment and Return Cycles

Immersive light projection equipment, sound-insulated therapy cabins, professional folk instruments and intelligent sound wave devices demand substantial one-time procurement costs. The thematic renovation of courtyard spaces also incurs higher expenses than ordinary homestay decoration. Wellness and cultural experience represent slow-cycle industries; brand reputation accumulates gradually, creating severe capital pressure for small and medium entrepreneurs with limited self-funding.

This reality motivates the light-asset verification strategy proposed in this research. Direct full-scale construction without prior market validation of core courses leads to severe financial risks if consumer feedback fails to meet expectations.

5.4 Polarized Public Perception and High Cultural Education Costs

Consumers hold two extreme attitudes toward five-tone healing. Some dismiss sound-based physical conditioning as unscientific superstition, while others hold overly optimistic romantic expectations of its therapeutic efficacy. Both perspectives hinder sustainable customer relationships. In promotional communication, wording must remain neutral without exaggerated efficacy claims, while meeting visitors' reasonable demands for empirical evidence.

Age gaps create distinct acceptance differences toward intelligent digital equipment. Elderly visitors show low acceptance of VR facilities and intelligent sound wave mattresses, while young generations embrace digital technology yet hold varying interest in traditional folk music and TCM wellness. Therefore, multi-tiered experiential paths should be designed to accommodate diverse visitor groups instead of adopting a unified experience framework for all demographics.

6. Conclusion

Rooted in the five-tone healing theory of Huangdi Neijing, this paper proposes an integrated development framework combining intangible folk music, five-element TCM wellness and immersive spatial experience. It constructs a top-down feasible path from theoretical conception to commercialized products through four dimensions: theoretical construction, spatial layout, productization and implementation modes.

This research argues that the core competitive advantage of immersive wellness accommodation lies not in advanced technical equipment or spectacular visual effects, but in its capacity to transform classical cultural theories into tangible, participatory and verifiable physical and mental experiences. Balancing cultural depth and commercial viability requires continuous iterative market trials.

From a broader perspective, such tourism accommodation integrating traditional music and modern wellness demands represents not only innovative commercial models but also a daily, scene-based inheritance approach for intangible folk music. The sustainable survival of traditional culture does not rely on static exhibition in display cabinets, but on practical integration into daily life and public recognition. If this development framework proves viable, its value extends beyond single-industry commercial success, offering a reference for the inheritance of traditional music in contemporary society.

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