

Article

Tea for Well-Being: Restaurant Atmosphere and Repurchase Intention for Hotel Afternoon Tea Services

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Abstract: Afternoon tea has become a popular leisure activity in Taiwan. Most hotels, restaurants, and cafes have started to provide an afternoon tea service in addition to their regular menus. Restaurant atmosphere research has largely focused on single environmental factors in upscale restaurants. Several studies have indicated that a restaurant's atmosphere influences the degree of customer satisfaction, thereby affecting their well-being and repurchase intention. However, the relationships between a restaurant's overall atmosphere, its degree of service performance, and customer well-being have rarely been explored. This study utilized the Mehrabian–Russell environmental psychology model to investigate the relationships between hotel restaurant atmosphere, service performance, customer well-being, and repurchase intention for afternoon tea services. The results indicated that a hotel restaurant's atmosphere and service performance influence customer well-being, which can positively affect customers' repurchase intentions.

Keywords: restaurant atmosphere; well-being; afternoon tea; hotel service performance; Mehrabian-Russell environmental psychology model

1. Introduction

Tea is the most widely consumed beverage globally, and most tea research has focused on its frequency of use and physiological effects [1]. However, few studies have focused on the role of tea in hospitality services. In addition to health considerations, personal life habits and cultural factors influence tea consumption. In Taiwan, afternoon tea has gradually become a popular part of social life. Customers care about a restaurant's environment, ambience, service, and layout, and distinctive afternoon tea restaurants typically appeal to customers.

Hospitality is one of the world's largest industries, contributing trillions of dollars annually to the global economy and stimulating capital investment [2]. Each major city in Taiwan (such as Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung) has more than 600 restaurants and hotels that provide afternoon tea service, which generates annual revenue of \$13 billion NTD [3]. Customers value the hotel restaurant atmosphere. Specifically, restaurant atmosphere and service performance influence customer enjoyment, thereby influencing repurchase intention. The effects of hotel atmosphere on customers are primarily emotional and are difficult to verbalize. Because these emotions are temporary, they are difficult to recall accurately. Therefore, most studies have focused on the influence of a single factor (such as lighting, music, or color) on hotel restaurant atmosphere, whereas few have discussed the influence of atmosphere and service performance on the customers' sense of well-being. Therefore, this study focuses on whether a customer's sense of well-being and their repurchase intention are influenced by an afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere and service performance. To improve customer experiences,

reputable hotels and restaurants worldwide implement sensory experience strategies and attempt to create a pleasant atmosphere with music. An afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere influences the customer experience. Specifically, a favorable restaurant atmosphere can create an active and agreeable experience for customers. Therefore, this paper first addresses how an afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere influences customers' sense of well-being.

Well-being is a subjective feeling of great satisfaction experienced by customers. Nickson et al. [4] argued that customers feel satisfaction and pleasure from an excellent service experience. Jang and Namkung [5] argued that service performance positively influences customer emotions. Godbey [6] believed that having afternoon tea is a crucial part of a person's leisure time and considerably strengthens people's sense of well-being. Having afternoon tea is a popular leisure activity in modern society. Customer satisfaction and emotions are influenced by the performance of service personnel. Therefore, this paper raises the second question of how the service performance of a hotel restaurant's personnel influences customers' sense of well-being.

Unlike merely serving food, the act of providing afternoon tea entails immersing the customer in the experience by stimulating all five senses and providing an enjoyable and comprehensive period of time [7]. Borucki and Burke [8] believed that excellent service performance produces high satisfaction among and elicits positive comments from customers, thereby increasing the likelihood of a customer's future visits. Kotler [9] argued that customers develop a repurchase intention if they are satisfied with the goods or services they purchase. Afternoon tea is a major business offering in many Taiwanese five-star hotels. The largest group of consumers of afternoon tea is adult women aged 20 to 35 [10]. Afternoon tea is an excellent diversion that relaxes both the body and mind. The persistent appeal to customers involves not only delicious food but also a warm and comfortable environment. Customers' emotions and experiences influence their subsequent behavior. Therefore, this paper investigates how customers' sense of well-being acquired in a hotel restaurant influences their repurchase intention.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Afternoon Tea

Drinking a cup of hot tea, tasting delicious desserts, and enjoying afternoon tea comprise a pleasant and leisurely activity that is a respite from busy urban life. This lifestyle activity originated in 19th-century Victorian Britain [11]. Afternoon tea typically occurs in the midafternoon and was traditionally served on low tables. It is associated with etiquette, lace, and dainty foods. Historically, afternoon tea was considered to be a ladies' social occasion and remains more often enjoyed by women than by men. By contrast, high tea was a working-class meal served on a "high" table at the end of the workday that included a substantial meal of hearty savory foods such as meat pies, fish such as pickled salmon, baked vegetables, and cheesy casseroles [12]. Afternoon tea has become an artistic part of life. In terms of porcelain, table setting, and tea tasting, afternoon tea involves not only personal taste but also features of different historical times.

Currently, afternoon tea has evolved into a popular tea culture. Afternoon tea combined with specific desserts, music, and conversation has become a custom suited to specific groups, and many customers have learned to enjoy the atmosphere offered by afternoon tea [13]. During a busy and tense afternoon, modern people may rest and enjoy afternoon tea to satisfy their taste buds and relax both their body and mind [14]. Afternoon tea has gained popularity in Taiwan. The customers attracted to afternoon tea typically vary depending on the restaurant atmosphere. Therefore, food and tea are not the major attractions. Afternoon tea is currently closely associated with restaurant atmosphere. Accordingly, this paper discusses the relationship between hotel restaurant atmosphere and customers' sense of well-being.

2.2. Restaurant Atmosphere

An atmosphere may stimulate the five senses. Wall and Berry [15] argued that although restaurant performance is based on food quality, the overall atmosphere influences customers' comments on the restaurant more. Ryu and Jang [16] used facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting, table settings, and layout as the dimensions to assess restaurant atmosphere. Hotel managers often claim that they sell a unique sensory experience. The core products of a restaurant are food and beverages, and a restaurant attracts customers through flavorful taste with various experiences, including services, interactions between customers and service personnel, and dining environment [17]. Horng, Hong, and Lin [18] demonstrated that facility aesthetics greatly influence the overall atmosphere. Wakefield and Blodgett [19] believed that customers are attracted by specifically designed colors on walls, buildings, floors, tables, and chairs. Ryu and Han [20] contended that environmental settings influence atmosphere value. Customers increasingly pay attention to the dining environment, services, and atmosphere, and customers may be attracted by various factors (such as storefront and interior design, arrangement of seats and use of motion, colors, lighting, acoustics, and air conditioning). This reflects the operations of modern restaurants [21].

Environmental psychologists assume that individuals' emotions ultimately determine their behavior. Environments can also evoke various feelings that cause certain behaviors. The Mehrabian-Russell (M-R) environmental psychology model defines mediating variables and response taxonomy. Thus, the M-R model has been applied to restaurant dining environments to demonstrate that dining atmosphere increases customers' sense of pleasure [16,22]. Within the framework of the M-R environmental psychology model revised by Kim and Moon [22], this paper uses an afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere as hardware and service performance as software. Service performance is also used as an independent research variable. Therefore, an afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere is defined by factors of a restaurant's physical environment that are used to create a perceptual environment, stimulate emotions, and influence consumption intentions and subsequent behaviors of customers.

2.3. Well-Being

Argyle [23] posited that well-being comprises satisfaction, contentedness, sense of achievement, pleasure, and delight. Well-being is a positive and subjective psychological state that people can attain through leisure, sports, or work activities, thereby acquiring a sense of pleasure and achievement. Hospitality and tourism development influences sectors such as agriculture, livestock raising, forestry, handicrafts, food processing, and recreation in manners that can contribute to the well-being of communities [24,25]. Heintzman and Mannell [26] argued that afternoon tea is a leisure activity in daily life in which people can develop positive emotions and acquire a sense of well-being. Ragheb [27] believed that participation and satisfaction in leisure activities help people acquire a sense of well-being. Stated differently, a sense of well-being is influenced by life events. When people are satisfied by life events, they develop a sense of pleasure and well-being. Enjoying afternoon tea can help people relieve work and life stress and has become an integral part of modern life [28]. Since the Victorian era, enjoying afternoon tea has been a popular leisure activity. In this study, afternoon tea is considered a leisure activity, and well-being is defined as the sense of pleasure and relaxation developed from participation in afternoon tea activity.

2.4. Service Performance

Services comprise behaviors, processes, and attitudes that produce a sense of pleasure, comfort, respect, and understanding in the recipient. Service performance refers to the work performance of service personnel and comprehensively reflects their thoughts, willpower, emotions, competencies, and wishes [29]. In the hospitality industry, service personnel maintain a high degree of contact with customers, and their service performance is the most influential factor of service quality [30].

The appearance, dress, professionalism, and attractiveness of service personnel influence customer emotions and behavior intention [31,32]. Nickson et al. [4] argued that customers acquire a sense of satisfaction and pleasure from of an enjoyable visual and service experience. Zeithaml et al. [33] argued that customers make purchases in a shop because of its pleasant atmosphere, and their future shopping behaviors are influenced by whether service personnel provide considerate service during the shopping process. Jang and Namkung [5] argued that service performance positively influences customer emotions and purchase intention. This paper defines service performance as satisfactory service provided by service personnel who behave cordially and politely to produce feelings of pleasure and satisfaction among customers.

2.5. Repurchase Intention

According to Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal [34], repurchase intention refers to the likelihood that customers will repurchase a product. Specifically, it refers to their intention to repurchase a product. Kotler [9] argued that customers develop a repurchase intention if they are satisfied with the goods or services they purchase. According to Pettijohn, Pettijohn, and Taylor [35], 91% of customers who are dissatisfied with a restaurant's service quality were unwilling to dine at the restaurant again and informed 8–10 potential customers about their dissatisfaction. Therefore, restaurants must offer excellent service quality to remain competitive. Kivela, Inbakaran, and Reece [36] demonstrated that customer satisfaction significantly influences customer repurchase and recommendation intention. If customers feel more positive emotions and enjoyment from their dining experience, they tend to more favorably comment on the products. This enhances their repurchase intention and inclination to give recommendations to others as well as inclination to engage in positive word-of-mouth (WOM) communication [5,20,32]. When customers have afternoon tea in a restaurant, the restaurant's atmosphere and service performance constitute their dining experience and influence their satisfaction and subsequent behaviors. In this study, repurchase intention for afternoon tea that includes tea and desserts is defined as follows: customers are excited by the afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere and feel a sense of satisfaction from their consumption experience.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Framework

Although the influence of environment on behavior has been acknowledged by many behavior and marketing scholars, few studies have been conducted in a hospitality context, and no study has provided a clear framework in which to determine how environmental cues affect afternoon tea patronage. The M-R model involves an environmental psychology model of affective states that suggests that affective reactions to environments influence diverse behaviors [37,38]. By considering the characteristics of the hospitality industry, this study revises the M-R environmental psychology model [22], uses the service performance of hotel restaurant personnel as software and an independent research variable, and uses afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere as hardware. In addition, this study uses facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting, table settings, and layout [16] as the dimensions of atmosphere, thereby creating a new M-R environmental psychology model. In other words, this paper uses restaurant atmosphere, well-being, service performance, and repurchase intention as research variables and uses the new model to discuss their causal relationships. Figure 1 illustrates the study framework.

Leisure activities are central to human activities because they increase positive emotions and thereby enhance people's sense of well-being [26]. Restaurants should create an innovative dining atmosphere to increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and enjoyment [39]. Restaurant atmosphere positively influences customer emotions [5]. Therefore, this paper hypothesizes that the higher the quality of atmosphere is in an afternoon tea restaurant, the stronger the customers' sense of well-being.

In the service industry, customers' emotional reactions are influenced by service personnel reactions, attitudes, and attractiveness as well as their interactions with customers [40]. Customers

acquire a sense of satisfaction and pleasure because of pleasant visual and service experiences [4]. Service performance positively influences customer emotions [5]. Customers demand not only products but also satisfactory service experiences [41]. This study posits that the higher the service performance of hotel restaurant personnel is, the stronger the customers' sense of well-being is.

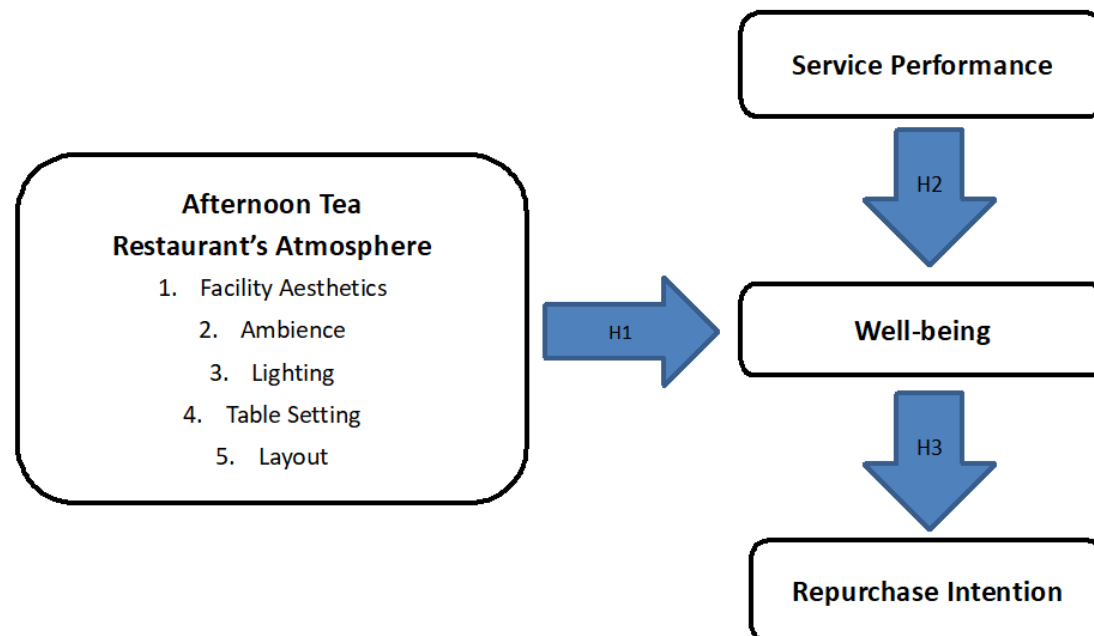


Figure 1. Study framework.

Positive WOM communication by loyal customers in the hospitality industry is key to influencing consumer satisfaction and subsequent behaviors [42]. Business performance and profits from customers' repeated purchases increase with customer satisfaction [17]. If customers have positive emotions during their dining experience, they are more likely to acquire positive results [43]. The sense of well-being is the key factor determining customers' future behavior [44]. Feeling positive emotions during the dining experience increases behaviors such as repurchasing, engaging in positive WOM communication, and recommending a restaurant to others [5,16,32]. In summary, this study posits that the stronger the customers' sense of well-being is, the stronger their repurchase intention is. Therefore, this paper presents the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *An afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere significantly increases customers' sense of well-being.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *The service performance of a hotel restaurant's personnel significantly increases customers' sense of well-being.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *The sense of well-being acquired by customers in a hotel restaurant significantly increases their repurchase intention.*

3.2. Questionnaire Design and Data Collection

Apart from tapioca tea, tourists and residents of Taiwan enjoy various tea drinks daily. Taipei residents consume the most tea in Taiwan, and more than 80% of five-star hotels in Taipei provide afternoon tea services. This paper studies the relationship between afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere, sense of well-being, service performance, and repurchase intention for 25 five-star hotels in the greater Taipei area. Survey participants were Taiwanese customers who met the following conditions: (1) were

aged 18 or older, (2) had attended an English afternoon tea in one of the 25 five-star hotels (such as W Taipei) in the greater Taipei area during the past half year, and (3) were able to answer the questions. Considering the characteristics of afternoon tea consumers, this study resorted to convenience sampling by distributing questionnaires in the Xin Yi commercial circle, which has many five-star hotels. A total of 420 questionnaires were collected, and 402 valid questionnaires were obtained.

To address the needs of the present study, this paper designed 49 survey questions by referencing the restaurant atmosphere scale [16], subjective well-being scale [45], well-being scale [46], Oxford happiness inventory [47], service performance [48], and service personnel scale [16]. The survey questions used 5-point Likert scales from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The higher the score is, the higher the customer's agreement with the item is.

3.3. Reliability Analysis

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of measurement results and is typically measured in terms of Cronbach's α . The larger the Cronbach's α is, the higher the reliability of a dimension is. In the present study, Cronbach's α for afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere, well-being, service performance, and repurchase intention were 0.940, 0.900, 0.942, and 0.887, respectively. These values were all greater than 0.7, indicating that they had high reliability. Thus, the research questionnaire had high stability and consistency.

4. Results and Analysis

A total of 402 valid questionnaires were obtained, and the ratio of effective questionnaires was 95.7%. The analysis results of ample structure and consumption habits of the research participants are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Respondent demographic characteristics.

Items	Frequency (N = 402)	Percentage	Items	Frequency (N = 402)	Percentage
Gender			Marital Status		
Male	155	38.6	Single	293	72.9
Female	247	61.4	Married	109	27.1
Age			Average Monthly Income (NTD)		
18–25	158	39.3	Under 20,000	101	25.1
26–35	129	32.1	20,001–40,000	181	45.0
36–45	46	11.4	40,001–60,000	49	12.2
46–55	51	12.7	60,001–80,000	33	8.2
56 or more	18	04.5	80,001 or more	38	9.5
Education Background			Which type of afternoon tea layout is most attractive to you?		
Under junior high	53	13.2	Three-tiered stand layout	282	70.1%
University	230	57.2	General platter desserts	120	29.9%
Above graduate	119	29.6	-	-	-
Occupation			Which type of afternoon tea dessert do you most prefer?		
student	100	24.9	Scone	61	15.2
Public sectors	33	8.2	Sandwich	61	15.2
Service industry	125	31.1	Fruit tart	60	14.9
Homemaker and retiree	31	7.7	Mini cake	104	25.9
Business	50	12.4	Chocolate and biscuit	56	13.9
Freelancer	32	8.0	Macarons	60	14.9
IT professional	31	7.7	-	-	-
With whom do you usually enjoy afternoon tea?			Which type of publicity primarily attracted you to afternoon tea?		
Friends	208	51.7	Recommendation by Friends & Relatives	147	36.6
Family members	61	15.2	Internet and mass media	106	26.4
Boy/girlfriend or husband	102	25.4	promotion and discount coupon	90	22.4
Colleague	31	7.7	Discount by credit card	59	14.7

Table 2. Analysis of afternoon tea consumption behavior.

Items	Frequency (N = 402)	Percentage	Items	Frequency (N = 402)	Percentage
Average consumption time in a hotel's afternoon tea restaurant			Average consumption time in a non-hotel's afternoon tea restaurant		
60 min or less	5	1.2	60 min or less	40	10.0
60~90 min	77	19.2	60~90 min	114	28.4
90~120 min	199	49.5	90~120 min	152	37.8
120~150 min	79	19.7	120~150 min	62	15.4
150 min or more	42	10.4	150 min or more	34	8.5
Number of visits to a hotel's afternoon tea restaurant in the past year			Number of visits to a non-hotel's afternoon tea restaurant in the past year		
1~2 times	179	44.5	1~2 times	81	20.1
3~4 times	124	30.8	3~4 times	101	25.1
5~6 times	62	15.4	5~6 times	116	28.9
7 times or more	37	9.2	7 times or more	104	25.9
Average amount spent per visit to a hotel's afternoon tea restaurant			Average amount spent per visit to a non-hotel's afternoon tea restaurant		
\$500 NTD or less	14	3.5	\$500 NTD or less	157	39.1
\$501~7000 NTD	106	26.4	\$501~7000 NTD	183	45.5
\$701~9000 NTD	109	27.1	\$701~9000 NTD	36	9.0
\$901~1100 NTD	104	25.8	\$901~1100 NTD	17	4.2
\$1101 NTD or more	69	17.2	\$1101 NTD or more	9	2.2

4.1. Regression Analyses

To conduct the regression analysis between afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere and well-being, this paper used the five dimensions of an afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere (facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting, table settings, and layout) as independent variables and well-being as the dependent variable. Table 3 displays the results. In Table 3, the p -value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere and well-being is significant. The adjusted R^2 value is 0.321, indicating that the restaurant atmosphere of a five-star hotel has an explanatory power of 32.1% with respect to customer well-being. Therefore, restaurant atmosphere significantly influences the sense of well-being. Specifically, two dimensions (facility aesthetics and lighting) of restaurant atmosphere significantly influence the sense of well-being. Therefore, H1 is corroborated.

Table 3. Regressions of afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere and well-being.

N = 402	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	SD	Beta	t-Value	p-Value
constant	39.475	0.266		148.239	0.000 **
facility aesthetics	1.677	0.408	0.259	4.109	0.000 **
ambience	0.591	0.448	0.091	1.321	0.187
lighting	1.873	0.431	0.289	4.343	0.000 **
table settings	0.084	0.452	0.013	0.185	0.854
layout	−0.093	0.400	−0.014	−0.234	0.815
F value	38.880	-	-	-	0.000 **
adjusted R^2 value	0.321	-	-	-	-

To conduct the regression analysis between service performance and well-being, service performance was used as the independent variable and well-being as the dependent variable. Table 4 lists the results. In Table 4, the p -value is less than 0.05, and the adjusted R^2 value is 0.344. Therefore, H2 is corroborated. In the analysis of well-being and repurchase intention, well-being was the independent variable and repurchase intention was the dependent variable. Table 5 lists the results. In Table 5, the p -value is less than 0.05, and the adjusted R^2 value is 0.354. Therefore, H3 is corroborated. To analyze the relationship between restaurant atmosphere, service performance, and well-being, restaurant atmosphere and service performance were used as independent variables, and well-being was used as the dependent variable. Table 6 presents the results. In Table 6, the p -value is less than 0.05, and

the adjusted R^2 value is 0.392. Therefore, H1 and H2 are corroborated, and the influence of service performance is greater than that of restaurant atmosphere on customers' sense of well-being.

Table 4. Regression of service performance and well-being.

N = 402	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	SD	Beta	t-Value	p-Value
constant	39.475	0.262		150.889	0.000 **
service performance	3.811	0.262	0.588	14.550	0.000 **
F-value	211.689	-	-	-	0.000 **
adjusted R^2 value	0.344	-	-	-	-

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.001$.

Table 5. Regression of well-being and repurchase intention.

N = 402	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	SD	Beta	t-Value	p-Value
constant	3.029	0.820		3.692	0.000 **
wellbeing	0.304	0.021	0.596	14.844	0.000 **
F-value	220.330	-	-	-	0.000 **
adjusted R^2 value	0.354	-	-	-	-

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.001$.

Table 6. Regression of afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere and service performance.

N = 402	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	SD	Beta	t-Value	p-Value
constant	1.236	0.179		6.911	0.000 **
afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere	0.338	0.058	0.296	5.841	0.000 **
service performance	0.357	0.046	0.396	7.809	0.000 **
F-value	130.018	-	-	-	0.000 **
adjusted R^2 value	0.392	-	-	-	-

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.001$.

4.2. Analysis of Demographic Characteristics and Afternoon Tea Restaurant Atmosphere

To determine the difference in afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere perceived by different customer groups, restaurant atmosphere was split into five dimensions (facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting, table settings, and layout) for one-way analysis of variance. Table 7 presents the analysis results. As presented in Table 7, opinions of afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere vary significantly by customer gender, age, and occupation. Significant differences based on customer sex were found with respect to lighting, facility aesthetics, and ambience. Significant differences were evident with respect to customer age in ratings of facility aesthetics and ambience. Specifically, perceptions of facility aesthetics and ambience of customers aged 18–25 were significantly different from those perceived by customers aged 26–35 and 36–45. Among customers with different occupations, significant differences were evident in their views on ambience, lighting, and table settings. In terms of ambience, a significant difference emerged between the opinions of students, businessmen, and freelancers. In terms of lighting, military personnel, functionaries, teachers, freelancers, and businesspeople had significantly different perspectives. In terms of table settings, a significant difference emerged between the perspectives of students, businessmen, and freelancers.

Table 7. Post hoc comparison of afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere and demographic characteristics.

Sample Data		Atmosphere	t-Value	p-Value	LSD
Gender	Male	facility aesthetics	6.366 *	0.012	-
	Female	ambience	6.234 *	0.012	-
	-	lighting	10.780 **	0.001	-
	-	table settings	3.128	0.078	-
	-	layout	8.419 *	0.004	-
Sample Data		atmosphere	F-value	p-value	LSD
Age	18–25	facility aesthetics	2.400 *	0.050	1 > 2, 1 > 3, 3 > 4
	26–35	ambience	3.244 *	0.012	1 > 2, 1 > 3
	36–45	lighting	2.149	0.074	-
	56 or more	table settings	1.963	0.099	-
	-	layout	0.873	0.480	-
Occupation	Student	facility aesthetics	0.976	0.441	-
	Public sectors	ambience	4.145 **	0.000	1 > 6, 1 > 5, 3 > 6, 3 > 5 > 7, 6 > 7
	Service industry	lighting	2.473 *	0.023	2 > 6, 2 > 5, 3 > 5
	Homemaker and retiree	Table settings	4.506 **	0.000	1 > 6, 1 > 5, 3 > 6, 3 > 5 > 7, 6 > 7
	Business	layout	1.259	0.275	-
	Freelancer	-	-	-	-
	IT professional	-	-	-	-

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.001$; LSD: least significance difference.

5. Discussion

In terms of afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere, customers gave the highest scores to the following four items: (1) colors that create a warm atmosphere, (2) lighting that creates a comfortable atmosphere, (3) an enticing aroma, and (4) lighting that creates a warm atmosphere. Therefore, customers believe that color design, color hues, and lighting design influence the atmosphere. By contrast, customers provided low scores to the following three items: (1) exquisite three-tiered stands used to arrange desserts, (2) candles that create a warm atmosphere, and (3) a seating arrangement that creates a crowded feeling. This may have been due to differences in decorations, platter arrangements, table positions, and distances between tables among the five-star hotels. As shown in Table 1, 70.1% of respondents felt that the three-tiered stand layout was enticing.

The restaurant atmosphere perceptions by customers also varied by sex. Specifically, significant differences emerged in the following items: (1) welcoming lighting, (2) a layout easy to move about in, (3) decorations or accessories to improve the aroma in the washroom, and (4) attractive paintings and pictures. Evidently, feelings toward aroma and decorations varied by customer sex. Customer age significantly influenced perceptions of the following items: (1) the paintings and pictures are attractive, (2) the furniture (e.g., dining tables or chairs) is high quality, (3) the background music relaxes me, (4) candles create a warm atmosphere, (5) the tableware (e.g., glass, china, and silverware) is high quality, (6) the linens (e.g., tablecloths and napkins) are attractive, (7) the seats are comfortable, and (8) the seating arrangement makes me feel crowded. Perhaps older customers who typically have high incomes have high requirements for the quality and layout of items. According to the research results, customer experiences, satisfaction, and enjoyment were influenced by an afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere, chiefly lighting, facility aesthetics, and table settings. The music played in a hotel is a factor that attracts customers to the hotel restaurant. Facility aesthetics may include paintings, pictures, plants, flowers, colors, and wall decorations.

For well-being, customers provided the highest scores on the following three items (arranged in descending order): (1) I am satisfied with my life, (2) I feel happy, and (3) when I engage in this activity, I feel fulfilled. Customers believe that having afternoon tea in a hotel contributes to a relaxing and

enjoyable life and makes them feel happy. The following three items received low scores: (1) when I engage in this activity, I feel more satisfied than I do when engaging in most other activities, (2) when I engage in this activity, I feel happier than I do when engaging in most other activities, and (3) if I have not had afternoon tea recently, I feel unhappy. This is because afternoon tea is a static activity that is restricted to the amount of free time people have. According to the research results, customers believe that they can acquire a sense of well-being (e.g., relaxation, enjoyment, and pleasure) by having afternoon tea in a hotel.

For service performance, customers provided the highest scores to the following three items (arranged in descending order): (1) employees are neat and well dressed, (2) employees are friendly and helpful to customers, and (3) employees can help customers when required. Evidently, the service personnel of hotel restaurants effectively provided timely and high-quality service to customers. The following three items regarding service personnel received low scores: (1) asking suitable questions and listening to learn customers' wants, (2) suggesting items customers might enjoy but did not think of, and (3) identifying and relating item features to meet a customer's needs. Evidently, the service personnel of hotel restaurants have room to improve their service. For example, to offer more considerate services, service personnel can use details to identify services that customers may want and proactively ask them what they want. According to the research results, the service performance of personnel is a crucial factor that influences customer feelings and selection of hotel restaurants. Therefore, hotel managers should encourage service personnel to provide considerate and proactive services to help customers to feel comfortable.

For repurchase intention, customers provided the highest scores on the following three items (arranged in descending order): (1) I would like to return to this restaurant in the future, (2) I would recommend this restaurant to my friends, and (3) I am willing to remain at this restaurant for longer than I had planned. Therefore, customers are willing to return to the restaurant they visited to enjoy afternoon tea, recommend the restaurant to their relatives and friends, and remain for longer than scheduled. Low scores were provided on the following item: I am willing to spend more money than I had planned at this restaurant. This is because afternoon tea in a five-star hotel's restaurant is expensive. In Table 1, "Recommendation by relatives and friends" accounts for 36.6% of the responses to "Which type of publicity primarily attracted you to afternoon tea?" This is consistent with the high scores for the item "I would recommend this restaurant to my friends." Therefore, receiving WOM recommendations from relatives and friends is the major factor that attracts customers to afternoon tea. Customers who feel a sense of pleasure, relaxation, and satisfaction have higher repurchase intentions. According to the aforementioned research results, the sense of well-being felt by customers in a hotel restaurant increases their repurchase intention.

A high sense of well-being creates a strong repurchase intention and high willingness to recommend afternoon tea to relatives or friends. To increase customers' repurchase intentions, hotel managers should attempt to satisfy customers' needs by improving facility aesthetics and service performance. According to the regression analysis results, service performance increases the sense of well-being more than restaurant atmosphere does. The research objects of this present study were five-star hotels, which are all considered upscale. Therefore, the difference in atmosphere between such hotels is slight. Modern customers are sensitive to services, and restaurants typically distribute customer satisfaction questionnaires to collect customer comments regarding service performance. Because the characteristics of service personnel typically vary between hotel restaurants, the service performance perceived by customers typically differs.

The survey of customers' afternoon tea habits indicated that customers had frequently visited nonhotel afternoon tea restaurants (five to six times on average) in the past year. This may be due to the high standard of consumption in hotel restaurants. However, high-income or older customers had frequently visited hotel restaurants in the past year. On average, customers spend 90 to 120 min in both hotel and nonhotel afternoon tea restaurants. In addition, customers are attracted to the three-tiered stand layout and enjoy miniature cakes. Therefore, this study recommends that afternoon

tea restaurants offer various miniature cakes and arrange desserts on three-tiered stands. In the present study, most afternoon tea consumers were students and young women. In addition, afternoon tea (including English and Taiwanese styles) is the most popular among people aged 20–30, which would appear to indicate afternoon tea has gained in popularity. In summary, most afternoon tea consumers who want to relieve stress and chat with friends are students and young women rather than middle-aged people.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Hospitality is a valuable tool for economic diversification, and hospitality development can be an effective means of engaging communities by providing new markets for agricultural products [49]. From the Victorian era to the present, afternoon tea consumers have been mostly women, but male afternoon tea consumers are increasing in number. In the present study, the qualities of an afternoon tea restaurant's atmosphere perceived by customers increased customers' sense of well-being. Specifically, lighting and facility aesthetics most significantly influenced well-being, followed by table settings and ambience, whereas layout influenced well-being the least. In addition, the service performance of hotel restaurant personnel perceived by customers influenced customer well-being, and the influence of service performance was more significant than that of restaurant atmosphere. Finally, customers' sense of well-being significantly influenced their repurchase intention. To increase customers' repurchase intention, afternoon tea restaurants in hotels should be designed to offer a distinctive atmosphere (e.g., making full use of lighting effects, playing different styles of music, and displaying distinctive ornaments, flowers, and drawings) to provide a sense of relaxation and enjoyment. In addition, service personnel should be trained in professional competencies and skills.

The Internet and mass media are vital for marketing because young consumer groups tend to search for hotel restaurants on the Internet. In addition, consumers may be attracted by promotions on official websites or by point-accumulating events. Compared with Internet media, WOM communication between relatives and friends is more attractive to potential consumers. Uniquely shaped three-tiered stands can create an atmosphere of elegance and romance to attract potential consumers. The findings concerning customers' afternoon tea habits (Table 2) indicated that customers visit nonhotel afternoon tea restaurants frequently because the standard of consumption in hotel restaurants is high. Nevertheless, consumers are willing to have afternoon tea in hotel restaurants if they can feel a sense of well-being (e.g., a sense of enjoyment or relaxation). Compared with nonhotel afternoon tea restaurants, hotel restaurants have advantages with respect to their exquisite desserts, overall hotel decor, tableware settings, and professional service performance. The most successful publicity method to increase customers' repurchase intention and willingness to recommend hotel restaurants to others is to make them feel comfortable, acquire a sense of well-being, and experience unique value beyond money.

The well-known M-R model is used to explain the effects of physical environments on customer behavior [16]. Many studies have focused on a single dimension of atmosphere, but few have discussed the influence of an afternoon tea restaurant's overall atmosphere. In addition, most studies on well-being have focused on work environments or leisure tourism, whereas few have discussed well-being in the hospitality industry. This paper discussed the influence of overall atmosphere on well-being to provide a valuable reference for subsequent studies. This study investigated the influence of afternoon tea restaurant atmosphere on the sense of well-being. Because well-being is an abstract concept, it cannot be measured accurately by using various original measuring scales. By referencing the subjective well-being scale [45], well-being scale [46], and Oxford happiness inventory [47], questionnaire items on well-being suited to the present study were selected, and a few other question items were added, resulting in a total of 10 question items. Cronbach's α values of the question items of well-being equaled 0.900, indicating high reliability. Based on factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.884, indicating a strong relationship between variables. Therefore, the scale used herein could measure the sense of well-being felt by afternoon tea consumers. Since 2013, the atmosphere of

upscale or themed restaurants has been discussed frequently. This study focused on five-star hotels to address the deficiency in empirical studies on this topic in the hospitality industry.

In addition, this paper offers suggestions on restaurant layout, design, atmosphere, food and desserts, employee training, and marketing strategy. Regarding restaurant atmosphere, unique colors or ornaments can be used to create a romantic or fashionable atmosphere. In particular, large glass panes that allow customers to view outdoor landscapes are suggested. Bright lighting and magnificent crystal lamps can create a unique atmosphere. In addition, fresh flowers and candles can be arranged to create a romantic atmosphere. Elegant music can make customers feel relaxed, and live piano performances can increase the romantic atmosphere. Aroma is crucial to restaurant atmosphere. In particular, customers readily perceive the cleanliness, aroma, and decorations of washrooms. Health and environmental sustainability concerns have grown among consumers and affect their food consumption selections [50]. The flavor of food and desserts is the most crucial factor attracting people to afternoon tea restaurants. Thus, hotels can offer themed or uniquely shaped desserts. The survey indicated that male and elderly customers prefer English-style desserts such as scones and sandwiches. Hotels that provide afternoon tea menus can offer more savory foods, desserts, and healthy snacks to satisfy diverse customer demands.

Although the original M-R model offers rich insights for managerial practices, studies have ignored service personnel misbehavior. The importance of positive emotions indicates that customers should experience pleasant sensations in restaurants [51]. Service personnel should be trained to provide considerate service and proactively satisfy customers' needs to make a positive impression and increase their repurchase intention. Regarding marketing, inspiring recommendations from relatives and friends is the preferred method of attracting people of different ages to hotel restaurants. Because the Internet is highly developed, an increasing number of consumers select hotel restaurants online or by viewing bloggers' comments and shares. In addition, frequent guest programs, coupons, and credit card discounts can attract customers to hotel restaurants. Therefore, hotel restaurants should use various promotions and events at appropriate times (e.g., birthday discounts, themed events, and holiday events).

Numerous limitations are associated with this study. First, because the M-R environmental psychology model processes only potential indicators and dimensions, individual observations may lose meaning. In this study, the M-R model focused only on atmosphere and service qualities that affect well-being. Thus, improved linkage between theoretical frameworks and practical management and marketing topics can be further examined to benefit hotel managers. Second, this study focused only on five-star hotels in Taipei. Because afternoon tea is gradually growing in popularity, more restaurants and coffee houses are providing unique afternoon tea services and products. Studies regarding guest values and loyalty are warranted to add insights to hospitality product development and quality improvement.

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