

# RESEARCH OF TAIWANESE CHILI HOT POT CULTURE ATTRACTIVENESS AND CONSUMERS

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## ABSTRACT

Benumbingly spicy hot pot, also known as chili hot pot, is from Sichuan. It was chiefly eaten for the purpose of preventing edema by forcing people to sweat in summer. However, in Taiwan, to eat the chili hot pot is no longer restricted in summer, and moreover, develops new Taiwanese chili hot pot culture. This research is mainly discussing attractiveness of eating chili hot pot and its consuming groups to understand the culture behind as a guidance of Chinese food culture and creative industry development. The research is constructed in two parts: (1) Investigation of attractiveness—using EGM (evaluation-grid method) to interview chili hot pot lovers and constructed evaluation-grid chart. Then, sorting out the result into 5 attractiveness hierarchical charts, the 5 attractiveness are satisfaction of flavored delicacies, warm atmosphere of being together, peppery feeling, diversity of foods and self-determination, and value for money. (2) Analysis of consuming groups—making questionnaire based on the result of attractiveness hierarchical charts, and applying cluster analysis. The result shows 6 consumer groups of eating chili hot pot: the flavor-added ordinaries, the swarmed gluttons, the principled, the chili-possessed, the exclusive gourmets, and the join-in-the-funs.

*Keywords:* Chili hot pot, Attractiveness, Taiwanese food culture, EGM

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Chili hot pot originated from Sichuan. It developed to Taiwanese style while spreading into Taiwan. Information about chili hot pot may be less in research, but various discussions in Taiwanese delicacies books and on the internet. There are also many chili hot pot stores on

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the streets. Chili hot pot may not originate from Taiwan, but it has been one of the favorite foods of gluttons in Taiwan. Even the people who cannot tolerate spicy hot are possibly included. This research is mainly discussing attractiveness of eating chili hot pot, and the fascinations of making Taiwanese people eating chili hot pot regardless of the season or spicy hot. Besides, this research also analyzes the consumer groups and hopes to get more understanding about Taiwanese chili hot pot culture; what's more, as a guidance of Chinese food culture and creative industry development. This research may also help restaurant business understand more about Taiwan food culture.

## **2. CHILI HOT POT DEVELOPMENT AND EGM**

### **2.1. The origin of chili hot pot**

There are lots of saying for the origins of chili hot pot on records. The most common one was listed below: Chili hot pot origins in ancient Chongqing, China. During the time vendors took a shoulder pole to sell buffalo innards, washed, and diced. Checker-shaped ironware was set on portable stove on the pole, carrying hot, benumbing, and salty soup. In 1934, larger chili hot pot stores were opened in Chongqing city. They switched the ironware into copper pot. (Li, 1947)

Another saying is that chili hot pot also named bowel hot pot in early period. Ox bone was boiled for soup; pepper and flavor were added. (Chinese hot pot network, 2006)

### **2.2. Hot pot culture**

Chinese hot pot culture are popular and various. People gathering and eating hot pot together appear their enthusiasm and friendly mind. Variety of food items to choose can fit different people's appetite, and suit to sorts of occasions like treating visitors, dinner party or celebration. Besides, hot pot has an interesting characteristic that eaters can cook by themselves instead of the chef. (Chinese hot pot network, 2006)

### **2.3. Taiwanese hot pot**

In Taiwan, the original hot pot is satay hot pot—assorted hot pot cooked by light broth, with satay sauce, a little bit similar to barbecue sauce, that can be dipped in to savor. Now it's common to add uncooked yolk in satay sauce, which comes from Japanese culture in order to mitigate the heat of food, and also make sliced meat taste smoothly.

Taiwanese food culture, originated from Fujian food culture, with special feature in sea food. It also combined food cultures from all around China, hence create abundant brand new culture. When chili hot pot was introduced in Taiwan, to fit Taiwanese tastes, sometimes sea foods were added, too. (Hung, 2005)

### **2.4. Evaluation Grid Method, EGM**

Evaluation Grid Method is one of the important research methods in Miryoku Engineering. It originated from the category of psychology, created by Japanese scholar, Sanui, who adapted from RGM, the Repertory Grid Method, proposed by Kelly(1955), primarily catching up personal cognition concept and arranging into grid chart. Through pair-comparison with two objects during personal interview, the difference and the resemblance were clearly discussed, consecutively sorted the personality of object (Kelly, 1955).

### 3. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

The research contains two parts: (1) Attractiveness factors of eating chili hot pot; (2) Consumer groups composition of eating chili hot pot.

#### 3.1. Research on attractiveness factors of eating chili hot pot

By using EGM, the research sorted the evaluation-grid chart of attractiveness factors, then, extracting important attractive factors of chili hot pot by using KJ method.

##### 3.1.1 Interviewers filtering

In order to make sure the interviewers are all in level of preference and understanding to chili hot pot, four conditions were discussed and listed below:

- (1) Eat chili hot pot at least three times or more in half a year. (Frequency);
- (2) Visited five or more chili hot pot restaurants (experience);
- (3) Known ten or more relative stores (Info);
- (4) Self-scored six points or more to preference of chili hot pot (Enthusiasm);

Finally, nine of the participants match the conditions hence selected as interviewers.

##### 3.1.2 EGM interview

EGM interview is a personal interview, mainly compared between objects for interviewer to address the thought of some topics. The research starts from three to five impressive chili hot pot stores said out by the interviewer themselves as comparable elements. Three processes of the interview are original reason, solid items, and abstract feelings. By comparison between objects, the original reasons could be obtained. Then, keep asking down for solid items, and up for abstract feelings. One thing to be notice is that the process of interview should let interviewer speak all the key phrases out of themselves, which means no hints and no inductions were allowed. Finally, the result of interview could be constructed into Evaluation Grid Chart (EGC).

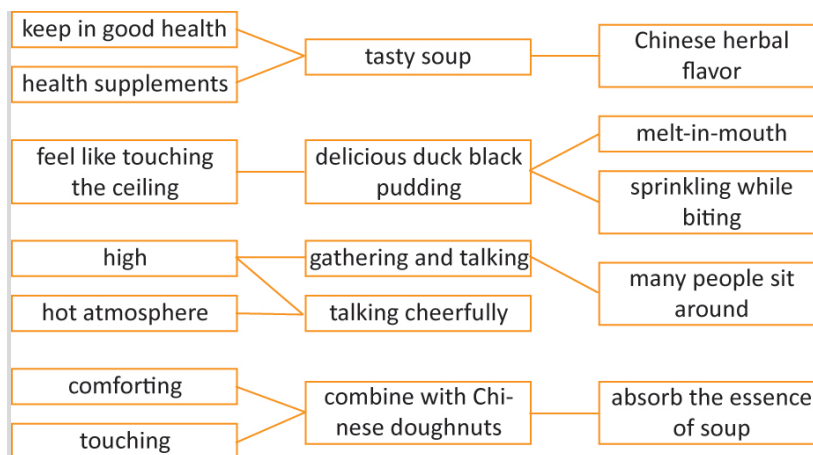


Figure 1: One of the interviewer's Evaluation Grid Chart

### 3.1.3 KJ method

In case of the size of EGC is huge, nine EGCs from nine interviewers were integrated; rare factors deleted. Finally, KJ method was applied to manage original reasons. Five factors are shown below:

- (1) Satisfaction of flavored delicacies: Typical foods in chili hot pot such as “Duck black pudding” and “Chinese doughnuts”, have juicy taste and makes eater satisfied.
- (2) Warm atmosphere of being together: A group of people eating chili hot pot together are cheerful and boisterous; what’s more, eating spicy food can brings more topic of conversation.
- (3) Peppery feeling: Boiling hot soup and spicy hot taste give rise to the temperature of environment and human body.
- (4) Diversity of foods and self-determination: Consumers can decide which kind of soup, food ingredients and quantity on their own.
- (5) Value for money: Many chili hot pot restaurants are managing in “all you can eat” operation—once paid the price and you can enjoy all the stuffs in any amount you can afford. There is a variety of additional foods like ice cream and dessert, which let consumers feel worthwhile.



Figure 2: The result of KJ method

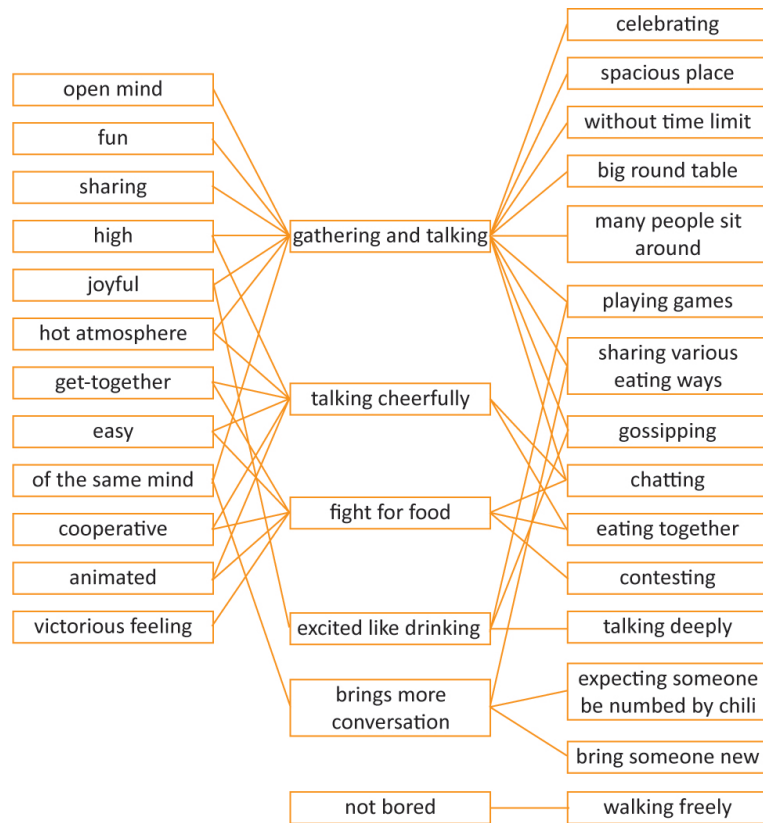


Figure 3: One of the five Evaluation Grid Charts -- Warm atmosphere of being together

### 3.2. Consumer analysis

Based on the former step of EGC, questionnaire was made. First of all, the questionnaire takers should score in one to five points of the original reasons corresponding to five attractiveness factors based on the personal experience as it comes to talk about eating chili hot pot. Secondly, they were asked to choose a representative solid item from corresponding original reason. The example shown below:

第三部分：

A、下列為構成「麻辣鍋特有美食」的可能要素，請以自身吃麻辣鍋的經驗，勾選下列各構成要素的重要程度

「麻辣鍋特有美食」的構成要素：	不 重 要	1	2	3	4	5	很 重 要
入味的鴨血.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
入味的豆腐.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
油條.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
醬料.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

•請為「麻辣鍋特有美食」的構成要素，選出其所應具備的特色

1-1 你覺得吃麻辣鍋時，「入味的鴨血」應具有下列哪個特色？(單選)

- 有彈性的滑嫩口感
- 入口即化
- 有味道，咬下去有湯汁

1-2 你覺得吃麻辣鍋時，「入味的豆腐」應具有下列哪個特色？(單選)

- 吸收湯汁吃得到湯的精髓
- 辣中帶甜有豆味
- 香軟、入口即化
- 有縫隙吸滿辣油

1-3 你覺得吃麻辣鍋時，「油條」應具有下列哪個特色？(單選)

- 軟硬兼具的口感
- 裡頭吸飽湯汁

1-4 你覺得吃麻辣鍋時，「醬料」應具有下列哪個特色？(單選)

- 獨家特調的味道
- 可以提味
- 可以去辣

Figure 4: Questionnaire sample

On the other hand, for increasing the reliability, the frequency of eating chili hot pot for questionnaire taker was added in personal data column. A filter mechanism was taken that if someone choose the frequency as “less than once per year”, the questionnaire would treated as invalid one. After filtering, 66 valid questionnaires were received. Next, with cluster analysis and original data comparison, six typical groups were shown:

- (1) The flavor- added ordinaries: moderate in frequency and experience, they likes variety life, changing taste, and different combination. They may also try heavy hot pot if they want to.
- (2) The swarmed gluttons: they are superior in frequency and experience, particular about the spicy soup and joyful in the atmosphere when gathering people to eat together.
- (3) The principled: they have their own favorite food and usually go to the regular restaurant.
- (4) The chili-possessed: everything about “hot!”
- (5) The exclusive gourmets: they are particular about the spicy soup and food ingredients; they also like to control the supremacy of the pot.
- (6) The join-in-the-funs: they may not tolerate spicy hot food but enjoy the cheerful and boisterous atmosphere.

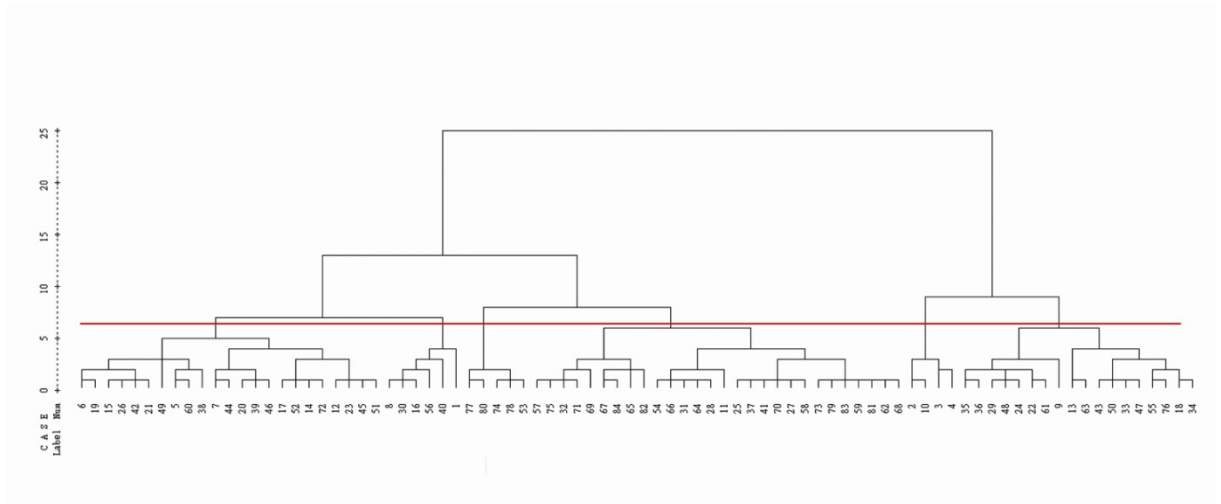


Figure 5: cluster analysis

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Attractiveness factors research:

Based on EGM (evaluation-grid method) interview with chili hot pot lovers, the evaluation-grid chart was constructed. Consecutively, the result can be sorted into five attractiveness hierarchical charts.

From the result it is easy to see that the factors attract people to eat chili hot pot include physically level as food materials to mentally level as atmosphere building, feeling of eating “Hot”, or other additional service. Because chili hot pot is one sort of hot pot, some characteristic like cheerful atmosphere, various kind of foods and self-dominated are common with hot pot. However, what atmosphere that chili hot pot building is better than hot pot because the extra spicy hot feeling not only stimulate the sense of taste, heating the body, but also brings the topics of conversation.

### 4.2. Consumer analysis:

The six consumer groups of eating chili hot pot are: The flavor- added ordinaries, the swarmed gluttons, the principled, the chili-possessed, the exclusive gourmets, and the join-in-the-funs. They are fascinated by different characteristics of chili hot pot such as fresh feeling, spicy hot arousing, cheerful atmosphere or special delicacies. This result can be a guideline for managements of chili hot pot restaurant. With different characteristics highlighted, more customers’ need was concerned. Better service could be provided hence bring better dining experience.

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