

Daniel Robert Szabo, 2017

Volume 3 Issue 2, pp. 512 - 521

Date of Publication: 15th September, 2017

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2017.32.512521>

This paper can be cited as: Szabo, D. (2017). *The Main Characteristics of Music in the Television Commercials of Popular Brands*. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 3(2), 512-521.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF MUSIC IN THE TELEVISION COMMERCIALS OF POPULAR BRANDS¹

Daniel Robert Szabo

Kautz Gyula Economics Faculty, Department of Economic Analyses, Széchenyi István University, 9026, Egyetem sqr 1., Győr, Hungary
szabodr@sze.hu

Abstract

Television advertisement is one of today's most popular tools and forms of audiovisual marketing communication. It can reach a huge number and a wide range of viewers. Typically, most of them include some sort of music which can contribute to the atmosphere of the advertisement, and thereby support its message. Examining the connections and relationships from the perspective of music theory in them, we can say that the individual components of music can influence the mood of the music. In this paper, in an exploratory nature, the music of advertisements of the companies with the highest brand values was analyzed. For this study, television commercials served as a basis. They are made up of a number of components. The aim was to find solutions and correlations that can help marketing communication in a conscious use of music in the commercials, from the perspective of planning and implementation and utilization. In the light of the results of the tests, between the main characteristics of music used in commercials of the world's most valuable brands, statistically detectable relationships can be detected. Accordingly, by partly

¹ This study was supported by EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00017, Internationalization, initiatives to establish a new source of researchers and graduates, and development of knowledge and technological transfer as instruments of intelligent specializations at Szechenyi University, funded by the funded by the Hungarian Government and the European Union.

accepting the hypothesis of the study, it can be concluded that the formation of the main musical theoretical characteristics of the analyzed advertising genres correlates with each other.

Keywords

Marketing, Communication, Commercials, Music, Advertising, Brands

1. Introduction

Music used in commercials can be interpreted as a multifaceted stimulus set, that meets the listener and supports the effect of the message of the advertisement (Bruner, 1990, Hecker, 1984, Morris & Boone, 1998). It can be generally regarded as a system with specific syntax, consisting of sound elements. Some of which can be interpreted in a manner similar to those of verbal communication (Bernstein, 1976), and should be considered from the perspective of its own symbol system (Bode, 2006). In other respects, it can play different roles; they may arouse the attention of viewers and listeners, induce excitement or peace. They can also influence the listeners' memory or form an integral part of the transmission of the message (Alexomanolaki, Loveday & Kennett, 2007). Since commercials can communicate by using different layers (Omar-Yee, 2017), music can be also another way of communication for brands.

2. Music in advertisements

In terms of its basic characteristics, music can be generally described with parameters such as volume, pitch, duration, tempo, tone, textures, and other noises (Fraedrich & King, 1998, Dowling & Harwood, 1986, Bruner, 1990, Milliman, 1982, Milliman, 1986). Hevner (1935, 1936) studied the appearance of moods from classical music theory by the alteration of major and minor tonalities, and then expanded his earlier research, studying the effect of further musical theory on the mood, in terms of tempo, rhythms and volume. According to his results, music with more rapid, varied and loud rhythm, with more vivid dynamics, is considered as happier, more dignified, more playful and cheerful, while slower and quieter music is rather considered as sad, wobbly, dreamlike, and sentimental. The musical education (Rauduvaite, et. al., 2017) can play an important role in the musical socialization of people.

Awareness raising, attractive, intense music is typically fast, loud, irregular and unpredictable, whereas its opposite is the slow, monotonous, predictable music (Berlyne, 1971). Different tempi - fast, medium, slow - and tonalities - major, minor, and atonal music -

have also been studied, by altering them one by one. In the case of major tonalities, the average tempo was most favored by respondents, while the other two tonalities were faster music (Kellaris & Kent, 1991). Similarly, the effect of moderate speeds on the aforementioned tonalities, as well as the stimulation of music-induced stimuli, gave similar results (Kellaris & Kent, 1993).

It has been found that louder music, which is considered to be more attractive, was perceived as longer by the listeners. Measuring the tempo and the effect on time elapsed, it has been found that the time-related criterion is also influenced by the volume of music. This may be related to the amount of information that is being processed by the amount of volume involved. However, in different moods of the listeners this effect differed (Kellaris & Altsech, 1992; Kellaris, Powell-Mantel & Altsech, 1996).

Possible reactions, like affection, awareness raising and surprise was studied by the effects of the above attributes on students. Changing the tempo, it had a significant impact on the first two perspectives above. Tonality affected particularly the impressive and surprising nature of music. Different textures shaded the effect of the tempo, increasing the liking of classical music and the awareness raising nature of pop music. Musical textures, tonality, and its change also influenced the liking of classical music, however, we should still look at these as some elements of a more complex system (Kellaris & Kent, 1993).

It is important to point out, that there are contradictions in this area. As mentioned above, basically, faster music was more popular among the listeners. However, when it comes to the reactions and behavior of customers, the use of slower music was proven to be more useful. Another aspect can be the examination of the relationship between the advertising music and the brands (Brodsky, 2011). From the perspective of awareness-raising or appealing effects, positive effects of music in medium-paced music can be the highest (Kellaris, 1992).

3. Methods

This paper focuses on examining relationships between musical components discussed above. According to the hypothesis of the study, we can find musical characteristics related to time, sound, and volume, which are closely related to each other (meter, tempo ranges, modalities, dynamic ranges, and solutions). Independence test was used to explore relationships between the individual components.

The sample was made up of the commercials of brands with the highest calculated values. The estimated value of brands is calculated using accounting data and data related to various consumer decisions. It is important, however, that in many cases significant differences can be found between the results of the lists (Brandirectory, 2013; Ranking the Brands, 2013; Millward Brown, 2013). The inclusion on a list like that can be considered as a guideline rather than a self-interpretable indicator. In order to select certain brands to be included in the study, a new list was generated by comparing the three above lists. Brands were excluded that were not listed in at least two top 100 categories according to the three methods. The survey does not include Google and Facebook ads, as these brands did not broadcast television commercials in that period. However, both of these brands are playing an important role in marketing. Apart from the ads managed by the latter one, brand communities can be an important form of interaction for consumers (Islam-Zaheer, 2016). In the paper, in an exploratory manner, music-related analysis has been carried out to identify the basic musical characteristics of the top 50 of the most valuable brands' advertisements. 5-5 films from each brand, so a total of 250 commercials from 2012 and 2013 were examined.

4. Results

4.1 Relationship between the pace and modality of the music

Among the most common modalities (Major/Ionian, Minor/Eolian, Dorian), medium tempo range appeared in the highest proportion. Exceptions to this were the more complex sounding, less common, other modalities (Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian and Locrian). From this group, we can say that the faster tempi appeared in almost the same proportion.

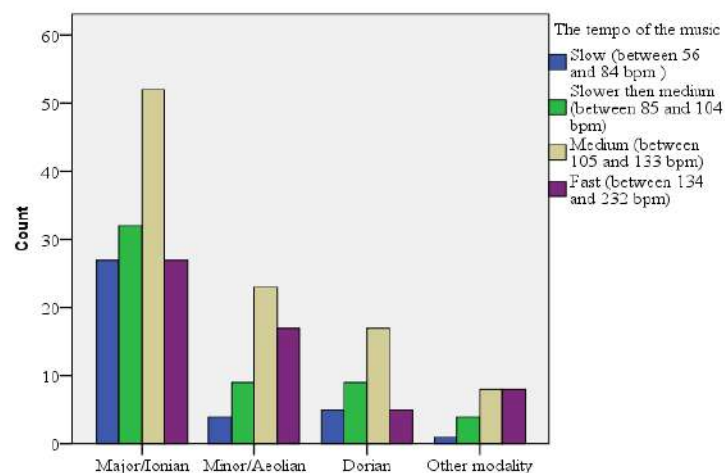


Figure 1: Distribution of the tempo ranges of music from the perspective of the modalities (sig: 0,156)

In the case of the basically more intense and melodic sounding music written in minor mode, a similar shift can be observed. Music with slow and slower than average tempo is offset by a relatively high rate of faster music, and this shift can be observed among other modalities as well. In this present case, the less intense, milder tone of the Dorian modes play a kind of transition between the airier sounding major and other modes (Figure 1).

4.2 Relationships between the modality and dynamic features of the music

Moving away from the less robust sounding major modality towards to the rather rare modalities, increasingly more dynamically louder, vibrant music appeared, while less intense, softer ones appeared in smaller proportions. In this case, Minor / Eolian modality played the role of the transitional mode. The group of the softer sounding music almost disappears and the proportion of mezzo piano and mezzo forte (medium-volume) dynamics turned in favor of the latter in the Dorian modality. In this respect, Dorian modality can be considered as a transitional mode. It is important to emphasize that other modes are characterized by medium loud and loud dynamics (Figure 2).

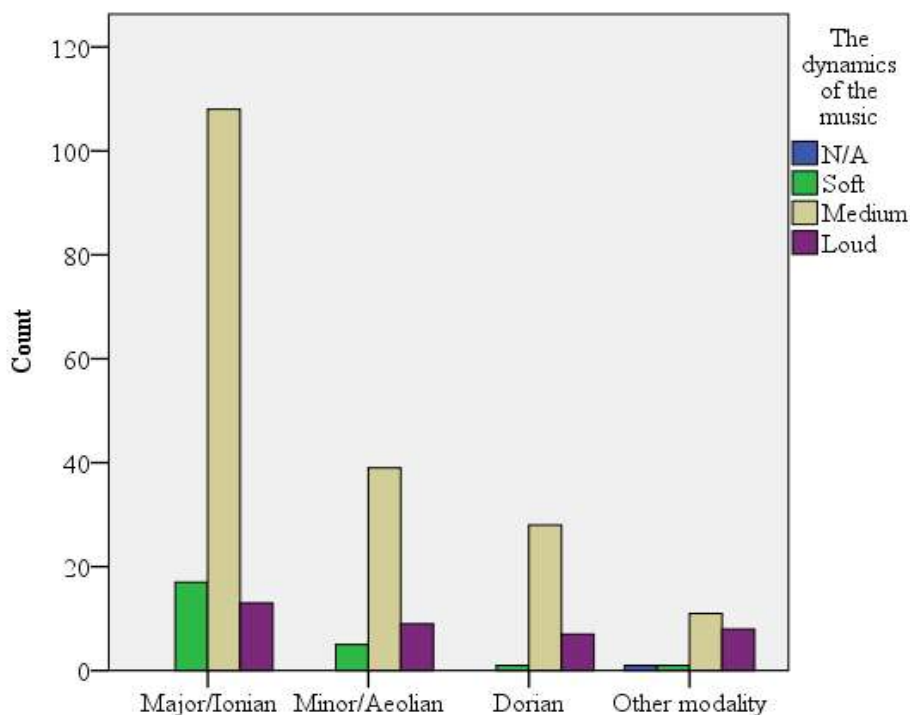


Figure 2: Distribution of the dynamics and modes of the music (Sig .: 0.002)

From the perspective of dynamic enhancement, the shift from above appears again. While in the music written in major tonalities the ratio of unchanged dynamics is similar to the frequency of music featuring crescendo dynamic change. Music with other tonalities

significantly shifted towards to the latter direction of dynamic changes. In the case of minor modalities that are generally more emotional and intense sounding, the ratio of unchanged music is significantly lower than music featuring dynamic growth, ie. crescendo (Figure 3).

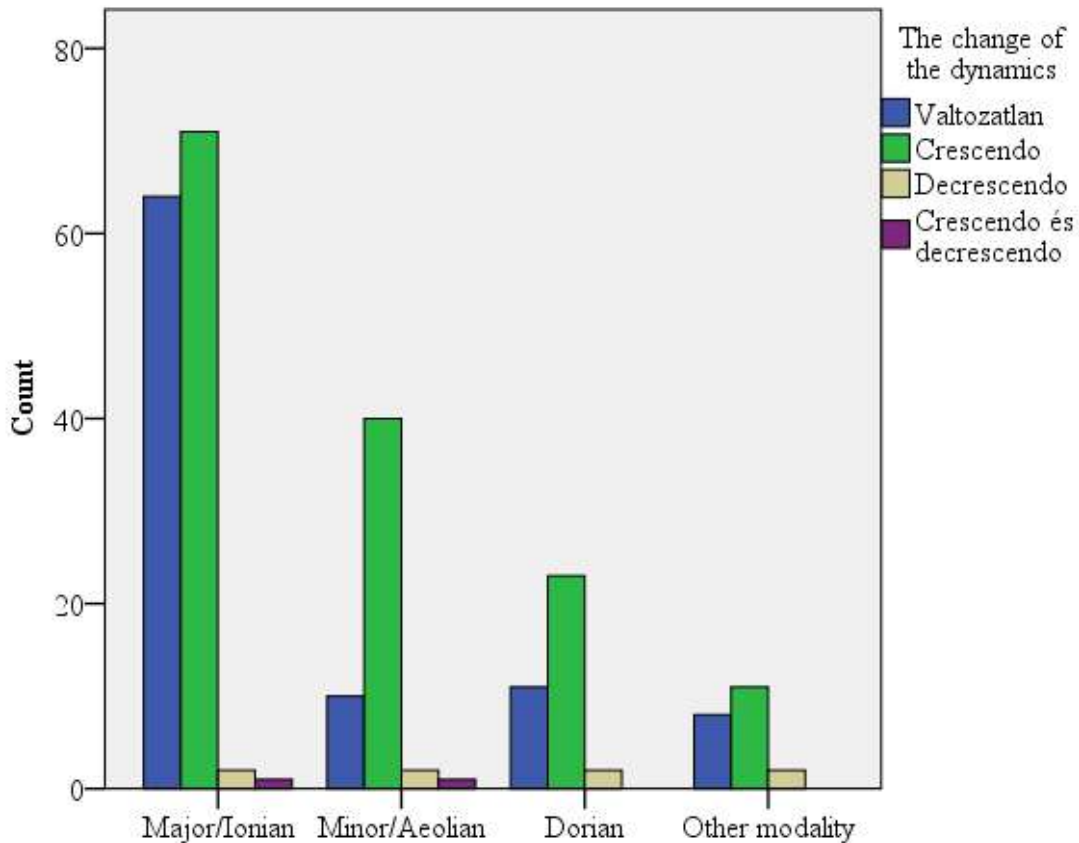


Figure 3: *The nature of dynamic changes from the perspective of the modalities (sig .: 0,033)*

In the case of closings, ie the music appearing at the end of the advertisement, the above shift in the sample can be also observed. While in the case of major modalities, most of the music fell into the ranges of medium dynamics, other modalities showed a shift toward louder, more powerful dynamics. From this perspective, minor modalities played the role of transitional modalities. Among them, the ratio of medium dynamics were present in almost the same proportion to the louder, more powerful ranges.

In the case of Dorian modalities, this ratio seems to shift towards the dynamically louder ranges, and this is further strengthened by the increase in the proportion of specifically dynamic music, and by the decrease of quieter music. Like in the case of dynamic changes, music written in other modalities this phenomenon seems to turn back to the opposite direction, so there is a shorter shift from the louder dynamics to quieter music. This is

probably not a coincidence, as these two features are not independent, the dynamic change in the overall advertising affects the volume of the closing.

4.3 The relationship between the pace and dynamics of the music

The increase of dynamics show a similar direction to the increase of the tempo. With the rise of the pace, we can see more and more dynamic music. Louder music is typically faster, slower ones are quieter, while music with medium dynamic ranges tends to be faster (Figure 4). Given that both the tempo and the dynamics are the means of intense sounds, there may be a linkage between the means of increasing the sound and audio effects in advertising.

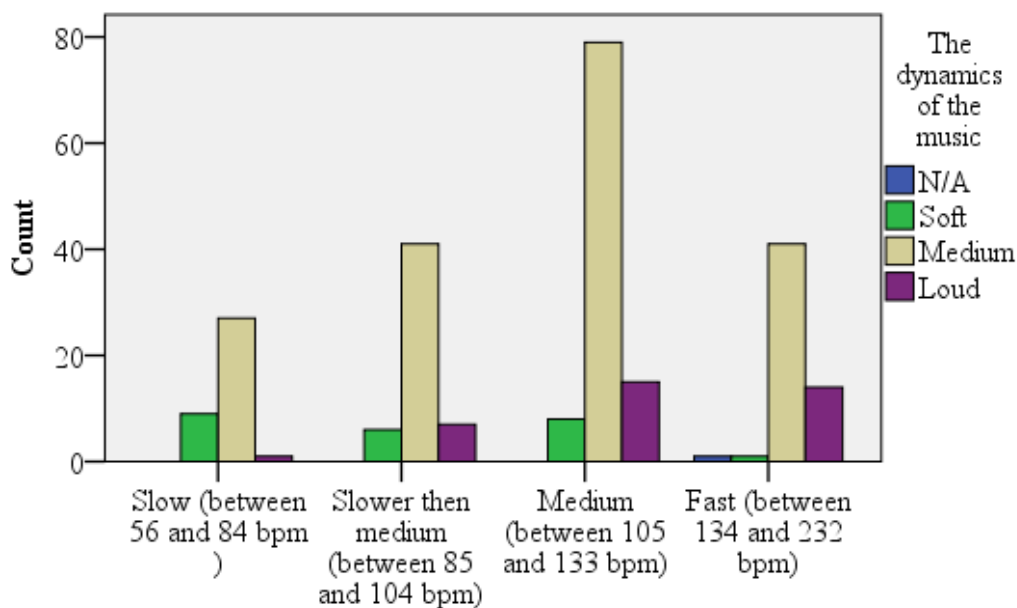


Figure 4: The dynamic distribution of advertisements in each tempo ranges (Sig: 0.005)

Likewise, this kind of enhancement also appears in terms of changing the dynamics of music. With the exception of slow music, each the tempo ranges were dominated by dynamically-enhanced music. Although their proportion wasn't higher in the three ranges in question, but it may also support the relationship between faster and more intense sounds.

If we examine the distribution of the dynamics of closures of the commercials, the majority of music ends with unchanged dynamics. There is also a significant decrease in volume. The latter phenomenon, like the above, can support commercials from the point of view of their story through the musical support of closing the message and the ad itself.

5. Conclusions

In addition to the basic role of the music of advertising music, a number of complex solutions within the music, as well as their combined effects can further shape their roles. That is why it is important to identify patterns that emerges from the commercials examined. It is also important to find common solutions that reflect on previous experiences or show what is widespread in this field.

In the light of the results obtained from the examination of the characteristics of the commercials and the music there are statistically different strengths between their certain features, identical orientations seem to emerge. Phenomena and basic combinations that can be supported by music theory, together with solutions that appear in the communication context can be interpreted or expanded.

When it comes to the relationship of modalities and the distribution of the tempo ranges, from the natural, positive sound of the major modes towards more intense, complex sounding modes there's shift towards faster tempo ranges. Concerning the causes of the above phenomenon, it may be assumed that the dissonance of the minor and the above-mentioned more complex modalities, they sound less disturbing at faster tempi.

The distribution of the sample is partially able to support the experience of earlier studies, but the considerable presence of more complex solutions can partly overshadow them. However, comparing these results to the literature, it is important to emphasize the different points of emphasis, methods, and circumstances of previous studies. With regard to the dynamics of music, the above shift can be observed both in the main part of the advertisement and in its closure, as well. This phenomenon also appeared in the case of the tempo, ie louder music were recorded in faster paces. Looking at the dynamic changes, by moving toward less commonly used modalities, the ratio of dynamic sounds increases.

In the light of the results of the tests, between the main characteristics of music used in commercials of the world's most valuable brands, statistically detectable relationships can be detected. Accordingly, by partly accepting the hypothesis of the study, it can be concluded that the formation of the main musical theoretical characteristics of the analyzed advertising genres correlates with each other. From the above phenomenon, supposing that more intense music can be a useful partner for enhancing the effects of the commercial film.

References

- Alexomanolaki, M. – Loveday, C.& Kennett, C. (2007). Music and Memory in Advertising: Music as a Device of Implicit Learning and Recall. *Music, Sound and the Moving Image*, Vol. 1. <https://doi.org/10.3828/msmi.1.1.7>
- Berlyne, D.E. (1971). *Aesthetics and Psychology*. New York: Appleton–Countly Crofts
- Bernstein, L. (1976). *A muzsika öröme*, Gondolat Kiadó
- Bode, M. (2006). Now That’S What I Call Music!: An Interpretive Approach to Music in Advertising. *NA – Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 33.
- Brandirectory (2013). Global 500 2012. http://brandirectory.com/league_tables/table/global-500-2013 Downloaded on 02.03. 2013.
- Brodsky, W. (2011). Developing a functional method to apply music in branding: Design language–generated music. *Psychology of Music*, Vol. 2. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735610387778>
- Bruner, G. (1990). Music, Mood, and Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 4.
- Dowling, W. J. & Harwood, D. L. (1986). *Music Cognition*. Academic Press, New York.
- Fraedrich, J. P. & King, M. F. (1998). Marketing implications of musical sounds, *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 1.
- Hecker, S. (1984). Music for advertising effect. *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220010303>
- Hevner, K. (1935). The Affective Character of the Major and Minor Modes in Music. *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 47. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1416710>
- Hevner, K. (1936). Experimental Studies in the Elements of Expression in Music. *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 48. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1415746>
- Islam, J. & Zaheer, A. (2016). Using facebook brand communities to engage customers: a new perspective of relationship marketing, *People: International Journal of Social Sciences*. Special Issue Vol. 2 Issue 1, pp. 1540-1551 <http://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2016.s21.15401551>
- Kellaris, J. J. & Altsech, M. (1992). The Experience of Time As a Function of Musical Loudness and Gender of Listener, *NA – Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 19.
- Kellaris, J. & Kent, R. (1991), Exploring tempo and modality effects, on consumer responses to music. *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 18.
- Kellaris, J.J. & Kent, R. (1993). An exploratory investigation of responses elicited by music varying in tempo, tonality, and texture. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol.

4. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp0204_03 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408\(08\)80068-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408(08)80068-X)

Kellaris, J. (1992). Consumer Esthetics Outside the Lab: Preliminary Report on a Musical Field Study. NA – Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 19.

Kellaris, J.J. – Mantel, P. S.& Altsech, M. B. (1996). Decibels, Disposition, and Duration: The Impact of Musical Loudness and Internal States on Time Perceptions, NA – Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 23.

Milliman, R. E. (1982). Using Background Music to Affect the Behavior of Supermarket Shoppers, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 46. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251706>

Milliman, R. E. (1986). The Influence of Background Music on the Behavior of Restaurant Patrons, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209068>

Millward Brown (2013). 2012 Brandz Top 100. http://www.millwardbrown.com/BrandZ/Top_100_Global_Brands.aspx Downloaded on 03.03.2013.

Morris, J. D. & Boone, M. A. (1998). The Effects of Music on Emotional Response, Brand Attitude, and Purchase Intent in an Emotional Advertising Condition. NA – Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 25.

Omar, N. N. & Yee, T. M. (2017). Effectiveness of hidden messages in advertisements towards viewers' buying intention, *People: International Journal of Social Sciences*, Special Issue Volume 3 Issue 1, pp. 542 – 553.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/Mijst.2017.s31.542553>

Ranking The Brands (2013). Ranking the Brands Top 100.
<http://www.rankingthebrands.com/The-Brand-Rankings.aspx?rankingID=6&nav=category> Downloaded on 02.03. 2013.

Rauduvaite, A. – Lasauskiene, J. – Abramauskiene, J. & Chuang, M-J. (2017). Children's singing: reflections on a vocal teaching in Lithuania and Taiwan, *People: Journal of Social Sciences*, Special Issue Volume 3 Issue 1, pp. 853 – 869.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pjss.2017.s31.853869>