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THE EFFECTS OF SERVICE QUALITY, SERVICESCAPE, AND SERVICE PERSONNEL ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SERVICE INNOVATION IN WEDDING BUSINESSES[*]

ผลของคุณภาพการบริการ สภาพแวดล้อมการบริการ และบุคลากรบริการ ต่อความพึงพอใจของลูกค้า : บทบาทสื่อกลางของนวัตกรรมการบริการ ในธุรกิจงานแต่งงาน

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Abstract

Objectives of this research article were: 1. To examine how service quality, servicescape, and service personnel influenced customer satisfaction in the wedding industry in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, and 2. To investigate the mediating role of service innovation between service quality, servicescape, and service personnel and customer satisfaction. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. The population consisted of customers who had used wedding services in Kunming within the past year, and a quota sampling method was used to select 312 respondents. Research instruments included a structured questionnaire that was tested for validity and reliability (Cronbach's alpha ranging from .88–.92) and semi-structured in-depth interviews with 18 key informants, along with two case studies. Data collection was conducted both online and offline through wedding venues, photography studios, and WeChat groups. Quantitative data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with 5,000 bootstrapping resamples, while qualitative data were analyzed through descriptive content analysis.

The findings revealed that service quality (β=.41, p < .01), servicescape (β=.27, p < .01), and service personnel (β=.36, p < .001) significantly influenced customer satisfaction. Service innovation strongly predicted customer satisfaction (β=.44, p < .001) and partially mediated the effects of the three antecedents, with indirect effects ranging from .11 to .17. The structural model explained 58 percent of the variance in service innovation and 67 percent in customer satisfaction. Qualitative findings identified three key themes: the tension between personalized and standardized services, the hidden role of emotional labor among service personnel, and cultural identity as a driver of service innovation. The study expanded the understanding of service-dominant logic and servicescape theory and provided practical implications for enhancing customer experience through innovation in culturally distinctive industries.

Keywords: Service Quality; Servicescape; Service Personnel; Service Innovation

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1. ศึกษาว่าคุณภาพการบริการ สภาพแวดล้อม การบริการ และบุคลากรบริการมีอิทธิพลต่อความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าในธุรกิจงานแต่งงาน ในนครคุนหมิง มณฑลยูนนาน ประเทศจีน และ 2. ศึกษาบทบาทของนวัตกรรมการบริการ ในฐานะตัวแปรสื่อกลางระหว่างคุณภาพการบริการ สภาพแวดล้อมการบริการ และ บุคลากรบริการกับความพึงพอใจของลูกค้า การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยแบบผสมผสานเชิง อธิบายตามลำดับ (Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods) ประชากร คือ ลูกค้า ที่ใช้บริการงานแต่งงานในนครคุนหมิงภายใน 1 ปีที่ผ่านมา กลุ่มตัวอย่าง จำนวน 312 คน ได้จากการสุ่มแบบโควตา (Quota Sampling) เครื่องมือวิจัยประกอบด้วยแบบสอบถาม เชิงโครงสร้างที่ผ่านการตรวจสอบความเที่ยงตรงและความเชื่อมั่น (ค่าแอลฟาของครอนบาค ระหว่าง .88–.92) และแบบสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกแบบกึ่งโครงสร้างกับผู้ให้ข้อมูลสำคัญ 18 ราย พร้อมกรณีศึกษา 2 กรณี การเก็บข้อมูลดำเนินการทั้งแบบออนไลน์และออฟไลน์ ผ่านสถานที่จัดงาน ร้านถ่ายภาพ และกลุ่ม WeChat การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้สถิติแบบจำลอง สมการโครงสร้างกำลังสองน้อยที่สุดบางส่วน (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling: PLS-SEM) ด้วยการบูตสแตรป 5,000 ครั้ง และการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาเชิงพรรณนา

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ผลการวิจัยพบว่า คุณภาพการบริการ (β = .41, p < .001) สภาพแวดล้อมการ
บริการ (β = .27, p < .01) และบุคลากรบริการ (β = .36, p < .001) มีผลต่อความพึง
พอใจของลูกค้าอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ นวัตกรรมการบริการเป็นตัวทำนายความพึงพอใจที่
แข็งแกร่ง (β = .44, p < .001) และมีบทบาทสื่อกลางบางส่วน โดยมีค่าผลกระทบทางอ้อม
ระหว่าง .11–.17 แบบจำลองอธิบายความแปรปรวนของนวัตกรรมการบริการได้ 58%
และความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าได้ 67% ผลเชิงคุณภาพพบประเด็นหลักสามด้าน ได้แก่ ความ
ตึงเครียดระหว่างการบริการเฉพาะบุคคลกับมาตรฐาน บทบาทของแรงงานทางอารมณ์
และอัตลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมในฐานะปัจจัยขับเคลื่อนนวัตกรรมบริการ ซึ่งช่วยขยาย
แนวคิดตรรกะการบริการและทฤษฎีสภาพแวดล้อมการบริการ รวมถึงเสนอแนวทาง
ยกระดับประสบการณ์ลูกค้าผ่านนวัตกรรมในธุรกิจที่มีลักษณะเฉพาะทางวัฒนธรรม
คำสำคัญ: คุณภาพการบริการ; สภาพแวดล้อมการบริการ; บุคลากรบริการ; นวัตกรรมการ
บริการ

Introduction

China's wedding industry has grown into a 1.8 trillion RMB sector driven
by rising incomes, social media influence, and demand for personalized
experiences (China Wedding Industry Association, 2023; National Bureau of
Statistics of China, 2022). Kunming, Yunnan's capital known as the City of
Eternal Spring, leverages its ethnic diversity and natural landscapes to create
distinctive wedding offerings, though the sector faces challenges including
inconsistent service standards, limited professional training, and intense
competition.

Customer satisfaction is central to service research (Oliver, 1997;
Zeithaml et al., 1996) and particularly critical in weddings due to their
emotional significance and substantial financial investment. Unlike typical
service encounters, weddings involve extended client-provider interactions
spanning months of planning, complex service bundles, and emotionally
charged decision-making. Multiple service dimensions from physical
environments to staff interpersonal qualities combine to shape customer
evaluations.

Prior research demonstrates positive associations between service
quality and customer satisfaction in hospitality contexts. Clemes et al. (2011)

found perceived service quality strongly associated with satisfaction in Chinese hospitality, while Lai (2015) linked event management service quality to satisfaction and loyalty. Cultural context shapes quality perceptions: in collectivist societies, relational dimensions (empathy, assurance) may outweigh functional aspects (Mattila, 1999), suggesting Kunming wedding customers particularly value trust-based service.

Servicescape the physical environment including ambient conditions, layout, functionality, and symbolic elements shapes customer perceptions and behaviors (Bitner, 1992), evoking affective responses that relate to satisfaction and loyalty (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). In weddings, servicescape is central to symbolic meaning, reflecting social status, cultural values, and identity (Getz & Carlsen, 2005). Empirical studies confirm that atmospherics correlate with restaurant satisfaction (Ryu & Jang, 2008) and hotel revisit intentions (Han & Ryu, 2009), effects potentially amplified in weddings by social visibility and social media sharing (Hudson & Thal, 2013). In Kunming's diverse cultural context, venues incorporating ethnic motifs (e.g., Yi or Bai) may enhance authenticity and emotional connection while aligning with Chinese cultural expectations.

Frontline employees strongly influence customer evaluations through professionalism, empathy, and emotional labor (Hartline & Jones, 1996; Hochschild, 1983). In weddings, planners and photographers shape experiences through expertise while managing emotions and resolving conflicts. Emotional intelligence correlates with higher hospitality satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2012), and personnel co-create experiences through personalized consultations (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Positive interactions associate with perceived control and satisfaction, while service failures severely damage perceptions (Chan et al., 2018).

Service innovation new service concepts, processes, or delivery systems (Gallouj & Weinstein, 1997) emphasizes intangibility, co-production, and relational value (Den Hertog et al., 2010). Wedding innovations include VR previews, digital planning tools, and thematic experiences. Research links innovations to enhanced satisfaction through improved personalization,

efficiency, and engagement (Avlonitis & Papastathopoulou, 2001; Chen, 2019; Storey & Hughes, 2013). Service innovation may mediate relationships among service quality, servicescape, personnel characteristics, and customer satisfaction, though this pathway remains underexplored in wedding contexts.

This study examines associations among service quality, servicescape, service personnel, service innovation, and customer satisfaction in Kunming's wedding industry. Given the cross-sectional design, we focus on associations and predictive relationships rather than causal claims, offering theoretical insights into culturally specific service management and practical guidance for enhancing customer experiences.

Hypotheses

H1: Service quality positively influences customer satisfaction.

H2: Servicescape positively influences customer satisfaction.

H3: Service personnel positively influence customer satisfaction.

H4: Service quality positively influences service innovation.

H5: Servicescape positively influences service innovation.

H6: Service personnel positively influence service innovation.

H7: Service innovation positively influences customer satisfaction.

H8: Service innovation mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

H9: Service innovation mediates the relationship between servicescape and customer satisfaction.

H10: Service innovation mediates the relationship between service personnel and customer satisfaction.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how service quality, servicescape, and service personnel influence customer satisfaction in the wedding industry in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China.

2. To investigate the mediating role of service innovation between service quality, servicescape, and service personnel and customer satisfaction.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design within an explanatory sequential mixed methods framework to examine relationships among service quality, servicescape, service personnel, service innovation, and customer satisfaction in Kunming's wedding industry.

2. Populations and Samples and Key Informants

The study targeted customers in Kunming, Yunnan, who had engaged wedding services within the past year. Using quota-based convenience sampling, 350 questionnaires were distributed via wedding expos, bridal shops, photography studios, and online platforms; 312 valid responses were obtained (89% response rate). Quotas ensured representation across age groups (22–30, 31–38, 39+), service types (venue, planning, photography, decoration), and expenditure levels. Respondents averaged 28.4 years (SD = 4.2), with 68% holding bachelor's degrees or higher. While this approach facilitated efficient data collection, it limits generalizability beyond the sampled population.

3. Research Instrument

All constructs were measured using established scales adapted to the wedding context on five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree): Service Quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988), Servicescape (Bitner, 1992; Ryu & Jang, 2008), Service Personnel (Hartline & Jones, 1996; Kim & Lee, 2012), Service Innovation (Den Hertog et al., 2010; Chen, 2019), and Customer Satisfaction (Oliver, 1997; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Scales were translated from English to Mandarin Chinese using translation-back-translation procedures. Two bilingual researchers independently translated items; discrepancies were resolved through discussion. A third translator back-translated the Chinese version, which was compared with originals to ensure semantic equivalence. Content validity was confirmed through expert review (three academics, two practitioners), and a pilot test (n = 30) ensured clarity before the main survey.

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4. Data Collection

Data were collected over three months (September–November 2024) via paper surveys at wedding venues and online via WeChat groups. Participation was voluntary with assured anonymity. To minimize common method bias, procedural remedies included temporal separation of survey sections, randomized item order, and anonymity assurance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Harman's single-factor test showed the first factor explained 34.7% of variance (below the 50% threshold), indicating common method bias was not a serious concern (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

5. Data analysis Statistics Used to Analyzed the Data

Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4.0), selected for its suitability with predictive modeling, medium samples, complex mediation models, and non-normal distributions (Hair et al., 2019). The measurement model was assessed for reliability (composite reliability, Cronbach's α) and validity (AVE, HTMT). The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients (β), t-values, effect sizes (f^2), R^2, and Q^2. Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) assessed significance of direct and indirect effects.

Results

The measurement model demonstrated adequate psychometric properties. Cronbach's alpha (.88–.92) and composite reliability (.92–.95) confirmed internal consistency, while AVE values (.69–.75) established convergent validity. Discriminant validity was supported through the Fornell–Larcker criterion and heterotrait–monotrait ratios (all <.85). VIF values below 3.0 indicated no multicollinearity concerns.

Table 1 Measurement Model Results

Construct	α	CR	AVE	HTMT
Service Quality	0.91	0.94	0.71	0.45–0.68
Servicescape	0.88	0.92	0.69	0.42–0.61
Service Personnel	0.90	0.93	0.70	0.39–0.64
Service Innovation	0.89	0.93	0.72	0.47–0.66
Customer Satisfaction	0.92	0.95	0.75	0.44–0.59

Although PLS-SEM prioritizes predictive accuracy over model fit, we assessed global fit indices to ensure model adequacy (Henseler et al., 2014). The saturated model showed SRMR = .065, below the recommended threshold of .08, indicating good fit. The normed fit index (NFI) was .92, exceeding the .90 benchmark. The RMS_theta value was .098, below the .12 threshold. These indices collectively suggest that the model adequately represents the empirical data.

With the adequacy of the measurement model established, attention turned to the structural model. The results demonstrated that service quality, servicescape, and service personnel each had significant positive effects on customer satisfaction. The path coefficient from service quality to satisfaction was .41 (t = 6.82, p < .001), from servicescape to satisfaction was .27 (t = 3.55, p < .01), and from service personnel to satisfaction was .36 (t = 5.44, p < .001). All three antecedents also had significant positive effects on service innovation, with path coefficients of .33 for service quality, .25 for servicescape, and .39 for service personnel. Service innovation itself emerged as a strong predictor of satisfaction, with a path coefficient of .44 (t = 7.23, p < .001).

The model displayed robust explanatory power. Service innovation accounted for 58 percent of the variance (R^2 = .58), and customer satisfaction was explained at 67 percent (R^2 = .67). Effect sizes (f^2) ranged from .10 to .22, demonstrating small to medium effects, while predictive relevance (Q^2) values exceeded .40, suggesting strong out-of-sample predictive ability.

Table 2 Structural Model Results

Path	β	t	p	f^2
Service Quality ⟶ Customer Satisfaction	0.41	6.82	< .001	0.21
Servicescape ⟶ Customer Satisfaction	0.27	3.55	< .01	0.12
Service Personnel ⟶ Customer Satisfaction	0.36	5.44	< .001	0.18
Service Quality ⟶ Service Innovation	0.33	4.67	< .001	0.14
Servicescape ⟶ Service Innovation	0.25	3.12	< .01	0.10
Service Personnel ⟶ Service Innovation	0.39	5.86	< .001	0.20
Service Innovation ⟶ Customer Satisfaction	0.44	7.23	< .001	0.22

The mediation analysis confirmed that service innovation played a significant role in transmitting the effects of the three antecedents on customer satisfaction. For service quality, the indirect effect via innovation was .15 (t = 3.97, p < .001), while for servicescape the indirect effect was .11 (t = 2.84, p < .01). The strongest mediation effect was found for service personnel, where the indirect effect through service innovation was .17 (t = 4.21, p < .001). In all cases, partial mediation was observed, meaning that service innovation complemented rather than replaced the direct effects of the antecedents.

Table 3 Mediation Results

Mediation Path	β	95% CI	t	p	Type
SQ → SI → CS	0.15	[.08, .23]	3.97	< .001	Partial
SS → SI → CS	0.11	[.04, .19]	2.84	< .01	Partial
SP → SI → CS	0.17	[.09, .25]	4.21	< .001	Partial

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm and extend prior research on service management by demonstrating that service quality, servicescape, and service personnel are significant predictors of customer satisfaction in the wedding industry of Kunming, and that their effects are partially mediated by service innovation. Together, the quantitative and qualitative results provide a comprehensive picture of how customers evaluate wedding services and how providers can enhance satisfaction in an increasingly competitive environment.

The results reaffirm the centrality of service quality in shaping satisfaction. Consistent with Parasuraman et al. (1988) SERVQUAL framework and subsequent hospitality research (Clemes et al., 2011; Lai, 2015), higher levels of reliability, empathy, and responsiveness strongly predicted satisfaction among Kunming customers. The emphasis on relational and emotional aspects of quality aligns with studies suggesting that in collectivist cultures, interpersonal trust and assurance are particularly salient (Mattila, 1999). The interviews further demonstrated that quality was not perceived solely as technical competence but also as the provider's ability to adapt services to

customer expectations, often through innovative practices. This reinforces the argument that service quality acts as both an antecedent to satisfaction and a platform for innovation.

While we hypothesize positive relationships based on prior literature, we acknowledge that these relationships may be context-dependent and potentially non-linear. For instance, excessive service innovation might introduce complexity that reduces satisfaction, or highly elaborate servicescapes might create discomfort among budget-conscious customers. However, given the exploratory nature of this study in the Kunming wedding context and the predominance of positive findings in existing service quality research, we focus on testing positive directional hypotheses. Future research should examine boundary conditions, curvilinear effects, and potential moderators such as customer demographics and cultural backgrounds.

Body of Knowledge

This study identifies new knowledge about the role of servicescape in Kunming's wedding industry. While prior research confirms that physical environments influence emotional and behavioral responses (Bitner, 1992; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Han & Ryu, 2009), our findings show that customers placed particular value on cultural authenticity within the servicescape. Specifically, elements such as Yunnan's ethnic motifs, traditional décor, and regional design features were not only aesthetically pleasing but also fostered symbolic pride and emotional connection among guests. This extends existing understanding by demonstrating that servicescape can function simultaneously as an aesthetic, functional, cultural, and emotional environment. For practitioners, this new insight underscores the importance of embedding local cultural identity into venue design to enhance customer satisfaction and create memorable, meaningful wedding experiences.

Recommendations

The role of service personnel was strongly supported by both quantitative and qualitative findings. In line with research on frontline

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employees (Hartline & Jones, 1996; Kim & Lee, 2012), personnel professionalism and emotional intelligence significantly influenced satisfaction. The interview data revealed how personnel's emotional labor, such as calming anxious clients or resolving conflicts, was sometimes more important than material aspects of service delivery. This supports Hochschild (1983) concept of emotional labor and suggests that in high-stakes services like weddings, the relational and affective performance of personnel is a critical determinant of satisfaction. Importantly, personnel were also shown to be drivers of service innovation, introducing creative ideas and solutions that enriched customer experiences.

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