

Guidelines of traditional weddings in different cultures: a market research for Finnish market

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<p>This study was conducted by International Students at HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Science Porvoo Campus. The aim was to find out if wedding planning service is popular in Finland, and to study wedding traditions in different cultures. The thesis was commissioned by Zelante Oy which is an event planning company in Espoo, Finland. The results will be used in order to provide useful advice to help Zelante to develop their cultural wedding planning services.</p> <p>The study includes a market research which focuses on the Capital areas in Finland to research if the wedding planning in Finland is popular or not and if the customers are interested in cultural weddings or not, as well as their wedding preferences such as what kind of cultures they would like to use and what kind of services they would like to have. It also includes a guideline which demonstrates 7 different traditional wedding cultures. This report covers the Introduction of the thesis, Research Problem, Wedding Planing Theories, Market Research Theories, Research methods, and research findings.</p> <p>Aim of this study was to get answers to the questions of what kind of traditional weddings the potential customers would like to have, what kind of elements are most important for them, and what potential customers know about wedding planning and traditional weddings in Finland.</p> <p>After this research, the acknowledge of wedding planning services and wedding traditions of the potential customers were clearly defined. Therefore, the wedding planning services and cultural wedding planning can be done better with our current research results. Hopefully, with good understanding about the results, the commisioner could plan traditional cultural wedding services.</p>	
<p>Keywords Wedding, traditional, culture, market research, guideline</p>	

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1 Introduction

Weddings are one of the most arranged events in the world which is full of different cultures. Every culture has its own traditions and rituals. Everybody, especially women would like their wedding to be unique, romantic, splendid and memorable. In this occasion, two students from HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Science came up with the idea to bring the dissimilar wedding traditions to the Finnish market. In order to find commissioner, the researchers contacted event planning company Zelante Oy which has been co-operating with HAAGA-HELIA UAS. The manager of Zelante Oy showed interest towards the topic after the researchers presented the ideas.

The idea was to create a guideline by researching various wedding cultures and find out if these wedding traditions could be implemented in Finland. In terms of understanding the wedding planning processes and solving the research problems, the researchers have to understand the theories which are connected. Event planning, weddings, cultures, service development, and market research were the main theories which are related to the case.

The researchers used a mix research method approach which combined qualitative questionnaire interview and quantitative research method which includes conducting the online questionnaire. In the case of market research in Finland, the researchers interviewed people by letting them answer the questionnaire and they also sent the questionnaire by Internet. The main target group was people who are in relationship but have not married yet. However, since the people who got married already also able to give some ideas about what they would do differently for their weddings, the researchers also went to interview them. The main area was chosen as the Helsinki areas since the commissioner's location is in Espoo, so their main customers might be come from that areas.

The thesis include the introduction of the topic, organization background analysis, research problems, aims and goals of the research, wedding planning theories, market research theories, research methods, question and questionnaire, analysis of the results

or findings in Finland, guidelines for different cultures, and references and sources. For the guidelines, the researchers included some pictures which are related to the culture research.

When it comes to the commissioner background information, Zelante Oy is an event planning company based in Espoo, Finland. In their services they specialize on company events, but also arrange other kind of events. The company is project based and is operated by two persons constantly. For every project they hire one to ten people and in every project the personnel is different. One of their biggest yearly projects is Joulumaailma, which is arranged in Helsinki city centre. The turnover in the projects varies between 10 000 and 80 000 euros. As one of their services they also provide wedding planning.

2 Research Problem

This chapter described the research problems of this thesis. According to the topic and aims, the research problem can be divided into two main problems for the market research part and guideline part.

In market research, the researchers would like to find out if the wedding planning in Finland is popular or not. The researchers also would like to find out if the customers are interested in cultural weddings or not, as well as their wedding preferences such as what kind of cultures they would like to use for their weddings and what kind of services they would like to have. In guideline, the researchers defined the differences in the wedding traditions and specify the elements of the traditions which are needed to be able to create or plan cultural weddings in Finland.

In addition, there were sub questions in order to support and modify the main questions. Namely, how popular the wedding planning services are in Finland? What are the different wedding traditions? What are needed in order to create or plan cultural weddings in Finland?

The reason why those questions were our research problems was that by asking the questions above, an overall picture of the wedding planning services are popular or not and what the different cultural weddings are as well as if the weddings traditions could be work in Finland or not. These were the researchers' task to find out in order to create useful findings for the commissioner.

2.1 Aims and Limitations

Since the one of the aim of the thesis was to create guidelines about traditional weddings in different cultures for the wedding planners in Finland. Thus, the limitation for this case was that the researchers might not find enough information about those wedding traditions. Next, the researchers would like to find out if the wedding planning

services are popular in Finland, so the limitation of this could be if the wedding planning is not popular enough in Finland. Additionally, the limitation could be is this against the cultural traditions if the wedding planners in Finland use other culture traditions.

2.2 Expected Results

Since the thesis was completed by two persons, the team work was very essential in order to conduct qualified research and report. The researchers would like to enhance team work skills and learn to cooperate with each other. Next, the researchers expected to work efficiently and finish the study within a certain time period. On the other words, it means to learn and apply good time management skills. The researchers also would like to obtain good reporting skills. For this study, the researchers expected to learn different wedding traditions, as well as market research skills. Additionally, the researchers wanted to gain more experiences about doing research such as interview, questionnaire, and online survey.

When it comes to research results, the researchers expected to get at least 50 respondents who would answer the questionnaire and give good opinions and comments in terms of wedding planning services. The best result for the researchers is that to get 100 respondents. Additionally, the researchers would like to conduct an excellent research and create a guideline which would help the commissioner to develop their wedding planning services and knowledge of tradition cultural weddings.

3 Wedding Planning

This chapter concentrated on event and wedding planning theories and defines weddings in general terms. The chapter will explain the phases in event and wedding planning and how this theory is implemented to the research. First section in this chapter defined the key terms used in this study. The second section gave an overview of the weddings, focusing on its unique elements and differences to other events. Third section of the chapter concentrated on the wedding planning process and generally goes through all the steps during the process. In the fourth section, it concluded the reasons behind the chosen theories and how they will be implemented during the research process. Finally the chapter explained the wedding planning as a service and what kind of vendors are connected to wedding planning services

3.1 Definition of key terms

In this section the key terms were defined to understand the ideas behind the text. They are terms which are constantly used in the report and need to be explained.

Cultural weddings are wedding which are related to any other culture than the local one. For example French weddings in Finland would be cultural weddings. Other word to define these kinds of weddings is theme weddings.

Traditional weddings are weddings which are based on the wedding traditions and follow the wedding customs of the certain culture. For example traditional Chinese weddings would follow the Chinese wedding customs.

Traditional cultural weddings are type of weddings which are arranged in other cultural area then where it comes from, but still would follow the wedding customs. For example traditional Indian weddings in Finland would be traditional cultural weddings.

Dissimilar wedding traditions/customs are the unique elements used in wedding cultures. Each wedding culture has own unique elements and only been used in traditional weddings.

Wedding planner is a professional advisor for couples, who need help in arranging weddings. Their main goal is to find best solutions for couples who have ideas for their weddings but have no clues where to find the elements needed.

Vendors are different service providers, who are necessary for making the actual process possible.

3.2 Weddings in general

Weddings are unique events in which two persons are united in marriage to be equal in front of the law. This legal contract establishes rights and obligations between united families. Marriages can only be recognized by registered authorities such as priests.

Weddings are as any other events, they have three phases; planning, executing and finalizing. The facts that make wedding different and unique compared to other events are the variety of rituals and wedding customs. These unique features are different in every culture, religion or even between different classes.

The marriage is a holy thing all around the world, but the ways how people get married are depending on the rituals and wedding customs. In eastern part of the world the historical traditions are still strong and they affect a lot in nowadays marriages. In eastern cultures and religious traditions the broom is chosen for the bride when they are still young. In western cultures in other hand the freedom of choice give the opportunity to find partner of their dreams. In the modern world these traditions of the eastern cultures are fading away and starting to adapt more the western customs.

When talking about rituals, the most common ritual is the engagement, which is a promise of being faithful and future unification with the bride. It is seen as part of tradition in western cultures and nowadays also becoming more popular in eastern cul-

tures. The sign of engagement is a ring, which symbolizes the love of the partner and dedication to take care of the other party. The average time for engagement is 17 months. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

In next section we took a look at the wedding planning process from the eyes of the wedding planner, but also from the eyes of customer.

3.3 Wedding Planning Process

Weddings as any other event take a long time to be planned and require a careful overview of the project. The planning process is divided in to seven different phases; 1) research, 2) design, 3) coordination, 4) legal issues, 5) confirmation, 6) implementation and 7) evaluation.

Research phase consists of evaluation of the situation, identifying the possibilities for the venues, vendors, wedding dates and setting the budget. The usual starting time for this phase is after engagement and at least one or two years before the actual wedding day. The goals set in this phase have to be realistic.

Design phase is usually overlapping with research phase. This phase is all about the design, deciding the date and venue, visiting the possible vendors, finalizing the guest list and choosing the wedding party such as bridesmaids, and flower girls.

Coordination phase is all about making the selections and sending the invitations. In this phase the wedding attires, vendors and honeymoon destination are booked and paid, the drafts for production schedule and venues are developed, the gift registry is being prepared and the overnights for guests are booked.

Legal issues consist of the permission to get married in the target country, the certificate for the marriage and changing the name form, if necessary.

Confirmation phase is the phase of finalizing the plans made for the event. The production schedule, guest list, seating order and layout of the venues are being set up in final form. Also the vendors and honeymoon details are being confirmed.

Implementation phase is the main event, which is being executed by following the production schedule. In this phase there can be different rituals which are being carefully executed by the family or the authorities.

Evaluation phase consists of thanking the guests, vendors and planners. It wraps up the weddings with memorable collection of pictures and summary of the event being held. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

As a wedding planner the customer also has their priorities in wedding planning. As a newly engaged the couple might be wondering where to start the planning. Nina Callaway describes the basic steps in planning the weddings for newly engaged in her two articles in wedding.about.com.

As Callaway writes in first article, the customer should enjoy being engaged and be ready for announcing the big news for family and friends. As this big moment comes, the actual planning should start by setting the date. (Callaway N. 2013a)

In her second article she describes the main elements for planning the weddings: the budget, theme of the weddings, venues and list of attendees. Callaway's article also leads the reader to other useful sites related to wedding planning. The article also mentions how useful it is to get help from the professional wedding planners and consultants. (Callaway N. 2013b)

In following subsections we take a look at the important elements in wedding planning. As first we come to budget, which is the most important element in planning process.

3.3.1 Wedding Budget

Budget is the most important element in wedding planning process. It binds up everything: the theme, decorations, venues, etc. Without a proper budget, it is hard to keep the costs under control and it can cause lots of financial issues in the end.

When planning a wedding, one of the key elements in planning is to make a budget plan. This makes it much easier to follow up what are the estimated and final costs. It also helps with following up how much has been already paid and when it finally has to be paid. An average budget for American weddings are 26 000 USD.

The easiest way to make list of costs, is to make a list of items required in different situations. For example wedding attire, photography, reception, catering etc. These lists also help to keep overview of the items and services which have been already taken care of. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

To make a proper budget, it is never too early to start planning. All the budget planning should be based on the priorities set for the wedding was it the venue, the attire or the theme of the weddings. The wedding planning should be stress free and the budget should be kept in realistic amount. Aiming for too expensive elements, will lead to low funds for the other elements and cause stress of not getting all what was planned.

In case that something goes wrong it is always good to have a plan B. Counting some extra funds for the actual wedding day is a good plan B. Making a list of the costs is always a good idea. It should also include the plan B.

When the costs are discussed with the suppliers, take notes or ask confirmation of promised prices as emails. (Hitched.co.uk 2013)

As the budget binds up the whole wedding planning process and guides it towards the right direction, the wedding themes will guide the wedding planning towards the vision of the customer.

3.3.2 Wedding Themes

When planning a wedding, it is important to understand the vision of the client. Because everybody as individuals are different and that is why the styles of weddings are always unique in every situation. Wedding themes can be based of wild imagination of the couple or they can follow the traditional line of local wedding customs. It is very important to meet with the couple to get understanding over their vision.

The ideas for wedding themes can emerge based on certain elements. These kinds of elements can be the exact venue, the seasons of the year or holidays, the historical time periods or it can be free of imagination. Also the wedding customs in certain cultures have to be respected when planning traditional weddings.

Wedding destinations and sites can be related to the theme, but sometimes it is impossible to get to that kind of location where this would be actually possible. In these kinds of cases the importance is to create the atmosphere, as you would be there where you would like to have your dream weddings. For example a client wants to have a Parisian wedding, but the budget does not allow the trip to Paris, the wedding planner can create the actual venue to look and feel like Paris, by creating the elements reminding of the destination. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

Wedding themes guide through the planning process and has effect to other elements, especially the tastes and looks of the catering

3.3.3 Catering in weddings

The catering is usually based on the theme of the wedding, for examples if the weddings are traditional, then the dishes offered at wedding reception are culturally related to the theme. If the weddings would be Japanese weddings, the dishes would be Japanese or would give a reminder of Japanese culture.

Choosing a caterer to weddings always depends on the services they have available. Some of the caterers might have the ability to provide the food and beverages as it would fit to their clients, but they may lack the ability to provide food for the people who have a special kind of dietary or follow certain religious customs. It is important to know all the special diets when meeting with the caterer. It is also very common to cook the meals for the wedding yourself, to avoid this kind of long selection process or the conflicts it might cause.

For the caterers it is important to meet the couple few times before the actual decision of the menu. In the first meeting the caterer will get the better view of the idea the couple has about the food in the weddings. For the second meeting the caterer has made some proposals for the couple, who can then choose what they would like the best. When the clients have made the decisions about the food, the tasting of the chosen menu is important. In these meetings caterer has to provide the clients with the estimated costs of the food and services.

The type of food service depends on the capability of the caterer but also the space the venue provides. The service in weddings can be a buffet, plated or French service.

Buffet style of service is convenient for the couples, who prefer variety of food. It is also much easier to separate diet meals from the normal meals. Buffet style of service is a good choice for venues which have plenty of space for guests to go around the table. It is a good choice for bigger group of guests.

Plated style of service in other hand is convenient for the couples, who prefer something exact and they have an idea what they would like to have. Plated style service does not require much space and the service provided is more personal. It is a good choice for smaller group of guests.

French style of service gives more attention to the guests and the couple itself. In French service the meals are either prepared at the table or the meals are assembled in the kitchen on a big plate and served at the table.

One of the most anticipated moments in the weddings is the cutting of the wedding cake. Nowadays the styles of the cakes are planned by the theme related to wedding, but the elements which help selecting cakes are the icing, flavour, design and the size.

The icing of the cake makes it look beautiful and decorative. It can be made from butter cream or fondant. To find right kind of cake the flavour of the cake is important. When clients choose the cake, they have to taste the baker's choices of the cakes to find a right combination for themselves. The design and the size of the cake are very important elements when defining the price for the cake. The design of the cake can be influenced by the theme of the weddings and that makes them unique. The size of the cake depends on the amount of the guests.

The timing of cutting the cake is important. As it is the most anticipated moment of the wedding reception, it will keep the excitement high till the end. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

Size and style of the catering in weddings depends on the time of the day when the weddings are held or the size of the guest list. For the smaller weddings a casual tea party would be enough to celebrate the marriage, for bigger weddings a buffet would be a perfect solution. Depending on the time of the season and the theme of the wedding, the catering will be based on the ideas. For example a barbecue would be a nice idea for a summer weddings.

The buffet service adds variety to wedding meals and offers easier solution to handle the guests with different kind of eating habits. In smaller weddings afternoon tea would be a good way to have traditional wedding speeches and salutations for the married couple. (Pearson J. 2013)

As much as the catering is related to the theme of the wedding, the wedding attire follows the same principals.

3.3.4 Wedding Attire

For most of the brides the wedding attire is one of the most important elements in weddings. Especially when it comes to traditional weddings, the wedding dress has to be exactly based on the wedding traditions and may not be an exception.

Choosing the wedding attire is one of the elements in wedding planning, which the bride wants to do herself, or with the help of a best friend or family. Still it is important to understand the style of wedding dresses.

Nowadays lots of women, who get married, get inspired by the world of fashion. They follow up the trends and get their ideas how the dress should look like. Some brides also follow the traditions and use the wedding dresses of their mothers. It is important for the bride that the wedding dress is perfect in her opinion and it makes her happy.

Most used colour in the world for wedding dress is white. In certain cultures the colour of the wedding dress might be something else, following the traditional customs in the country. One of these examples is Chinese wedding dress.

Such traditions as “something new, something old, something borrowed, and something blue” is one way to build up a wedding attire. Something old is related to the items which the bride has gotten from her family as a heritage. Something new relates to the items which have been bought by the bride herself. Something borrowed counts in the items which are been borrowed from the friends, for example the maid of honour.

Choosing the wedding attire for the groom is much easier. It is usually a measured tuxedo, but it can also be a vest, depending on the current trends.

Also the groomsmen use a tuxedo in the weddings. They do not have to be similar, but they have to match with the choice of bridesmaids. Bridesmaid’s dresses are usually same collared, but the design of the dress varies of the body type. (Daniels M. & Lovell C. 2007)

Every couple has their own preferences in wedding attires, but also in how the guests should dress for the event. The weddings can be formal or informal and will give directions what to wear and what not. For the female guests it can be suit or a cocktail/short dress. For the men in other hand it can be suit or Tuxedo.

In weddings the bride is centre of attention, which also defines how the women should dress for the weddings as guests. As a traditional wedding dress is white, the colour should not be worn by the guests. Dresses or suits have to be appropriate and not to look like being overdressed for the event. For men the suit should be dark, except for the evening weddings. The wedding invitation usually describes the dress code for the evening. (Nellis C. 2013)

Wedding dress is one of the main attractions during the event. For the guests the wedding ceremony is the first place where they see the bride in her unique wedding dress.

3.3.5 The Ceremony

Ceremony is the main event during the wedding day. It is the moment where the guests will join the couple to bless them. In the ceremony the bride is the usual main attraction with her unique wedding dress.

Most of the wedding ceremonies consist of four main elements: the officiant, readings and vows, exchange of the rings and artefacts and the ceremony program. These elements differ in every culture following the wedding customs.

The officiant is one of the key elements in weddings. In intercultural weddings the celebrant has to have training in cultural and religious differences and to know the traditional flow of the ceremony, if not otherwise planned.

Readings and Vows can consist texts which have been planned by couple themselves or they have been chosen together with the officiant. These texts can be religious, and taken from the religions sacred texts, but they can also be out of the sacred texts still

having spiritual and meaningful purpose. Readings can involve another person, such as a family member, to read the chosen text for the couple. The vows in other hand are the personal promises between the couple which makes them to be committed to the marriage.

Exchanging the rings and artefacts is a symbolic act, where such artefacts as rings are exchanged between couples. In some cultures the wedding traditions are performed in this stage of the ceremony.

Ceremony program summarises the wedding ceremony. It consists of the list of the wedding part and the flow of the program.

For the wedding planner it also important to know the policies of the weddings. This makes it easier to give instructions for the people involved in the ceremony. Also the legal parts are counted as part of polices, for example if the other party has been married, the old marriage has to be legally annulled. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

In every ceremony, was it traditional or themed weddings, has to be an officiant. It can be official person from the side of the church, mosque or temple. To add the personal touch in to weddings the officiant can be also a reliable friend, who understands and appreciate the honour given.

During the ceremony, there can be two different vows: personal vow and ring vow. The personal vows are the symbol of couple becoming man and wife, the ring vow is a symbol of unbroken love. In some cultures the ring vow also includes the personal vow. Vows are personal speeches of the dedication to love the other half of the couple. It can be written individually or together with the other half. (Stewart M 2013)

Ceremony is the main event during the wedding day, but weddings are also lot more than just blessings to newlyweds, it is a day which should be enjoyed in good atmosphere. Atmosphere can be created by using right kind of decoration.

3.3.6 Floral décor

Flower decorations underscore the mood and the tone of the wedding and are prominent feature in ceremony and reception. When choosing the flower decorations to a wedding it has to be clear where they are needed, who needs them, what kind of flower decorations are needed, who installs and clears them up.

Flowers are used in many ways in wedding. They are mainly used as decorations, but they are also use as part of some traditions. As a decoration in indoor ceremonies their meaning is to create the atmosphere and welcome the guests. In outside ceremonies flowers create a focal point. Flowers are also used in ceremony by the flower girl, bridesmaids and sometimes also by groomsmen.

Selecting flowers depends season, colour, scent, shape and size. Seasons define which flowers are available to be used, colours draw attention, scent should not be too strong, shape and size gives the final touch for the decoration elements.

In wedding reception, the floral decoration is usually a key element. The first flowers when entering the reception site sets the tone for the rest of the wedding reception. Centrepieces in reception should be sized by the tables used.

Installing and removal of the flower decoration are done by the floral designer. The estimated charges for the service are based on time and the arrangements on the site. .
(Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

Flowers are part of the decoration elements and create the mood. One way to remember the feeling of the wedding day is to take photos or videos as memories.

3.3.7 Photography

It is always good to have some memories of special events. Especially in weddings, catching the important and exciting moments are very important to couples getting married. The estimated percent in wedding budget for photography is 10-15 %.

It is very popular to have wedding photos, but also filming the wedding ceremony and reception has become more popular. Photography can be done in two ways: traditionally or photojournalistic.

The traditional photography is all about catching the moments in traditional ways and it follows the stages by the photographer. In photojournalistic photography all the moments are natural and they come out as they are happening. Not all the photographers prefer the photojournalistic style as some of them stay partially traditional. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

Photos and videos are memories for the future to bring back the feeling of the wedding day. During the wedding day the music and entertainment are the main elements to keep the feeling up during the day.

3.3.8 Music and Entertainment

In weddings music and entertainment is divided into two sections. The first section is during the ceremony and the second during the wedding reception and cocktail hours.

The ceremonial music is divided into five phases; prelude, processional, ceremony, recessional and postlude. The music in all these phases has their own meaning.

Prelude can be a performance of choir or instrumental by soloist. The prelude is being played while the guests arrive and settle down to venue to wait for the bride to walk through the aisle.

Processional phase starts when Bride arrives to the end of the aisle with the wedding party. The length of the processional is usually one song and it should last as long as bride is in the other end of the aisle or as long as there are members of the wedding party. Most used processional is the chorus of Lohengrin, which is simply named Here Comes the Bride.

Ceremony itself can consist musical elements such as group prayers, hymn or performance of soloist or choir. Music for the ceremony has to be coordinated with the officiant.

Recessional phase occurs when the wedding party exits the wedding venue. The music in this phase has to be joyful and meaningful for the couple.

Postlude music is played until the guests have left the ceremonial venue. It allows smooth exit for the guests in the rhythm of beautiful music.

In wedding reception the music has to be chosen wisely. During the cocktail hour, the music has to be light and allow people to communicate with each other. If the venue for the reception allows, the music can be played by live band or artist, but the music should not get lost under the conversations or overwhelm them.

During the actual wedding reception the music can be pre-recorded playlists of music played by DJ's or a live band. Wedding reception also includes other kind of entertainment, such as wedding dance, cutting the cake, wedding games and other wedding reception rituals. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

As music is important to create the feeling for the wedding day, it has to be carefully planned where music is played and how much space the musical equipment or the band needs. To make sure everything goes smoothly, it is important to plan the site layout and consider what elements need to be rented.

3.3.9 Rentals and site layout

When considering the layout for the reception site, rentals should be considered as one choice to decorate the place. Renting the compulsory elements in wedding reception, can lower the costs of the weddings when considered buying the same elements. These kinds of items to rent are tents, furniture and tableware, lighting and other smaller items. Considering the layout the venue has to be familiar enough.

In outdoor wedding receptions tents are very common item. When renting or buying a tent for wedding reception, the style, size and price have to be considered. There are two styles of tents; pole and frame tents.

Pole tents are considered classic and it is held by outside and inside poles. The poles have to be anchored to the ground to make it steady. Frame tents are supported by aluminium piping and do not need to be anchored. Pole tents can be higher than frame tents, but more unattractive. Frame tents in other hand take more time to be set up.

The size of the tent is determined by how many guests are coming, are they going to be seated and all the additional elements, such as dance floor. It is always recommended to have too much space than be too crowded. The size is also one factor when discussing the price for renting the tent. Other factors which affect the price are for example the heating, flooring and air conditioning.

Without a furniture and tableware the wedding reception would not be possible. The plan of using the certain items has to be made with the venues. Some venues allow usage of own tableware and some require using their items. Sometimes it can be negotiated to use some of own additions with the rented items, but if own items are allowed to be used, they have to follow the rules and regulations of the venue.

The layout and tableware sometimes depends on the available items on the venue. What size tables they have, what shape they have, how many chairs does fit around one table, do they have tableware fitting to wedding theme. The rental price of more common materials is lower than the luxury ones.

Lighting is very important part of the wedding reception. It creates the atmosphere in the ballroom and brings it to life. The first focal points in lighting are the centrepieces in the table. Centrepieces can be lighted to “pop” up from the table or as wash of light to light up the whole table.

The lighting over the dance floor should be warm coloured and create the right kind of mood for a romantic wedding dance. Usage of Gobos (templates creating patterns) in lighting is usual, but also computerized lighting can be used to create patterns to the dance floor. Gobos and computerized lightings are used to create a unique feeling.

In tents the lighting is more complicated and more expensive. It takes double the time used to set up the lighting in a ballroom and also costs double as much.

Site layout is a plan of for mapping the elements needed in the ceremony and reception venues. It starts with an empty layout of the sites and ends with a plan on a paper. It does not have to be a masterpiece, but it should help a lot when putting the pieces together. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

Wedding decoration brings the package for the day together, but also they can be used before the actual wedding day. The decoration elements can be also found in stationery elements.

3.3.10 Stationery elements and etiquette

Stationary elements are present during the whole wedding process, from save-the-date to thank you cards. These elements take smallest piece in the budget.

Save-the-Date cards are sent about one year before the wedding day, and it is sent to all the possible guests. The information given in Save-the-Date cards is the names of bride and broom, the date and the location of the wedding. It is important especially when destination weddings are being planned.

Formal invitations include inner and outer envelope, invitation card, reception card and response card. Outer envelope is used to keep the inner envelope clean. The invitation card gives the specific information about the weddings. Reception card is sent if the reception and ceremony are in different places. Response card are sent to get a reply to the invitation.

Outer envelope is the most formal and should not include any abbreviations. It should be addressed to the primary recipient. In inner envelope the recipients can be more specific, including other family members invited to the weddings.

For printing the invitations four main styles are used: engraving, letterpress, thermography and flat. Engraving is very formal and traditional style, in which the texture is made to feel a bit raised and when turned around impressed. Letterpress is the opposite of engraving, leaving an indent on the front of the invitation and gives a feeling of the ridges. Letterpress is considered classy and very expensive. Thermography is the most common style and is similar to engraving. As in engraved style inked press is used, in thermography is printed through regular printing press. It makes the text feel bit raised but it is not impressed. Flat printing is considered when the style is designed not to lend them raised.

All these printing styles also have a difference in paper used for invitations. In engraved style paper is usually all cotton and watermarked, in letterpress soft paper. As the style, also the quality and colour of the paper determines the price of invitations.

Invitations can be written in four different types of fonts. These can be considered cursive or printed, uppercase versus mixture of upper and lowercase, inclusion of monograms or other large specialty fonts and ink colour.

The wording in every invitation consists of six parts; the host, request, bride and groom, date and time, location and special instructions. The wording in the response card has to be written in similar style as the invitation.

Before ordering the actual invitations, the couple should make few try-outs and proof-read the texts in the test invitations. The amount of invitations should not be counted by the individual persons but by the household. If a family of five people is invited, only one invitation should be sent instead of five.

In delivery phase, the invitations have to be weighted and sent six to ten weeks before wedding day. When mailing the invitations, using love themed stamps are very common.

During the weddings important documents are the ceremony program, which guides the guests through the ceremony; seating stationery, indicating the seats for every person during the reception; menus, to give an overview of the planned menu (if served meal); personalized paper products, which can be for example napkins with the names of couple; wedding announcement, when smaller weddings are being held. It is a notice for the people who were not invited or could not attend the wedding

Thank-you notes are sent to all the guests, who took part of the event. The messages are sent just to thank all the participants and they may include a wedding photo. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

As the stationery elements are present during the whole ceremony, the transportation instead is a temporary element during the weddings.

3.3.11 Transportation

Transportation is always a question when arranging an event, also during the wedding. The first question to be asked is how many people will require transportation from place to place. Second question is who needs to be transported and the third question when they will need the transportation.

Traditionally the ride to the ceremony is the bride last ride as a single woman, accompanied with her parents, the person who walks her down the aisle or if the father meets the bride at the ceremony site, the ladies have their own ride. Usually a classic car is

used to transport the bride. Groom in other hand can be accompanied by his family or groomsmen.

Depending on the budget, the transportation can be also arranged for the guests, bridal party and the rest of the family. The style of the transportation depends on the style of the wedding and number of people needing the transportation.

When moving from ceremony to reception the transportation method can be the same as when they arrived to the ceremony. If the guests are using their personal vehicle, it is efficient to give them the directions to the reception site and also hire a valet to help with the parking. It is also very efficient to ask the guests if they are arriving with their personal vehicle, which makes it easier to plan the parking in cooperation with the venue. The style of the ride for the married couple depends on the style of the weddings.

The transportation from reception to final destination should be planned as the newly wedded couple wants it. It can be quiet or a stylish exit from wedding reception. It is very important to remember all the guests who needed a ride during the whole event. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

Wedding day can be very hectic and something could have gone wrong during the day. It is good to make a plan of what is needed to be done during the wedding day.

3.3.12 Wedding day details

It is always good to make a plan B in a case something goes wrong. The transportation for bride could be late or the something goes wrong during the ceremony.

On a wedding day the rituals for groom and bride are different. As for the groom the preparation can be easier, for the bride it is a whole process. The wedding day preparations count in the hairstylists and the makeup artists. Also part of the wedding day details are the risk assessment, security details and the emergency case.

The wedding day preparation for the bride usually happens with the bridesmaid. Getting the hair styled and the makeup, the beautification process always starts with the bride. When using a hairstylist, the bride can make a few trials for different styles. As the bride is the main attraction in the wedding, her hair should reflect her personality. If the wedding attire requires a headpiece or a veil, it will be tested in the main trial before the wedding day. The makeup artists usually use natural makeup, making it look flawless. If the makeup for some reason needs correction the bride can decide to make the preparations herself. The preparations have to be started early enough before the wedding ceremony.

As any day of the year, accidents can happen and it is always good to be prepared for every case. Writing a risk and security analysis beforehand can prevent anything serious to happen. When the risk analysis concentrates on the safe of the possible accidents, the security analysis concentrates on keeping the guests safe. Security in weddings consists of keeping eye on the expensive items in the sites and prevents anything from happening to the participants. Security check in both sites is necessary to make weddings safe.

Wedding preparations also consist of the bridal emergency kit, which includes the necessary items needed in different situations to prevent the risks. For example the dress can break before the ceremony starts and someone needs to fix it, or somebody faints during the event. These items are then always reachable when included to the emergency kit. (Daniels M. & Loveless C. 2007)

3.4 Implementation to the research

In this research, the knowledge of the wedding planning elements has been used for creating the guidelines for traditional weddings and questionnaire. The guidelines were added to this report as an attachment and they describe the wedding elements in different cultures based on the traditions. The questionnaire was related to wedding planning services and their popularity in Finland. The elements of wedding planning process have been used to find the right questions.

3.5 Wedding planning as a service

Wedding planning as a service is a puzzle: there are many little things combined to huge content, which makes the weddings something unique. The key element for wedding planning is the wedding planner.

Wedding planners provide the help for couples to find the right kind of elements for their type of weddings. They help to contact the right kind of vendors, who will provide their services to the couple. These are the usual vendors used in wedding planning and during the wedding day:

- 1) Venues: The wedding ceremony/reception, rental equipment/furniture
- 2) Officiant: Wedding ceremonies
- 3) Dress designer: Wedding attire
- 4) Bakeries/Catering services: Main menu and wedding cake
- 5) Photographer: Wedding photos and videos
- 6) DJ's, Bands, Choirs: Entertainment in ceremony and reception
- 7) Florist: Wedding bouquet, floral décor
- 8) Transportation
- 9) Hair and makeup stylist

Wedding Contact List

Cake/Bakery	Caterer	Ceremony Venue
Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
Dressmaker	Florist	Musician/Entertainment
Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
Clergy/Officiant	Photographer	Reception Venue
Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
Stationer/Printer	Table/Chair Rental	Transportation
Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
Tuxedo Rental	Videographer	Wedding Planner
Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
Travel Agent		
Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____



Figure 1. Wedding vendor plan

4 Service Design

Service design described as an approach which combines different tools and methods from wide range of disciplines. (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011 s. 28) Service can be defined as a special product that needs to be designed. The services and its operation also need to be managed. Scholar Kotler et al defined service as an activity that could benefit one party from another party in the year 2008. Services are totally intangible which does not result in any ownership or other stuff. (Hollins & Shinkins 2006)

4.1 Customer Needs and Wants (Service Process)

The Service Process is the essential part to exceeding customer's needs and wants. Customer service expectations can be divided into five overall dimensions, which are reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Reliability is focus on the service outcome. However, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are more concerned with the service processes. Although reliability is the most significant dimension in meeting customer expectations, the process dimensions, especially assurance, responsiveness, and empathy are most important in exceeding customer expectations. Companies should always be accurate and dependable and provide the service they promised to provide to customer. (Parasuraman;Berry;& Zeithaml 1991)

4.1.1 Customer Service Expectations Are Dual-Levelled and Dynamic

Customers' service expectations have two levels, which are desired and adequate. The desired service level is the service that the customer hopes to receive. The adequate service level is that which the customer finds acceptable. The customer's desired service expectations may also due to the expectations of a relevant party rise. Customer's adequate service expectations are influenced more by specific circumstances, thus, they are more changeable than desired service expectations. The factors which including customer experience, expectations of an affiliated party, number of perceived

service alternatives, and emergency or situations could influence the position and size of the zone separating customers' desired and adequate service levels.

(Parasuraman;Berry;& Zeithaml 1991)

4.1.2 Customers Want Relationships

Customers' desires for more personalized and closer relationship about service providers are not only in the interview transcripts for insurance and leasing services, but also for hotel and repair services, which are provided in an intermittent manner. Customer relationships are essential to exceeding customer expectations. This is due to relationship building is focus on process, requiring responsive, assured, and empathetic service over time. (Parasuraman;Berry;& Zeithaml 1991)

4.2 Customer Journey

Customer Journey can be always explained by a customer map. A customer journey map is very simple, it is a diagram that illustrates the steps your customers go through in engaging with your company, and no matter it is a product, an online experience, retail experience, a service, or any other combinations. It is more complicated if you have more touch points, but it is necessary to build such a map. Sometimes customer journey maps looking at the entire arc of engagement. For instance, a customer journey timeline that includes first engaging with a customer who buying the product or service, and then using it, sharing about the experience with others, and then finishing the journey by upgrading, replacing, or choosing a competitor. (Richardson 2010) It is a way of improving customer experiences. The example below shows a customer journey about car purchasing in figure 2.

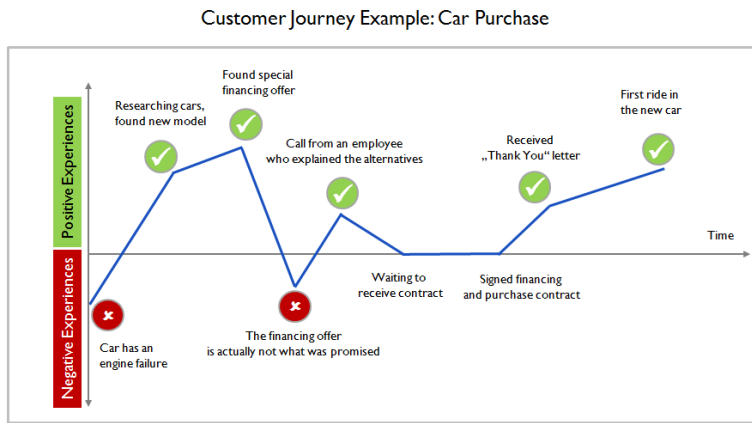


Figure 2. Customer Journey Map

For wedding planning services, it is all the same as the car purchasing that customers would like to research their idea wedding services at first. If they feel interested in some specific services, they will focus on them and research more about them as well as ask other people’s opinions whom have used those kinds of services or know it better. Then they will contact the company and the company explain more details such as planning, budget to them. Last but not least, the deal is made and they will use the services.

4.3 The Critical Components of a Great Customer Journey Map

The first component is representing your customer’s perspective. The customer journey map needs to be represented as interactions as your customer experiences it. It is usually includes interactions that happen outside of your control, such as a social media interaction or a website search.

Use research. It is much better if you do not use internal staff to do the research. Depending on the scope, the customer journey map process can involve interviews or maybe also combined with surveys. Some companies bring in customers and build them interactively with internal staff. It is better to do the research first, and then bring in your customers to build your final map.

Represent customer segments. Different segments always have very different customer experiences. For example, in a pre-sales project for a service company, one segment

spent only two hours researching the category, while another segment spent more than six weeks doing the same research by using very different tools. Thus, it is better that trying to represent these very different experiences as one.

Include customer goals is also one component. A good customer journey map shows your customer's goals at each stage of the process. Goals can change as the process been implemented.

Next component is Focus on emotions. Emotions are essential to any experiences, whatever B2B or B2C, and a great customer journey map able to communicates these emotions.

Represent touch points. The aim of building customer journey map is to communicate the order and type of touch point. It is often including those not in your control as well.

Highlight moments of truth. Some interactions have more impact than others. Good journey maps separate those critical moments of truth from the rest. For instance, when visiting a hospital, a bad check-in affects the rest of the patient experience.

Measure your brand promise. A critical outcome of a great customer journey map is measuring how your experience supports your brand promise. If your brand promise is to be effortless, highly customized, or unique, then your journey map is an excellent way to document whether your customer feels you are meeting that goal. (Tincher 2013)

4.4 Customer Profile

A useful customer profile is a key to a comprehensive guide on how to reaching your target customers. It gives you a structured look at their goals in trying your product, the features they would like to have in your products, content that matters most to them, and the information that will help them to find your company in the first place.

If your company is currently profiling attempts are vague and ineffective, then be sure to create great customer profiles in order to help you. (Ciotti 2013)

The information you need to collect depends on your type of business. For example, if you sell to individual consumers, you will want to know their age, gender, location, spending habits and income. If you sell to other businesses, find out what sector they are in, how big they are, how much they spend and what other suppliers they use. In the conclusion part, the customer profile would be displayed based on the data analysis and findings.

4.5 Product Development

4.5.1 Attributes of Successful Product Development

Products that sell well and make a healthy profit reflect a successful product development process. However, it takes time to assess profitability. As a result, companies must rely on the definition of manufacturing in order to establish the attributes of a successful product development process. A business should develop the high-quality products the market desires quickly, economically, easily, and efficiently. A successful product development process includes attributes such as cost, quality, product development time, and development of know-how.

The product cost also determines its selling price and its market attractiveness, but this is not to say that price is the main determinant of the product attractive that found out by customers. Cheaper but low quality products are not acceptable as well. The price determines profitability, and that is why product cost is quite important. Product cost is a function of both fixed costs, such as tooling and capital equipment costs, and variable costs, such as material and labour costs. How much money the business spends on developing the product also determines how much profit you can get. A product does not become profitable until the development costs are fully recovered

Only if a product satisfies customers' needs and is considered as dependable, it will not succeed in the marketplace. Therefore, the quality of the product is the key determi-

nant of the price customers are willing to pay for it. Quality determines the share of the market a product gains. The length a product makes it to the market also determines the overall economic returns on the investment and can be used as a measure of the success of the development effort. Development of successful innovative products one after the other reflects the know-how a business has acquired over a period of time. Such companies are able to perform efficiently, effectively, and economically. Thus, good product development process is reflected by reduced development time, lower developmental costs, and products that capture significant market share and become profitable. (Mital;Desai;Subramanian;& Mital 2007 ss. 37, 38)

Wedding services could be considered products. It is also necessary to develop the services like product development. Only if the wedding planners develop their products frequently in terms of new trends, innovations, or customers' needs and wants, the services can be provided with good qualities. It would attract more potential customers as well.

4.5.2 Key Factors to Developing Successful NEW Products

If a business want to be successful, develop new products is necessary. However, not all new products can succeed in the marketplace. Cooper (1993, 1996) and Montoya-Weiss and Calantone (1994) identified several factors from a large number of studies that make new products winners and separates successes products from failures products.

Products that succeed in the marketplace should be unique and clearly distinguished from other products. The successful products are those are able to provide excellent value for the money spent, and have excellent quality in comparison to their competition. It also requires meeting customers' needs more fully than competitors' products and having unique features, and having highly useful benefits. Therefore, the product development process must aim at developing products that are better in value, distinct in features, and provide clear and unique benefits to the customer.

Focus on customer's wants is crucial to develop successful products. Such focus improves success rates and profitability. In order to achieve a strong market orientation during the product development, businesses must understand the nature of the market, understand the competitors, understand customers' wants, develop a relationship between product attributes and customers' needs, and seek for customer input throughout the design of product, development, prototyping, testing, and marketing.

To test if the product will be successful, work preceding actual product design is essential. It includes the decision to proceed with the project, a quick study of the market for the product, technical assessment of the capabilities and requirements, market research, and the financial analysis. According to Cooper (1996), only about 7% of developmental money and 16% of development effort are devoted to these crucial activities. This leads to increases chances of product failure; company's name, reputation, and size of the sales force do not necessarily help if the necessarily work is skipped.

(Mital;Desai;Subramanian;& Mital 2007 ss. 39-43)

In conclusion, the predevelopment work, or homework, leads to a sharp and early product definition and is essential for reducing the time to market. A product definition should include an outline of the concept and the benefits to be provided, a list of product attributes and features, a description of the potential users and attributes of the market, and an outline of the business strategy. This is the way of developing successful new products. When it connected to develop new wedding planning services, it is necessary to consider all these factors in order to develop successful new services.

4.5.3 Strategy for New Product Development

The objective of establishing a strategy or a business plan for developing new products is to ensure that it is reached on the fundamental inputs and goals to the plan. As mentioned earlier, these inputs include information regarding the market, sources of capital, business per forma, information about the nature of the product, and information about the marketplace. However, before a development plan can be put together, certain activities must be performed in order to develop an overall new product develop-

ment strategy. These activities include determining the company's growth expectations from the new products, gathering information of interest regarding capabilities, market, and the customers, determining what opportunities are exist, developing a list of what new product options exist, setting criteria for inclusion of new products in the company's portfolio of products, creating the product portfolio, and last but not least, managing the product portfolio to maximize profitability. (Mital;Desai;Subramanian;& Mital 2007 s. 44)

To sum up, wedding planning service is sort of a product. As wedding planners, they must know their product well in order to provide good wedding planning services to the customers. The service should be unique and has high standard so that the customers are willing to buy the services from them.

5 Research Design

5.1 Market Research

Market research is a way of discovering and answering questions about human behaviours in the certain market. The market researcher's main tools are exploratory in nature, descriptive, and experimental. At the most basic level, the market researcher uses these tools to describe human behaviours. For market researchers, their tasks are exploring the tactical and strategic options which are available to managers and making recommendations to managers or the research team so that they could make right marketing decisions. (Philips 2008 s. 37)

The key idea of the market research in an organisation is to provide reliable evidences in order to help managers make better decisions. In practice process, it involves not only the ability to collect information and analyse it, but also the ability to communicate and interpret the results in a way which helps others to use them. (Philips 2008 s. 37)

The researcher should be able to identify the core issue that being asked in the question and what evidences could help to support managers or research team to make better decisions. Another essential skill for the researcher is the ability to designing research and collect data which is sufficiently supportive, valid and reliable to support the decision being taken, but in a budget and short time way. Last but not least, a good researcher always able to find a way to present the research findings which makes it possible for the organisation to engage with them and use them to take better decisions. (Philips 2008 ss. 37,38)

The market researcher also need to differentiate and brand their services relate to other information providers and consultants due to the various information sources are available to decision makers has increased nowadays. Another important aspect of market research is that it relies on the public to provide the information based on the industry. Market researchers need to be able to explain to respondents what market

research is and how the information they provide will be used so that their agreement could take part in research. (Philips 2008 s. 38) For these reasons it is important for there to be a widely accepted, clear and simple definition of market research.

5.2 Market Research Process

The market research process can be defined as several stages. For instance, define the research problem, research method, research design, data collection techniques, sample design, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

5.2.1 Stage 1: Define the Marketing Research Problem

The first step of market research is to define the research problem. Most of the researches start with a main research problem that needs to be solved. This problem needs to be understood, solved and developed. Nevertheless, most of the problems are not always easy to research. On the other hand, research problems focus on providing the information you need in order to solve the management problem as well. (Smith 2012)

5.2.2 Stage 2: Research Method

There are two research methods that can be used to answer research questions which are experimental research and non-experimental research. Experimental research allows you to control impertinent changes and control one or more variables that influence the implementation process. Non-experimental research only focuses on observation but not intervention. It means you just need to observe and report on your findings. (Smith 2012)

5.2.3 Stage 3: Research Design

The research design is a plan or framework for conducting the study and collecting data. It is defined as the specific methods and procedures you use to acquire the information you need. (Smith 2012)

5.2.4 Stage 4: Data Collection Techniques

There are many ways to collect data. Interviews and observation are two important methods using in the research process. Interview is to ask questions and receive responses from the respondents. There are some common modes of research communication such as conducted face-to-face interviews, telephone interview, by email, or over the Internet. This kind of research techniques is known as survey. (Smith 2012)

Another way to collect data is by observation. Observing a person's or company's past or present behaviour can predict future purchasing decisions. Data collection techniques for past behaviour can include analysing company records and reviewing studies published by external sources. (Smith 2012)

In order to analyse information from interview or observation techniques, you must record your results. Because the recorded results are vital, measurement and development are closely linked to which data collection techniques you decide on. (Smith 2012)

5.2.5 Stage 5: Sample Design

It is impossible to use the entire population in the research, thus it is more practical to use a sample which is smaller but able to accurately represent the greater population. In order to design your sample, you have to know which population is the sample to be selected, and what method you are going to use to select sample, as well as the size of your sample.

Once you have established the relevant population, then you have a basic idea for your sample. This will allow you to make inferences about a larger population. There are two methods of selecting a sample from a population: probability and non-probability sampling. The final stage of the sample design is to choose proper sample size. This is an essential step which involves cost and accuracy decisions. (Smith 2012)

5.2.6 Stage 6: Data Collection

After the previous stages, you can move on to data collection. Depending on the mode of data collection, this part of the process can require large amounts of personnel and a significant portion of your budget. Despite of the data collection mode, another essential element to your research project which introduced by the data collection process is the importance of clear and constant communication. (Smith 2012)

5.2.7 Stage 8: Analysis and Interpretation

To ensure that the data is useful, you must analyse it before reporting step. The types of information you are collected, and the type of measurements you used decides the analysis techniques vary and their effectiveness. Analysis techniques should be decided before this step because they are dependent on the data collection.

5.2.8 Stage 9: The Marketing Research Report

The last part of the research is to conduct a research report. This report will include all of your information of your research process such as the results, conclusions, and recommendations. The report should provide all the information the decision maker needs to know for the project. It should also be written in professional way but the language should be easy to understand and also in Academy way. It is really important to find a balance between completeness and conciseness.

If you want to keep your findings clear, you must to prepare several different representations of your findings. In the research process, the information you have gathered could be presented by PowerPoint presentations, graphs, face-to-face reports, and transcript of records of the interviews. The alternative presentations will allow the decision maker to understand and know all aspects of the project by reading the final report (Smith 2012)

5.3 Research Method

It described the methods planned and used during the research. It will also concentrate on the problems which were encountered during the data gathering process.

5.4 Data gathering process

Research methods are systematic, focused, and orderly collection of data for the purpose of obtaining information from them, in order to answer a particular research problem. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005, 109) According to Creswell (2003, 18), there are three approaches to research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approach.

A *quantitative approach* is the one where researchers use post-positivist claims (cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories) to develop knowledge. Experiments and surveys are usually used as strategies of inquiry. On the data collection process, predetermined instruments are used to turn collected data into statistical data. (Creswell 2003, 18)

A *mixed methods approach* is used when researchers want to base knowledge claim on pragmatic grounds (consequence-oriented, problem-centred, and pluralistic). A collection of both quantitative and qualitative data is used sequentially. The data collection involves gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) and text information (e.g., on interviews). Finally, the database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. (Creswell 2003, 18-21) In this approach, there are two types of strategies: Sequential Strategies (including Sequential Explanatory Strategy, Sequential Exploratory Strategy, and Sequential Transformative Strategy) and Concurrent Strategies (including Concurrent Triangulation Strategy, Concurrent Nested Strategy, and Concurrent Transformative Strategy). (Creswell 2003, 213-219)

In this case, the researchers decided to use mixed methods which included qualitative research (face-to-face interview) and quantitative research (online survey). Due to the issues of interview, the main research was quantitative research in this case.

5.4.1 Surveys

Surveys utilise questionnaires or interview techniques for recording the verbal behaviour of respondents. It is effective to obtain opinions, attitudes, and descriptions, and to cause-and-effect relationships. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005, 124)

Normally, there are two types of surveys: analytic survey and descriptive survey. *Analytic survey* allows researchers to test a theory by talking the logic into the field (e.g., understand the relationship between accounting control systems and business strategy). Thus, emphasis is put onto independent, dependent, and extraneous variables. Meanwhile, *descriptive survey* identifies the phenomena whose variance researchers want to describe. It concerns with particular characteristics of a specific population of subjects. In business studies, descriptive survey is usually used to understand opinions and behaviour of employees within an organisation regarding to motivation, job satisfaction, and grievances. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005, 126)

Questionnaires will be created by the researchers. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews as well as online surveys via Facebook by sending the questionnaire

5.4.2 Implementation to the research

The research has been a mixed approach. In the questionnaire qualitative and quantitative questions were used to find out the opinions about wedding planning services and if they are such services which would interest the people.

The methods planned for the research were individual interviews with potential customers of wedding planners. In the final research also the social media was used to distribute the questionnaire.

The interviews were made in Helsinki, Espoo and Porvoo during January. In social media the Facebook was used to distribute the questionnaire in variety of Facebook groups with people who have different backgrounds as well as send individually to users and asked them to forward to their connections.

The researcher was in Espoo and Helsinki during the Chinese New Year on 30.1.2014 and 31.1.2014. The researcher went to his Chinese friend's place in Espoo to celebrate the New Year with them in order to get more answers. The researcher asked them to answer the questionnaires and also helped to forward them to their friends or fellow students who study in Laurea UAS as well. The researcher also met one of his Finnish friends in Helsinki during the Chinese New Year celebration event.

However, there were some problems encountered during the process. When the research phase was started in Helsinki city centre area, the first problem encountered was the courage to ask people to answer the questionnaire. As the courage was found to ask the people, they seemed to be uninterested to answer the questions.

Moving to the social media spread the questionnaire to wider amount of the people, but as the people are using social media with mobile devices nowadays, so the answering to the questionnaire is much harder.

5.5 Questions and Questionnaires

As described above in the research method, this research was conducted based on questionnaire data collection procedure. The questionnaire is under the attachment section of this thesis (Appendix 1).

Questions 1 to 6 were asked about the general information such as age, gender, relationship status, nationality, hometown, and the time of living in Finland. The purpose of asking these general information is to let the researchers know more about the respondents in order to help the researchers to categorise and analyse the data later on.

Question 7 was “*Are you currently making plans to get married?*” This question aimed at finding out if the respondents were making plans to get married soon. If they will get married soon it means they will have weddings soon. Thus, these kinds of respondents are the best potential customers for the wedding planner and they could give best opinions about wedding planning service and cultural weddings.

Question 8 was “*How interested in wedding planning services are you?*” This question was follow-up question of the question 7. It aimed at asking if they are willing to use wedding planning services for their weddings or not. It also tested how popular the wedding planning services are in Finland.

Question 9 was “*If you are married, would you have used wedding planning services?*” This question was only for those people who were married already. Since the married people are able to give some opinions about wedding planning services as well, thus they are also the researchers target interviewees.

Question 10 was “*Why would you (not) use wedding planning services?*” It was an open question and it asked the respondents to give their opinions about in what purpose they would like to use wedding planning services and in what purpose they do not want to use wedding planning services.

Question 11 was “*Do you want to try other traditional cultural weddings instead of Finnish?*” This question was asking the respondents preferences of trying other cultural weddings instead of Finnish. It helps to answer whether the customers are interested in other cultural weddings or not.

Question 12 was “*If yes, what kind of traditional elements would interest you?*” This question is a follow-up question of question 11. The purpose of this question was to ask the respondents about their most interested traditional wedding elements. It could help the wedding planner understand the potential customers’ preference and provide wedding planning services according to the customers’ interests.

Question 13 was “*Which traditional cultural weddings would you be most interested in?*” This question aimed at finding out the most popular cultural weddings from the customers’ point of view. Thus, the wedding planner could provide the most popular cultural services according to this.

Question 14 was “*How much would be the following elements affect wedding planning?*” This question indicated the most important elements about wedding planning in customers’ point of view. According to this, the wedding planner could know which elements affect the customers’ decision most and then the wedding planner could make suitable plan for customers.

Question 15 was “*What kind of services would you outsource to a wedding planner?*” Is asked the respondents’ opinion about what services they would like to hire a wedding planner.

Question 16 was “*Write briefly your additional opinions about wedding planning services.*” It aimed at hearing more about the wedding planning service in customers’ point of view so that the wedding planner could use them and improve their existed services.

Question 17 was asked the respondents to leave their contact information if they are interested in learning more about traditional cultural weddings. The wedding planner can send them more information about traditional cultural weddings and they can be the potential customers.

5.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are key issues when doing a survey. It is impossible to see all the potential problems in research, so it is the researchers’ responsibility to minimize the threats of validity and reliability during the development of the research. (Natco 2013)

5.6.1 Validity

Validity includes the entire experimental concept and it is the concept to check if the results you have gained meet all of the requirements of the scientific research method or not. (Explorable 2013)

In general, the researchers received support in developing the questionnaire from the thesis supervisor. The questions were carefully thought according to the research problems. It has been changed and edited for couple of times. According to all of these above mentioned matters the authors think that the questionnaire is valid.

In the face-to-face interviews, it was very challenging to reach people as they were really busy with and in a hurry. Some people did not show much patient to answer the questionnaire. Thus, the information received from the face-to-face interviews was somehow narrowed. In term of the Facebook questionnaire, the validity of the questionnaires was, to some extent, in question as some respondents might be in a hurry to complete it and so might not give accurate responses.

5.6.2 Reliability

“The idea behind reliability is that any significant results must be more than a one-off finding and be inherently repeatable. Other researchers must be able to perform exactly the same experiment, under the same conditions and generate the same results. This will reinforce the findings and ensure that the wider scientific community will accept the hypothesis.” (Explorable 2013)

The researchers made a survey for thinking of the whole concern of the research problems. They wanted to get at least 50 answers by interviewing or online. 100 answers would be the best result for the researchers. In order to make people answer the survey and the researchers could get enough answers, the researchers went to Helsinki 3 times. Despite of the fact that the researchers tried their best, the authors got 74 answers from the survey. Since Helsinki area has nearly 1 million inhabitants, this research cannot be claimed completely reliable. However, the results are positive and

fairly informative. There are many development ideas and recommendations suggested to wedding planning services and more people would like to try the tradition cultural weddings. This survey could be used another time in order to check if the answers were different from the previous.

Got people to answer the questionnaire was truly a challenging issue for the researchers in this thesis. The researchers tried face-to-face, online survey, and sent via Facebook. Initially, face-to-face interview method was expected to be used but due to the reaching people issues, people are not willing to stop and answer the questionnaire, the researchers had to adapt the plan to the situation by changing to online survey method. Fortunately, with the hard working and some benefits offered to the respondents, the researchers could get more answers and some people who could assist the researchers in distributing the survey. However, this had, to some extent, slowed down the progress of the research and impacted the reliability of the report.

6 Key Results and Discussions

In the following chapter, the interview of the questionnaire would be analysed. The researchers team got 74 answers to the interviews, 26 from face-to-face questionnaire and the rest were answered via Facebook. In the analysis of the answers, it would be described how popular the wedding planning services in Finland and how interested would the customer like to use wedding planning services and try other traditional cultural weddings.

6.1 General information

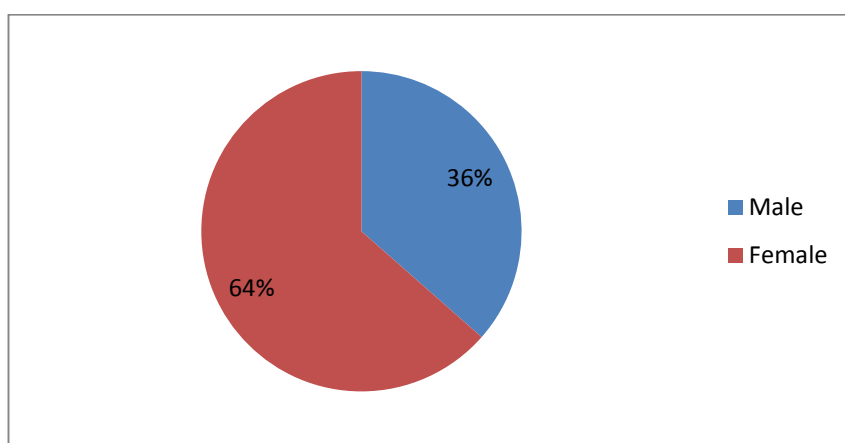


Figure 3. Gender

As it shows above in the pie chart, most of the respondents were female which contains 64%. The male was 36%.

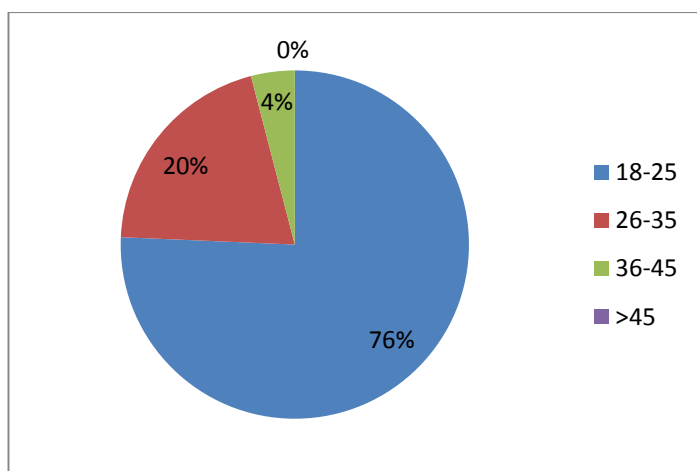


Figure 4. Age group

Most of the respondents were from age 18 to 25 which reached 76%, followed by the age from 26 to 35 with 20%. For 36-45 years old, there were only 4% and no respondents were from age more than 45 years old.

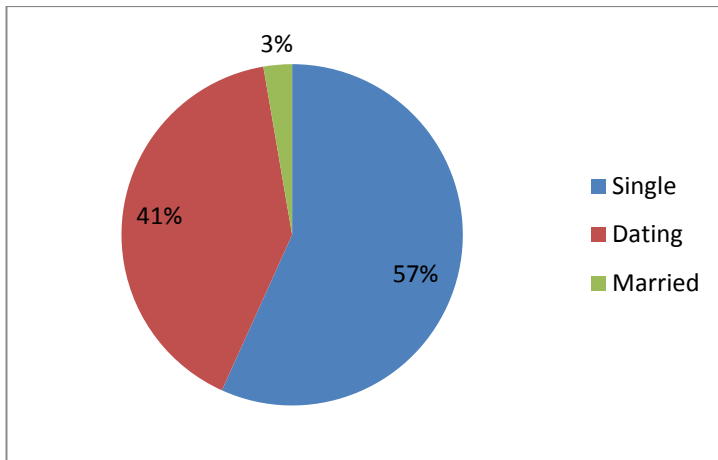


Figure 5. Relationship Status

As it showed in the pie chart, 57% of the respondents were single. 41% were dating.

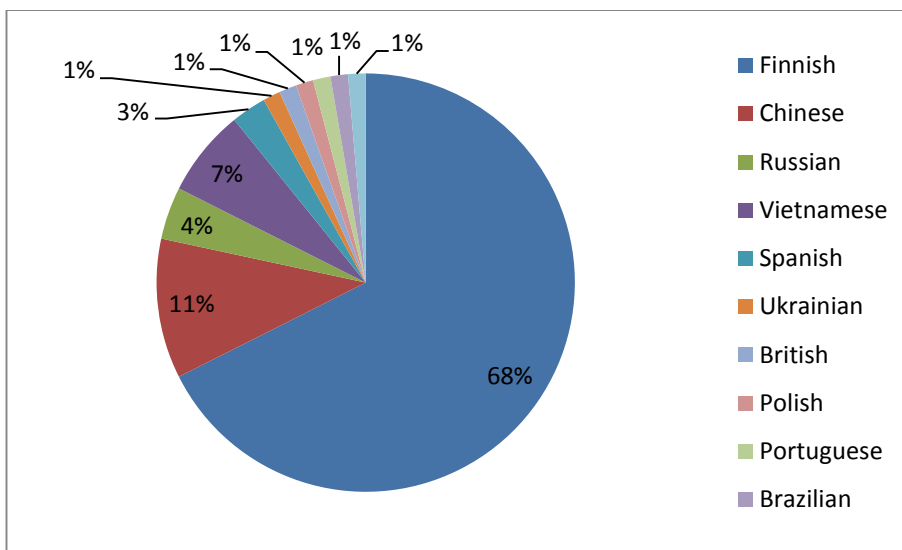


Figure 6. Nationality

Most of the respondents were from Finland which has 68%. There are also other nationalities such as Chinese (11%), Vietnamese (7%), Russian (4%), and Spanish (3%). Then there were countries like Ukrainian, British, Polish, Portuguese, and Brazilian which had only 1%.

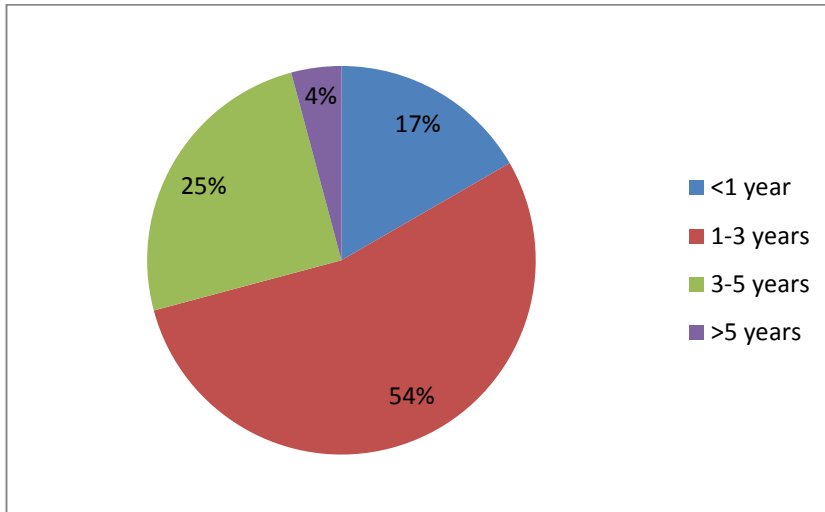


Figure 7. Years living in Finland

This question was only focus on foreigners who live in Finland. As we can see from the pie chart, most respondent lived in Finland from 1 to 3 years which has 54%. People lived in Finland from 3 to 5 years also was the main group which has 25%.

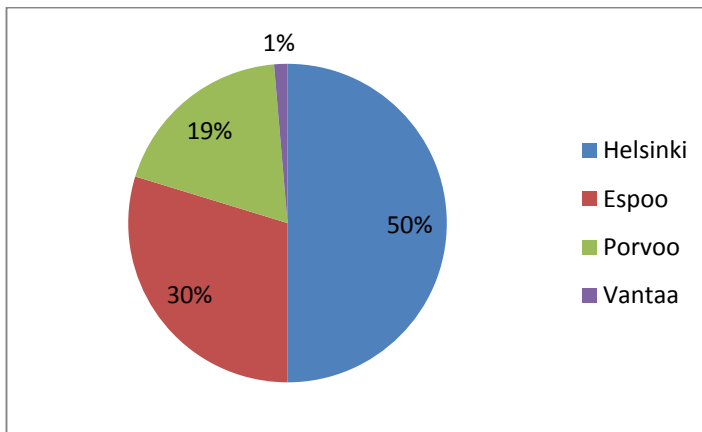


Figure 8. Home town/place living in Finland

Half of the respondents were from Helsinki (50%). Espoo had also 30%. Then it was Porvoo which has 19%. Vantaa also got 1%.

6.2 Currently planning to marry or not

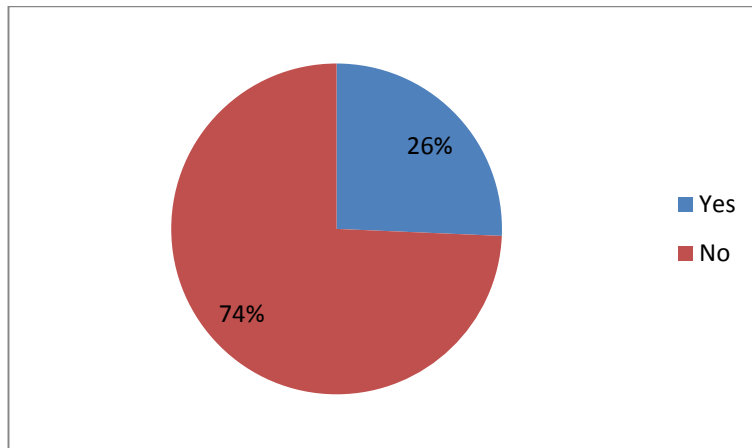


Figure 9. Planning to marry or not

Most of respondents were not planned to get married recently. Only 26% of respondents had planned to get married.

6.3 How interested the respondents in wedding planning services?

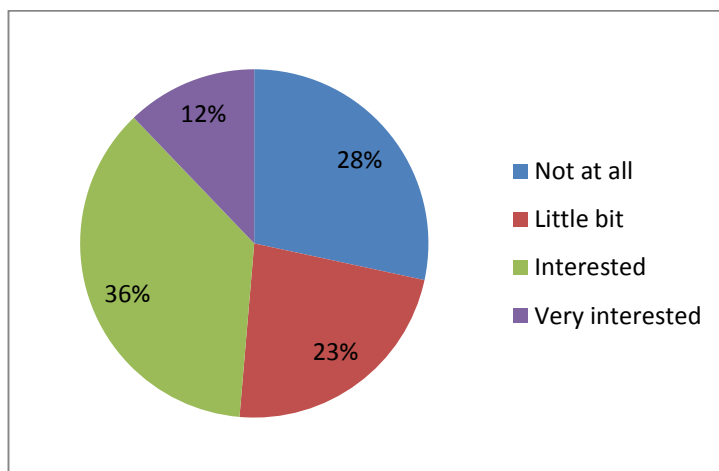


Figure 10. How interested the respondents in wedding planning services

The majority were interested in wedding planning services which have 36%. However, 28% of the respondents were not interested at all. The respondents showed little bit interested have 23%. Only 12% thought they are very interested in wedding planning services.

6.4 Reasons of using or not using wedding planning services

The most common reasons for interesting in the wedding planning services were easy and convenient, saving time, good quality, and professional. Almost 60% of respondents mentioned those reasons. There were also some other reasons such as the respondents would like their wedding to be memorable, and it might be save costs compared to planning everything by themselves.

For the reasons not using wedding planning services, most of the respondents though they would like to keep some privacy and planning their own wedding it is much funnier than outsource to wedding planners. Also some people mentioned wedding planners may not able to catch their ideas and it is non-personal.

6.5 Respondents' willing of trying other cultural weddings instead of Finnish

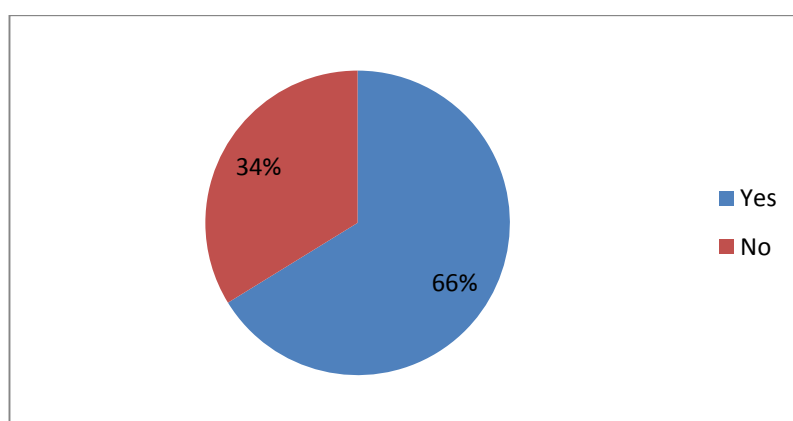


Figure 11. Do you want to try other cultural weddings instead of Finnish

Although most of respondents were Finnish, they were still willing to try other cultural weddings which were 66%.

6.6 What kind of traditional elements the respondents would like to try?

Most of the respondents would like to try different traditional wedding dresses (34%). Then it followed by people who would like to try the wedding rituals (28%). Other elements such as French wedding; combined; not too long weddings; morocco wedding, decoration; food; rings; wedding games; dance; customs also were mentioned.

6.7 Which traditional cultural weddings are most popular?

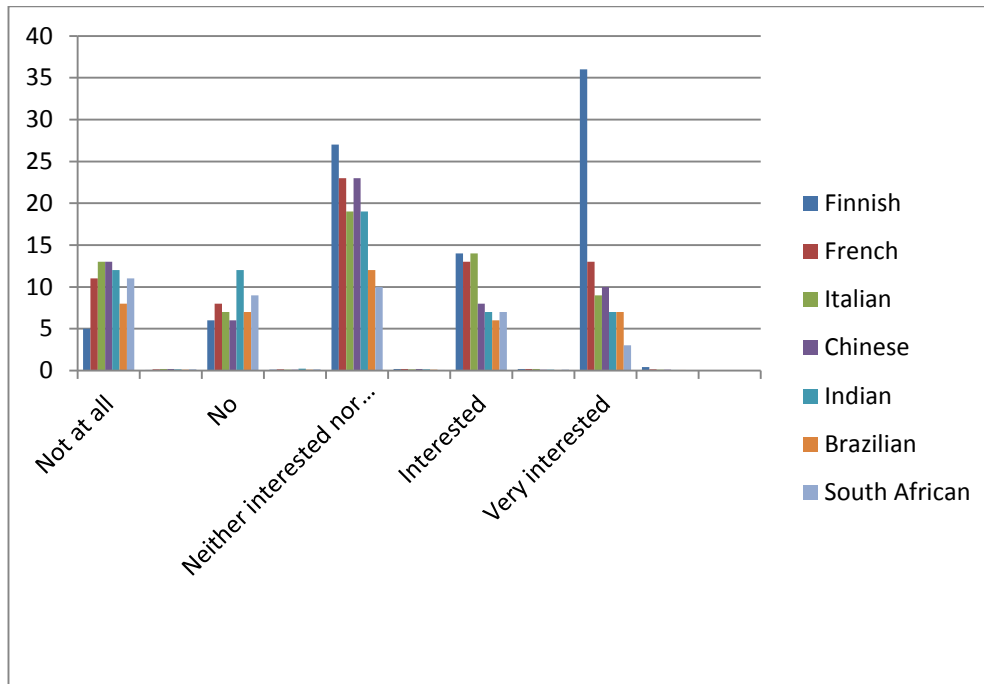


Figure 12. Most popular traditional cultural weddings.

The most popular traditional cultural wedding was Finnish wedding which 42% of respondents has thought they were very interested. Followed by French and Chinese which has 15% and 12%. The least popular one was South African wedding which has only 4% of respondents who were interested in. There were also some other cultural weddings such as Japanese wedding, Portuguese wedding, Latvian wedding, Morocco wedding, Vietnam wedding, British wedding, Greece wedding and mixed cultural weddings were mentioned by the respondents.

6.8 What affects the respondents' wedding planning?

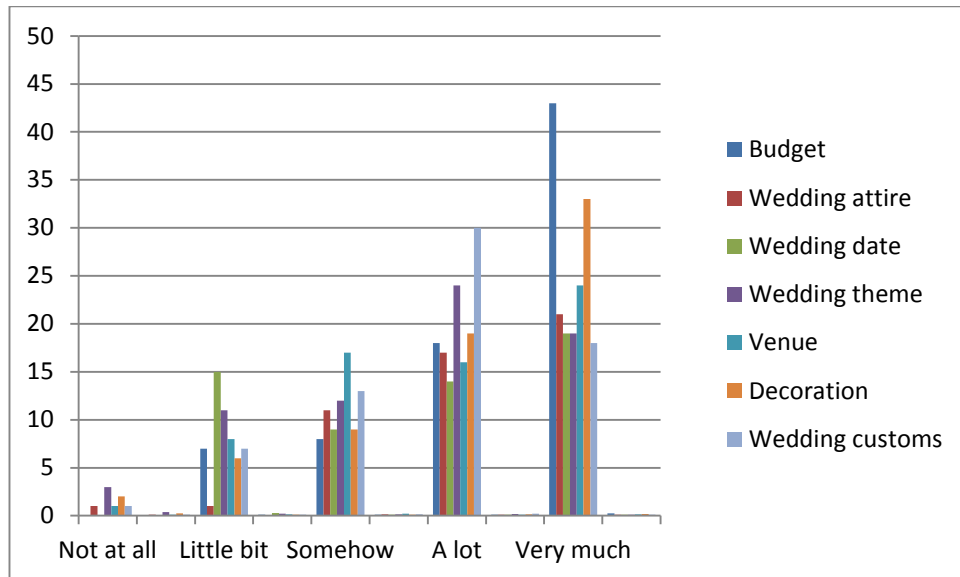


Figure 13. Most important elements which affect wedding planning

24% of respondents thought that budget affect wedding planning very much. Followed by the decoration which has 19%. Then it was venue which has 14%. Wedding customs affect a lot which has 22%.

6.9 What kind of services would the respondents outsource to wedding planner?

The top five were food (27%), wedding programme (24%), venue (22%), music (18%), and planning and executing (12%). Wedding games, competitions, photographer, and wedding host also have been mentioned.

6.10 Additional opinions about wedding planning service

Respondents wrote their opinions such as the service must provide high standard of service quality. In addition, they do care about cuisine for their wedding, their parents or family members must be satisfied about the food served in the wedding. Next, it is good to have a company to help them take care of their weddings. What is more, they claimed that it is really important and it helps to organize and mention all details. Most of all, they said that wedding planners should create something significant rather than

just a normal wedding plan. In fact it should come as a surprise to the clients as an unexpected surprise. Last but not least, wedding planning services are so useful for getting the wedding of their dreams. This services help the people to be more relax and to know all the details, it also helps the couple to be involved in the preparation of the wedding.

6.11 Would the respondents be interested in learning more about traditional cultural weddings?

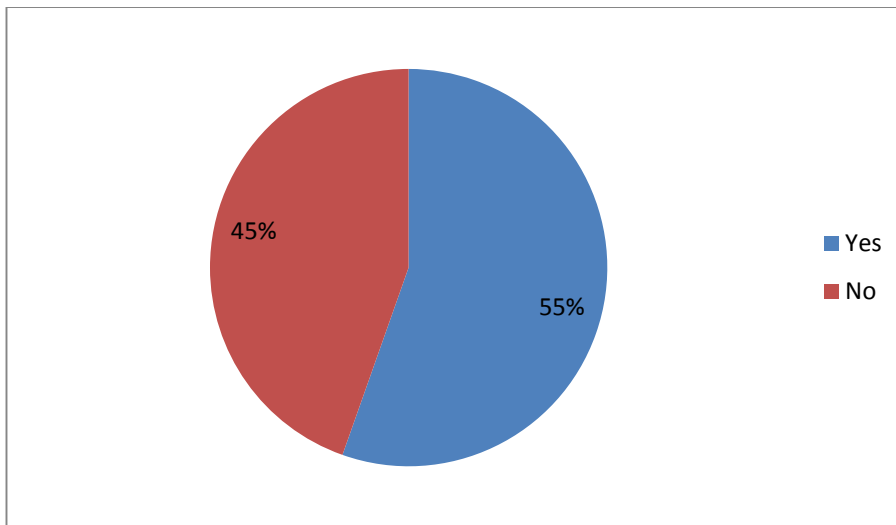


Figure 14. Would the respondents be interested in learning more about traditional cultural weddings?

Most of respondents were interested in learning more about traditional cultural weddings. However, still 45% of respondents who were not interested.

7 Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Summary of Research Process

Regarding to the research process, there were many issues during the research. Firstly, this research was a totally new research, no one has done any research related to this topic, so it was quite hard for the researchers to learn others' experiences and do the research. It was quite hard to do the interview as well. The research covered a range scale of target group, so the researchers did not have certain people who could be the respondents. The researchers had to go to the city centre to stop people. However, nowadays people are not willing to answer this kind of questionnaires and they were always in a hurry, so the result was not as expected in the beginning. What is more, it was really hard to find relevant theories connected to the research as well.

However, the issues were overcome by the researchers. The researchers changed the way of interview to online survey by Facebook and the respondents increased a lot. Since this research was a new topic and no one has done it before, so this could be the strength of the research. The weakness could be the respondents were not enough to present the whole Helsinki areas, and some people did not show much patient to answer the questionnaire. Thus, the information received from the face-to-face interviews was somehow narrowed. In term of the Facebook questionnaire, the validity of the questionnaires was, to some extent, in question as some respondents might be in a hurry to complete it and so might not give accurate responses.

7.2 Main Findings and Recommendations

Regarding to the data analysis, the majority of the respondents were interested in wedding planning services which have 36%. However, 28% of the respondents were not interested at all. The respondents showed little bit interested have 23%. Only 12% thought they are very interested in wedding planning services. Thus, wedding planning services are not really popular in Finland yet and they are not quite important for the customers. The most common reasons for interesting in the wedding planning services were easy and convenient, saving time, good quality, and professional. Almost 60% of

respondents mentioned those reasons. There were also some other reasons such as the respondents would like their wedding to be memorable, and it might be save costs compared to planning everything by themselves. For the reasons not using wedding planning services, most of the respondents though they would like to keep some privacy and planning their own wedding it is much funnier than outsource to wedding planners. Also some people mentioned wedding planners may not able to catch their ideas and it is non-personal.

For the traditional wedding elements, most of the respondents would like to try different traditional wedding dresses (34%). A lot of respondents showed their interests in wedding rituals as well. Other elements such as French wedding; combined; not too long weddings; morocco wedding, decoration; food; rings; wedding games; dance; customs also were mentioned. The most popular traditional cultural wedding was Finnish wedding which 42% of respondents thought they were very interested. French, Italian and Chinese weddings would also attract some customers. The least popular one was South African wedding which has only 4% of respondents who were interested in. There were also some other cultural weddings such as Japanese wedding, Portuguese wedding, Latvian wedding, Morocco wedding, Vietnam wedding, British wedding, Greece wedding and mixed cultural weddings were mentioned by the respondents.

There were some good answers and opinions about wedding planning services and traditional cultural weddings. The authors were disappointed of the amount of the respondents. Due to the small amount of responses the results cannot be generalised to represent the whole Helsinki. However, the good things were people would like to try traditional weddings and use wedding planners. This could be good news for the commissioner. Since the research was conducted in Finland, the most popular cultural wedding was Finnish wedding. For this, the commissioner should not have problems to plan. The French and Italian cultural weddings were also quite popular, thus, the commissioner could learn more about those weddings and the research also presented guidelines about some popular traditional cultural weddings in the appendix below. The budget affected most of the wedding planning from respondents' point of view,

the company could provide different wedding planning packages with different prices so that it could cover more target groups and attract more customers.

Respondents wrote their opinions such as the service must provide high standard of service quality. In addition, they do care about cuisine for their wedding, their parents or family members must be satisfied about the food served in the wedding. Next, it is good to have a company to help them take care of their weddings. What is more, they claimed that it is really important and it helps to organize and mention all details. Most of all, they said that wedding planners should create something significant rather than just a normal wedding plan. In fact it should come as a surprise to the clients as an unexpected surprise. Last but not least, wedding planning services are so useful for getting the wedding of their dreams. This services help the people to be more relax and to know all the details, it also helps the couple to be involved in the preparation of the wedding. Thus, high standard services and fulfil the customers' requirements are the most significant aspects for customers. Wedding planners have to consider these aspects in order to plan excellent wedding services.

7.3 Customer Profile

According to the research and data analysis, the customer profile can be divided into 4 different categories by distinguish their expectations of wedding planning services, the value they could offer, the new services they would like to buy, and why they use this kind of services.

7.3.1 Type 1. Mikko

Mikko is a student from Finland. He is 21 years old and a typical Finnish. He is recently in a relationship and he would like to use the wedding planning service since he wants everything to be easy and convenient so that he does not have to concern about them. He is a typical Finnish so he only wants to use Finnish traditional weddings. He expects the service would be unique and memorable but does not cost a lot.

For the customer type like Mikko, they would like to try wedding planning services and outsource everything to the wedding planner. They expect high quality but low prices and they are not willing to try other cultural weddings except Finnish.

7.3.2 Type 2. Anni

Anni is a student from Finland. She is 24 years old and having a part-time job in S-market. She likes travelling a lot and experiencing different cultures. She has been travelling to a lot of countries. She is single now but she hopes to find a boyfriend soon. She would like to use the wedding planning services and would like to try other tradition cultural weddings for her wedding. She would like her wedding to be really romantic and high quality. But for some elements such as wedding dresses, she would like to design or search it by herself because she is worry about if the wedding planner could not fits her requirements.

For customer type like Anni, they also want to try wedding planning service, but not outsource all of them. They are interested in different cultures, so they are more like to use other cultural weddings instead of Finnish.

7.3.3 Type 3. Sylvia Ji

Ji is an international student from China. She is studying here in Finland and she wants to stay here after graduating. She comes from a rich family. She is 22 years old and dating with a Finnish guy. She is willing to hire a wedding planner for her wedding and she expects everything to be perfect since wedding is the most significant event in her whole life. She wants to try other weddings as well since she in not Finnish, and she is more likely to combine some cultures but not only one culture. The costs of wedding planning is does not matter for her if the quality is really good.

For this kind of customers like Ji, they have very high requirements for their weddings, so they would like to choose a good wedding planning company and the costs are not very important for them if the quality fit their requirements. They might not from Finland, so they are most likely to use other cultural weddings.

7.3.4 Type 4. Linda

Linda is a Finnish lady and she is 36 years old. She is divorced and now in a relationship again. She is really interested in different tradition cultural weddings but she is not willing to use wedding planner because she would like to have everything under her control and keep the privacy. She thinks that planning by herself would be funnier than outsource to wedding planner. Hire a wedding planner is also out of her budget. However, she is willing to learn more about other cultural weddings so that she could use in her weddings.

For customer type like Linda, they would like to plan everything by themselves so that wedding planning services do not fit them. On the other hand, they are interested in different wedding cultures. In this case, the wedding planner could be their consultant and provide them some knowledge about other cultural weddings.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire

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This study is conducted by International Students at HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences. The aim is to find out if wedding planning is popular in Finland, and to study wedding cultures especially traditional weddings (wedding traditions/customs). The results will be used for developing services for Zelante Oy which is an event planning company in Espoo.

Thank you for your response!

Background information:

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: 18- 25 25 – 35 35 – 45 >45
3. Relationship Status: Single Dating Married
4. Nationality:
5. How long have you being living in Finland if other than Finnish?
 - o Less than one year
 - o One year to three years
 - o Three years to five years
 - o More than five years
6. Home town/place you live in Finland:
.....

7. Are you currently making plans to get married?(for single or dating only, if you are married, go to question)

YES NO

8. How interested in wedding planning services are you?

- Not interested at all
- Little bit interested
- Interested
- Very interested

9. If you are married, would you have used wedding planning services?
YES **NO**

10. Why would you (not) use wedding planning services?

.....

11. Do you want to try other traditional cultural weddings instead of Finnish?
YES **NO**

(The other traditional cultural weddings in Finland mean traditional weddings in other cultures, for instance, Chinese, Indian, Italian, French, South Africa, etc.)

12. If yes, what kind of traditional elements would interest you?

.....

(The traditional elements such as; wedding rituals, wedding dresses, wedding games, etc.)

13. Which traditional cultural weddings would you be most interested in?

(1= Not interested at all, 2 =Not interested, 3 = Neither interested nor interested, 4 = Interested, 5 =Very interested)

	1	2	3	4	5
Finnish					
French					
Italian					
Chinese					
Indian					
Brazilian					
South African					
Other, please specify					

14. How much would the following elements affect wedding planning?

(1= Not at all, 2 = Little bit, 3 = Somehow, 4 = a lot, 5 = Very much)

	1	2	3	4	5
Budget					
Wedding attire(wedding dress, suits)					
Wedding date					
Wedding theme (season, historical, etc.)					
Venue(castle, farm, temple, church)					
Decoration					
Wedding customs(traditions, rituals)					
Other, please specify					

15. What kind of services would outsource to wedding planner?

.....

.....
.....

16. Write briefly your additional opinions about wedding planning services.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

17. Would you be interested in learning more about traditional cultural weddings?

- YES

If Yes, please add your contact information (email address)

.....
.....
.....

- NO

Thank you for spending your precious time!

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Appendix 2 Guidelines

Traditional Cultural Weddings Guidelines

Wedding customs in Finland

This Guideline helps you to organize traditional Finnish weddings. The guideline includes the usual Finnish traditions and unique elements in the cultural weddings.

Engagement

In Finland the engagements are usually longer than in other cultures. The usual time span to be engaged is three to four years. The historical meaning for the engagement in Finnish culture was to link two socially equal families together. It was sealed but an agreement, usually a handshake or a trade of wedding gifts and rings. The longer period was a way to get to know the other half much better. Nowadays the engagement has a meaning of a relationship. (Finland 2013)

In Finnish culture as in any other wedding culture, the bachelor party is a common element. It is celebrated on the last evening before the wedding day. (Leila 2013)

Wedding ceremony

Until 1917 the Church weddings were compulsory. Around that time the civil weddings came as a legal alternative for church weddings. From this reason Finns can hold their weddings in any possible venue like the other Europeans and Americans. Traditional Finnish weddings lasted few days and it was celebrated with local community. The weddings took place in homes of bride and groom. As traditionally the weddings were held in autumn and winter time, when nowadays the Finns prefer to have summer weddings. The weddings were usually paid by the family of the bride. The most important tradition in Finnish traditions are the “give-away” of the bride by the father or male relative of the bride. (Finland 2013)



Picture 1. Finnish ceremonial traditions (Finland 2013)

The picture above shows of the Finnish wedding elements after the actual wedding ceremony. The tradition has been inherited from Great Britain and is very popular in weddings. Its purpose is to bless couples wealth and fertility. (Vartiainen O 2008)

Traditional wedding attire in Finland for the bride is usually a white dress but also regional dresses may be worn. For the groom the wedding attire is a dark suit. (Finland 2013)

Festivities

Even though Finnish wedding culture is influenced by other cultures, there are some unique traditions in Finnish weddings.

One of the traditions is to have a boy child on the lap of the bride to encourage fertility. One of the most known traditions in Finnish weddings, is the wedding waltz, the traditional wedding dance. In many other cultures throwing the wedding bouquet is a tradition. It does also exist in Finnish culture but in Finnish culture the additional element is also to pass the bridal crown. Wedding games are popular in Finnish cultures. Usual wedding games are musical chairs or steal the bride.

The food in Finnish weddings is either traditional or it can vary depending on the couples needs and wants. In Finland the cake is the centrepiece of the reception. It is usually made with fresh cream, fruits and berries.

Unique elements

In Finland there are few unique elements in wedding traditions. One of the unique elements is a bridal tour with a male companion to collect wedding gifts. (Finland 2013)
Another wedding tradition is wedding twines, which hangs from the exhaust pipe of the car. It consists of old stuff of the couple; shoes, cans, etc. The meaning of the twines is to show people how they are ready to leave the old life behind and start anew. (Leila 2013)

Wedding customs in France

Engagement (French connection)

In France the engagement is great honour and it is different than in many other cultures. Instead of bending on a knee the French engagement process goes as followed:

- The groom asks the questions and hopes for a “yes”. No ring required.
- Asking the blessing from the bride’s parents
- Buying the rings together
- Bride gets her ring on a family meal

Wedding ceremony

The wedding ceremonies are often held in civil venues. In France it is a must to hold the wedding in civil venue to be legally recognized. In civil venues it is enough when the couple gets married in front of few witnesses. The religious weddings are also possible in France. In France there is no cost for the civil service, which makes it affordable for everybody. If the couple is having the civil service weddings, but also faith solemnization in a church, the couple usually invites the family as witnesses to a civil service ceremony. In chapel service the couple sits in red velvet chairs and after the ceremony the guests throw rice and grains.

Wedding reception

The French traditional wedding reception is a “French Toast” where people get together to give blessings and speeches for the married couple. In the wedding reception the food is related to the local traditions which are different around the different provinces. After eating and drinking French wedding reception includes dancing and more drinking as custom till next morning.

French Wedding Wardrobe

The traditional white wedding dress was introduced when Ann of Brittany got married to Louis XIV and it started the trend which spread all over the world. In France it is a custom to use veil, which is later used for baptism of a child. (France 2013)

Unique elements

In France there are many unique elements related to weddings. These elements vary in different areas in France. Not every couple include them or they make it a bit different. These are the unique elements in French wedding culture:

Le Vin d'Honneur is a mini reception after the wedding ceremony. It usually takes place at the ceremonial site or in the same place with the main reception. It can last few hours and during the mini-reception drinks and snacks are provided.

La Danse de la Brioche is a special dance where the couple are presented with a giant brioche. They have to hold it aloft together with the guests to show their strength. During the dance the Groom will hold the Brioche over his head while he dances and also both halves of the couple are lifted up on the brioche.



Picture 2. Danse de le Brioche

Croquembouche is a special French style “wedding cake”. It replaces the original wedding cake and it is made out of caramel covered profiteroles. These pasty puffs are made filled with vanilla cream in thin crusty caramel, and they are “glued” with melted toffee or chocolate. They can be decorated as any other wedding cakes. The Croquembouche is cut with a sword, while bridesmaids hold the tablecloth to catch the pieces.



Picture 3. Croquembouche

Dragées are usually handed to the guests after the ceremony. They are small candy-covered almond favours for the guests. They can be replaced by truffles, mini-macaroons or chocolate bonbons.



Picture 4. Dragées

Pot de Chambre is a special event for the newlyweds and the wedding party. On the wedding day the newlyweds are transported with a cart pulled by a donkey holding a chamber pot. Next day after the wedding day the wedding party have to hunt the newlyweds with the pot and after they have been found, the couple has to drink the content of the chamber pot. First the bride, then the broom and finally the wedding party. In the Pot de Chambre there can be anything mixed in it; bread, alcohol, fruits, etc. (French Entrée 2013)

Wedding customs in Italy

Engagement

In Italy the traditional engagement happened through the family. The first step in engagement was to ask the permission from the parents to marry the daughter of the family. The second step was to get the rings as a commitment for the relationship. Nowadays the first step is left out and the men ask the women straight to marry them.

After the traditional engagement the families meet in engagement party, which is a formal dinner, where the families get together to discuss about the future. The engagement party is not necessary if the families know each other's from earlier times. (Exclusive Italy 2013)

In Italy the wedding day is very important. In Italian customs the wedding day may not be in August, which brings bad luck or in May, when Italy is celebrating St. Mary. The best day of the week for Italian weddings is Sunday, which is a luckiest day for the Italians. Usually Italian weddings are held in the morning. (Italy 2013)

As in many other cultures the bachelor parties in Italian culture is very usual. It is usually held one or two weekends before the wedding day and the time is spent with the friends who are or are not invited to the weddings. (Exclusive Italy 2013)

Wedding ceremony

Italian brides usually spend the night before the wedding day at their parent's houses. In Italian wedding culture the bride should not wear anything gold on herself to avoid the bad luck. The wedding attire for the bride has to include something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue and something she has received as a gift. In wedding ceremony only the bride should wear white.

The wedding day in Italy can be different depending on the province. In some provinces the tradition forbids the groom to see the bride before she gets to the altar, but also in some provinces the bride and groom walk together to the church. (Exclusive Italy 2013)

During the walk the couple will be put in “test”, which shows their capabilities for the future. These “tests” include different kinds of tasks, for example showing the unity by doing something in which both have to do something together. As the couple gets married, they tie a knot outside the church to show their unity. (Italy 2013)

Wedding reception

Italian wedding reception starts with the cocktail hour, which is arranged for the guests to be entertained while the married couple takes the longest possible route to the reception venue. As the couple arrives to the site with the wedding party, the guests get together and make a clear way to the wedding party.

One of the most important elements during the wedding reception is the food. As a Mediterranean country the food has lots of Mediterranean tastes and some feasts can have even up to 14 different courses. In some occasions Italian wedding receptions can include many speeches as it is important to give a chance to speak for everybody who wants to give a speech. As the courses have been finished the cake will be cut and served with Italian coffee.

The wedding reception usually includes a band which plays music for the guests. As one of the Italian wedding reception rituals is the dance with the bride. The bride carries a satin bag in which the guests can put money to have a dance with the bride. Also singing is usual in the reception. One of the wedding party or guests cry out a “Hurrah for the newlyweds” chant. (Italy 2013)

Italian Wedding Clothes

In Italy it is customary to wear white wedding dress and dark suit. For a faith wedding the bride always has to wear a veil. Tearing a veil after the wedding is one of the traits to become lucky. In Italy the brides are very honoured when they get the wedding dress as heirloom from their mother or other family member. They are very proud of the tradition and the dress will move on from generation to another. The Italian bride may not wear any golden items before the ring is given. Groom instead wears light or dark suit, whether it is church or a civil venue. The most important item for a groom is a piece of iron during the wedding day. It serves the purpose of banishing evil spirits.



Picture 5. Italian wedding dress

Unique elements

Instead of throwing rice or grain, the Italian confetti consists of the minibags of almonds or tiny twists of dough fried and sprinkled with sugar. One of the Italian traditions after the ceremony is to break a glass. The amount of the splitters is counted as happy years of marriage. Also releasing doves while in a confetti rain is a Italian tradition, which is not always necessary.

Wedding customs in China

Pre-marital rituals and Wedding Customs

Traditional Chinese wedding customs are considered as the foundation of rites in traditional Chinese culture. There are eight major procedures of a traditional Chinese wedding, including proposal, birthday matching, marriage divination, betrothal gifts presenting, wedding date fixing, dowry urging, pick up the bride from her own house to the wedding and last but not least, performing the formal wedding ceremony.

The birthday matching is the process in which the groom's family asked the matchmaker to go to the bride's family to ask about her name and date of birth. Then, the parents in the boy side will send the girl's and their son's names and birthdates to a sorcerer or fortune teller for divining to see if the marriage between the two would be appropriate, and if they were perfect match or not and if the marriage could bring good luck to both of them. This is the so called "marriage divination".

If according to Chinese astrology the couple was compatible and both families agreed to the marriage, the boy's family would then send betrothal gifts to the girl's family in order to show respect and let the girl's family allow the marriage. The betrothal gifts mainly included clothes, jewelleries, gold, silver and cash. In addition, a gilded silver coin with the word "qiu" (meaning "proposal") was among the gifts. The girl's family would send back another coin with the word "yun" (meaning "agreed") among their gifts presented in return. Thus, the marriage was confirmed.

Next, the two families start to prepare and arrange the wedding. When everything is ready, the boy's family would invite a fortune teller to choose a best wedding date in order to bring the good luck to the couple based on the Chinese calendar. After the date was chosen, the boy's family would send someone to inform the girl's family of it.

Traditional Wedding Ceremony

Pick up the bride to the wedding and performing the formal wedding ceremony would be conducted on the same day, which is the most important of the whole wedding

procedures. On the wedding day, the groom's family would pick up the bride to the wedding in a bridal sedan accompanied by a wedding procession. The procession is a noisy and joyous show with firecrackers exploding and band playing. When the bride arrived at the groom's home, the couple would perform three formal bows. The first bow called "bowing to Heaven and Earth", which were conducted to gain approval of the marriage from gods, divinities, ancestors. Second bow is to their parents, older generations, relatives and neighbours in the mortal world. The final bow is the couple bow to each other to show respect to each other and love each other.



Picture 6. Groom pick up the bride by the bridal sedan

After the bowing rituals, it means the ceremony is down. Then the couple would enter the bed room, also called bridal chamber, followed by rituals like sitting on the bed, throwing happiness-embodying nuts and drinking the nuptial wine. After that, relatives and friends to the wedding would be treated to a wedding feast include eating, drinking and enjoy the show. Then, wedding guests especially the couple's close friends would play bridal chamber pranks which contain plenty of jokes about the couples and make fun of them. They wouldn't leave till the dead of night. After that, the wedding was officially finished and the couple could enjoy their first night together. (China 2010)



Picture 7. Bride and groom in the wedding ceremony

Wedding Attire

The traditional Chinese wedding dress is in the red colour for both bride and groom. Red colour is the most favourite colour for Chinese people since it means good luck in China. The bride wears jewellery on the head, hands, ears and the jewellery are mostly made of gold, silver, and jade.



Picture 8. Bride with traditional Chinese Wedding dress



Picture 9. Wedding shoes



Picture 10. Traditional golden wedding rings

Wedding Venue and Catering

Nowadays, every Chinese people choose to hold their weddings in a banquet room in a big restaurant or hotel. In the ancient time, people just hold their wedding in their own house. Chinese people do not go to church for weddings.



Picture 11. Wedding banquet room and tables

For the catering, usually Chinese people divide guests in round tables, and each table can has 10 seats. The food should be enough for every guest in one table. The traditional food is Chinese bride cake or other name is happiness cake, but it is not a cake actually. In Chinese is ‘xi bing’ which means good luck and happiness. The happiness candy or wedding candy (xi tang in Chinese) is also really important. Each guest will have one pack or box of wedding candy and with good and wedding style package. It means bring the good luck back to the guests. The other food is just like livestock

meat, or any other meat and fish. There are no certain dishes for weddings, just really good and expensive food.



Picture 12. Chinese wedding cake and wedding candy



Picture 13. Wedding dishes.

Budget

The budget depends on how many guests you would like to invite and how well you would like your wedding to be. For the catering and food, the ordinary price in China is from 800-1500 Chinese Yuan, which is 100-200 euros per one table, and each table can hold 10 guests. The wedding dress you must custom-tailor since there is no shop which is still selling those kinds of traditional dresses. It is old fashion and most Chinese people take western style dresses for their wedding nowadays. The other staff which is needed such as bridal chamber, decorations you can rent from the wedding planning service companies in China. The ordinary price will be from 2000-10000 euros.

Wedding customs in India

Indian Wedding Traditions

An Indian wedding ceremony is always lasts for up to five days or more due to the rich in tradition, customs and symbolism. The rituals have evolved a great deal since traditional times and of course, different from Western ceremonies. Modern Indian weddings have a lot of differences as there are many regions throughout the Indian continent and can involve all the rituals of traditional ceremonies, or can be tailored by the bride and groom and their families based on their own traditions and backgrounds. Below the researchers would like to introduce mainly the Hindu wedding, which is also the main nation in India.

Before the Wedding



Picture 14. Engagement ring

There are several important ceremonies that take place in the days before the wedding. the first is Misri – the ring ceremony. Misri will take place couple of days before the wedding and calls for seven married women to draw the sign of Lord Ganesha in red powder spread above a bowl of rock sugar. Prayers are said by you and your fiancée and your parents and you will exchange flowered garlands and gold rings with your beloved in the presence of your priest. The groom's parents will place in your lap a basket of fruit or other gifts to welcome you then feed your family misri – rock sugar –

confirming the engagement and promising a life full of sweetness ahead.

The next ceremony is Mehendi and it takes place the day before the wedding. The concept is about a ladies-only afternoon tea. Intricate patterns drawn with mehendi (henna) are applied to your hands and feet and symbolize the deepening of bonds with your future husband. Often this ceremony will merge with Sagri, also known as the “acquaintance party”, where the groom’s female relations visit bearing gifts and flowers with which to adorn you.

On the day before the wedding, the priest will perform the Nav-Graha Puja in both the groom and bride’s homes, in which he will say prayers to the Gods of the “nine planets”, thus bestowing the couple with their blessings. Next he will perform the Ghari Puja which is a series of prayers combined with offerings of wheat, coconut, betel nuts, rice and spices for prosperity. Both mothers will don their wedding clothes and walk to the doorways of their respective homes with earthenware pots containing water on their heads. The water will be cut with a knife to kick off evil spirits. Relatives and friends will then adorn the parents with flowers and money. Next, you and your fiancée will put on old clothes which will be torn of with glee by family members, symbolizing the end of your single lives.

The next ceremony called Sangeet. This is a joyous night time party held the evening before the wedding and is an opportunity to enjoy the spirit of the moment with music, dancing and food.

The Day of the Wedding



Picture 15. Bride receiving baptism

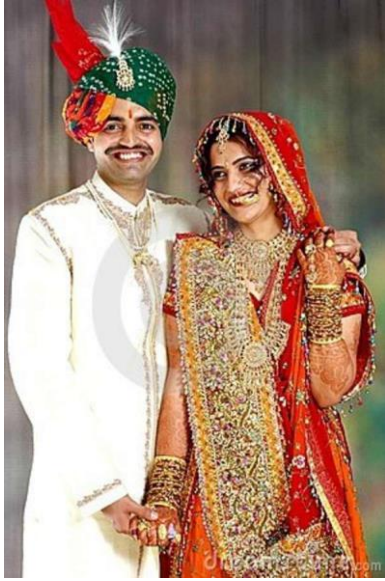
The wedding day starts with the Haldi ritual, in which you are cleansed at your home with turmeric powder. Then followed by the Swagatam ceremony, in which your female relatives help you dress in your wedding sari. Your fiancée will also do the Haldi ritual and will be dressed in his wedding attire at his home before coming to your home. When he arrives, he'll place his right foot gently over yours to symbolize the support and protection he will provide and will then be invited inside for his feet to be washed in milk and water or you will then depart to the location where your wedding is to be held. In traditional times you would have ridden in an ornately decorated horse-drawn carriage.

At the temple or the grounds where you've chosen to have your wedding, the ceremony will take place under a Mandap, the symbolic four-pillared canopy that is typically decorated with bright and vibrant colours under which burns Agni, the sacred fire that is witness to the ceremony. The ceremony begins with Madhuparka which means your fiancée receives gifts from your father.

The next ceremonial functions include Pratigna Karan, Shila Arohan and Laja Horma, in which you drop an offering of puffed rice over the sacred fire. Lawan Phere, which legalizes your union as you walk around the sacred fire four times, touching a stone on each turn which represents your ability to overcome the obstacles you will face in the future. This is followed by the Saptapadi or seven steps ceremony, which involves a ceremonial knot to be tied between your sari and your husband's scarf, and a thread that has been blessed that will tie your right hands together. You will turn to the north and take seven steps as you recite seven mantras that symbolize which includes the abundance of food and a life that is noble and respectful, physical and mental strength, spiritual strength and blessings, happiness, the welfare of all living things and noble offspring, bountiful seasons and togetherness, and a life of understanding, loyalty unity and companionship as well for the peace of the universe. (Pictures 2010)

Wedding Attire and Venue

There is no certain colour for the wedding dresses, just the customs which represent Indian Culture. The bride wears gold or silver jewellery on the head, ears, hands, even nose. The groom wears a hat.



Picture 16. Indian wedding dresses

For the wedding venue, some Indian choose to hold the wedding in a temple, some choose any other places which satisfied them.

Catering

In weddings, Indian people also prepared good food and buffet. The guests will take whatever they want to take on the buffet table. The main ingredient is curry, and it is Indian's most favourite species.



Picture 17. Indian wedding catering

Wedding customs in Brazil

Engagement

In Brazil the exchanging the engagement rings is not very important. It is very common to only exchange the wedding rings as part of the betrothal. The couple will wear these rings in their right hands until the ceremony.

As in many cultures the groom chooses groomsmen early enough, in Brazil the traditional way is to choose the best man and groomsmen on the wedding day before the ceremony. Alternatively the groom and bride may choose three couples who may or may not be in relationship as groomsmen and bridesmaids.

One of the Brazilian customs is the “kitchen shower” which is their version of bridal shower. In this gathering the female guests bring the bride gifts what she can use in her new kitchen. Also nowadays male relatives may join.

The Brazilian weddings are described to be very costly and as a tradition the bride's family usually takes care of the cost. As the traditions have changed, the costs are taken care of groom and bride together. In Brazil both families take part of the preparations until the last day before the weddings. Last day before the weddings bride and her family usually spend take a break before the actual wedding day in a spa.

Wedding ceremony

Brazilians, as many others, separate the bride and groom before the wedding ceremony. As in any other culture, seeing the bride before the actual ceremony brings bad luck. It is also very important that the groom arrives to the ceremonial venue first. It is customary that bride can be 10 minutes late after the groom, in some provinces even 2 hours.

- The Brazilians are very exact with their faith rituals and they follow the next traditions:
- Bride will be led by two flower girls to the altar. One of them scatters the flowers in front of her, whilst the other carries the rings
- Bride and groom will recite their vows after prayers
- The clergyman will bless the couple and the rings will be placed to the left hand as symbol of moving from betrothal to married.
- The couple gives a kiss as a symbol of being officially married
- Signing the legal documents for the marriage
- Usual length of ceremony is an hour, depending of the length of prayers and readings
- Some churches are also big enough to arrange the wedding reception, but usually a different location is used.

Wedding reception

Brazilian wedding reception is very loud, and they are proud of it. As in any culture the wedding reception starts with toasts and speeches, later consisting of dancing and singing. (Brazil 2013)

In Brazilian weddings there are two popular dishes usually served. The other one is called “Feijoada”, which is a mix of black beans and pork meat. It is like a stew and is served with rice, collard greens and “Farofa”, which is similar to couscous. “Farofa” is made out of round and roasted cassavas. As a dessert the “Bem Casados” or “Brigadeiros” are served. Brazilians are also known for their love to cocktails, and also in weddings cocktails are served as drinks. (Tripod 2013)



Picture 18. Brigadeiros



Picture 19. Farofa

In wedding reception, one of the traditions is to play the national anthem of Brazil. Another tradition is to dance traditional Samba.

Brazilian Wedding Attire

Brazilian wedding attire may follow the traditional American wedding dress. White dress, which includes something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue and something gotten as a gift. It is usual for bride to choose her gown. As a customary element the bride may wear golden shoes.



Picture 20. Traditional wedding dress

In Brazil it is customary to wear different colours as bridesmaids or groomsmen. The old Brazilian idea is not to repeat the same colour twice.

Unique elements

In some parts of the Brazil it is customary for the groom to prove his worth in ancient custom numba-meu-boi, where he tries to tame a donkey as a proof of him being capable for his bride. As one of the unique elements it is customary to engrave the names on the rings. Another unique element is when the bride takes off their golden shoes and put them in the middle of the dance floor so that the guests can make donations for the future of the couple. (Brazil 2013)

Wedding customs in South Africa

Customs

The Preparation of wedding ceremony in South Africa really long and it is possible to mix of ethnic background to build on as a new family since there are a lot of different nations and traditions.

1. The Reed Dance Festival

This is an annual event held on every September at the Enyokeni Zulu Royal Palace which is located in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Zulu virgins are brought here to get reeds from the nearby river and bring them to the Zulu king. Since polygamy is practiced here, the King is allowed to choose a new wife among the young girls. The rest who are not chosen are encouraged to maintain their status as virgins and come back the following until they are married. This is practice that isn't just traditional but also used to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDs through awareness, self-dignity and women power.

2. Jumping the Broom

This tradition is a ceremony participated by mixed couples such as African-American couples. Africans were treated as slaves and not allowed to mingle much more marry someone of different ethnic background and skin colour before. One proof of equality among races is this tradition of literally jumping over a broom while drums are being played. It isn't as simple as it sounds because some of these brooms used are dazzling with precious stones, ribbons, and elegant flowers.

3. Tying the Knot

Just like other cultures, the men also buy engagement rings for proposing marriage. And aside from the usual exchange of rings at the ceremony and placing of veil on the couple, African tradition requires that the couple have their hands tied together using a cloth or grass.

4. The 12 Symbols

The 12 symbols needed during an African wedding ceremony are wheat, wine, salt, pepper, water, bitter herbs, pot and spoon, shield, spear, honey, broom, and holy book whether it is the Bible or the Koran. These are the symbols of what to expect in a marriage and that both individuals are willing to face each the marital problems that will surely come and not decide to divorce because of the bumps in the marriage.

5. Libation Rites

Before the wedding takes place, the couples have to pray to their ancestors in a chant after which they must sprinkle some blessed alcohol or water on the ground.

Other traditions in a South African wedding are:

- Dedication prayer after the exchange of vows with the lighting of one candle which is very similar to the Catholic tradition
- Karamu which is the reception after the wedding ceremony and also known as the wedding feast
- Dowry payment in kind or in cash known as lobola.
- The wearing of bright colours among guests; white for the bride, dark colour for the groom, kente cummerbunds and bow ties for the men, and African shawls for the women
- Wedding cake to symbolize fertility and children
- A shoe tied to the back of the wedding car to symbolize a father passing responsibility for his daughter to the groom

Finally, the most poignant wedding tradition in South Africa is when the parents of the bride and groom carry fire from their fireplaces in their homes to the home of the newlyweds where together they light up the hearth. (weddings 2014)

Wedding Dress and Catering

There are many different tribes in South Africa and each tribe has their own traditional wedding dresses. The food is also their traditional food such as barbequed meat. Many people also choose western food for their catering.



Picture 21. Traditional South African Wedding Dresses



Picture 22. Traditional Wedding Food in South Africa

Appendix 3 Data Analysis Process

Attached was the data analysis process. It indicated how researchers have done the data analysis in a excel file.



Data Analysis
Process.xlsx

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