

## CUSTOMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS WEDDING SERVICES

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### ABSTRACT

*Couples are now willing to spend more on once a lifetime wedding event. It led the demand for wedding related services are growing rapidly. The purpose of this research is to examine the customer perception between decoration, catering, photography and entertainment. Questionnaire was developed and distributed to 385 respondents on perception towards wedding services. Multiple regression analyses were used to analyse the relationship among variables of the conceptualized model. The findings confirmed the significant impact of decoration, catering, photography and entertainment. The suggestions for future research development also being discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Wedding services, customer perception, events and multiple regressions.*

### INTRODUCTION

Weddings are incredible celebrations that can also bring friends and family together to witness a memorable love (The Spruce, 2019). According to Coontz (2005), weddings have been an economic and political contract between the two families, building new relationships and increasing power and property. As time changes, most weddings are now love based and become the most important occasions for many couples, leading to more luxurious and grandiose events to make that opportunity unforgettable (Weiss & Levine, 2016). According to the Industry TBC (2019), there are around 115,000 married couples in Canada every day in 2008. The most populous country - China, hosting 900,000 marriages per year with total \$ 19,900 (approximately RM80, 844) per wedding. There are approximately 10.63 million registered couples in 2017, compared to 2016, a total of 11.43 million registered couples (Statista, 2019). The wedding industry in the United States generates wedding and ceremony costs of more than 60 billion dollars a year (Stevie Ray Entertainment, n.d.). The wedding industry is one of Malaysia's most lucrative industries, worth up to RM7 billion a year (The Malaysia Reserve, 2019). Tourism Malaysia promotes the industry and promotion of the country as a perfect choice for holiday destinations in light of the growing demand for wedding (Ming, 2018).

According to Joseph (1987), perception includes all the processes by which people are informed about their environment - seeing, feeling, hearing, tasting and smelling. From the point of view of "their" a customer realizes value in a service not from the supplier's

point of outlook. The importance of customer perception has been emphasized by many researchers. A customer's perceived "value" can be tangible, non-tangible, psychological or even social. Therefore, "value perception" is the benefit of a customer's product, service and associated experience (Thrive Plus, 2019). A quality service is based on the feeling and view of the customer. A high quality of service is the key to the creation of a positive customer perception and retention of our customers. The purpose of this research is in order for customers in Klang Valley to identify the perceptions of wedding services and explore the relationship between services and customer perceptions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Decoration**

Decorations are necessary for setting the ambience, express the emotion and highlighting the importance of the event. It can create an atmosphere for wedding event that enhances the beauty of the ceremony, showcases the bride and groom and promotes the occasion's romance. It gives an event feeling, touch, class and theme. According to Aanchal (2015), various types of principles such as renders, management or photographs are applied to the decoration of wedding events. Wedding decorators play a vital role in the creation of the wedding scene. Backdrops and props can be used in many ways to create an illusion or for decorative or functional purposes in special events (Lena, 1998). The wedding decorations literally help wedding and considered one of the day's most remarkable attractions (Martha, 1999).

The wedding professional decorator has the right experience and expertise to organize an ideal wedding celebration and party (Monroe, 2006). When the invitees enter the room, the desired object, logo, or person is focused on their eyes and attention. This can be accomplished by focusing attention on line, composition and colour (Riley, 2003). They may be called upon to serve multiple functions, including those of a floral designer or carpenter with responsibilities ranging from partial to total authority for design (Goldblatt, 2004). They will brainstorm ideas and show the couple how to find inspiration and, ultimately, hold the couple hand by selecting a theme, colours, flowers and even a wedding venue that fits the couple's overall vision (Silver, 2004).

*H<sub>1</sub>: Decoration has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services.*

### **Catering**

Food is an important part of the wedding and the couple want to find the right wedding options for caterer. Professional caterers know the sequence in which the classical menu was presented (Sudhir, 2008). They have a variety of foods to identify, purchase, use and prepare. The bigger task of planning an event is food, understanding how many people needs to serve, figuring out what food need to serve, preparing and serving the food, and cleaning up when the guest leaves (Clear Water Plaza, 2019). If the food is great, though, guests are sure to remember it (Sudhir, 2008). Wedding trends have shown that guests care more and more about the food. Food quality is important when serving, the food is considered or not satisfied by the guest (Frank, 2012). As stated as Charles (2017), there is

nothing better than satisfying the bride and groom and the guests in the eyes of a wedding that seeks to provide nothing but the best.

Food is one of the main and most obvious factors leaving the guest content. It was a serious element measured, which will affect customer expectations when attending the event (Namkung and Jang, 2007). Food presentation is as important as taste, texture, and smell and it is creating a whole atmosphere and experience for guests to enjoy, and presenting the food in an unforgettable ways adds to the event (Joyce, 2007). According to Anisa (2016), eating is a sensual experience. Our eyes have already judged it before our mouths have tasted something. Perhaps its main attraction for customers is the visual appeal of food. The effect of attractive food presentation is lavishness and ample quantity, and careful arrangement and garnishing also suggest quality (Wayne, 2016). Any decorative touches like sauce handling or garnishing should be done carefully and carefully (Sarah, Alan and Priscilla, 2011).

*H<sub>2</sub>: Catering has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services.*

## **Photography**

Wedding photography contain photographs of the couple before marriage which for portrait displays, announcements, or thank you cards as well as registration of marriage ceremony and reception. According to Frith and Harcourt (2007), a wedding photograph is a memory that can remember the feeling at the time. A wedding photograph is not only about the wedding couple, but also about the successive generations who have not been given the privilege of attending the ceremony. It is the biggest event where most of their family's people have come together and gather together. So it is important to have a documented wedding photography (Lili, 2002) and the bride and groom will engage with professional wedding photographer.

A professional wedding photographer needs strong interpersonal skills, procedural knowledge, technical skills and expertise (Jing, 2012). Editing is important as it can change a photograph completely. A professional wedding photographer has a consistent editing process and be sure to communicate the tone and atmosphere the couple want to give off (Charles, 1998). Wedding photographer cannot miscarry to serve the couple as they hardly have the second chance to improve it. Wedding photographer therefore learn to comprehend the needs and expectations of customers well before serving them, minimizing the chances of failure (Bowen, 1990). All of these design concerns could well prepare the design and quality aspects of wedding photography services in order to give the best photography to the couple (Jing, 2012).

*H<sub>3</sub>: Photography has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services.*

## **Entertainment**

Entertainment is a kind of activity that embraces the attentiveness and attention of the spectators, or gives happiness and pleasure. The wedding day will be a great opportunity for a happy couple to unite family and friends. Wedding entertainment is also of great importance to make guests feel happy and remember the occasion and most appropriate

entertainment should be carefully considered (Lynn, 2010). Although not everyone can remember what they had for a wedding starter song, everyone will evoke the one band that rocked the wedding so hard (Sternberg, 2019). Professional entertainment companies have a wealth of ideas and experience with the selection of the event theme and develop a range of concepts to ensemble the theme (Lynn, 2005). There are a wide range of actions, particularly interesting performers, that can be used to enhance the subject of the event (Johnny *et al.*, 2011).

Some couples might make a key mistake by misjudging the importance of entertainment on their special day. A good DJs or bandleader is ready to sit down and talk about the music couple want and make sure music for all your guests' tastes (Brian, 2005). As stated as Kelly (2013), a professional emcee or DJ can speak in a way those appeals to all ages and personalities. Good tone is generally smooth and comfortable thru a voice's entire range (Doug, 2008). An emcee will use various contents at a wedding to entertain guests. A professional wedding emcee knows how to make an extraordinary event. Also, a professional comes with a complete package, they won't fail you in the last minute, they would appears on time and keeps entertaining your guests until the end of the event (Lynn, 2005).

*H<sub>4</sub>: Entertainment has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services.*

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample and Data Collection**

There are prior studies that have been conducted to examine customer perception towards wedding services, however little research has been done specifically on Malaysians in wedding services. For instance in this research, the target population is Klang Valley age between 18 to 40 years old. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), choosing the right number of samples is important as it can avoid waste of resources especially when the sampling is size is large. The number of the sample must be more than 30 and less than 500 as it is suitable for most study. Samples can be divided into a few subcategories and each category must have at least 30 samples. Henceforth, the questionnaires were distributed in Klang Valley, as Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019) shown Klang Valley is a large city.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

The data was processed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). SPSS enables researcher is a data management and analysis program for the purpose of producing statistical data analysis such as descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). SPSS is user-friendly and flexible, researcher can easily access SPSS with all skill levels and able to help the research study to find new opportunity, improve efficiency and minimize risks (IBM, 2018).

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), reliability of measure specifies the level to which it has no error and without bias. Along with Tavakol and Dennick (2011), it is acceptable to have a value of more than 0.7, nevertheless, some researchers may recommend

higher value of 0.9 to 0.95. This research also adopted normality test. It was to identify whether the data fits a bell curve shape or to ensure the samples are normally distributed. As said by Griffin and Steinbrecher (2013), the acceptable range for skewness is between -3 and +3. Regression analysis also used to analyse the effects of two or more independent variables on a single, interval-scaled dependent variable (Zikmund *et al.*, 2010).

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Reliability Analysis

According to researchers Sekaran and Bougie (2013) along with Tavakol and Dennick (2011), the results at Table 1 based on the rule of thumb of Cronbach's Alpha shown that the test coefficients range from acceptable to good.

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
Decoration	4	0.901
Catering	4	0.866
Photography	4	0.927
Entertainment	4	0.903

### Normality Analysis

Normality analysis was used to calculate the probability of normal data distributions. The skewness and kurtosis test will show whether the variables used are normally distributed and whether we can accept or reject the null hypothesis. The results shown in Table 2, for skewness, the lowest and highest value are -0.924 and -0.717 respectively. All the values fall into acceptable range, hence the data gathered considered normally distributed.

**Table 2: Skewness and Kurtosis**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Skewness</b>
Decoration	-.717
Catering	-.812
Photography	-.924
Entertainment	-.815

### Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was commonly used technique to verify that between dependent variable and independent variables which are related to hypothesis for correlation showing in percentage or value able to describe and explain. Simple regressions analysis was used to evaluate the research throughout the test in-value showing how strong the relationship and a significant value of less than 0.05 is the better to show that is a positive relationship between

variables and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Table 3 shown the summarized results of multiple regression analysis for the independent variables, price ( $p = 0.000$ ), eWOM ( $p = 0.041$ ) and brand image ( $p = 0.000$ ) accepted however only unique and local authenticity ( $p = 0.823$ ) was rejected.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis**

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Significant
Decoration	1.390	.953	61.799	.000
Catering	1.409	.929	49.090	.000
Photography	1.329	.922	46.526	.000
Entertainment	1.437	.951	60.026	.000

*\*significant at the 0.05 level*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

H<sub>1</sub> indicates decoration has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services. Based on the results from the regression test, it shows that there is a significant relationship between decoration and customer perception, which expressed that H<sub>1</sub> is supported ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta = 0.953$ ). According to Monroe (2006), the decoration is the event's adornment and beautification. It makes the wedding feel, touch, class, and theme. Having a decoration service is, therefore, a must which decoration can create an atmosphere for the wedding dinner which can have a WOW effect as well as promoting the romance of the occasion. Martha (1999) mentioned the wedding decoration gives the feeling of this day, the decorations are important because they set the atmosphere of the party. They emphasize the venue and the ceremony and give it an appropriate look. The wedding decorations literally make wedding considered one of the day's most remarkable attractions. According to the supporting research done by past researchers, the decoration is significantly influencing customer perception towards wedding services, thus H<sub>1</sub> is accepted.

H<sub>2</sub> indicates catering has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services. Based on the results from the regression test, it shows that there is a significant relationship between catering and customer perception, which expressed that H<sub>2</sub> is supported ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta = 0.929$ ). Some of the past studies also support this hypothesis. Catering is about food that can affect the emotion and feeling of the customer. Good quality, food tasting as well as professional caterers can change a customer's mood. Besides these three, the food presentation is also important for planning a wedding. Food presentation is very important; 80% of food is eaten by the eyes during the wedding. Eating is a sensual experience. Eyes have already judged this before mouths have tasted something, mentioned by Anisa (2016). According to Namkung and Jang (2007), quality of food attracts those who discern their food taste. Another serious element was also measured, which will affect customer expectations when attending the event. Thus, catering is significantly influencing customer perception towards wedding services, thus H<sub>2</sub> is accepted.

H<sub>3</sub> indicates photography has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services. Based on the results from regression test, it shows that there is a significant relationship between photography and customer perception, which expressed that

H<sub>3</sub> is supported ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta = 0.922$ ). As Frith and Harcourt (2007) mentioned photography has defined couples as a memory that can remember the feeling at the time, as well as remembering the story that happened. A wedding photography is not only about the wedding couple, but also about the successive generations who have not been given the privilege of attending the ceremony. According to the past research, photography is significantly influencing customer perception towards wedding services, thus H<sub>3</sub> is accepted.

H<sub>4</sub> indicates entertainment has an influence on customer perception towards wedding services. Based on the results from regression test, it shows that there is a significant relationship between entertainment and customer perception, which expressed that H<sub>4</sub> is supported ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta = 0.951$ ). Brian (2005) stated that Entertainment is about an activity that holds the audience's interest and attention. Peter, Debra and Geoff (2010) added that wedding entertainment also great importance to make guests feel happy and remember the occasion. A wonderful plan to make this happen is the crying need. Thus, entertainment is significantly influencing customer perception towards wedding services, thus H<sub>4</sub> is accepted.

On a practical level, this study provides significant information to various stakeholders from professional wedding decorator, catering suppliers, professional wedding photographer and professional wedding emcee. Professional wedding decorator may understand how high perception from customer towards decoration in the sense of experience employee, conceptualisation of a suitable theme which able to generate desired atmosphere. Catering suppliers may realise the importance of food tasting and how standard operating procedure will bring the impact in food quality. Furthermore, professional wedding photographer may recognise the important role of themselves due to once in a lifetime event they are shooting, hence professionalism of photographer and the image output must be clear and sharp. Professional wedding emcee may comprehend their expertise to entertain everyone on the floor, because their main duty is to hold guest's interest, attention and relaxed the ambiance.

On the other hand, this study provided significance in terms of theoretical level. There is a limitation of research for wedding services in Malaysia. Hence, future researchers can use this research study as a reference to extend wedding services. In this study, there are four proposed factors which are decoration, catering, photographer and entertainment. The future researchers can explore other latest relevant factors from time to time. Furthermore, gaining the understanding on customer perception towards wedding services also provides the contribution to the education sector. Education sector such as colleges and universities can include the outcome of this research into the syllabus. Academia can also teach about customer perception in the lecture. For instances, lecturers can educate students on the new trends in event services industry and how this industry should be evolved.

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