



**INDUSTRY STUDY OF WEDDING TOURISM
IN THAILAND**

BY

MISS LOLITA HOW-CHOONG

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN MARKETING
(INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ACCOUNTANCY
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSIT**

**INDUSTRY STUDY OF WEDDING TOURISM
IN THAILAND**

BY

MISS LOLITA HOW-CHOONG



**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN MARKETING
(INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ACCOUNTANCY
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ACCOUNTANCY

INDEPENDENT STUDY

BY

MISS LOLITA HOW-CHOONG

ENTITLED

INDUSTRY STUDY OF WEDDING TOURISM IN THAILAND

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science Program in Marketing (International Program)

on..... 13 MAY 2019

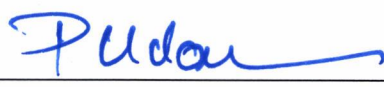
Chairman


(Associate Professor Nigel Barrett, Ph.D.)

Member and Advisor


(Professor Kenneth E. Miller, Ph.D.)

Dean


(Associate Professor Pipop Udorn, Ph.D.)

Independent Study Title	INDUSTRY STUDY OF WEDDING TOURISM IN THAILAND
Author	Miss Lolita How-Choong
Degree	Master of Science Program in Marketing (International Program)
Major Field/Faculty/University	Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy Thammasat University
Independent Study Advisor	Professor Kenneth E. Miller, Ph.D.
Academic Years	2018

ABSTRACT

Trends in the wedding industry have been changing from time to time. The current trend is to create a unique and exclusive experience before, during, and after the wedding. Social media, as part of the rational and psychological mindset behind, act as the tools to project out the exclusivity to the non-participated guests. The destination wedding is one of the most popular options to create a unique and dream-come-true wedding. Most of the destinations that are chosen based on their breathtaking scenery; Mexico, Bali, Bahamas, and Thailand. However, the scenery and location are not the only criteria in making the decision; there are other criteria such as the cost-value, facilities, and hospitalities taking into consideration. As a result, Thailand becomes a popular wedding destination for couples that consider getting married somewhere else.

This research aims to analyze and determine the industry, in order to conclude and give recommendations on the wedding tourism industry in three areas, Tourism Authority of Thailand's Marketing Strategy, Service Providers aspect, and Limitation and Future research. Also, the result of this research could, eventually, be used as a tool to determine the key features that would help Thailand maintain a sustainable growth of wedding tourism industry.

The study is conducted by using secondary research, observation, and in-depth interview. The collected data is transcribed, coded data, created the pattern of the data by using reduction method, summarized, and interpreted. The readers will be able to understand the essence and fundamental concept of wedding tourism in Thailand. Apart from that, the readers will understand the expectation and experience of service providers in the industry towards TAT's marketing strategies.

From the research, TAT launched Thailand as a wedding destination in the global arena five years ago. In the last five years, Thailand's wedding tourism has been increasing with healthy growth; however, there is emerging wedding market around the world that Thailand has to be aware of, especially in the potential competitors in the regions, i.e., Malaysia and Vietnam. There is potential for Thailand to grow more in the wedding tourism business, as TAT aims to achieve a 5 percent contribution of total Thailand's tourism revenue.

This independent study is focusing on the area of Thailand as destination wedding only, and the conduct of this research is mainly to understand the performance of TAT's strategies and ability to further Thailand's wedding tourism in the future.

I sincerely hope that the study will benefit people who are interested in Thailand's tourism and wedding tourism industry.

Keywords: Wedding tourism, Destination wedding, Thailand

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Professor Kenneth E. Miller, Ph.D., his supportive encouragement had helped me through this study. He gave me help with valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this study.

I would like to also thank the experts and interviewees who were involved in the sharing insightful information for this study. Without their passionate participation and input, the validation survey could not have been successfully conducted. My grateful thanks are also extended to families and friends, whom assisted me with the research in the area that I was lack of, and unable to reach to.

Lastly, I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents for being my moral support and standing strong for me throughout my years of study. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you.

Miss Lolita How-Choong

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	(1)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(3)
TABLE ON CONTENTS	(4)
LIST OF TABLES	(7)
LIST OF FIGURES	(8)
LIST OF ABBREVIATION	(9)
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Overview of the Wedding Industry	1
1.2 Wedding Definition	2
1.3 Study Purpose and Objective	2
1.4 Organization of Report	3
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 Industry Structure	4
2.2 Industry Conduct	6
2.3 Industry Performance	6
2.4 Summary	9
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	10
3.1 Research Design	10
3.1.1 Secondary Research and Observations	10
3.1.2 In-depth Interview	11
3.1.3 Identifying Research Variable	11

3.2 Discussion Guideline Design	11
3.3 Data Collection Plan	12
3.3.1 In-depth Interview Sample Size	13
3.4 Data Analysis Plan	13
 CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	 15
4.1 Views on Wedding Tourism in Thailand	15
4.1.1 Growth and Potential of the Industry	15
4.1.2 Customer Segment and Brand Positioning	16
4.2 Industry Structure	17
4.3 Industry Conduct	18
4.3.1 Operation of the Destination Wedding	18
4.3.2 Tourism Authority of Thailand's Marketing	20
4.4 Industry Performance	21
4.5 Wedding Tourism Challenges and Response by Service Providers	23
4.6 Service Providers Expectation Experience in the Industry towards TAT's performance	24
4.6.1 Marketing Knowledge and Competitive Skill Development	24
4.6.2 Marketing Strategies and Execution	25
4.6.3 Information and Help Center	25
4.7 Competitors	25
 CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 27
5.1 Conclusions	27
5.1.1 Industry	27
5.1.2 Tourism Authority of Thailand's Expectation and Experience Analysis	27
5.1.3 Service Providers Experience and Satisfaction	29
5.2 Recommendations	30

5.2.1 Tourism Authority of Thailand	30
(1) Chinese and Indian Market – Luxurious and Sophisticated segment	30
(2) Understand the need for service providers	30
5.2.2 Service Providers’ aspect	30
(1) Create competitive advantages	30
5.2.3 Limitation and Future Research	31
(1) The emerge and increase of the competition in the market	31
(2) The political and economic stability	31
REFERENCES	32
APPENDICES	36
APPENDIX A: Discussion Guideline: Wedding Planner	37
APPENDIX B: Discussion Guideline: Hotel	41
APPENDIX C: Discussion Guideline: Wedding Celebrant	44
APPENDIX D: Discussion Guideline: Tourism Authority of Thailand	46
APPENDIX E: Key variables of the research	49
APPENDIX F: In-depth Interview Samplings	50
BIOGRAPHY	51

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
2.1 Global Destination Wedding by Region and Market Worth	4
2.2 Consumers by Geography and Preferred Destination	8
3.1 Discussion areas and Expected respondents	12
4.1 Highlighted Income by Country of Origin in 2017 and 2018	15
4.2 Tourism Authority of Thailand's Highlight Initiations and campaign	21
4.3 Key Performance Indicators of Service Providers	21



LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
2.1 Global Contribution to Destination Wedding	5
4.1 Industry Structure of Wedding Tourism in Thailand	18
4.2 Procedure flow of Wedding Planning	19



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand
MOTS	Ministry of Tourism and Sports
DWP Congress	Destination Wedding Planners Congress



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the Wedding Industry

The tourism industry in Thailand is for an essential driver of Thailand's economy with a total of 1.83 trillion Thai Baht in 2017. The growth of the tourism industry in Thailand is increasing, while the strong support from the Thai government in aiming toward increasing the numbers of the tourism industry. Wedding and Honeymoon tourism is a part of the industry that has been gradually growing in the past years, with the latest growth of 11.66 percent in 2017. This study will allow the readers to understand the structure of the wedding tourism in Thailand and be able to capture the opportunities in wedding tourism with strategies to sustain the long-term growth in the industry.

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2018), Thailand welcomed over 35 million tourists in 2017 with a total revenue of over THB 1.83 trillion. For the wedding segment, over 104,000 couples were coming to Thailand for their wedding celebration, which generated the total revenue of THB 5 billion. Thailand's wedding tourism industry has had healthy growth in the past few years; in 2018 Thailand expected an increase of 5 percent over 2017. (*Bangkok Post*, 2018)

The wedding tourism industry can be divided into three main parts, which are the pre-wedding market, wedding market, and honeymoon market. This research will be focusing on mainly the pre-wedding and wedding market in which the statistical numbers in this research will remain accountable for the contributions of these two parts only. China has had the most significant contribution to Thailand's wedding tourism industry, followed by India, Hong Kong, Australia, European countries, and The United States of America.

Thailand's tourism has always contributed to the most substantial portion of national revenue. However, the wedding segment has been gradually growing over the years. With the growth of Wedding Tourism industry, it will benefit not only the wedding market but also other facilities, food, and entertainment industry since not

only the couple will be coming to Thailand but friends and family of the lovers as well. With the healthy growth and trend of the wedding tourism itself, Thailand could develop business strategies in order to increase the opportunities in the wedding tourism industry.

This research is aimed to understand the industry structure of the wedding tourism and be able to determine the potential key success for future opportunities in the industry. This research will benefit any organizations that are looking for opportunities in the destination wedding industry in Thailand.

1.2 Wedding Definitions

Wedding Tourism: Wedding Tourism is a part of the Tourism industry, focusing on inbound weddings in Thailand. According to The Tourism Authority of Thailand Wedding and Honeymoon Tourism is comprised of three main parts, which are short-haul travel including Pre-wedding and the Wedding period, and long-haul travel including Honeymoon period. However, in this research, the researcher will mainly focus on short-haul travel.

Destination Wedding: Destination wedding is where the wedding is set away from the couple's home countries, which means that the guests, friends, and family are traveling to attend the wedding at the predetermined location.

Inbound Wedding: Inbound refers to visitors traveling into a particular destination; therefore Inbound Wedding means that couples who travel to a particular destination out of their home country for their wedding.

Service providers: In this study, Service Provider will be referred to as the members in the industry, which are hotels, wedding planners, and celebrants.

1.3 Study Purpose and Objectives

- A) To understand the industry structure of wedding tourism in Thailand
 - a) To understand the market size and market growth of the industry.
 - b) To determine the regional competitors in the industry.

- c) To understand and analyze Thailand's governmental regulations towards the industry
- B) To understand the conduct of Thailand's wedding tourism from Tourism Authority of Thailand; positioning strategy, market segmentation, promotion, and industry competition and opportunities.
- C) To determine the critical key features of Thailand's destination wedding industry from the key members' perspective.

1.4 Organization of Report

This report comprises of 5 chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the report, providing the basic knowledge of wedding tourism and information about the industry and the current market situation. The second chapter is the literature review of the global wedding industry, particularly on the destination wedding industry. The third chapter is the research methodology, which contains research design, discussion guideline design, data collection plan, and data analysis plan. The fourth chapter is the result of the data and the analysis of the result of the data collection of the qualitative research. Lastly, the last chapter provides the summarized conclusion of the research with the recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Industry Structure

Even though the business all around the world seems to decline in the past years, the wedding industry spending, on the other hand, keeps growing and splurging more than ever. (Singh, 2016) The total spending on the wedding all over the world is considered to be over trillions and trillions of dollars, and it is still growing every day. North America has the most significant contribution to the world's destination wedding market, followed by Asia, Europe, and South American and the Caribbean. Australia, Africa, and the Middle East contribute to the smallest portion with a total of about 15 percent combined. (World of Weddings, 2018)

Table 2.1: Global Destination Wedding by Region and Market Worth (World of Weddings, 2018)

Country	Market Worth
North and Central America	USD 27 Billion
Asia	USD 19.8 Billion
Europe	USD 18 Billion
South American and the Caribbean	USD 10.8 Billion
Australia and New Zealand	USD 5.4 Billion
Africa	USD 4.5 Billion
Middle East	USD 9 Billion
TOTAL	USD 94.5 Billion

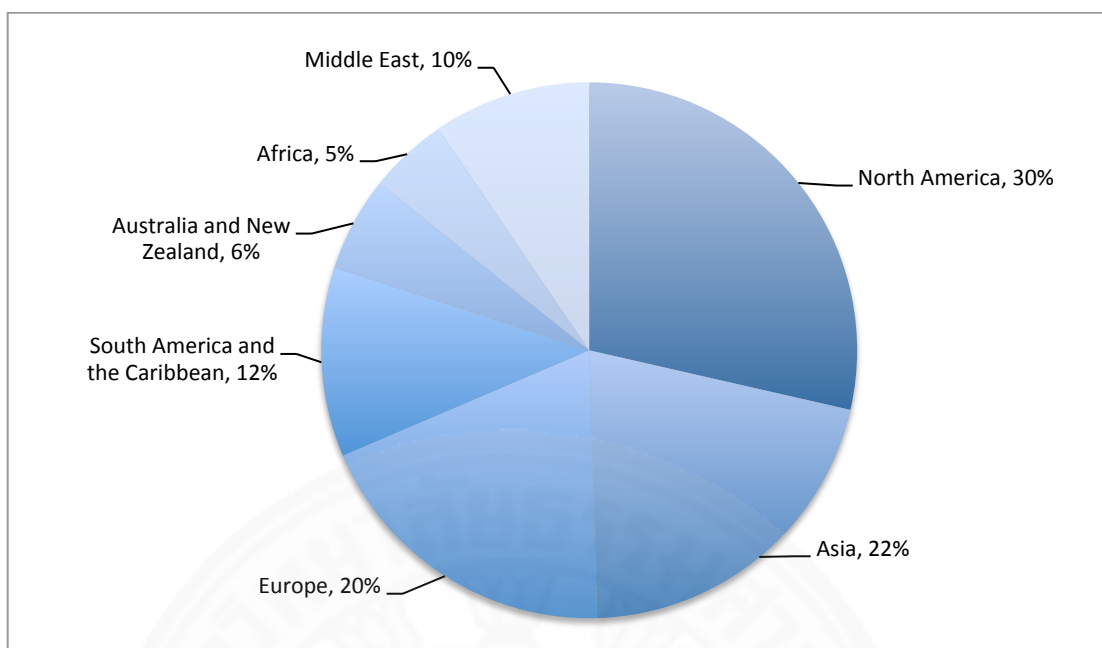


Figure 2.1: Global Contribution to Destination Wedding (*World of Weddings*, 2018)

Globally, the average spending for a wedding is approximately USD 33,000, but the number could range from USD 5,000 up to USD 500,000, or even more, depending on the country. At the same time, the spending per guest is increasing as well. Even though the number of guest counts is conservatively reducing, yet the spending per count is increasing by 50 percent.

The trend of formal wedding steadily decreased since 2009, and couples are looking for a more non-traditional wedding with exclusivity. Moreover, here is the reason, why the destination wedding has come into play and becoming more and more popular for the new modern couples. In some countries, particularly in Asian countries, the trend of creating guest experience has been increasing. The couples are more willing to spend more on entertainment and decoration in order to create the ultimate memorable experience. (*The Knot Worldwide*, 2018) As a result, we are expecting a potential growth in the industry with new arrays of spending by the consumers, and more new emerging destinations in the wedding industry.

2.2 Industry Conduct

“Destination wedding” can be defined as a wedding ceremony that is celebrated outside of the bride and groom’s hometown. “Wedding Tourism” can be defined as the international arrival flows that arise from the participation to a destination wedding in a different location from where the couples are initially from or where they live. (*Del Chiappa & Fortezza, 2013*) Recently the trend of destination weddings has become more and more popular with various reasons explaining why. In some countries like China or India, lavishing wedding represents the status of the couple and family. Destination wedding for them is held in order to express their privilege and exclusivity. (*Euromonitor, 2008*) Another reason, and it is a crucial reason why destination weddings are becoming more popular is that destination weddings can be more affordable yet unique. The couples could create their own identity through the wedding, and they are allowed to escape any social and family obligation, such as those that do not allow wedding among gay (*Schumann & Amado, 2010 & HappyWeddingLife, 2017*).

2.3 Industry Performance

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2018), Thailand welcomed over 35 million tourists in 2017 with a total revenue of THB 1.83 trillion, the revenue up 11.66 percent over 2016. (*Bangkok Post, 2018*) In 2019, Tourism Authority of Thailand expected the increase of international arrival from 37.5 million to 40 million tourists, and expected to expand with at least 10 percent growth in revenue, reaching THB 3.4 trillion (*The Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018 & World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018*) By 2028, Thailand’s international tourist arrivals are forecast to generate at least THB 4 trillion with an increase of at least 6 percent. (*Bangkok Post, 2018 & ITMJ, 2018*)

For the wedding segment, over 104,000 couples were coming to Thailand for their wedding celebration, which generated the total revenue of THB 5 billion. Even though the wedding segment is accounted for a small portion of the total revenue,

however, Thailand's wedding tourism industry has had healthy growth in the past few years; in 2018 Thailand increased of 5 percent over 2017. (*Bangkok Post*, 2018)

TAT has categorized the romance tourism industry into three main target segments (*The Tourism Authority of Thailand*, 2018):

1. Pre-Wedding Market – With China as the main potential source of the market. Chinese tourists prefer coming to Thailand for their pre-wedding photo shooting. (*The Tourism Authority of Thailand*, 2018) TAT Beijing office has seen China as a potential market to encourage into the Wedding market. (*ITMJ*, 2018)

2. Wedding Market – India contributes the biggest share for this segment. (*The Tourism Authority of Thailand*, 2018 & *Paul*, 2017) With approximately 400 couples of Indian coming to get married in Thailand every year, generates over billions of revenue. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) estimates the cost for a traditional Indian wedding organized in Thailand at THB 10 - 50 million per couple, based on 200 - 500 guests staying for 3 - 5 nights. In this short-haul wedding market, Hong Kong and Australia are also potential sources for the market. (*Krungsri Research*, 2017)

3. Honeymoon Market – Long-haul market like Honeymoon market is from European countries and America, as well as nearby countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and South Korea. (*The Tourism Authority of Thailand*, 2018)

Thailand has recently awarded the Best Wedding Destination from Wanderlust, Indian based magazine. With a wide range of hotels, great location and landscape, great hospitality, and the mixture of traditional and modern; Thailand is an excellent destination for couples to spend their romantic time here. (*The Tourism Authority of Thailand*, 2018) One of the goals for Thailand's wedding industry is to become World's Top 5 Destination Wedding country, by expanding the awareness and create perception as a quality well-rounded destination. As seen in this table below, Thailand would like to position in the Top Destination and enhance the position from Emerging to Top Destination.

Table 2.2: Consumers by Geography and Destinations

Geographic Location of Couples	Top Destination	Emerging Destination
North & Central America	Mexico, Italy, the Caribbean Islands, Hawaii, France, USA	Croatia, Iceland, Thailand, Indonesia, Portugal, Argentina, South Africa, Spain, Greece, Australia, Ireland, Morocco, India
South America & Caribbean Islands	Mexico, the Caribbean Islands, Brazil, Columbia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, USA	Italy, France, Hawaii, Switzerland, South Africa, Spain, Morocco, Greece
Europe	Italy, Greece, Spain, France, England, Indonesia, Croatia, Portugal	Caribbean Islands, Mexico, Thailand , Austria, Switzerland, UAE, Ireland
Africa	UK, Italy, UAE, South Africa, France, Seychelles, Mauritius	Greece, Spain, Turkey, Mexico, Oman, Morocco
Middle East	UAE, France, UK, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Indonesia, Lebanon, Morocco	Indonesia, Lebanon, Morocco, Portugal, Thailand , Maldives, Mauritius, Spain
Asia	Thailand , Indonesia, Italy, UAE, Turkey, Greece, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Spain	Portugal, Vietnam, Croatia, Austria, Hungary, Macau, Maldives, Czech Republic, France
Australia and New Zealand	Thailand , Indonesia, Italy, Greece, France, Fiji, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand	Mexico, North America, Vietnam, Spain, Singapore, UAE

With great potential and healthy growth in Thailand's wedding tourism market, TAT and Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) is aiming to increase the growth in Thailand's tourism by attracting the constant flow of visitors, also aiming for the spending per person rather than numbers of arrivals, and the plan will be continued in 2019. (*Euromonitor*, 2017) Apart from the governmental support and TAT annual plan in expanding the wedding tourism industry, other key members in

the market; airlines, hotels, and wedding planner are a crucial part in the growth of the industry. Moreover, technology and social media have been initially taking significant parts in communication and marketing, and the wedding industry has no exception. Customer's decision in selecting their wedding destination is upon their expectation and satisfaction of marketing and social media channels. (*Sotipipith, 2013 & Schumann, 2012*) For this research, the study will be built based on these initial findings.

2.4 Summary

As a summary, the research on wedding tourism in Thailand has never been well explored and studied, the current research on Thailand's tourism industry is mostly focusing health and sports market than the wedding industry where upholds the potential growth for the tourism industry. The research on Thailand's wedding tourism has yet examined the impact of the conduct of Tourism Authority of Thailand toward the dependent variables – attitudes of the tourist, attitudes of key members in the wedding tourism industry. Research has determined the key success factors of wedding planners or tourism in general, whilst none has been examining the key success features of the destination wedding industry in Thailand. This study will provide contributions in these areas.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The exploratory approach was applied in this research in order to collect and analyze data and expected to reflect the data according to the research objectives.

3.1 Research Design

Porter's Five Forces model together with SWOT analysis model was used in this research to understand the independent variables; the industry structure, competitive landscape, national policy, governmental supports, market trends, and market growth of Thailand's wedding tourism market. The discussion guideline was designed based on these two frameworks. (Appendix A)

In order to understand the environment of the industry, each element of Porter's Five Force framework is used to analyze the industry. The five elements are as follows:

Competitive rivalry: Number and size of competitors in the business, Strength, and weakness of the competitors, Industry Growth, Switching cost

Supplier Power: Competitive Advantage, Cultural and knowledge, specialized offers, Uniqueness, Number and size of suppliers

Buyer Power: Number of customers, Customer's spending, Price sensitivity

The threat of Substitution: Competitors in the region

The threat of New Entry: Governmental Regulations, New emerging destination, the global economy

3.1.1 Secondary Research and Observations

The secondary research was conducted in order to understand the tourism industry of Thailand and probing the wedding tourism industry of Thailand. The data was acquired from books, articles, thesis, and journal both from online and offline sources.

The researcher also applied the observatory approach to acquiring information from the hotels and wedding planners by attending wedding conventions in Bangkok. Moreover, observations were made to understand and accumulate information about both inbound wedding and domestic wedding in order to respond to the research objective below:

- To determine the critical key features of Thailand's destination wedding industry from the key members' perspective.

3.1.2 In-depth Interview

The in-depth interview design comprised of two target populations, which are the governmental unit and the service providers with a total of 12 in-depth interview sessions. These interview sessions focused on the attitudes and opinions of the key members of the wedding tourism industry in Thailand. The acquired information was used to reflect the governmental National's policy and overall industry structure.

3.1.3 Identifying Research Variable

The key dependent variables of this study are as follows; collective numbers of tourists in Thailand's wedding tourism, attitude and opinions of the organizations or institutes related to the wedding tourism industry in Thailand, and expected growth of wedding tourism market in Thailand. (Appendix B)

3.2 Discussion Guideline Design

The interview session comprised of 6 main areas. The interviews were designed and divided into three different sets of questions. Below are the details of the discussion areas and expected respondents.

Table 3.1: Discussion areas and Expected respondents

Expected Respondents	Discussion Areas
1. Wedding Planners 2. Hotels	1. General Question 2. Wedding Market 3. Customers 4. Marketing and Promotions 5. Destination Wedding in Thailand 6. Destination Wedding in Thailand and Governmental Support
3. Celebrants	1. General Question 2. Marketing and Promotion 3. Destination Wedding in Thailand 4. Destination Wedding in Thailand and Governmental Support
4. Governmental Organization	1. General Question 2. Customers 3. Marketing and Promotion 4. Destination Wedding in Thailand

Discussion guideline for the in-depth interview is provided in Appendix A.

3.3 Data Collection Plan

Due to time limitations, a non-probability convenience sample was used as our sampling method for the data collected for this study. In the destination wedding industry, there are key members associated in the growth of the industries, which are the service providers and governmental organizations. This study was interviewing three categories of service providers, which are the wedding planners, hotels, and wedding celebrants. Since Phuket and Samui Island are the most popular destination for the couples to get married, therefore the interviews were conducted with service providers that are located in Phuket, Samui Island, as well as in Bangkok. The governmental organizations that the researchers interviewed are the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT); TAT is the union representing the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS). The full contact list of the samplings is provided in Appendix C.

3.3.1 In-depth Interview Sample Size

In the wedding planners market, many players provide destination wedding services however the key players who provide full service of the couples are mainly located in Bangkok, Samui Island, and Phuket. Due to the limitations and time constraints; the research required information from 3 wedding planners located in Phuket, one wedding planner from Samui Island. The research also acquired information from another two wedding planners located in Bangkok, who are specialized in Indian Wedding planning. Discussion guideline for the wedding planners is provided in Appendix A.

Since there are many hotels available in the market, this research had randomly picked three hotels that destination wedding service is available. Discussion guideline for the hotel representatives is provided in Appendix A.

Wedding celebrants are one of the crucial functions in the wedding ceremony, not because they act as the conductor of the wedding, but celebrants also act as the leading host of the ceremonial event. This research interviewed two experienced celebrants who have been working in Thailand. Discussion guideline for the hotel representatives is provided in Appendix A.

The relevant governmental organizations that have been working with the tourism industry are The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS). Since TAT is the unit that accounts for the tourism market in Thailand, this study was focusing on interviewing with representatives from TAT only. The interview was conducted with two officers from TAT's department of wedding destination. Discussion guideline for the governmental organizations is provided in Appendix A.

3.4 Data Analysis Plan

In this research, the approach that was applied in the analysis was the deductive method based on the objectives of the research.

The data collected from the interviews of the service providers, i.e., wedding planner, hotel, and the celebrant was transcribed into Microsoft Word format. The data was described by using a data reduction method, verbatim and categorized into

summary sheets by using coding plan method. The coded data was then be used to identify the key ideas and patterns of the data. The data was used to redefine the key variables of the research, which are the typical numbers of tourists in Thailand's wedding tourism, attitude, and opinions of the organizations or institutes related to the wedding tourism industry in Thailand, and the expected growth of wedding tourism market in Thailand. Finally, the conclusion was interpreted and applied the current market situation, also to provide the recommendation.

The data collected from the interviews of governmental organizations, i.e., TAT and MOTS were transcribed into Microsoft Word format. The collected data was analyzed by using the Structure-Conduct-Performance model in order to examine the level performance of the organizations toward the wedding tourism industry. Finally, the conclusion was interpreted and applied to the current situation and to provide a recommendation.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Views on Wedding Tourism in Thailand

4.1.1 Growth and potential of the industry

All of the representatives from hotels and wedding planners agree that there is potential growth in Thailand's wedding tourism industry. In the last five years, Thailand's wedding industry has been steadily growing. In terms of numbers of the wedding, the wedding planner could accept from 20 to 50 weddings yearly; while the Indian wedding, with the restriction of details and complexity of the ceremony, the wedding planners could only accept approximately one wedding per month. They foresee that there will be more couples interested in getting married in Thailand, and expect that Thailand will be more known as the perfect wedding destination for couples.

TAT, on the other hand, has been seeing capability in the wedding tourism segment in the last two years. The Indian market has contributed a very a lot of revenue to Thailand, not only for the wedding phase but considering the post-wedding phase of the stay as well. TAT aims to strategize and target more at the Indian market and anticipates the growth of Thailand's wedding tourism segment mainly from the high growth Indian market.

Table 4.1: Highlighted Income by Country of Origin in 2017 and 2018 (*Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018*)

	Total Revenue in 2017 (THB)	Total Revenue in 2018 (THB)	Growth (%)	# of Wedding in 2018 (Wedding)
Singapore	57,038,464	51,105,850	(-10.4)	1,388
South Korea	98,756,546	306,545,270	210.41	6,468
India	157,126,209	297,695,146	89.46	6,227
China	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,806 *

	Total Revenue in 2017 (THB)	Total Revenue in 2018 (THB)	Growth (%)	# of Wedding in 2018 (Wedding)
France	68,005,993	77,792,103	14.39	1,050
Italy	32,468,596	161,764,345	398.22	2325
U.S.A	109,137,792	424,704,802	288.68	5,504
Australia	738,016,092	403,664,472	(-45.30)	4,649

* Note: The number of Wedding from China is from the year 2017 since the data of 2018 is not available.

4.1.2 Customer Segment and brand positioning

As discussed, TAT has been targeting quality tourists, who undeniably are tourists who are more sophisticated and are willing to spend more per trip, in line with the positioning of most of the wedding planners. Most of the wedding planners are positioning themselves as a higher tier of wedding services. They deliver luxurious, creditability, comfort, and service needs to exceed the expectation. Their target customers are ones who are willingly spending the minimum of THB 1 million for their weddings. With the high number of Chinese and Indian couples getting married in Thailand, surprisingly, most of them are Chinese and Indian who are dwelling in Western countries like the US and European countries. Followed by Singaporean, South Korean, and other western countries. Most of the customers are considered affluent with medium to high education.

On the contrary, a service provider like celebrants and hotels do not have any specific target customers. While all the hotels agree that they have their positioning, but they see it as branding and the standard of service that they are going to provide to all customers equally. They do not branch out directly to the customers; instead, create a friendly relationship with the wedding planners. Since celebrant service is quite typical and there are fewer requirements in the preferences of the service, there is no clear customer segmentation. We would define the target segment of the celebrant service by the required language.

4.2 Industry Structure

Thailand's Wedding Tourism structure is comprised of mainly three components, which are Tourism Authority of Thailand as the primary function of the structure, the Associations, and service Entrepreneurs or referred in this study as "service providers."

The associations connect the relationship in the industry as the hub of information and platform for the service providers and TAT. Thailand's Wedding Business Association does not only cooperate with the service providers but also international suppliers like travel agents in other countries and wedding/tourism association located in other countries as well. Thailand's Wedding Business Association works under the implementation of the marketing strategy set by TAT in the execution and operational phase.

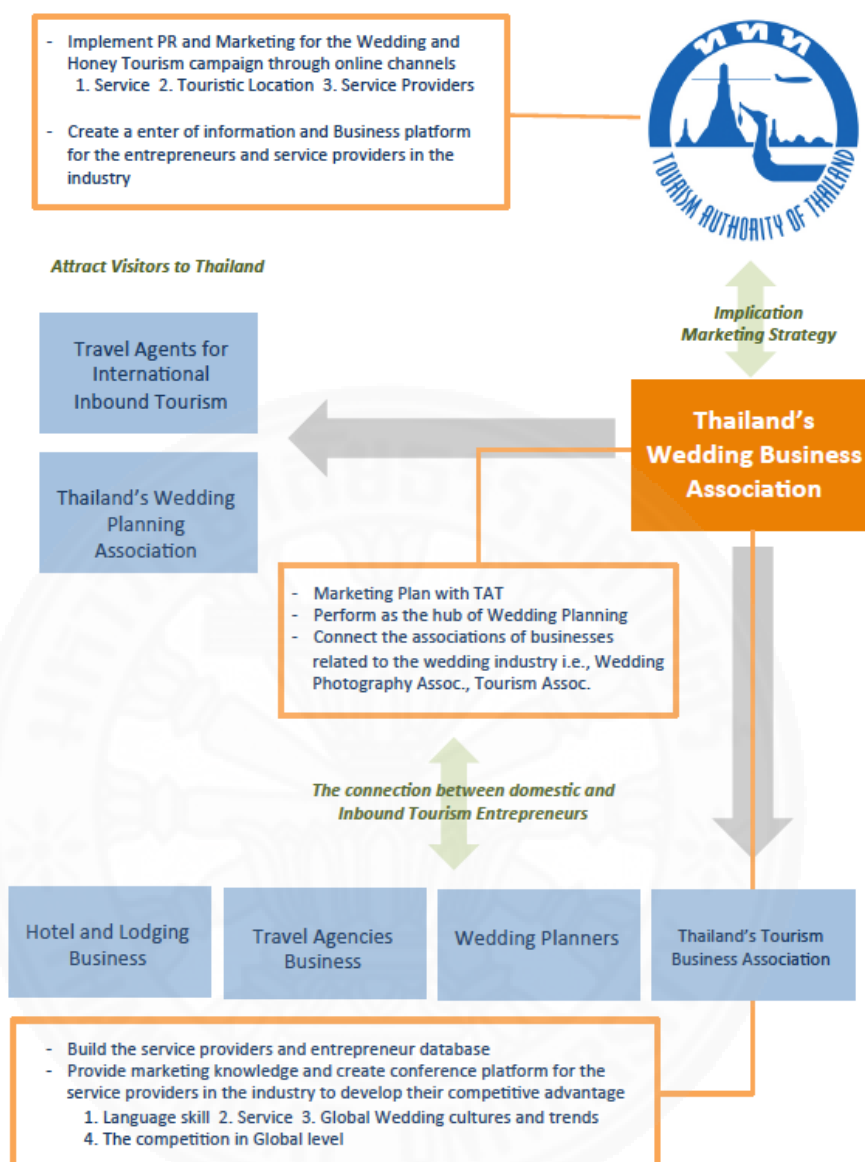


Figure 4.1: Industry Structure of Wedding Tourism in Thailand (TAT Academy, 2018)

4.3 Industry Conduct

4.3.1 Operation of the Destination wedding

From the interview with wedding planners, the procedure of planning a wedding is considerably similar to one another.



Figure 4.2: Procedure flow of Wedding Planning

Pre-consulting: Most of the customers that are reaching to the wedding planners, they have seen them from the search engine, Google, and the customers learn about the services by browsing through the wedding planners' websites. If the service is satisfied, the customers will be contacting the wedding planners via e-mail or Whatsapp. Even though Facebook is a powerful social media platform, it turns out that foreign customers are less likely to find services from Facebook.

Consulting and Planning: Since it is an inbound wedding, the consulting period is approximately one year, or else six months would be the minimum. Most of the time, the wedding planners and the customers are contacting via Whatsapp and e-mail. However, a monthly meeting is fundamental for updates and discussion. Many of the Indian couples would fly to Thailand in order to meet up for their wedding updates.

Preparation: For a destination wedding, wedding planners are one-stop service for the couple, where they must cooperate with other service providers; florist, photography, hotels, and bands, and be prepared before the arrival of the couple.

Arrival: The couple would likely arrive in Thailand 2-3 days before the wedding day. During the 1-2 days stay before the wedding, the wedding planner

would introduce the couple to the venue, and on-ground setting for the final time. The bachelor and bachelorette's party are as per request from the bridesmaids and groomsmen, in which it can be included in the service of the service providers.

Wedding Day: On the big day, a team of wedding planners will be standing by at the venue in the morning to get ready for the couple, while the other team will be assisting the bride and groom with the preparation and final briefing.

Post-Wedding: If the wedding planner hires the photographer, the edited images and videos will be sent to the couple after the wedding. However, if the couple hired the photographer, the last task for the wedding planner would be clearing out the venue, and make sure that all the couple is satisfied with the service.

4.3.2 Tourism Authority of Thailand's Marketing Strategy

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) was first established, as The Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) in 1959 during Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat was the country's Prime Minister in order to promote Thailand and Thailand's tourism. Later in 1979, TOT was elevated to TAT in the act of Government Gazette. Now, TAT has been working out the mandate to develop the national tourism, while promoting Thailand as 'Sustainable Preferred Destination' with economic and environmental balances together with the grace of Thainess.

TAT launched the promotion marketing in the wedding segment of the industry five years ago by participating in the Destination Wedding Congress 2014 in Greece. Even the contribution of the revenue from the romance segment (including wedding and honeymoon) is accounted for only 2 – 3 percent of the total income, but there has been positive growth in the industry every year. Since then, TAT has included the wedding segment as part of its annual strategic plan to promote Thailand tourism.

After introducing Thailand as one of the destinations for a wedding in the global arena, TAT has initiated a campaign in the wedding tourism for both customer and service provider aspects. For the consumers (couple) end of the aspect, TAT has been created awareness through online media, social media, and wedding publishing. Besides, on the service provider aspect, TAT has been partaking in business matching both held in Thailand and abroad. TAT has been attending a wedding conference and seminar, to maintain the presence in the global wedding

arena. As TAT has been targeting a higher tier of the consumers, TAT has been initiated business matching for the service providers in the wedding industry in Thailand to connect with the world leading wedding suppliers. Apart from that, TAT has been conducting a wedding convention annually, in order to bring together the consumers and service providers, as well as expand the connectivity of network among the service providers in Thailand.

Table 4.2: Tourism Authority of Thailand's Highlight Initiations and campaign

Date / Period	Activities
Annually	Thailand Wedding Fair
2014	Attended the Destination Wedding Congress in Greece
2015	Attended the Destination Wedding Congress in Mauritius
2016	Attended the Destination Wedding Congress in Florence, Italy
2017	Thailand hosted the Destination Wedding Congress in Phuket
February 2017	TAT hosted 'Thailand Wedding Destiny' campaign
2014 - Current	Released wedding and romance handbook, brochure, and magazines
2018	TAT hosted Thailand Travel Mart Plus the Greater Mekong Sub-region

4.4 Industry Performance

The comparison of the performance between the service providers in the industry is based on the numbers of customer statistic given by each service provider. However, the data are given below (See more in Table 4.2) are not the accurate numbers since there are some unavailable data that cannot be fully disclosed by the service providers.

Table 4.3: Key Performance Indicators of Service Providers

The numbers include ONLY destination wedding in Thailand.

Key Performance Indicators	Wedding Planner	Indian Wedding Planner	Hotel	Celebrant
Average Min. Number of Wedding	Ten weddings (Per year)	Five weddings (Per year)	15 weddings (Per year)	N/A

Key Performance Indicators	Wedding Planner	Indian Wedding Planner	Hotel	Celebrant
Average Max. Number of Wedding	50 weddings (Per year)	12 weddings (Per year)	30 weddings (Per year)	N/A
Average Customer Min. Spending	THB 1 million (Per wedding)	N/A	THB 500,000 (Per wedding)	THB 30,000 (Per wedding)
Average Min. Attending Guests	35 guests (Per wedding)	150 guests (Per wedding)	80 guests (Per wedding)	20 guests (Per wedding)
Average Max. Attending Guests	150 guests (Per wedding)	700 guests (Per wedding)	150 guests (Per wedding)	300 guests (Per wedding)
Average Consulting Period	1 Year	Min. 1 Year	-	2-3 months

From the interview, the service providers are reluctant to disclose the maximum numbers of spending per wedding, so the numbers listed above are the minimum numbers given by the service providers. For Indian weddings, the minimum number of spending is estimated to be THB 1 million; however, the service providers were not feeling comfortable giving the exact numbers.

Since the nature of an Indian wedding is very culturally particular and different, the complexity and the scale of the wedding are different from other weddings. Therefore this part of the comparison, we would separate the result of the key performance of Indian Wedding planners from others. According to the table above, the scale of the Indian wedding is between 150 – 700 guests per wedding. Due to the collectivism culture and family oriented of the Indian culture, extended friends and family are invited to the wedding. Indian couples, which are having an inbound wedding, are less sensitive to the spending, and they are willing to spend not for only the wedding, but the accommodation of the guests as well. As mentioned by one of the hotel respondents,

"Indian couples are generally having a larger scale of wedding compare to a western-oriented style of wedding. The minimum number of guests is approximately 150 people, and the highest number would be 650 – 700 people, in which they would close down the entire hotel for a couple of days for their weddings."

On the contrary, the western-oriented wedding are more likely to prefer a more

private and cozy wedding with an average number of guest between 35 – 150 guests. With the exclusivity and smaller scale of a wedding, the higher tier of customers would be more willing to spend the best premium quality of service for the wedding; i.e., the best venue with the best scenery, best catering, best exotic flower decoration.

According to the interview, the wedding planner cannot obtain customers per year due to 2 main reasons:

- 1.) Workforce constraint
- 2.) Time constraint

Indian wedding planners are likely to limit their customers to 10 couples per year. The average number of the couple per wedding planner per year, from the interview, would be 5 – 6 weddings. Apart from Indian wedding planners, the *maximum* capability of the service per year falls between 30 – 50 weddings, however, some of the wedding planners do agree that it is not healthy to have over 30 weddings per year.

"Sometimes having overcapacity is a challenge that we could feel victorious if we could achieve it. However, in the wedding industry, details and finesse is the key to perfection, bearing overwork could lead to a flaw. No one could afford to have a minor error in a wedding because a wedding is someone's biggest day." said a wedding planner.

4.5 Wedding Tourism Challenges and Response by Service Providers

"Some regulations limit us from providing the best service to what consumer needs," said a wedding planner. According to the interviews, there is a rise of concept in Thailand's regulation that limit the ability to provide what the customers are asking for. For example, the legal sound limit in Thailand prohibits the use of sound over 90 decibels after 22.00 creates a difficulty for the couples who requested to have all night after a party or particularly the Indian wedding that normally has their guests party back to back for three days. The fact that the wedding planners need to deal with the government units about the permission of sound usage overtime is becoming a more significant challenge since there is no fixed standard from one provincial office to the others.

One big challenge that almost all of the wedding planners agree is Thailand's ability to facilitate the quality tourists with 'real quality' environment. The service provided by the wedding planners during the stay is only a part of their stay, but the overall experience of the customers required assistance and cooperation from other units as well. For example, the cleanliness and safety of the tourist landmark, or well-trained English speaking staffs could enhance the overall experience of the tourist. Based on the Expectation and Experience Model, the tourists were attracted by the beautiful images and branding of Thailand; therefore there is a set of high expectation in mind. In order to create high satisfaction, one or two units or service providers in the system is not enough. It requires help from governmental units to enforce the development of Thailand's tourism quality.

4.6 Service Providers Expectation Experience in the Industry towards TAT's performance

4.6.1 Marketing knowledge and competitive skill development program

Expectation:

Thailand's Wedding Business Association would build a program to train and develop a competitive skill for the service providers in the industry, including marketing knowledge, global wedding trends, and language skill.

Experience:

There is no consistent program to train the workforce in the industry. The primary concern that has been raised by many of the respondents is the 'language barrier.'

"I feel it is very ironic that Thailand is thriving for world top 5 the destination wedding, but there is still a lack of the language skill in this service industry."

One of the service providers, wedding planner, said that he wishes that there would be a training program from TAT for the accounted unit for the industry. The language barrier could be one crucial factor that intervenes in the consumers' experience.

4.6.2 Marketing Strategies and Execution

Expectation:

TAT would initiate a campaign to enhance the awareness of Thailand. The marketing news and update of the campaign are announced to the members in the industry regularly.

Experience:

Many service providers agree that they rarely receive news and update from TAT. The marketing activities, business matching and conference, many of the respondents have never been updated. One of the wedding planners mentioned that *"Despite that, we have been in this industry for many years, we have never participated in any of the campaigns by TAT. We have never been approached by TAT as well."*

4.6.3 Information and Help Center

Expectation:

TAT and Thailand's Wedding Business Association would act as the database of information and create a platform for the service providers to connect to the potential customers and updates.

Experience:

From the interview, some of the service providers find that contacting TAT in Thailand can be difficult and sometimes it takes time in order to get the assistant. One of the service providers said that they would contact TAT located at the outbound country for the most efficient service. For example, if the customers were coming from India, they would contact TAT in Delhi or Mumbai in order to ask for facilitation.

4.7 Competitors

"I find that Thailand is a perfect destination for weddings, we have plenty of amazing venues, we have a variety of activities for the couples, the service available in Thailand is complete. In term of regional competitors, Bali and Vietnam are potential competitors but the viable of wedding services there is not as convenient as Thailand," said a wedding planner.

In the South East Asian and East Asian region, Thailand is considered one of the most advanced and complete in term of wedding service. The scenic venue, our thoughtful service mindset, and Thai craftsmanship are the keys competitive advantages of Thailand. However, the emerging destination wedding trends is encouraging other countries in the region to develop their wedding tourism plan to create a new stream of revenue as well. Bali as one of the most well-known islands in the South East Asian region is Thailand's strong competitors in the regions. Malaysia is another new emerging country that would like to join the destination wedding industry.

"A key indicator that a country is entering in the competing arena of a destination wedding is voluntary to be a host country of DWP Congress. In 2019, the event will be held in Dubai; we can assume that Dubai is now trying to promote their wedding tourism as well", explained by TAT.

From TAT's point of view the competitors of the wedding industry are not limited to the regional level, but the global level. Many players are customer's top of mind, i.e., France, Mauritius, Bora Bora Island, Maldives. Nonetheless, in order to become the world's top 5 of the wedding destination, Thailand must be able to proclaim a firm best wedding destination in Asia first.

"Having a wedding in Thailand is not cheap. Some might think that Thailand is cheaper to get married, but with accommodation and airfare, it ends up costing a lot more. For European and American consumers, I think that the Caribbean or South America would be a better option; therefore those countries are competitors that Thailand should also consider", an opinion shared by a celebrant.

Interestingly, a unique concern raised by a service provider from the in-depth interview session. Besides regional competitors, Thailand should consider competitors with similar competitive features with better geographic location for some particular segment of consumers. As mentioned above, the Caribbean could be more worthy of money for American and European customers. By promoting Thailand, as the destination of wedding Honeymoon, Thailand should not only include the competitive features that are available elsewhere but include the emotional value of our culture and variety of activities that Thailand could provide to their wedding experience.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Thailand's tourism has always contributed the most substantial portion of national revenue; however, the wedding segment has been gradually growing over the years. With the growth of Wedding Tourism industry, it will benefit not only the wedding market but also other facilities, food, and entertainment industry since not only the couple will be coming to Thailand but friends and family of the lovers as well. With the healthy growth and trend of the wedding tourism itself, Thailand could develop business strategies in order to increase the opportunities in the wedding tourism industry.

5.1.1 Industry

From the research, Thailand's wedding tourism has been growing in the past five years, since the entering of DWP Congress 2014, yet the position of Thailand as the destination for a wedding is not in the top ranking comparing to some competitors like the Caribbean islands. Despite that Thailand has not yet achieved the top-of-mind position in consumers position, TAT has been thriving for Thailand's presence. In the wedding and tourism industry that both individually growing positively, when combining the two, it creates a lucrative business for the country.

Thailand's revenue from the wedding segment in 2018 has reached over THB 2 billion (USD 60 million), only from the wedding segment. The other potential stream of revenue related to the wedding segment is the revenue from the long-haul tourist, i.e., Honeymoon, Anniversary, and the continuity stay of guests. Last year, 2018, the honeymoon and anniversary (long-haul tourism) contributed to Thailand over THB 45 billion (USD 1.4 billion). From the research, we could conclude that there is a correlation between the wedding and the honeymoon segment.

From Table 4.1, the findings show that South Korea, Italy, and The US have a high percentage of growth in 2018 due to the increase in trend. However,

TAT sees India as the segment with great potential. Even though the number of growth from 2017 to 2018 is not the highest number but the spending per wedding of Indian market could create very high margin, and if the market were continuously growing, Thailand would expect three digits of positive from the Indian market. Since the Indian market is in the early phase of growth, therefore TAT will be trying to boost the Indian market and expect double in growth soon. For the other market, especially the US and European market, TAT is trying to maintain the growth and plan for the increase in spending per trip or wedding.

5.1.2 TAT's Expectation and Experience Analysis

Expectation:

The expectation is the value and perception of the customer's psychology.

Perceived Quality: Thailand has always been perceived to be an exotic tropical country with beautiful scenery. The southern of Thailand and the beach is the dream destination of all travelers. With the launch and increase communication through TAT's social media about a destination wedding in Thailand, TAT has strengthened the image of Thailand's southern scenery even more. Moreover, the essence of a wedding with a luxurious aspect has created a more sophisticated perception toward Thailand wedding tourism industry.

Differentiation: TAT has tried to differentiate Thailand's wedding tourism by using the 'Thainess' into the experience of the consumers. The consumers must be able to experience the culture and hospitality of Thai people. TAT also sometimes has a welcoming ceremony for the couple when arriving in Thailand with Thai dancing and flower garlands.

Emotion: With the image of luxury, sophistication, and rich in culture; the consumers perceive Thailand's wedding with more aesthetic. Despite that the emotion towards Thailand romance tourism in general still cannot be shifted to the more sophisticated perception, due to the image of Thailand's nightlife; the emotion of customers are deliberately changing bit by bit.

Experience:

Since a wedding is one of the most important days of one's life, TAT wants the consumers to experience the best of everything Thailand has to offer.

Loyalty: Word-of-mouth (WOM) is the best tool to measure success in the loyalty of the consumers for the service industry. Eighty percent of the Indian weddings held in Thailand are from WOM and the previous experiences in Thailand. Besides, the guests who attended a wedding held in Thailand are very likely to stay in Thailand further after the wedding, and they are most likely coming back to Thailand if they have any chance.

Service: TAT works closely to the service providers in the wedding tourism industry. Not only in term of creating awareness in the global arena, but TAT also supports the local service provider both SMEs and corporate chains to provide the best service to the consumers during the stay. The experience from the arrival day, during the wedding events, and the departure must be as smooth as possible for the couple.

Surprise: As mention earlier, TAT has provided a welcome ceremony for couples that are getting married in Thailand. The service is upon request from the wedding planner. This little service creates a great touch.

5.1.3 Service Providers Experience and Satisfaction

From the interview conducted to the selected service providers, 9 out of 11 service providers have never participated in TAT's campaign, and they have never been approached by TAT to join the wedding tourism campaign. As a result, they do not have direct experience in working with TAT. However, their expectation towards TAT was set by the publications of Thailand's Tourism campaign. The service providers expect TAT, especially the main office in Thailand, to be more responsive and approachable by the service providers in the industry. As one of the wedding planners said:

"We have help from TAT, but it is the assistance of TAT office fro India who helps coordinate the service that we have requested. Where if we contacted Thailand's office directly, we find it difficult to get hold of them."

To conclude, the relationship between the expectation and experience of the service providers towards TAT are not aligned, which creates the dissatisfaction for the service providers.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Tourism Authority of Thailand

Chinese and Indian Market – Luxurious and Sophisticated segment:

Currently, Thailand has been enjoying revenue from the Chinese tourist mostly in the 'pre-wedding' market; however, there is a large opportunity in the 'wedding' market that TAT should be tapping in. Chinese Millennial, not only own the capability to pay, but they also love the luxurious and they are very active on social media. If TAT could penetrate the Chinese Millennial the growth of wedding market could be growing and reach the milestone of achieving 5% contribution to Thailand's tourism industry.

The number of Indian wedding in Thailand has been growing continuously, and they are Thailand's big potential customers for the wedding industry as discussed in Chapter 4 that wedding planners who cater wedding for Indian market have quite a low acquisition rate because most of the customers come from the WOM or being a guest in their previous wedding. In order to maintain and expand the Indian market, the service providers must be able to facilitate the needs of the consumers, and most importantly, they must be able to deliver a satisfying experience to all the guests at the wedding.

Understand the need for service providers:

The difficulty that TAT needs to consider is that the 'stakeholders' in the industry is not only the tourist, yet most important is the service providers. TAT should continuously ask for feedback or research on what activities or campaign that the service providers are looking for. Since the actual customers that will be purchasing the service are not customer situating in Thailand, to reach the perceived expectation of the consumers, TAT should keep in mind the front line is all the service providers.

5.2.2 Service Providers' aspect

Create competitive advantages:

Despite the amazing natural resources that Thailand is possessing, the service providers should always seek for their competitive advantages in order to be

able to compete in the regional and global arena. Currently, the services and facilities available in Thailand are considered one of the most complete, in term of wedding events and ceremony, but these competitive advantages can be duplicated very easily. The service providers in Thailand should be able to deliver the service that cannot be done by others. For example, the service could be provided with the essence of 'Thainess' in every single process of it. The kindness and thoughtfulness of the service, together with the small additional service; i.e., welcome drinks and Thai Flower Garlands, could give an ultimate moment for the couples and guests.

5.2.3 Limitation and Future Research

The emerge and increase of the competition in the market:

Wedding marketing is growing globally, and there are more and more competitors emerging in the market. The new entrants to the industry could be determined by the willingness of the country to host the Destination Wedding Congress for example; Malaysia hosted the event in 2019 and Dubai is going to host in 2020. It shows that these two countries are going to jump into the destination wedding bandwagon as well.

The political and economic stability:

In 2019, Thailand is having a national election for the new prime minister. According to the history in the past ten years, Thailand's political stability has been the main impact on Thailand's economy. In contrast, the wedding industry is very prone to risk and very sensitive to any risk. The consumers are not willing to risk for their wedding, not to mention the fact that the wedding is going to be held in a foreign country, so it is exceptionally crucial for TAT to have a contingency plan to cope with the consumers (tourist) and the suppliers, in case if the instability in politics occurs again.

REFERENCES

Articles

Schumann, F. R. (2012). The Online Marketing of Guam's Overseas Weddings in Japan. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Systems*, 5(2).

Electronic Media

Bourque, A. (2017, December 07). Technology Profit and Pivots in the \$300 Billion Wedding Space. Retrieved March 18, 2019, from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/technology-profit-and-piv_b_7193112

Del Chiappa, G., & Fortezza, F. (2013). Wedding-based tourism development: An exploratory analysis in the context of Italy. *Scientific Committee*, 412.

Euromonitor International. (2008). Weddings in Asia are Big Business for Travel Companies. *Passport*. Retrieved November 26, 2018.

Euromonitor International. (2017). FLOWS IN THAILAND. *Passport*. Retrieved November 14, 2018.

Global Wedding Academy. (2018, June 01). Top And Emerging Wedding Destinations Across The Globe. Retrieved March 31, 2019, from <http://dwp-insider.com/revealed-top-and-emerging-wedding-destinations-across-the-globe/>

HappyWeddingLife. (2017, February 15). Destination Wedding Venues in Thailand Cost Comparison. Retrieved November 22, 2018, from <https://www.happywedding.life/en/tips/wedding-venue/40011/inb>

ITMJ. (2018). The TAT Beijing office director will encourage new segments, including families, females, weddings, sports, and wellness visitors from major cities, plus promoting travel to secondary Thai cities to first-time travelers. China remains the top market for Thailand. Retrieved November 16, 2018, from <https://www.imtj.com/news/thailand-tourism-statistics-10-growth-2019/>.

- Krungsri Research. (2017). India's Booming Outbound Tourist Market: Opportunities for Thailand. *Research Intelligence*. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from https://www.krungsri.com/bank/.../Research_Intelligence_04_India.aspx.
- Paul, M. (2017, August 9). Thailand witnesses a 15 percent surge in Indian tourists. Retrieved November 11, 2018, from <https://www.traveldailynews.com/thailand-witnesses-15-surge-indian-tourists/>
- Restanis, A. (2018, June 4). Top and emerging wedding destinations across the globe. Retrieved March 10, 2019, from <https://www.traveldailynews.com/post/top-and-emerging-wedding-destinations-across-the-globe>
- Schmidt, S. (2017, April 16). The Wedding Industry in 2017 and Beyond. Retrieved March 18, 2019, from <https://blog.marketresearch.com/the-wedding-industry-in-2017-and-beyond>
- Singh, P. (2016, June 17). The magnificent world of weddings in the US. Retrieved March 18, 2019, from https://fashionunited.uk/news/business/the-magnificent-world-of-weddings-in-the-us/2016061720796?_ga=2.184357222.1910164058.1554681005-631827554.1554681005
- Sotipipith, S. (2013). *The Implication of Customers' Media Exposure, Expectation, and Satisfaction towards Competitive Advantage Factors of Their Decision to Use Wedding Planner Business Service in Bangkok Metropolitan*(Master's thesis, Bangkok University) (pp. 1-105). Bangkok University. Retrieved November 17, 2018.
- Sritama, S. (2018, June 14). *Bangkok Post*. TAT set to take a ride on roller coaster of love. Retrieved October 7, 2018, from <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/tourism-and-transport/1484649/tat-set-to-take-a-ride-on-roller-coaster-of-love>
- Singh, P. (2016, April 16). Indian weddings: An opulent and expensive affair to remember. Retrieved March 18, 2019, from [https://fashionunited.uk/news/business/indian-weddings-an-opulent-and-expensive-affair-to-](https://fashionunited.uk/news/business/indian-weddings-an-opulent-and-expensive-affair-to-remember)

remember/2016042220159?_ga=2.184357222.1910164058.1554681005-631827554.1554681005

- Singh, P. (2016, June 24). Summing up: Inside the big fat global wedding industry. Retrieved March 15, 2019, from <https://fashionunited.nz/news/business/summing-up-inside-the-big-fat-global-wedding-industry/201606241316>
- T. (2018, February 14). Couples Spend an Average of \$33,391 on Weddings, Incorporating Cultural, Religious and Personalized Elements, According to The Knot 2017 Real Weddings Study. Retrieved March 15, 2019, from <https://www.theknot.com/press-releases/the-knot-2017-real-weddings-study-wedding-spend/>
- TAT Academy. (n.d.). สถานการณ์และแนวโน้มการตลาดสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวกลุ่มฮันนีมูนและแต่งงาน. Retrieved March 18, 2019, from http://etatjournal.com/web/images/2012/etatjournal/2012_3_honeymoon_13.jpg
- The Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2018, June 13). Thailand highlights “5-D reasons for celebrating weddings and honeymoons” in the Kingdom. Retrieved from <https://www.tatnews.org/2018/06/thailand-highlights-5-d-reasons-for-celebrating-weddings-and-honeymoons-in-the-kingdom/>
- The Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2018, May 10). 18. Thailand wins ‘Best Wedding Destination’ award from Wonderlust Magazine. Retrieved November 21, 2018, from <https://www.tatnews.org/2018/05/thailand-wins-best-wedding-destination-award-from-wonderlust-magazine/>
- Tourism Economics Bureau by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (n.d.). เศรษฐกิจด้านการท่องเที่ยวของไทย ไตรมาสที่ 1 ของปี 2561 และแนวโน้มปี 2561. Retrieved October 7, 2018, from <https://secretary.mots.go.th/ewtadmin/ewt/policy/index.php>
- W. (2017, November 15). Travel industry encouraged to say ‘I do’ to the destination wedding market. Retrieved March 31, 2019, from <https://news.wtm.com/travel-industry-encouraged-to-say-i-do-to-the-destination-wedding-market/>
- Wedding Academy Global. (2019, January 04). The International Wedding Trend Report 2019 for the latest wedding trends globally. Retrieved April 1, 2019,

from <http://www.weddingacademyglobal.com/the-wedding-trend-report-2019/> World Travel and Tourism Council. (2018). ECONOMIC IMPACT 2018 THAILAND. *Travel and Tourism*. Retrieved November 10, 2018, from www.wttc.org

Z. (2018, December 04). Wedding spending on the rise. Retrieved March 15, 2019, from <http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201812/04/WS5c05e5aca310eff30328ee85.html>



The seal of Thammasat University is a circular emblem. It features a central five-tiered umbrella (parasol) with a lotus flower at its base. The entire emblem is encircled by a ring containing the university's name in Thai script at the top and "THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY" in English at the bottom, separated by small star-like symbols.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE: WEDDING PLANNER

Introduction:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your time today. Our discussion today will be about mainly about the wedding tourism industry in Thailand. The interview should take less than an hour.

The session today will be recorded for the educational purpose since all details of the interview are very important for the research. However, all the responses will be kept confidential, and I will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent.

Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to, and you may end the interview at any time.

General Question

- 1.1 What is your name? Position?
- 1.2 From which segment of the wedding industry are you from?
Which company are you from?
What are the services that you are providing? Pre and post wedding included?

Wedding Market

- 1.3 How is the wedding market in Thailand like? How do you deal with it?
- 1.4 How has the wedding industry in Thailand changed over the years?
Do you need to adopt and what are the adaptations that you will need to do?
- 1.5 What are the critical features in a wedding ceremony?
- 1.6 Are there any differences between the domestic wedding ceremony and destination wedding ceremony?
- 1.7 What are the services in a destination wedding that the couples consider as the most important features?

Customers

- 1.8 Where do your customers come from? What are the segments of your customers?
Which nationality contributes to your income the most in 2018?
- 1.9 How many wedding do you have per year?
- 1.10 How many guests do they usually invite to a wedding?
- 1.11 Is there any service that the couple tends to bring from their hometown? If so, what is the service?
- 1.12 What is the wedding format that the couples usually go for?
- 1.13 What is the average spending per wedding? What are the packages available for an inbound wedding?

Additional questions for Indian Wedding Planner

- 1.14 What are the differences between the Indian wedding from other wedding ceremonies?
- 1.15 What are the additional services required in the Indian wedding ceremony?
- 1.16 How many Indian wedding per year?

Additional question for Gay Wedding Planner

- 1.17 What is the potential in the gay wedding market?

Marketing and promotion

- 1.18 What is your marketing and promotion plan to capture the destination wedding customers? Do you tailor the marketing to each of your segmentation/countries?
- 1.19 Do you attend any wedding convention? Why? How was it?
- 1.20 Do you advertise in a magazine? Why? How was it?
- 1.21 Do you join any collaboration with other organization to create a bundle package? Why? How was it?
- 1.22 Do you use social media to communicate with your customers? Why? How was it?
- 1.23 How do the customers find you? Which channels that you attract most of your customers?

- 1.24 Does social media have any impact on your customers' decision making? To what extent?
- 1.25 How is social media affecting the destination wedding market in Thailand?

Destination Wedding in Thailand and competitors

- 1.26 In your opinion, what are the reasons that the couples chose to get married in Thailand instead of their home countries?
- 1.27 What are the competitive advantages that Thailand has over other countries?
- 1.28 What are the critical successes that Thailand has had and Thailand's wedding industry should maintain it?
- 1.29 Is there a weakness in Thailand's wedding industry that should be improved?
- 1.30 Do you have any idea of other countries with an excellent destination wedding?
What do you think about those countries?
What are the pros and cons of those countries that Thailand should be aware of?

Destination Wedding in Thailand and governmental supports

- 1.31 Can you describe briefly how the Destination wedding industry in Thailand has been in the last few years? Growth? Decrease?
- 1.32 What are the factors that have an impact on the wedding tourism industry in Thailand?
- 1.33 Have you seen or participated with any Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)'s campaign regarding the wedding tourism segment?
- 1.34 How have TAT or the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) been helping the industry?
What is your opinion toward their Thailand Tourism Plan?
- 1.35 In your opinion, does TAT or the MOTS' initiation in Thailand's tourism affect wedding tourism? To what extent?
- 1.36 Is there anything that TAT or MOTS should be improving in order to increase the growth in Thailand's wedding tourism?

- 1.37 How do you see the wedding tourism industry in Thailand in the next few years?



APPENDIX B

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE: HOTEL

Introduction:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your time today. Our discussion today will be about mainly about the wedding tourism industry in Thailand. The interview should take less than an hour.

The session today will be recorded for the educational purpose since all details of the interview are very important for the research. However, all the responses will be kept confidential, and I will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent.

Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to, and you may end the interview at any time.

General Question

- 2.1 What is your name? Position?
- 2.2 From which segment of the wedding industry are you from?
Which company are you from?
- 2.3 What are the services that you are providing?

Wedding Market

- 2.4 How has the wedding industry in Thailand changed over the years?
Do you need to adopt and what are the adaptations that you will need to do?
- 2.5 What are the critical features in a wedding ceremony?
- 2.6 Are there any differences between the domestic wedding ceremony and destination wedding ceremony?
- 2.7 What are the services in a destination wedding that the couples consider as the most important features?

Customers

- 2.8 Where do your customers come from?
Which nationality contributes to your income the most in 2018?

- 2.9 How many inbound wedding do you have per year?
- 2.10 How many guests do they usually invite to a wedding?
- 2.11 Is there any service that the couple tends to bring from their hometown? If so, what is the service?
- 2.12 What is the wedding format that the couples usually go for?
- 2.13 What is the average spending per wedding? What are the packages available for an inbound wedding?

Marketing and promotion

- 2.14 What is your 'off-shore' marketing and promotion plan to capture the customers?
- 2.15 Do you attend any wedding convention? Why? How was it?
- 2.16 Do you advertise in a magazine? Why? How was it?
- 2.17 Do you join any collaboration with other organization to create a bundle package? Why? How was it?
- 2.18 Do you use social media to communicate with your customers? Why? How was it?
- 2.19 How do the customers find you? Which channels that you attract most of your customers?
- 2.20 Does social media have any impact on your customers' decision making? To what extent?
- 2.21 How is social media affecting the destination wedding market in Thailand?

Destination Wedding in Thailand and competitors

- 2.22 In your opinion, what are the reasons that the couples chose to get married in Thailand instead of their home countries?
- 2.23 What are the competitive advantages that Thailand has over other countries?
- 2.24 What are the critical successes that Thailand has had and Thailand's wedding industry should maintain it?
- 2.25 Is there a weakness in Thailand's wedding industry that should be improved?

2.26 Do you have any idea of other countries with an excellent destination wedding?

What do you think about those countries?

What are the pros and cons of those countries that Thailand should be aware of?

Destination Wedding in Thailand and governmental support

2.27 Can you describe briefly how the Destination wedding industry in Thailand has been in the last few years? Growth? Decrease?

2.28 What are the factors that have an impact on the wedding tourism industry in Thailand?

2.29 Have you seen or participated with any Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)'s campaign regarding the wedding tourism segment?

2.30 How have TAT or the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) been helping the industry?

What is your opinion toward their Thailand Tourism Plan?

2.31 In your opinion, does TAT or the MOTS' initiation in Thailand's tourism affect wedding tourism? To what extent?

2.32 Is there anything that TAT or MOTS should be improving in order to increase the growth in Thailand's wedding tourism?

2.33 How do you see the wedding tourism industry in Thailand in the next few years?

APPENDIX C

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE: WEDDING CELEBRANT

Introduction:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your time today. Our discussion today will be about mainly about the wedding tourism industry in Thailand. The interview should take less than an hour.

The session today will be recorded for the educational purpose since all details of the interview are very important for the research. However, all the responses will be kept confidential, and I will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent.

Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to, and you may end the interview at any time.

General Question

- 3.1 What is your name? Position?
- 3.2 From which segment of the wedding industry are you from?
Which company are you from?
What are the services that you are providing?

Marketing and promotion

- 3.3 Do you have a particular marketing and promotion plan to capture the destination wedding customers? If so, what is it?
- 3.4 Do you attend any wedding convention? Why? How was it?
- 3.5 Do you join any collaboration with other organization to create a bundle package? Why? How was it?
- 3.6 Do you use social media to communicate with your customers? Why? How was it?
- 3.7 Does social media have any impact on your customers' decision making? To what extent?
- 3.8 How is social media affecting the destination wedding market in Thailand?

Destination Wedding in Thailand and competitors

- 3.9 In your opinion, what are the reasons that the couples chose to get married in Thailand instead of their home countries?
- 3.10 What are the competitive advantages that your airline has over other countries?
- 3.11 What are the critical successes that Thailand has had and Thailand's wedding industry should maintain it?
- 3.12 Is there a weakness in Thailand's wedding industry that should be improved?

Destination Wedding in Thailand and governmental supports

- 3.13 Have you seen or participated with any Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)'s campaign regarding the wedding tourism segment?
- 3.14 How have TAT or the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) been helping the industry?
What is your opinion toward their Thailand Tourism Plan?
- 3.15 In your opinion, does TAT or the MOTS' initiation in Thailand's tourism affect wedding tourism? To what extent?
- 3.16 Is there anything that TAT or MOTS should be improving in order to increase the growth in Thailand's wedding tourism?
- 3.17 How do you see the **tourism** industry in Thailand in the next few years?
- 3.18 How do you see the **wedding tourism** industry in Thailand in the next few years

APPENDIX D

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE: TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

Introduction:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your time today. Our discussion today will be about mainly about the wedding tourism industry in Thailand. The interview should take less than an hour.

The session today will be recorded for the educational purpose since all details of the interview are very important for the research. However, all the responses will be kept confidential, and I will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent.

Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to, and you may end the interview at any time.

General Questions

- 4.1 What is your name?
- 4.2 Where do you work? Position?

Customers

- 4.3 Where do your customers come from? What are the segments of your customers?
Which nationality contributes to your income the most in 2018?
- 4.4 How many couples come to Thailand for their wedding annually?
- 4.5 What is the expected number of couple coming to Thailand in 2019?
- 4.6 What is the average revenue per wedding?
- 4.7 What is the revenue in 2018?
- 4.8 What is the expected revenue in 2019?
- 4.9 How has the wedding industry in Thailand changed over the years?
Do you need to adopt and what are the adaptations that you will need to do?
- 4.10 What is the potential in the gay wedding market?

Marketing and promotion

- 4.11 What is the tourism campaign that Thailand has been doing in the past?
- 4.12 How is Wedding segment integrated into the tourism campaign?
- 4.13 What is your marketing and promotion plan to capture the destination wedding customers?
- 4.14 Convention? Events?
- 4.15 Advertising? Media?
- 4.16 Any collaboration with other organization to create a bundle package?
- 4.17 Do you use social media to communicate with your customers? Why? How was it?
- 4.18 How is social media affecting the destination wedding market in Thailand?
- 4.19 In your opinion, what are the reasons that the couples chose to get married in Thailand instead of their home countries?
- 4.20 What are the competitive advantages that Thailand has over other countries?
- 4.21 What are the critical successes that Thailand has had and Thailand's wedding industry should maintain it?
- 4.22 Is there a weakness in Thailand's wedding industry that should be improved?

Destination Wedding in Thailand

- 4.23 Do you have any idea of other countries with an excellent destination wedding?
What do you think about those countries?
What are the pros and cons of those countries that Thailand should be aware of?
- 4.24 Can you describe briefly how the Destination wedding industry in Thailand has been in the last few years? Growth? Decrease?
- 4.25 What are the factors that have an impact on the wedding tourism industry in Thailand?
- 4.26 How have TAT or the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) been helping the industry?

- 4.27 In your opinion, does TAT or the MOTS' initiation in Thailand's tourism affect wedding tourism? To what extent?
- 4.28 Is there anything that TAT or MOTS is developing in order to increase the growth in Thailand's wedding tourism?
- How do you see the wedding tourism industry in Thailand in the next few years?



APPENDIX E

KEY VARIABLES OF THE RESEARCH

Independent variables	Dependent variables
1. The industry structure 2. Competitive landscape 3. National policy 4. Governmental supports 5. Market trends 6. Market growth	1. Collective numbers of tourists in Thailand's wedding tourism 2. Attitude and opinions of the organizations or institutes related to the wedding tourism industry in Thailand 3. The expected growth of the wedding tourism market in Thailand.

APPENDIX F

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SAMPLINGS

CATEGORY	COMPANY	LOCATION
Wedding Planner	1. Wedding Planner A	Samui
	2. Wedding Planner B	Phuket
	3. Wedding Planner C	Phuket
	4. Wedding Planner D	Phuket
Indian Wedding Planner	4. Wedding Planner E	Bangkok
	5. Wedding Planner F	Bangkok
Hotel	6. Hotel X	Phuket
	7. Hotel Y	Phuket
	8. Hotel Z	Bangkok
Celebrants	10. Celebrant M	Bangkok
	11. Celebrant N	Phuket
Governmental Organization	12. Tourism Authority of Thailand	Bangkok

Note: The information shown in this table preferred to be confidential for the further benefit of the service providers.

BIOGRAPHY

Name Miss Lolita How-Choong

Date of Birth November 15, 1990

Educational Attainment 2019: Graduate

Work Position Sernior Marketing Executive

Publications

APA Style

Work Experiences

2017 – 2018: Senior Marketing Executive
Jaspal Company Limited (Lyn Around)

2016 – 2017: Senior Marketing Executive
NYLON Thailand

2015 – 2017: Assistant to Director of Sales
Thai-German Products Public Company Limited