

More Than a Ceremony: Destination Wedding Experiences and Satisfaction Outcomes

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Abstract

Tourism has been recognized as having a significant impact on nations' economic and social circumstances. The diversification and long-term growth of global tourism depend heavily on niche markets. As overseas travel grew more convenient and affordable toward the latter of the 20th century, the idea of destination weddings gained popularity. It is a gathering of people who leave their hometown or travel to celebrate a certain event with their friends and family. The objective of this study is to examine how couples' socioeconomic status and demographic makeup influence the link between their overall happiness and their destination wedding experience. The results show that pull variables, such as venue quality, cost, and service quality, have a greater impact on overall happiness even when couples choose destination weddings due to emotional and experience-based motives (push factors). The study supports destination wedding tourism by expanding market reach and improving service quality by providing useful data that planners and tourism boards may utilize to customize experiences based on sociodemographic segmentation.

Keywords- Destination, Wedding, Tourism, Experience, Socio-demographic

1. Introduction

Tourism has been realized to contribute vitally to countries in their economic and social scenarios. Niche tourism markets are of critical importance to diversification and sustainable development of world tourism (Robinson & Novelli, 2007). Unlike mass tourism, which aims at a big market, niche tourism serves small segments of the market with specialized experiences tailor-made to suit the unique preferences or special needs of certain groups of travellers. These value-added specialization does not only benefit tourist experiences but also helps preserve and further the cultural, environmental, and social assets. Tourism represents a substantial share of the gross domestic product and different types of jobs (Panfilov & Vernikova, 2020). Tourism not only creates capital investment and foreign exchange but also transfers innovation, making it the fundamental factor for both local economic development and social

upliftment in various regions of the world (Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). However, many of the economic benefits associated with tourism are also accompanied by challenging nuances that associate the potential for capital outflow to multinational enterprises, reducing the potential for wealth retention in the local economy, thus leaving open the issues over sustainability and common growth. Further, social and cultural impacts of tourism reach far beyond any monetary indicators to have positive and negative effects on community identity, social cohesion, and culture preservation, thus making the case for a balanced approach in tourism management in order for all stakeholders to benefit from its transformational ability. Tourism is now an industry very broad in activities and experiences, running from leisure travel to business ventures, cultural exchanges, and even destination weddings (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2018). Additionally, the complexity in tourism's effect calls for its being understood on the same plane as the

multidimensional activity serving not only as a major income generator but also affecting capital investment, employment opportunity, and social dynamics within communities, which are basic to sustainable development (Duffield, 1982). No single country can even confine the effects of the tourism industry, which ranks among the biggest businesses in the world. In 2018, the treasure of tourism to the world economy reached \$8.8 trillion, accounting for 10.4% of the total world GDP (Panfilov & Vernikova, 2020). The sector also underpins significant employment opportunities through solid growth, estimated at about 319 million jobs worldwide. This is to reiterate that tourism not only generates economic wealth but also increases livelihoods (Panfilov & Vernikova, 2020; Kar & Sahoo, 2016). Several niche tourists have turned out to be very valuable to the local economy, ranging from ecotourism to adventure tourism, cultural tourism, wedding tourism, and medical tourism. Couples now choose often-exotic or culturally-significant locations in which to celebrate their nuptials, therefore turning the event into an extended vacation for themselves and their guests. In the past years, it has grown tremendously because of the demands of various customers for unique wedding events and the allure of combining wedding and honeymoon destinations, more so because of the ease with which one can travel around the world (del Chiappa & Fortezza, 2015).

Destination weddings are a concept that started not long ago, only creating a splash at the end of the 20th century, where international travel became easier and cheaper. It refers to a group of individuals who travel or leave their home region to celebrate a particular occasion with their loved ones and friends (Peste et al. 2017). Micallef (2017) has defined such a wedding as a once-in-a-lifetime event experience in which couples go above and beyond to produce a one-of-a-kind event. When a couple wants to arrange a destination wedding, they want something exotic, intimate, unique, unforgettable, and, finally, more inexpensive in terms of cost (Peste et al, 2017). From an economic point of view, destination wedding tourism is a prospective and high-spending market for the tourism industry and vastly helps in the improvement of local economies. All the afore-

mentioned make the demand for most of the services to be delivered, such as event planning, setting up accommodations, transport, catering, and entertainment, thus benefiting various local businesses from florists to photographers with a bump of wedding parties, causing the spending to have a ripple effect on the economy of the destination as a whole (George, 2024). The rise of destination weddings is due to a cultural shift in how people perceive the wedding ceremony as a whole. This could be also due to shifting societal standards, which encourage couples to choose beautiful places and unique approaches for their wedding day (Carter & Duncan, 2017). As migration is increasing at a rapid pace these days, and wedding ceremonies are becoming important symbols of unity for the families of both brides and grooms who have been separated from their loved ones, this celebration can bring their origins and traditions closer together (Etemaddar, et al., 2018). Destination weddings represent one of the leading niches within a set of tourism components integrated with transport, hospitality, and event management. A place for destination weddings could be selected because of its scenic beauty, cultural significance, or personal importance for the couple. Contributing factors leading to a rise in destination weddings are globalization, social networking, and greater and easier access to international travel (Mylonas et al., 2024). Most couples are going out of their local borders in search of the most ideal setting for this very special day, where pictures and exotic destinations offer stunning backdrops with distinct experiences. This research offers both an empirical and methodological contribution within the conceptual fields of tourist perception. The study here would attempt to analyse the moderating role of socio-economic and demographic profile of couples on their relationship between destination wedding experience and overall satisfaction.

2. Review of Literature

Selecting a wedding location is one of the most significant decisions a couple will make in their lives, and it is often impacted by a number of psychological factors, such as social standing, emotional attachment to particular locations,

motivational considerations for identity expression, and a desire for uniqueness. Scholars and professionals interested in destination wedding tourism may find it helpful to comprehend these psychological factors.

One important psychological factor influencing the choice of destination wedding is identity expression. In many ways, couples want their wedding to be a reflection of their shared experiences, beliefs, and personalities. It is frequently noted that, in contrast to traditional marriages, vacation weddings provide more colorful declarations of identity (Roche & Hohmann, 2013). A couple's connection, including their love of travel, cultural history, or even significant life events, might be shown through meaningful locations. For them and their visitors, personalization is a memory rather than merely a statement. The requirement for uniqueness is another crucial element in destination wedding planning. Alternatives to conventional wedding locations and practices are becoming more and more popular among couples. To make their wedding special and unforgettable, the majority of them pick a far-flung or obscure site. Tian, et al., (2021) claim that the need for originality trumps all other factors in many consumer decisions, especially when choosing a wedding location. Due to this necessity, unique locations that provide experiences that are impossible to replicate in more conventional settings are chosen for destination weddings. Social media culture, which encourages couples to broadcast their wedding experiences with the world, usually feeds this psychological drive. When making decisions, emotional ties to certain places are crucial. This might be a favorite vacation area, the place where two individuals first met, or a place that links them to their ancestors or culture. Moy et al., (2017) asserts that the selection of wedding locations is likely to be influenced by an emotional bond. It was found that people saw a location more favorably and were more inclined to pick it above other possibilities if they had a greater emotional relationship to it. For the couple and their guests, this emotional depth frequently makes the wedding event even more significant and unforgettable.

Socioeconomic strata and prestige cues were connected with certain wedding settings, influencing their selections. Destination weddings are known for their exclusivity and grandeur. They might provide the couple a prominent place in their social circles in this way. The feeling of prestige attached to a wedding location is often the main driving force behind the choice, especially for couples who see the wedding as a chance to show off their social standing, claim researchers Carter and Duncan (2017). Famous locations like Paris, the Maldives, and Santorini are picked for their prestige rather than their natural beauty. Cultural norms and expectations that a wedding in an opulent or exotic setting represents the couple's prosperity and social standing have been spawned by this quest for prestige.

Cultural influences and traditions can also be incorporated into the psychological side of destination wedding decisions. In many cultures, marriage is more than just two people; it is a social event that identifies the community's ideals and traditions. For example, couples from India will strive to reserve the destination in such a way that rituals take place in a culturally significant site, a place where all traditional wedding ceremonies can be performed, such as Udaipur or Jaipur (George, 2024). Couples who want to make a statement in both class and culture may choose destinations that reflect their cultural background. Social media and influencers have a significant impact on the psychological variables influencing destination wedding decisions. Instagram and Pinterest offer limitless inspiration for wedding venues, usually in idyllic settings that appeal to most couples' needs for originality and distinction. Destination wedding influencers may be one of the elements influencing couples' decisions, setting trends and promoting new, desired places. According to Maheshwari, (2018), social media has a significant impact on customer views and choices, particularly for weddings. This study suggests that exposure to destination wedding content on social media is likely to increase the appeal of locales and influence final decisions made by couples. A variety of psychological elements, including the desire for identity expression, originality, emotional

connections, and social standing, heavily impact wedding destination selection. These characteristics help to explain consumer behaviour in terms of weddings and places. It has also been revealed that, as destination weddings continue to gain traction in one of the fastest growing markets, wedding planners, tourism marketers, and destination management organizations must incorporate these psychological drivers into their marketing campaigns to promote destinations and create wedding packages. Working in tandem with couples' psychological demands, destinations can assist them boost their chances of being picked for one of life's most important events. Pre-wedding planning is a key stage in the destination wedding process that necessitates extensive study, critical decision-making, and coordination. Circumstances under which a couple may choose a destination wedding include the location, the availability and legality of a wedding in the said country, or any other requirements imposed by the government, and local customs that must be followed when hosting a wedding (Daniels & Wosicki, 2020). A couple will also make arrangements for vendors, guest accommodations, and transportation. In order to help couples with their long-distance planning with less stress, this step mostly depends on the information and expert services offered at the destination. To manage expectations and make sure the big day goes successfully, the couple, the wedding coordinator, and the local providers must now communicate effectively. One of the main attractions for destination weddings is India's rich cultural legacy. This is due to the fact that visitors are frequently captivated by the nation's vibrant customs, rituals, and regional traditions, all of which enhance their satisfaction. Wedding tourism is enticing due to the uniqueness and genuineness of Indian wedding customs and ceremonies, which include intricate ceremonies, traditional attire, and local festivities. Vacationers who immerse themselves in the local culture and participate in more culturally immersive activities report feeling more satisfied and pleased (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016). In addition to that, cultural elements, such as local cuisine and traditional entertainment, would improve the wedding experience and boost

consumer satisfaction. Another important consideration is the qualities of the wedding site. The aesthetic appeal, facilities, and ambiance are among the elements considered while selecting a site. Venues that provide these benefits are highly sought after since destination weddings require stunning settings, upscale facilities, and sizable event spaces. In this sense, well-known Indian wedding locations like palaces in Rajasthan, Goan beaches, and Himachal Pradesh hill stations provide a unique charm and magnificence. Satisfaction is also determined by the venue's capacity to accommodate a large party while also providing all cooking and decorative services. Locations that employ regional architectural and design features to improve the wedding event's cultural authenticity and, consequently, guest pleasure fall into the second group. Himachal Pradesh is home to several well-known wedding locations. The state capital of Shimla is a well-liked travel destination because of its well-developed tourist infrastructure, pleasant temperature, and elegant historical background. The Oberoi Cecil and Wildflower Hall are renowned for their opulent weddings that offer stunning views of the surrounding valleys and mountains (Gubler & Glynn, 2008). Shimla's appeal as a wedding destination is increased by its accessibility by rail and road.

Another popular location is Manali, which is ideal for couples looking for an exciting combination of adventure and natural beauty due to its magnificent landscape and adventurous options. With a mix of traditional and contemporary settings, the Solang Valley and the Hadimba Temple are two of Manali's most sought-after wedding locations (Shabab, 2019). The town's proximity to the Beas River and Rohtang Pass provides additional breathtaking scenery for pre-wedding celebrations and photographs.

Dharamshala offers a distinctive cultural experience for wedding festivities because of its Tibetan heritage and the Dalai Lama's presence there. Weddings can take place in a serene yet thrilling setting because of the town's serene surroundings and attractions like the Dharamshala Cricket Stadium and the Norbulingka Institute (Condrolli,

2024). Dharamshala is a great location for weddings in Himachal Pradesh because of its natural beauty and cultural significance. Numerous studies on various aspects of destination wedding tourism, such as motivation, experience, and satisfaction, have been carried out in recent years. Nevertheless, there are some gaps in the literature, particularly when examining certain regional markets, such as Himachal Pradesh, which is becoming more and more popular as a wedding destination. The majority of study has concentrated on popular international travel destinations like Bali, Hawaii, and many European locations; little is known about the dynamics of untapped or developing markets. This is significant because cultural, regional, and infrastructure issues may have distinct effects on the reasons, experiences, and pleasure of individuals selecting a destination wedding in these expanding regions.

As a result, the following objective is established for the study. *To study the moderating role of socio-economic and demographic profile of couples on their relationship between destination wedding experience and overall satisfaction.* This objective investigates the ways in which sociodemographic factors, such as age, gender, income, education, and wedding budget, modify the association between overall satisfaction (the dependent variable) and destination wedding experience (the mediating variable). Additionally, it looks at how push and pull factors, independent variables affect the general experience and satisfaction levels of couples who decide to be married in Himachal Pradesh. In the next section the detailed method followed to arrive at the results of the study are discussed.

3. Research Methodology

The methods and materials used for conducting a study is of utmost importance as it can exhibit the levels of error and biases resulted. The study here undertakes a quantitative approach. A set of hypotheses based on the objectives would be established. As a part of the quantitative approach, the objectives of the study and the results derived from it would be quantified using the primary datasets collected in a continuous scale.

Sampling Population

A sample size was calculated to ensure robust statistical analysis using Cochran's formula. The proposed sample size for the study is 315 people, assuming a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and a 50% population percentage. The results are guaranteed to be trustworthy and representative of the intended audience thanks to this sample size.

To gather information, the researcher would use a self-administered questionnaire. The researcher may answer any questions the respondents had concerning the study by speaking with them directly. The questionnaire comprised standardized measures, presenting statements for respondents to provide their responses. It included guidance for respondents, and the researcher communicated with them, providing necessary information while maintaining confidentiality.

Sampling Method

The process of selecting the final group of respondents includes considering a non-probabilistic method. Here, the judgement sampling method is followed to select the final group of respondents.

Research Instrument

The instrument that is designed for the purpose of collecting data is that of a structured questionnaire. As the approach in the study is quantitative in nature and has involved a cross-sectional method of inquiry, the creation of an optimum instrument that investigated different aspects of couples choosing Himachal Pradesh as a Wedding Destination. The study uses existing literature from secondary sources extensively such as journal articles, books, reports and online resources to design the questionnaire.

There are a total of 10 factors and a total of 36 items, the use of a continuous scale in the form of a 5 point scale has been included. This scale helps in quantifying the results and utilising them to interpret using different advanced statistical methods. Moreover, a section investigating the demographic information of the respondents is provided in the beginning of the questionnaire.

Statistical Approach

The purpose of the study is to study the moderating role of socio-economic and demographic profile of couples on their relationship between destination wedding experience and overall satisfaction. To achieve this, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using AMOS to assess the relationships between various factors.

The detailed statistical analysis conducted is explained in the next section.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

As mentioned above there are a total of 315 responses collected for the purpose of the study. The process to be followed in analysing these datasets is to divide into sub-sections investigating each category of the respondents. But before that a demographic understanding about the respondents is provided below.

| Gender | | | | | |
|--------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 137 | 43.5 | 43.5 | 43.5 |
| | Female | 178 | 56.5 | 56.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The sample is composed of 43.5% male and 56.5% female respondents. This suggests that women are more actively involved in wedding planning and

decision-making, which validates the traditional notion that brides and their families have a significant role in wedding arrangements.

| Age | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| 18–24 years | 37 | 11.7 | 11.7 | 11.7 |
| 25–34 years | 111 | 35.2 | 35.2 | 47.0 |
| 35–44 years | 114 | 36.2 | 36.2 | 83.2 |
| 45–54 years | 38 | 12.1 | 12.1 | 95.2 |
| 55+ years | 15 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The majority of respondents (71.4%) are in the 25–44 age range, with 35.2% of them falling into the 25–34 age group and 36.2% into the 35–44 age group. This corresponds to the typical age range of

people getting married or organizing weddings. The very small proportion of respondents who were above 55 (4.8%) suggests that younger persons are more likely to plan weddings.

| Education Level | | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Undergraduate | 51 | 16.2 | 16.2 | 16.2 |
| | Graduate | 100 | 31.7 | 31.7 | 47.9 |
| | Post Graduate | 132 | 41.9 | 41.9 | 89.8 |
| | Doctoral | 32 | 10.2 | 10.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

With 41.9% having finished postgraduate courses and 31.7% possessing a graduate degree, the respondents are well educated. Furthermore, 10.2 percent of the participants hold a doctorate. This

implies that a well-educated population is drawn to destination weddings, maybe as a result of their exposure to international wedding styles and financial security.

| Income Level | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Less than 50000 | 39 | 12.4 | 12.4% | 12.4 |
| | 50001-100000 | 148 | 47.0 | 47.0% | 59.4 |
| | More than 100000 | 128 | 40.6 | 40.6% | 100.0 |
| | Total | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The income distribution shows that 87.6% of respondents earn more than Rs. 50,000 per month, and 40.6% earn more than Rs. 100,000 per month.

Higher-income groups are more likely to have destination weddings, which usually involve significant financial outlays, according to this financial stability.

| Wedding Budget | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Less than 10 lakhs | 85 | 27.0 | 27.0% | 27.0 |
| | 10-25 lakhs | 130 | 41.3 | 41.3% | 68.3 |
| | 25 -50 lakhs | 87 | 27.6 | 27.6% | 95.9 |
| | More than 50 lakhs | 13 | 4.1 | 4.1% | 100.0 |
| | Total | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

For their wedding, the majority of respondents (68.9%) have set aside a budget of between ₹10 and ₹50 lakhs. The most popular budget range is between ₹10 and 25 lakhs (41.3%), while ₹25 and

50 lakhs (27.6%) is not far behind. The market is dominated by mid-range and high-budget weddings, whereas ultra-luxury weddings are very rare, as just 4.1% of couples have set a budget surpassing ₹50 lakhs.

Prefer destination wedding over Local:

| Prefer destination wedding over local | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Yes | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

When asked if they would prefer a destination wedding over one in their hometown, all respondents (100%) indicated they had a terrific

time. This unanimous selection demonstrates the growing popularity of destination weddings, maybe due to their charm, gorgeous surroundings, and all-around experience.

How did you book the wedding?

| How did you book the wedding | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Through a travel agent | 78 | 24.8 | 24.8 | 24.8 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| | Through a tour operator | 70 | 22.2 | 22.2 | 47.0 |
| | Through a wedding planner based in host country | 167 | 53.0 | 53.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The significance of local knowledge in handling logistics is highlighted by the fact that over half (53%) of the respondents planned their wedding using a wedding planner situated in the host nation.

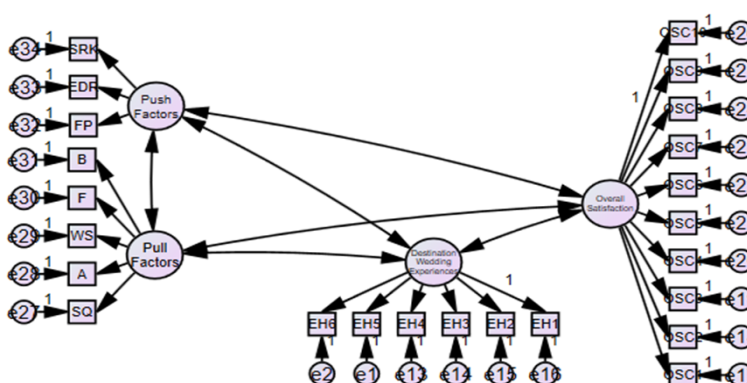
In contrast, 22.2% depended on a tour operator, and 24.8% hired a travel agency. It appears that couples prefer structured preparation to guarantee a smooth event, as seen by their dependence on professional wedding services.

How did you hear about the wedding destination?

| How did you hear about the wedding destination? | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Wedding fair | 34 | 10.8 | 10.8 | 10.8 |
| | Social Media | 164 | 52.1 | 52.1 | 62.9 |
| | Advertisements | 69 | 21.9 | 21.9 | 84.8 |
| | Word of mouth | 48 | 15.2 | 15.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 315 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Social media was the most important source of information, according to 52.1% of respondents, who claimed to have located their wedding venue on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest. Advertising (21.9%) and word-of-mouth recommendations (15.2%) were also significant, although wedding

fairs accounted for just 10.8%. This implies that social media and digital marketing have a significant role in influencing wedding trends and the decisions made by couples. To study the moderating role of socio-economic and demographic profile of couples on their relationship between destination wedding experience and overall satisfaction.



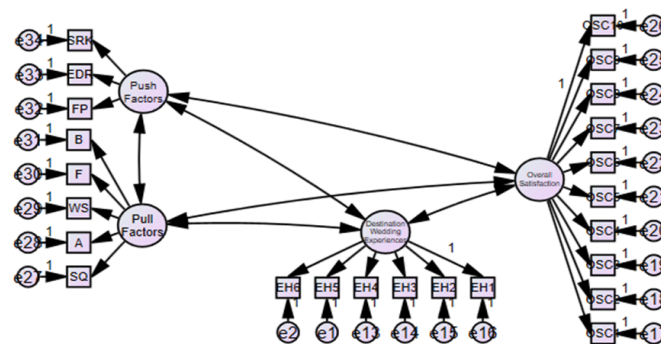
The model statistically and visually depicts how several independent variables (motivational factors) interact to impact the dependent variable, which is visitors' overall perceptions. It highlights how

important it is to focus on specific factors in order to positively influence travelers' experiences and viewpoints, such as offering opportunities for personal growth, establishing a connection with

nature, promoting health, and offering a place of escape.

Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

| | | | Estimate |
|----------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|----------|
| EH1 | <--- | Destination Wedding Experiences | .801 |
| EH2 | <--- | Destination Wedding Experiences | .883 |
| EH3 | <--- | Destination Wedding Experiences | .831 |
| EH4 | <--- | Destination Wedding Experiences | .810 |
| EH5 | <--- | Destination Wedding Experiences | .759 |
| EH6 | <--- | Destination Wedding Experiences | .830 |
| OSC10 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .512 |
| OSC9 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .017 |
| OSC8 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .051 |
| OSC7 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .044 |
| OSC6 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .050 |
| OSC5 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .010 |
| OSC4 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .039 |
| OSC3 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .057 |
| OSC2 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .037 |
| OSC1 | <--- | Overall Satisfaction | .039 |
| Services and Quality | <--- | Pull Factors | .897 |
| Atmosphere | <--- | Pull Factors | .915 |
| Wedding Services | <--- | Pull Factors | .906 |
| Facilities | <--- | Pull Factors | .902 |
| Budget | <--- | Pull Factors | .946 |
| Fulfilling Prestige | <--- | Push Factors | .902 |
| Escaping from daily routine | <--- | Push Factors | .922 |
| Seeking Relaxation and Knowledge | <--- | Push Factors | .009 |



Path Diagram 1

The standardised regression weights show a strong positive correlation between overall satisfaction and destination wedding experiences. Couples that had

a positive wedding experience are far more satisfied with their decision, according to estimates for a number of experience-related characteristics (EH1–

EH6), which range from 0.759 to 0.883. Of them, EH2 (0.883) and EH3 (0.831) have the biggest effects, suggesting that specific elements of the wedding experience play a significant role in determining satisfaction.

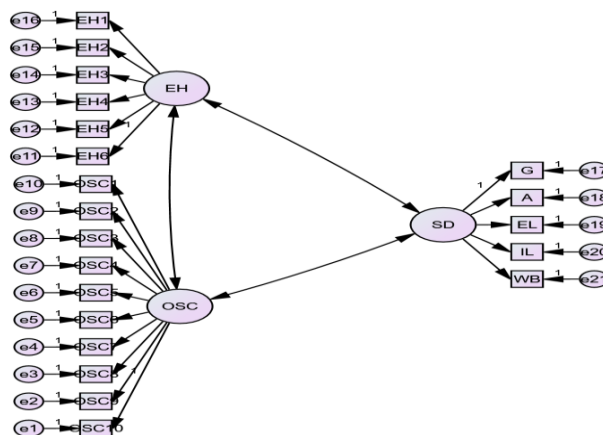
However, there are differences in the association between overall satisfaction and its indicators (OSC1 to OSC10). The estimates, which vary from 0.010 to 0.511, show that although the wedding experience has a considerable impact on some dimensions of satisfaction, other factors, such as individual preferences or outside circumstances, may have a greater impact. Both pull and push variables are important in determining how the wedding experience is shaped overall. Regression estimates, on the other hand, show that pull factors—which include things like services, atmosphere, facilities, budget, and wedding services—have a marginally greater impact than push factors, which include things like escaping routine, finding relaxation, and achieving prestige. Among the pull factors, budget (0.946) is the most significant predictor, underscoring the importance of financial concerns in influencing the wedding experience. Couples place a great importance on

affordable yet well-designed flowers to ensure an unforgettable celebration. Atmosphere (0.915) and wedding services (0.906) rank second and third, respectively, highlighting the significance of scenic beauty and faultless event implementation. These elements significantly affect how satisfied the couple is with their chosen location. The importance of facilities (0.902) and service quality (0.897) is particularly noteworthy, emphasizing the need for spotless locations, comfortable accommodations, and skilled event coordination to enhance the overall experience.

However, push factors also play a considerable role, even though to a slightly lesser degree. The two that have the greatest influence are escaping from everyday routine (0.922) and fulfilling prestige (0.902), indicating that couples choose a destination wedding in Himachal Pradesh not just for leisure but also for the status and social recognition that come with the occasion. However, the impact of seeking knowledge and relaxation (0.009) is minimal, suggesting that educational experiences or personal development are not the main drivers of wedding destination choice.

| | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| Destination Wedding Experiences | .481 | .057 | 8.401 | *** |
| Overall Satisfaction | .364 | .029 | 12.530 | *** |
| Pull Factors | .932 | | | |
| Push Factors | 1.011 | | | |
| e16 | .268 | .025 | 10.781 | *** |
| e15 | .133 | .015 | 9.035 | *** |
| e14 | .182 | .018 | 10.348 | *** |
| e13 | .197 | .019 | 10.670 | *** |
| e1 | .266 | .024 | 11.206 | *** |
| e2 | .197 | .019 | 10.355 | *** |
| e26 | 1.026 | .082 | 12.530 | *** |
| e25 | .627 | .050 | 12.530 | *** |
| e24 | .572 | .046 | 12.530 | *** |
| e23 | .586 | .047 | 12.530 | *** |
| e22 | .604 | .048 | 12.530 | *** |
| e21 | .748 | .060 | 12.530 | *** |
| e20 | .666 | .053 | 12.530 | *** |
| e19 | .619 | .049 | 12.530 | *** |
| e18 | .679 | .054 | 12.530 | *** |
| e17 | .634 | .051 | 12.530 | *** |
| e27 | .492 | .045 | 10.932 | *** |
| e28 | .343 | .033 | 10.537 | *** |
| e29 | .415 | .039 | 10.756 | *** |

| | | | | |
|-----|------|------|--------|-----|
| e30 | .455 | .042 | 10.832 | *** |
| e31 | .232 | .025 | 9.191 | *** |
| e32 | .408 | .043 | 9.443 | *** |
| e33 | .390 | .047 | 8.267 | *** |
| e34 | .788 | .063 | 12.530 | *** |



Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

| | | | Estimate |
|-----------------|------|-----|----------|
| OSC10 | <--- | OSC | .894 |
| OSC9 | <--- | OSC | .809 |
| OSC8 | <--- | OSC | .865 |
| OSC7 | <--- | OSC | .893 |
| OSC6 | <--- | OSC | .990 |
| OSC5 | <--- | OSC | .863 |
| OSC4 | <--- | OSC | .231 |
| OSC3 | <--- | OSC | .210 |
| OSC2 | <--- | OSC | .268 |
| OSC1 | <--- | OSC | .197 |
| EH6 | <--- | EH | .866 |
| EH5 | <--- | EH | .744 |
| EH4 | <--- | EH | .809 |
| EH3 | <--- | EH | .854 |
| EH2 | <--- | EH | .986 |
| EH1 | <--- | EH | .823 |
| Gender | <--- | SD | .757 |
| Age | <--- | SD | .150 |
| Education Level | <--- | SD | .031 |
| Income Level | <--- | SD | .255 |
| Wedding Budget | <--- | SD | .156 |

The analysis also explores how socio-demographic factors (SD) influence the relationship between wedding experiences and overall satisfaction. The

strongest mediator among these variables is gender (0.757), reflecting that men and women have a considerable difference in satisfaction. Such

inconsistency may be due to varying expectations for destination weddings and varying levels of involvement in wedding planning. Budget for the wedding (0.156) and level of income (0.255) are significant factors as well, implying that couples with higher incomes tend to have a more satisfactory wedding experience, which increases satisfaction. Age (0.150) affects moderately, indicating that different age segments hold different views and priorities regarding wedding experiences. For instance, young couples might give larger value to adventure and social image, while older couples might opt for comfort and service quality. But education level (0.031) affects the least, indicating that a person's education level has no noticeable influence on the connection between general pleasure and wedding experience.

5. Discussion

According to Dwyer et al., (2005), weddings are unique occasions that commemorate a significant turning point in people's lives. Family members get together to celebrate the "to be married" couple's momentous occasion. Due to their high expenses, traditional weddings are becoming less popular (Schumann & Amado, 2010). For people who cannot afford to spend a lot of money on their wedding day, overseas weddings are becoming more and more popular as an alternative to pricey traditional weddings. Traditional weddings typically spend a major portion of their budget on the reception, with additional costs for the honeymoon. An overseas wedding is a two-for-one idea, where the couple spends so much money on the wedding and honeymoon that the total cost is nearly equal to the cost of the honeymoon alone. Due to socioeconomic developments in modern society, wedding travel is now seen as a significant component of the tourist sector, with Bali, Seychelles, Maldives, Phuket, Mauritius, and other exotic wedding locations being the most recommended (Moir, et al., 2011). Nowadays, exotic away weddings and the packaging designed for them are seen to be the most stylish method to provide a wonderful wedding experience.

Destination wedding tourism represents one of the most dynamic niche areas under the broad umbrella

of tourism simply because it merges the traditional components of a wedding and the concept of travel to unique, usually exotic locations (Sharma et al., 2025). This kind of tourism allows couples to act out their joining in places that can bear personal, cultural, or aesthetic relevance, very far from the home grounds of the couples, thus making a wedding a memorable, long-lasting celebration. In simple terms, destination wedding is a technique that involves traveling to another location for the wedding ceremony (de Mendonca, 2020). The normal scenario in a destination wedding is where the couple, whose immediate families, and guests gather after traveling for a ceremony taking place outside their hometown (Bertella, 2018). One thing really appealing about a destination wedding is the chance to roll in the honeymoon and the wedding into one at one great setting: on the beach, in the mountains, or in a historic city. Del Chiappa and Fortezza, (2014) point out that these sorts of weddings are indeed a combination of romance and spirit of adventure and especially they know the point of cultural insight, which could be their reason for selecting a destination wedding. The place chosen reflects the couple's desire. It can be an isolated island, a city or a quiet countryside, anything of the sort. The wedding tourism business also covers events like honeymoons and vow renewals (Pereira et al., 2022).

The results show that while push and pull variables are both important in determining the wedding experience, pull factors seem to have a somewhat greater impact. Couples' emotional and psychological well-being is significantly impacted by their desire for status and a break from their daily routine. However, outside variables like venue amenities, financial concerns, and service standards have almost perfect predictive power over the whole experience. The exclusivity and prestige of a Himachal Pradesh wedding should be emphasized in marketing campaigns, but in order to increase customer satisfaction, wedding planners and tourism authorities also need to concentrate on upholding high service standards, upgrading facilities, and providing affordable packages.

6. Implications

Theoretical Implications - This study enhances the existing literature on destination wedding tourism by applying the push-pull motivation framework to wedding travel. The results indicate that although couples are initially driven by psychological and emotional push factors like prestige, escape from routine, and the pursuit of unique experiences, their overall satisfaction is predominantly affected by destination-specific pull factors such as venue quality, budget consideration, quality of service, ambiance, and amenities. This discovery enhances current tourism motivation theories by emphasizing that motivating drivers and satisfaction determinants are not inherently the same. The study enhances wedding tourism literature by integrating socio-demographic indicators as moderating variables in the association between destination wedding experiences and overall satisfaction. The considerable impact of gender, income, age, and wedding budget indicates that destination wedding experiences are not similarly perceived among client segments. This study expands the geographical reach of destination wedding research by emphasizing Himachal Pradesh as an emerging wedding destination, contrasting with the conventional focus on established international locales such as Bali, Mauritius, the Maldives, and various European wedding venues.

Practical Implications - The results offer significant insights for destination management organizations, wedding planners, hospitality providers, and tourism policymakers. Given that pull variables emerged as the most significant determinants of satisfaction, stakeholders ought to focus enhancements in venue quality, hospitality services, housing standards, transit amenities, and event management competencies. Wedding planners should provide tailored wedding packages aimed at various income brackets and budget classifications, thereby improving accessibility and client happiness. The pre-eminence of social media as a conduit for destination awareness indicates that tourism marketers ought to allocate resources towards digital marketing initiatives, influencer collaborations, and visually captivating material to entice potential couples. Furthermore, the moderating influence of socio-demographic

parameters underscores the necessity for market segmentation tactics that address diverse preferences among different age groups, genders, and economic brackets. Tourism officials in Himachal Pradesh may enhance the state's status as a competitive destination wedding hub by fortifying destination branding, upgrading infrastructure, and promoting public-private collaborations. These measures can enhance tourist influx, elevate tourism revenue, and promote sustainable regional development.

7. Conclusion

Destination wedding tourism is one of the most vibrant subcategories within the larger tourist industry because it combines the customs of a wedding with the idea of visiting unusual, sometimes far-flung places. As overseas travel grew more convenient and affordable toward the latter of the 20th century, the idea of destination weddings gained popularity. It is a gathering of people who leave their hometown or travel to celebrate a certain event with their friends and family. The goal of this study is to examine how couples' socioeconomic status and demographic makeup influence the link between their overall happiness and their destination wedding experience. According to the research, pull variables like venue quality, cost, and service quality have a greater impact on overall happiness even if couples choose destination weddings due to emotional and experience-based incentives (push factors). The study supports destination wedding tourism by expanding market reach and improving service quality by providing useful data that planners and tourism boards may utilize to customize experiences based on sociodemographic segmentation.

The study's conclusions shed light on the changing dynamics of destination wedding tourism, where socioeconomic and demographic traits of couples have a significant impact on the interaction between individual expectations and real-world experiences. The study demonstrates that although couples choose destination weddings for emotional reasons and status reasons, external pull factors like venue quality, cost, and service standards have a greater influence on satisfaction.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare

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