

THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE WEDDING PROCESS OF THE HOKKIEN TRIBE IN MEDAN IN THE PRESENT DAY

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Received : 27 February 2025

Published : 28 March 2025

Revised : 10 March 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijerlas.v5i2.3860>

Accepted : 21 March 2025

Publish link : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/IJERLAS>

Abstract

Marriage is a historic event in human life that is always eagerly awaited. On that happy day, two hearts that are united want to share their happiness with everyone by celebrating it in a special way. The celebration can be a simple party with only a few dozen guests, or a lavish party attended by hundreds or even thousands of people (Widhardin, 2010). Simple or luxurious, every couple certainly wants their wedding to run smoothly and leave a million memories (Widhardin, 2010). Therefore, to meet their expectations, careful planning is necessary, and a series of preparations need to be carried out. However, busy careers take up more of their time, leaving little left to take care of the various needs of the wedding party: renting a venue, wedding dress, catering, designer, invitations, and so on. Finally, the bride and groom and their respective parents must seek help from other parties. This is where the role of a wedding organizer is needed. This study uses qualitative methods. Data collection was conducted through interviews with several wedding organizers and elders.

Keywords: *Marriage, wedding event, wedding organizer*

Introduction

According to (Noor, 2013), an event is an activity held to commemorate important things throughout human life, either individually or in groups bound by custom, culture, tradition and religion, held for a specific purpose and involving the community environment held at a specific time. The Chinese ethnic group is the largest immigrant ethnic group to settle in Indonesia. As a result of their settlement in Indonesia, they carry out all activities, from pursuing education, trading to marrying in Indonesia, until they have descendants who are commonly called Chinese (中华人: Chinese People). The presence of Chinese communities is often found in city centers and corners of the city. One of the indigenous Chinese communities in Indonesia is the Hokkien Tribe (福建人: Hokkien people). Within the Chinese community itself, there are many tribes including the Hokkien, Teochiu, Hakka, Hai Liok Hong, etc. In Mandarin, these tribes refer to the Chinese community with the term Tangren (唐人; Tang People). Among these tribes, the Hokkien Tribe is one of the most dominant tribes in Indonesia (Herdawan, 2020). Chinese are one of Indonesia's ethnic groups with a unique and rich culture. However, Chinese culture is fading, leading Chinese Indonesians to feel less and less like native Indonesians (Tracy, 2016).

Theoretical review

Marriage is a solemn promise of marriage between two people with the intention of formalizing the marriage bond according to religious and legal norms. Wedding ceremonies vary widely, depending on tradition, ethnicity, religion, nation, culture, and social class. Marriage is a significant human event and should be held sacred. In modern times, most prospective brides and grooms hold a wedding reception to celebrate this important event (Deti, 2018). Here are some steps that must be taken to prepare for a wedding party:

1. Concepting

A wedding concept is a preliminary plan or design designed to organize a party (Indivara, 2007). This ranges from visible concepts such as the color of the decorations and the wedding dress to less visible concepts such as romantic, elegant,

and other nuances. This concept should be prepared from the start, as it forms the foundation of the wedding (Indivara, 2007). It would be best if this concept reflected our tastes and character (Indivara, 2007).

2. Pre-wedding Preparation

After finalizing the concept, we begin forming a committee. This committee is formed to help ensure the smooth running of the wedding. If we use a wedding organizer (WO), the committee's workload is slightly simplified. This committee consists of family and close relatives. Essentially, whether we use a WO or not, a committee is still formed to help ensure the event runs smoothly. (Indivara, 2007).

3. Wedding Day

The big day is the most awaited moment for the bride and groom, because all preparations have been made to ensure the smooth running of the big day. Make sure everything is in order by double-checking the vendors, namely ensuring they stick to the schedule and time that was previously agreed upon. (Indivara, 2007).

4. After The Wedding

People who attend an event tend to want to go home immediately after it's over, only thinking about their own needs. Therefore, we must have a team that takes care of all wedding-related matters, such as the guest book, red envelopes or gifts from invited guests, remaining souvenirs, bridal accessories like jewelry, venue cleanup, equipment, etc.

Chinese Wedding Event Management

As part of Indonesian society, the Chinese community has unique customs and traditions. An important marriage requirement is the prohibition against marrying a Chinese person from the same clan (she). Prospective brides and grooms from the same clan (she) are considered blood relatives, and this can negatively impact future offspring (Sugiasuti, Natasya Yunita, 2003: 341-342). In a Chinese wedding, there are several traditions that will be carried out before the wedding or blessing, namely, the proposal procession, the sangjit procession, the engagement procession, the procession of determining a good time to hold the wedding, the procession of installing bed sheets, the procession of praying cia tao, and the tea pai ceremony. *Tea Pai ceremony* is a tradition in Chinese weddings which aims to respect older people. During the Tea Pai ceremony, the bride and groom will offer tea to their family members, starting from the oldest to the youngest. Conversely, the family members who receive the tea will give the couple gifts, either red envelopes or jewelry. The tea ceremony usually begins with the groom's family, going from oldest to youngest, and then continues with the bride's family. The Tea Pai event will usually be led by an MC or Wedding Organizer. During the tea service, the WO team will prepare tea to be given to the bride and groom in two small cups, usually red. At the end of the Tea Pai ceremony, the bride and groom will also give red envelopes to unmarried family members who came to the Tea Pai event. Usually, they will be called one by one to come forward to the Tea Pai area and be given red envelopes. (TA Indonesia Chinese Wedding Journal in Bali).

Research methods

The author uses a qualitative research method with direct interviews with several wedding organizers, sources who truly understand Chinese traditional weddings, bridal couples and workers in the wedding sector, such as MC (Master of Ceremony), ushers, venue marketing, traditional elders (astrologists). In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method. According to Sugiyono (2013), qualitative research can be used to examine temporary problems that will develop once the researcher has entered the field to conduct the research. Qualitative research is an appropriate research method because the research being studied is a discussion that will change and develop over time according to the existing social situation. The technique used in this study was a nonprobability sampling technique, namely snowball sampling. According to Sugiyono (2013), snowball sampling is a sampling technique that initially selects a small sample size, then increases it. The researcher chose snowball sampling because in determining the sample, the researcher initially only selected one or two people. However, because the data obtained was deemed incomplete, the researcher sought other people to complete the data. Definitions of qualitative research can be found in many literatures. Among others, (Yusof & Ali, 2011) defines qualitative research as:

Any investigation which does not make use of statistical procedures is called “qualitative” now days, as if this were a quality label in itself.

The definition (Yusof & Ali, 2011) emphasizes the absence of statistical tools in qualitative research. This is intended to simplify the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods, as quantitative methods rely on calculations and statistical analysis procedures. Meanwhile, qualitative methods emphasize observing phenomena and delving deeper into the substance and meaning of those phenomena. The analysis and clarity of qualitative research are greatly influenced by the power of the words and sentences used. Therefore, it can be concluded that the focus of qualitative research is on the process and the interpretation of its results. Qualitative research focuses more on human elements, objects, and institutions, as well as the relationships or interactions between these elements, in an effort to understand an event, behavior, or phenomenon (Basri, 2014).

Results and Discussion

1. Planning

Planning According to AnyNoor, planning is a basic management function that involves deciding beforehand what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and who will do it. Planning includes conceptualization, scheduling, venue surveys, and team selection. From my research, planning for a Chinese wedding involves the initial stages. First, both families must agree. Typically, the bride and groom will plan a meal together, including their parents, to get to know each other better. This is where the discussion about their children's wedding plans will take place.

a) Khua Jit

Khua Jit (determining the date) is included in planning because it can be categorized as scheduling.

Although it is known that men are highly respected in Chinese tradition, when it comes to marriage and choosing a wedding date, women are considered first. In general, the bride's birth date is looked at first and considered first, followed by the groom and other family members. A famous Chinese proverb (子靠出生時 . 女靠行嫁年) (Zi kào chūshēng shí. Nǚ kào xíng jià nián) says, “A man can have a better life depending on his birth date, while a woman can have a better life depending on her marriage date.” Therefore, the importance of choosing an auspicious date for marriage depends greatly on how the relationship with the woman is.

b) Organizing

Organizing is the process of allocating and combining resources within an organization to achieve predetermined goals. Organizing in management is a crucial step that involves assigning authority, tasks, and responsibilities to each individual, including budgeting. At this stage, if a family uses a wedding organizer (WO), they will ask the WO to help them prepare their budget. Typically, the WO will provide several vendor references, such as decoration vendors, video/photographer vendors, and talent agencies, and include an EO fee. Based on the offers sent, the bride and groom will determine which vendors they will use. If they don't use a WO, the bride and groom will survey each vendor themselves. Typically, the determination of which vendor to use is based on the survey results and the family's agreement on their budget.

c) Actuating

Actuating is an effort to move all members in an organization so that they are willing to work together to achieve the goals that have been set together. In my opinion, from the research results, what is included in actuating is:

1. Sang Jit

Sangjit is a traditional ceremony performed by Chinese people before a wedding, after the proposal. The sangjit ceremony is not much different from the traditional seserahan ceremony—the giving of gifts and a dowry to the bride-to-be. *Sangjit*, performed by the groom and his family by sending a dowry and gifts, as a sign of serious commitment to the relationship. *Sangjit* is generally conducted privately and attended only by the immediate family.

2. Paitu/Ancheng

After the groom proposes, the bride is tasked with decorating the bridal wardrobe in the bridal chamber. The day is set; traditionally, every Chinese woman in a serious relationship will purchase decorations for her bridal wardrobe. A statue of her grandparents is usually included, intended to ensure the couple's future harmony.

3. Traditional Events

Customs are enduring codes of conduct passed down from one generation to the next as a legacy, thus strongly integrating them into societal behavioral patterns. Customs are also part of the cultural richness of a region or nation.

- A. *Teapay*
- B. *Goodbye*

4. Reception

After the traditional, religious, and belief-based wedding ceremonies are complete, the next event is the wedding reception. This reception serves as an expression of gratitude for the successful completion of the traditional ceremony and the smooth running of all events.

d) Controlling

*Controlling*It plays a role in ensuring that predetermined goals are achieved according to plan. Some common issues that require control in organizations include unfinished tasks, delayed completion times, under- or over-budget, and so on. Research findings indicate that controlling includes the evaluation stage.

Conclusion

The values contained in the implementation of a Chinese ethnic wedding are that a week to a month before the wedding, a display ceremony (paitu/ancheng) will be held at the bride and groom's residence. Until now, the entire series of traditional Chinese wedding ceremonies are still being carried out, but many stages have been shortened.

1. In ancient times, Ancheng/Paitu was held on a large scale and shown to everyone present. Nowadays, Paitu/Ancheng is performed privately by the bride and groom and their immediate family.
2. *SamCiao*It used to be held three days after the wedding ceremony. Nowadays, *SamCiao* has been shortened to just one day.
3. In the past, the hair-combing ritual was still widely practiced, where the mother of the bride would comb her daughter's hair and offer some advice. Nowadays, not all brides perform this ritual.
4. Previously, sangjit was held exclusively at home, without the groom's presence (only the groom's parents and aunt), with simple decorations and no specially hired videographer. Nowadays, the entire sangjit ceremony is held in hotels or restaurants, with lavish decorations, documented by a specially hired videographer and photographer, and the groom may be present.

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