

Omani Weddings in Transition: Exploring Rituals, Values, and Shifts in Social Perceptions

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine local people's perceptions of the Omani traditional wedding; to analyze local people's point of view about the traditional wedding in Oman, and to formulate recommendations based on local people's perceptions about the Omani traditional wedding.

Design/methodology/approach: This study adopts a quantitative research approach. The target population consisted of Omani residents aged 18 and above, including family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors, representing different regional and cultural backgrounds. A simple random sampling technique was used to collect primary data through online questionnaires from 172 participants. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS.

Findings: The results indicate significant preferences among Omanis for retaining traditional elements across wedding events. Food and dress consistently ranked highest in Al-Khutbah, Al-Thabat, Al-Huqq, Al-Mahwasha, and Al-Mulka. Traditional dress and music remained central during Al-Henna, while venue and decoration were most preferred in Al-Zaffah and Al-Tahweel. Modern influences—rising costs and social media—also significantly shape current wedding choices, reflecting a shift toward more practical and cost-conscious celebrations.

Research Implications: The study contributes empirical evidence on how specific traditional components—food, dress, venue, and music—retain cultural significance across different Omani wedding stages. The findings provide insights for researchers examining cultural continuity, event management, and social change in Gulf societies. The results also offer a framework for future studies on modernization pressures and generational differences in the preservation of wedding traditions.

Social Implications: The study highlights the ongoing importance of preserving Omani wedding customs while acknowledging shifting societal priorities such as affordability, simplicity, and digital influence. Understanding these preferences can assist policymakers, cultural institutions, and community leaders in designing initiatives that safeguard intangible heritage. The findings also encourage families and communities to balance cultural authenticity with sustainable practices that reduce financial burden on young couples.

Originality / Value: This research is one of the few empirical studies assessing Omani wedding traditions across all key ceremonial stages using quantitative methods. By examining preferences for traditional elements and identifying the impact of rising costs and social media, the study provides new insights into how cultural practices evolve. The integration of event-specific components and modern influences offers a unique contribution to literature on Gulf cultural heritage and changing social norms.

Keywords: Omani Weddings, Wedding Customs, Event preferences, Traditional ceremonies, Cultural heritage, Omani culture and heritage.
JEL: Z10, Z12, D12, M31.

Introduction

Traditional Omani weddings represent a deep cultural legacy that reflects the nation's identity, social values, and intergenerational continuity. Rooted in centuries-old customs, these celebrations are more than ceremonial gatherings – they are expressions of community cohesion,

family honor, and regional heritage. As noted by [Fanack](#) (2021), Omani culture is distinguished by its rich traditions, customary practices, and folkloric arts that are prominently showcased during weddings and other national or religious occasions. These customs not only reinforce a sense of belonging among community members but also serve as an important medium through which cultural knowledge is passed from one generation to the next.

In recent years, however, a combination of socioeconomic, technological, and global influences has reshaped how traditional weddings are perceived and practiced. The increasing role of social media, exposure to international wedding trends, shifting lifestyle preferences, and rising financial considerations have contributed to a shift in preferences—particularly among younger Omanis – toward modernized, simplified, or hybrid wedding formats. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated these changes by normalizing smaller gatherings, virtual participation, and cost-conscious event planning. These evolving perceptions have prompted concerns about the gradual erosion of traditional customs and raised questions regarding the sustainability of cultural heritage amid modernization.

Traditional Omani Wedding Practices

Traditional Omani weddings comprise several ceremonial stages that collectively reflect the cultural values, social structures, and regional identity of the community. Each stage carries symbolic significance and contributes to the broader cultural meaning of marriage in Oman.

Al-Khutbah (Engagement Ceremony)

The wedding journey typically begins with *Al-Khutbah*, the formal engagement ceremony during which the groom's family visits the bride's household to request her hand in marriage. This occasion strengthens ties between the two families and lays the foundation for the forthcoming marriage arrangements ([Al-Azri](#), 2010). The ceremony often includes the exchange of modest gifts – such as jewelry, perfumes, or clothing – as an expression of goodwill, commitment, and mutual respect. Families share traditional sweets and beverages, accompanied by prayers for a blessed and successful union.

Al-Thabat (Confirmation of Engagement)

Al-Thabat refers to the formal confirmation of the engagement and the acknowledgment of the matrimonial agreement by both families. In some regions, this stage may include discussions on the dowry, wedding arrangements, and the timeline of upcoming ceremonies. It symbolizes mutual consent and the establishment of a formal bond between the two families.

Al-Huqq and Bridal Preparations

Al-Huqq refers to a traditional cosmetic practice in which the bride applies a fragrant, dark kohl-like substance around the eyes. It is believed to enhance beauty and provide protection from the evil eye. Bridal preparation may also involve various beautification rituals, including traditional perfumes, incense, and attire specific to regional customs.

Al-Mahr (Dowry) and Al-Mahwasha

The dowry, or *Al-Mahr*, is a central component of Omani weddings and consists of monetary offerings, gold jewelry, perfumes, and other gifts presented by the groom to the bride ([Bix](#), 2011; [Safar](#), 2021). These gifts symbolize respect, security, and goodwill, and the bride retains full rights over the dowry. *Al-Mahwasha* is sometimes used interchangeably with the dowry-related offerings in certain regions.

Al-Mulkah and Al-Aqd (Religious Marriage Contract Ceremony)

The *Mulkah* is the formal religious ceremony during which the marriage contract (*Al-Aqd*) is officiated, typically in the presence of the groom, his family, and male witnesses ([Chatty](#), 2009). Conducted at the mosque or the bride's house, this ceremony legally binds the couple in accordance with Islamic principles ([Oman](#), 2011). It is generally a simple and solemn event, distinct from the festive celebrations that follow.

Al-Henna Night (Laylat Al-Henna)

A cornerstone of Omani wedding traditions is the *Henna Night*, an exclusively female gathering held shortly before the wedding. The bride's hands and feet are adorned with intricate henna designs, often accompanied by traditional music, singing, and dancing. The atmosphere is celebratory, filled with incense, perfumes, Arabic tea, dates, and sweets. This ceremony serves as both a beautification ritual and a joyful expression of cultural identity.

Music, Dance, and Festive Elements

Omani weddings are marked by vibrant cultural performances that reflect regional heritage. Traditional instruments such as the *oud*, drums, and tambourines accompany folk songs and dances, including *Al-Ayyala* and *Razha*. Hospitality remains a core value, with guests welcomed through the serving of Omani coffee, dates, and a variety of traditional dishes such as *shuwa* and *halwa*.

Traditional Dress and Al-Taqiyya

Both bride and groom typically wear traditional attire that varies by region. The groom's outfit may include the *dishdasha*, a *muzzar* (turban), and occasionally a *khanjar* (dagger). The *taqiyya*, a rounded prayer cap, may also be part of his attire, reflecting religious and cultural identity.

Al-Tahweel (Procession)

Al-Tahweel refers to the ceremonial procession in which the groom and his relatives travel – often in a festive caravan – to the bride's house. After the bride joins the procession, both families proceed together to the wedding venue. This tradition symbolizes the union of the two families and marks the transition into married life.

Zaffah (Bridal Entrance Procession)

The *Zaffah* is the celebratory procession that marks the bride's formal entrance during the wedding celebration. It may feature music, clapping, chanting, or traditional dance, and serves as a ceremonial highlight of the wedding festivities.

Exploring how different demographic groups value and interpret traditional ceremonies provides insight into the evolving relationship between cultural identity and societal change. Such inquiry aligns closely with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasizes protecting national heritage and strengthening cultural vitality as key drivers of sustainable development. By examining these perceptions, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to balance cultural preservation with the aspirations of a modern society, ensuring that traditional Omani weddings remain meaningful and accessible for future generations.

Problem Statement

In recent years, noticeable shifts have emerged in the way weddings are celebrated in the Sultanate of Oman. Driven by globalization, exposure to Western lifestyles, and the influence of social media, many families are increasingly adopting modern wedding practices that differ significantly from traditional customs. Examples include brides opting for Western-style white gowns instead of customary Omani attire and grooms choosing suits in place of the traditional *dishdasha*. Additionally, weddings that were once intimate, community-centered events hosted in family homes are now frequently held in hotel ballrooms and commercial venues. This shift has led to a substantial rise in wedding-related expenses, including costs for event planners, themed décor, and luxury services inspired by global trends. While modernization provides new forms of expression, it also raises concerns about the gradual erosion of cultural identity, the diminishing transmission of traditional practices to younger generations, and the financial pressures faced by families. These developments underscore the need to understand how local communities perceive traditional Omani weddings and whether these practices remain valued in contemporary society.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of the local people regarding the significance and relevance of traditional Omani weddings?
2. How do local community members view the continuation and practice of traditional Omani wedding customs in contemporary society?

Research Objectives

1. To determine the local people's perceptions of the Omani traditional wedding.
2. To analyze the local people's point of view about the traditional wedding in Oman.
3. To formulate recommendations based on the local people's perceptions about the Omani traditional wedding.

Review of Literature

Events are public or private occasions occurring on planned dates, requiring preparation. These events span various sectors and are not confined to a single industry; they include business conventions, training seminars, industry conferences, as well as wedding ceremonies ([Indeed Editorial Team, 2025](#)). Celebrations and events are integral components of a country's culture, engaging communities in cultural preparations and fostering

social participation. Such events contribute significantly to societal development and the advancement of civilizations (Quinn, 2009). Moreover, traditional events perform the vital function of acknowledging and affirming national identity by commemorating historical occasions through festivals, providing a platform for cultural tourism growth (Pasya et al., 2016; Richards, 2007). In particular, traditional events serve to display and embed cultural ceremonies and rituals within community memory, helping transmit these important heritage elements to younger generations.

Weddings are among the most profound cultural and social rituals worldwide, varying across populations in their customs and traditions shaped by ethnicity, religion, and social class (Braithwaite et al., 2009). They serve as formal announcements of relationships between couples and an affirmation of family identity, meriting full communal celebration. Historically, weddings trace back to prehistoric times, with the earliest known ceremonies dating to around 2350 BC in the Far East. Through centuries, marriage rituals have evolved, adapting patterns to societal changes and assimilating diverse cultural influences globally (Pallathadka et al., 2022). In Oman, traditional weddings hold exceptional cultural significance and are considered among the most beautiful milestones in a couple's life. Beyond uniting two individuals, weddings serve as a binding occasion, fostering relationships between families and communities, sometimes spanning entire villages (Best Country, 2019). The engagement phase involves multiple preparatory stages, beginning with obtaining familial approval and progressing through detailed planning managed collaboratively by the bride and groom. Arrangements typically encompass hiring wedding planners, booking venues, and designing guest hospitality experiences.

The wedding process throughout Omani regions generally follows three major phases: the engagement ceremony (Al-Khatubah), the marriage contract (Al-Malkah), and the main wedding celebration (Rashad et al., 2005). Distinctive regional customs enrich these ceremonies. In Muscat, for instance, the dowry process (Al-Haqq/Al-Mahr) involves setting a sum of money and gifts for the bride, which has escalated from a modest OMR 100 in the past to between OMR 3,000 and OMR 10,000 or more today, reflecting broader economic developments (Al Abdulhadi, 2018; Al Zubaidi, 2019). The dowry presentation is a communal event featuring family gatherings, traditional music, and dances, symbolizing honor and generosity (Abdulredha, 2006). This heavy financial obligation imposes a significant burden on Omani males and their families. In response, the government has introduced marriage loans and regulations aimed at controlling dowry expectations to ease economic pressure on young men and promote marriage (Al-Nasseri, 2020).

The marriage contract ceremony, Al-Malkah, is often hosted at the groom's home or mosque halls (Al-Majalis), involving a gathering of family, friends, and neighbors (Alqaraleh & Al-Omari, 2015). The ceremony includes the recitation of the marriage agreement, distribution of Omani halwa and coffee, and ritualistic blessings such as rose water sprinkling and incense offerings. This event culminates in traditional prayers and symbolic acts that officially unite the couple (Abdulredha, 2006; Chatty, 2009; Harrathi et al., 2025). In some families, a unique custom involves the bride's brother symbolically challenging the groom with light blows to signify protection (Al-Fadl, 2017). The pre-wedding Al-Jalwa party serves as a cleansing and blessing ritual for the bride, lasting three to five days before the wedding night. Rituals during this period include mixing sandalwood powder with saffron, rose water, and other substances, then applying this mixture to the bride, while the family hosts guests with gifts, food, and coffee (Al Abdulhadi, 2018; Harrathi et al., 2025).

Al-Henna Day follows with elaborate henna application ceremonies separated into Henna Al-Sariqa (the robbery henna) and Henna Al-Dhahir (the apparent henna), featuring highly decorative adornments, traditional music, and community festivities. The bride is elevated on a specially decorated chair (Al-Hajla), surrounded by symbolic items like basil, rose leaves, and mirrors, emphasizing beauty and protection (Abdulredha, 2006). This day also involves the exchange of henna between the bride and groom, reinforcing marital bonds (Abdulredha, 2006).

The wedding night, Al-Zafah, incorporates rituals such as the public invitation for the bride's emergence, traditional songs, blessings, symbolic acts like egg-breaking for fertility, and various prayers, all underscoring the spiritual and social importance of the union (Abdulredha, 2006). In Salalah, weddings carry additional unique customs, including phases such as Al-Thabut (final verbal agreement), Al-Jamiel (community financial support facilitating young marriages), and Al-Mahwashah (gift exchanges). The groom receives monetary support from the community to assist with wedding costs, reflecting social solidarity (Al Watan, 2016; Gulf Online, 2022; Times News Service, 2016).

Traditional dance (Al-Bara'ah) and music events (Al-Sahara) enliven celebrations in Salalah, distinguishing the local style from other regions. The wedding industry has nurtured a diverse service sector encompassing

event management firms, catering, decorators, photographers, and venue rental businesses, contributing significantly to employment and local economies. Weddings are showcased in festivals and bridal fairs, supporting cultural promotion and commercial activities ([Bosson Research](#), 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the wedding sector globally. Event cancellations and postponements caused substantial economic losses, exemplified by the Indian wedding industry's \$6.3 billion loss and a 32% reduction in ceremonies in 2020 relative to 2019 ([Dutt et al.](#), 2023; [Surplice](#), 2020). Oman's lockdown measures necessitated the closure of wedding venues, leading some to opt for smaller events or cost-saving measures ([Al-Nasseri](#), 2020).

Wedding events significantly contribute to the economy, especially through employment and several related industries. In Oman, weddings support a broad ecosystem including event planning companies, catering services, decoration and floral suppliers, venues (both private and hotel-based), photographers, pastry bakeries, and rental services. This creates jobs directly and indirectly for many professionals and small business owners, fostering entrepreneurship and encouraging economic diversification beyond traditional sectors. The wedding industry in Oman is valued at approximately USD 400 million, highlighting its substantial economic footprint. Families typically spend an average of OMR 10,000 (about USD 26,000) per wedding, fueling demand for luxury and personalized services. As disposable incomes rise, the market has shown growth with clients preferring elaborate ceremonies while also seeking to preserve cultural authenticity. These economic activities contribute to hospitality, tourism, and retail industries, underpinning local community livelihoods. Tradition and culture preservation intertwine deeply with these economic benefits. Weddings act as living cultural events where customs, rituals, music, dress, and food celebrate Omani identity and heritage. Maintaining these traditions not only fosters social cohesion but also serves cultural tourism by attracting visitors interested in experiencing authentic ceremonies. This preservation sustains demand for local artisans and service providers skilled in traditional crafts, ensuring that intangible heritage is economically viable and socially relevant.

Social media influence has profoundly reshaped how the younger generation perceives, plans, and spends on weddings. Digital platforms inspire new wedding themes, fashions, and decoration ideas, often blending modern trends with traditional elements. However, younger Omanis tend to prefer smaller, more cost-effective celebrations, signaling a shift from previous generations' larger and often more extravagant events. This change is partly driven by increased awareness of financial costs, as 54% of respondents in one survey expressed reluctance to marry due to expense. The social media-driven exposure to global wedding trends catalyzes both modernization and customization, leading to varied acceptance of traditional practices across demographics. Younger individuals may opt for Western wedding dress styles over traditional attire and thematic venues over customary settings, reflecting aspirations for contemporary lifestyles. Despite these shifts, about 50% of surveyed Omanis still express a preference to continue traditional wedding customs, emphasizing both respect for heritage and adaptation to current realities. In sum, weddings in Oman represent a vibrant nexus between cultural heritage and economic activity. They provide significant employment opportunities, support multiple business sectors, and maintain socio-cultural continuity. Meanwhile, the influence of social media and evolving youth attitudes induces transformation in celebration styles and spending habits, heralding a dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in Omani wedding culture.

Traditional Wedding Elements: Food, Dress, Music, and Decoration

Wedding elements such as traditional food, dress, music, and decorative styles serve as carriers of cultural identity and heritage in Middle Eastern and South Asian societies. Studies indicate that wedding cuisine reflects regional hospitality and symbolism ([Han](#), 2023; [Min et al.](#), 2018), while traditional attire reinforces ethnic identity and social status ([Albers et al.](#), 2021; [Mäder](#), 2024). Music and dance rituals, including Omani Al-Bara'ah and Al-Sahara, embody intangible cultural heritage and promote intergenerational transmission of traditions ([Al Siyabi](#), 2011). Decoration styles, often rooted in tribal customs, further represent aesthetic expressions of local culture ([Hasan](#), 2018). These components collectively shape the authenticity of wedding ceremonies and influence how communities perceive adherence to tradition.

Shift Toward Modernization and Preference Change in Weddings

Research across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) shows a growing trend toward modern wedding practices, influenced by globalization, higher education levels, and social media exposure ([Qian & Hu](#), 2024; [Mäder](#), 2024). Younger generations increasingly adapt Western-inspired décor, contemporary fashion styles, and curated wedding themes instead of traditional elements ([Lari](#), 2022). Studies from the UAE and Saudi Arabia reveal a similar shift toward smaller, cost-efficient celebrations and selective inclusion of traditional practices ([Lari](#), 2022). These patterns suggest a broader cultural negotiation between heritage preservation and modern identity formation.

Influence of Social Media on Specific Wedding Elements

Social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok have transformed how couples plan weddings, offering inspiration for décor, stage designs, dress fashion, and menu customization (Han, 2023; Mäder, 2024). Visual trends and influencer-generated content strongly shape preferences for contemporary aesthetics over traditional setups. Research shows that digital media not only inspires creativity but also increases pressure to conform to modern, visually appealing wedding standards (Han, 2023; Mäder, 2024), directly influencing changes in food presentation, attire selection, and music choices.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have examined Omani wedding traditions, regional cultural practices, and the broader economic and social significance of wedding events, limited research has explored how specific wedding elements—such as food, dress, venue decoration, and music—are preserved or modified across different stages of traditional Omani ceremonies. Existing literature does not adequately address how younger generations selectively adopt or replace these elements in response to modernization and social media influence. Moreover, empirical studies assessing recent shifts in wedding preferences across the distinct phases of Al-Khutbah, Al-Thabat, Al-Huqq, Al-Mulkah, Al-Henna, and Al-Zaffah remain scarce. This study fills this gap by examining contemporary Omani perspectives on which wedding components should remain traditional and how overall preferences have evolved in recent years.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, as the objective is to measure the extent to which traditional wedding elements—food, dress, venue and decoration, and music—are preferred across different stages of Omani wedding ceremonies. Quantitative methods allow the transformation of survey responses into measurable statistical data, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. A descriptive survey design was employed to gather primary data from participants, enabling the study to assess current perceptions and recent changes in wedding preferences. The questionnaire served as the main research instrument and included structured items capturing respondents' choices regarding the traditionality of wedding components during events such as Al-Khutbah, Al-Thabat, Al-Mahr, Al-Mulkah, Al-Henna, and Al-Zaffah. This design is appropriate for documenting existing attitudes, identifying patterns, and addressing the research objectives systematically.

The target population consisted of Omani residents aged 18 and above, including family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors, representing different regional and cultural backgrounds. A simple random sampling technique was used to minimize bias and ensure fair representation, resulting in 172 valid responses. Primary data were collected through online questionnaires disseminated via Google Forms, while secondary information was sourced from books, journal articles, and reports to support the contextual background. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, processed through Microsoft Excel and related analytical tools. This methodological framework allowed the study to generate evidence-based conclusions on how traditional wedding elements are perceived today and how preferences among Omani people have evolved.

Findings

Table 1. Demographic Table

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	135	78.5
	Male	37	21.5
Age	18-24	33	19.2
	25-29	41	23.8
	30-39	42	24.4
	40-49	42	24.4
	Above 50	14	8.1
Governorate	Al Batina	26	15.1
	Muscat	108	62.8
	Al Dakhliya	14	8.1
	Al Sharqiyah	12	7.0
	Musandam	3	1.7
	Al Dhahira	3	1.7

	Buraimi	1	0.6
	Dhofar	5	2.9
Employment Status	Employed	104	60.5
	Unemployed	56	32.6
	Self-employed	12	7.0
Recently attended or arranged an Omani Wedding	Yes	116	67.4
	No	56	32.6

Table 2. Which should be traditional in Al-Khutbah and Al Thabat

	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S. value	χ^2	P value
Food	16 9.3%	41 23.8%	40 23.3%	49 28.5%	26 15.1%	.190	45.047	.000
Dress	28 16.3%	38 22.1%	38 22.1%	49 28.5%	19 11.0%	.190		
Venue & Decoration	34 19.8%	39 22.7%	47 27.3%	37 21.5%	15 8.7%	.157		
Music	32 18.6%	37 21.5%	51 29.7%	39 22.7%	13 7.6%	.168		

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the items which preferred to be traditional in Al-Khutbah and Al-Thabat and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test values, the statement ‘Food’ and ‘Dress’ jointly ranked highest (K–S = .190). This was followed by ‘Music’ (K–S = .168). Meanwhile, ‘Venue & Decoration’ ranked third (K–S = .157).

Table 3. Which should be traditional in Al-Huqq, Al Mahwasha/Al-Mahar

	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S. value	χ^2	P value
Food	34 19.8%	29 16.9%	39 22.7%	48 27.9%	22 12.8%	.188	51.767	.000
Dress	31 18.0%	37 21.5%	37 21.5%	47 27.3%	20 11.6%	.185		
Venue & Decoration	35 20.3%	33 19.2%	40 23.3%	46 26.7%	18 10.5%	.178		
Music	40 23.3%	33 19.2%	46 26.7%	38 22.1%	15 8.7%	.157		

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the items which preferred to be traditional in Al-Huqq and Al-Mahwasha/Al-Mahar and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test values, the statement ‘Food’ ranked highest (K–S = .188). This was followed by ‘Dress’ (K–S = .185). Meanwhile, ‘Venue & Decoration’ ranked third (K–S = .178).

Table 4. Which should be traditional in Al-Mulka and Al-Aqd

	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S. value	χ^2	P value
Food	22 12.8%	31 18.0%	38 22.1%	54 31.4%	27 15.7%	.209	82.605	.000
Dress	21 12.2%	28 16.3%	38 22.1%	57 33.1%	28 16.3%	.219		
Venue & Decoration	27 15.7%	32 18.6%	40 23.3%	49 28.5%	24 14.0%	.190		
Music	26 15.1%	40 23.3%	43 25.0%	44 25.6%	19 11.0%	.169		

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the items which preferred to be traditional in Al-Mulka & Al-Aqd, and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test values, the statement ‘*Dress*’ ranked highest (K–S = .219). This was followed by ‘*Food*’ (K–S = .209). Meanwhile, ‘*Venue & Decoration*’ ranked third (K–S = .190).

Table 5. Which should be traditional in Al-Henna

	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S. value	χ^2	P value
Food	30 17.4%	28 16.3%	40 23.3%	43 25.0%	31 18.0%	.177	88.140	.000
Dress	28 16.3%	25 14.5%	35 20.3%	49 28.5%	35 20.3%	.205		
Venue & Decoration	29 16.9%	22 12.8%	47 27.3%	43 25.0%	31 18.0%	.170		
Music	23 13.4%	31 18.0%	43 25.0%	47 27.3%	28 16.3%	.183		

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the items which preferred to be traditional in Al-Henna and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test values, the statement ‘*Dress*’ ranked highest (K–S = .205). This was followed by ‘*Music*’ (K–S = .183). Meanwhile, ‘*Food*’ ranked third (K–S = .177).

Table 6. Which should be traditional in Al-Zaffah and Al-Tahweel

	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S. value	χ^2	P value
Food	28 16.3%	39 22.7%	45 26.2%	35 20.3%	25 14.5%	.157	68.767	.000
Dress	36 20.9%	43 25.0%	37 21.5%	35 20.3%	21 12.2%	.182		
Venue & Decoration	32 18.6%	48 27.9%	38 22.1%	34 19.8%	20 11.6%	.193		
Music	31 18.0%	42 24.4%	44 25.6%	34 19.8%	21 12.2%	.168		

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the items which preferred to be traditional in Al-Zaffah & Al-Tahweel, and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test values, the statement ‘*Venue & Decoration*’ ranked highest (K–S = .193). This was followed by ‘*Dress*’ (K–S = .182). Meanwhile, ‘*Music*’ ranked third (K–S = .168).

Table 7. Recent Preferences of People towards Omani Weddings

	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S. value	χ^2	P value
Omani weddings have become more expensive than in the past	15 8.7%	21 12.2%	10 5.8%	28 16.3%	98 57.0%	.334	86.093	.000

People prefer to invite a smaller number of guests to their weddings	18 10.5%	36 20.9%	31 18.0%	52 30.2%	35 20.3%	.214		
A growing preference is for shorter wedding durations	19 11.0%	31 18.0%	40 23.3%	49 28.5%	33 19.2%	.195		
People no longer like to spend a large amount of money on weddings	25 14.5%	39 22.7%	36 20.9%	36 20.9%	36 20.9%	.165		
Young men are hesitant to marry due to the high financial burden associated with weddings	16 9.3%	26 15.1%	38 22.1%	51 29.7%	41 23.8%	.207		
Digital & social media have reshaped people's expectations and preferences for how weddings are celebrated	16 9.3%	19 11.0%	26 15.1%	38 22.1%	73 42.4%	.243		
COVID-19 has positively influenced the way people want to have their weddings	16 9.3%	23 13.4%	27 15.7%	48 27.9%	58 33.7%	.226		
I prefer to continue the Omani traditional wedding customs to be known by future generations	17 9.9%	27 15.7%	42 24.4%	51 29.7%	35 20.3%	.200		

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the items that people prefer to be traditional in Recent preferences of people towards Omani weddings and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test values, the statement ‘*Oman Weddings have become more expensive than in the past*’ ranked highest (K–S = .334). This was followed by ‘*Digital & social media have reshaped people’s expectations and preferences for how weddings are celebrated*’ (K–S = .182). Meanwhile, ‘*Digital & social media have reshaped people’s expectations and preferences for how weddings are celebrated*’ ranked third (K–S = .168).

Conclusion

This study examined the extent to which traditional elements—food, dress, venue and decoration, and music—continue to influence various stages of Omani wedding ceremonies. Across all events, the statistical results showed a significant relationship between respondents' choices and their preferred traditional components, confirming that cultural practices remain deeply embedded in Omani wedding rituals. Preferences, however, varied according to the nature of each ceremony. Food and dress were strongly favored during Al-Khutbah, Al-Thabat, and Al-Mahar-related events, emphasizing their cultural symbolism in early wedding stages. In contrast, dress emerged as the most valued traditional element during Al-Mulkah and Al-Henna, reflecting the ceremonial and aesthetic importance associated with these events. Venue and decoration were prioritized during Al-Zaffah and Al-Tahweel, where public celebration and presentation are central.

The findings also highlight evolving wedding preferences among Omanis. Rising wedding costs and the increasing influence of digital and social media are reshaping how younger generations perceive and celebrate weddings. While traditional customs remain highly valued, financial considerations and modern trends are prompting shifts toward smaller, cost-effective, and more personalized wedding styles. Overall, the results demonstrate a dynamic balance between cultural preservation and modern adaptation in contemporary Omani wedding practices.

Recommendations

For Families and Couples

- Consider maintaining traditional elements that hold the highest cultural value (such as dress and food) while moderating costs in other areas.
- Adopt hybrid wedding models that blend traditional rituals with modern efficiencies to reduce financial pressure on young couples.
- Use digital platforms for planning and coordination, but remain mindful of unrealistic expectations created by social media trends.

For Policy Makers and Community Leaders

- Strengthen awareness programs encouraging simple and culturally meaningful weddings to reduce societal financial burdens.
- Promote community-based support systems—similar to Al-Jamiel in Dhofar—to assist young couples with essential wedding expenses.
- Encourage local municipalities to provide affordable wedding halls to reduce venue-related costs.

For the Event Industry and Service Providers

- Develop packages that prioritize cultural authenticity while offering cost-effective options for budget-conscious couples.
- Train service providers (planners, decorators, designers) in traditional Omani wedding customs to preserve cultural identity.
- Introduce digital services (virtual previews, design templates) to support efficient wedding planning without escalating costs.

For Future Research

- Conduct qualitative studies to better understand the motivations behind shifting wedding preferences among younger Omanis.
- Explore regional variations across Oman to identify culturally distinct practices requiring preservation initiatives.
- Expand the sample to include wedding service providers to gain a broader industry perspective.

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