

The push and pull factors for foreign couples to choose Malta for their wedding destination

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Abstract

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The main aim is to conduct this research as to why foreign couples find Malta appealing as their wedding destination. Part of the focus of the study will consist of the increase in same sex partnerships and mixed marriages, the importance of Malta in terms of luxurious weddings, unique venues and locations. As a future wedding planner, the author finds this study very interesting to gain knowledge in this particular area of the industry. The research will be conducted via interviews to wedding planners and/or companies, so a detailed data can be gathered in order to obtain insight knowledge of the subject at hand.

Keywords

Foreign couples, Malta, Destination, Weddings.

Declaration of Authenticity



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Research Title : The push and pull factors for foreign couples to choose Malta for their wedding destination

Declaration:

I hereby declare that this research study is based on the outcome of my own research. I, as the author, declare that this research study is my own composition which has not been previously produced for any other qualification.

The research study was conducted under the supervision of Helena Micallef

Date

Student's Signature

Acknowledgements



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1. Introduction

Malta is a small beautiful island, offering a variety of options where couples can opt for their wedding. These options of wedding venues include coastal and beach venues, historic places, and sites like Saluting battery in Valletta, palazzos like Palazzo Nobile in Naxxar, and Castellos like Castello Dei Baroni in Wardija. The island has almost 365 days of sun which a lot of couples are in favour of. Malta's geographic position in the middle of the Mediterranean helps as well in attributing a lot of different people from across the world. Thus, is it not just one factor that is guiding couples to choose the island as their wedding destination, but many other factors surrounding this matter. This research will help the author to further analyse the factors and justify them with the end results of what came out of this study.

1.1 Research Background

The main aim that will be discussed throughout this long essay is as to why foreign couples find Malta appealing as their wedding destination, however additional topics will be discussed such as, the unique venues and locations around Malta and Gozo, the impact of covid19 had on weddings held in Malta, the definition of wedding destinations, the relation of consumption to destination weddings also some advantages and disadvantages of wedding destinations. Counter-arguments will be added to this essay to shed some light on the negative aspects couples consider when choosing their wedding destination.

Sub-objective one: The Attractiveness of Malta for a wedding destination. Wedding couples search for the perfect place to tie the knot, Malta has various settings from wedding venues, luxurious hotels, and historical sites open for being a wedding venue. They also take into consideration the culture, climate and uniqueness of the destination.

Sub-objective two: The relation of consumption to destination weddings. Destination weddings require a high involvement decision making process with several risks along the way. The final decision is mainly due to several motivators the destination attracts or the consumer desires.

1.2 Research Aim, Objectives and Hypothesis or Question

The main aim of this research is to help answer what are the impacts for foreign couples choosing Malta as their wedding destination. To help the research, two interviews with different wedding planners will be conducted for further sector information. Since Malta has a very big market for tourism and foreign weddings being held here, the author would like to find out the main impacts that are attracting foreign couples to choose Malta for their destination.

For this essay Harvard-style referencing (Harvard-Anglia 2008 version) was used. References in Harvard style have been located at the end of the essay as well as organized in alphabetic order by the writer's surname in a reference list. In-text, citations are also added to every text that was taken from a reference.

1.3 Justification of the study:

This sector is growing very rapidly, the author's purpose is to find out important factors and effective combinations of push and pull factors that are connected to foreign couples and their wedding choices, as they relate to acknowledging and examining the motivations in segments of the market, developing advertisements, and developing a location.

1.4 Summery on the Chapters

In the first chapter, the author will explain some brief factors that may be affecting the choice for couple to choose Malta as a wedding destination, research background, aims, objectives, and justification of this study. In the second chapter, the author opens more on the factors and other things couples consider for their wedding abroad, while also explaining “Malta” in terms of a wedding destination, and the competitiveness between Malta and other countries as a wedding destination. In the third chapter, the term methodology and the methodologies used were identified and explained and also included ethical considerations. The fourth chapter will hold the results obtained from the interviews conducted and discuss the outline of the findings that came out of them. The fifth chapter will include the final argument of the main outcomes of the findings and any difficulties found while conducting it. The conclusion, recommendations and validity can be found in it too. At the end references and appendices can be found.

2. Literature Review

Malta’s wedding industry is growing bigger, and it is not just popular among Maltese couples only, but it is also attracting foreign couples too. The island has a lot of unique factors attracting couples starting from the sunny weather that Malta has, going on to the pictures venues it offers, continuing with the new or already existing regulations on how the couples can get married, too many more other factors incorporated into the decision-making process of the couple. In this literature review, the author explains more about the findings on these factors affecting foreign couples.

2.1 The importance of Malta in terms of luxurious weddings, unique venues, and locations

Wedding couples search for the perfect place to tie the knot, like Palazzo Villa Rosa, lower Barrakka Gardens, and Fort St Angelo. Malta has various wedding venues, like luxurious hotels and historical sites open for acting out as a wedding venue. The wedding couple also takes into consideration the culture, climate, and uniqueness of the destination.

Malta is well known for being one of the most romantic and picturesque places in Europe. Due to the generally friendly locals, the wonderful climate, and the fact that it is in the heart of the Mediterranean, rich in history and culture, it is a popular tourist destination. The island is primarily Roman Catholic, and as a result, it has 365 stunning churches and chapels, rendering Malta and Gozo a perfect location for religious weddings. In terms of the uniqueness of the place 'Malta', it is in the middle of the Mediterranean which makes the country filled with history and culture due to the island's history in the past. This makes it also a perfect place for a wedding destination because of the connection Malta has with other neighboring countries (D.Demicoli, 2017).

Stakeholders have found great benefits in making their destination wedding part of their tourism service. Nowadays neighboring countries have recognized the economic impact this can have and are incorporating the destination wedding factor into promotional activities, as well as putting effort and time into marketing themselves as wedding destinations. The ability of advanced technologies to aid travel industry operators in creating competitive and promotional strategies is growing by the day (D.Demicoli, 2017).

Malta is not the only wedding destination in Europe, so industry operators must find innovative ways to promote Malta for weddings. Taking into consideration competing countries like Greece, which has wedding destinations like Crete, Rhodes, and Santorini

which are just a few of the Greek islands. Couples can choose among civil ceremonies right on the coast to scenic beauty with blue waters, with new attractions and destinations introduced on a seasonal basis. A marriage in Greece can be as picturesque or as extravagant as you wish (A.Cording, 2017). Greece and Malta have similar beautiful sceneries that promote wedding couples to choose from, thus Maltese industry promoters must find ways to better Malta's marketing strategies to not lose clients for other similar destinations.

2.2 Destinations for couples:

A wedding destination is when couples opt for a wedding which takes place outside their home country. This is also placed under the term wedding tourism. It is a new trend that is gaining popularity very fast because it is something different than the traditional weddings being held normally. Another reason why it has gained such popularity is because couples like to commemorate their significant day in a variety of ways. Couples are finding it simpler to plan their weddings and choose a wedding destination away from their home thanks to online services and social media (D.Demicoli, 2017).

Wedding Ceremonies can be as little as just the bride and groom being present or more elaborate with family and friends attending. Also, there are lavish ones that are held over a full weekend in the shape of a number of celebrations. These weddings are much complex and more demanding than a typical wedding, this is because there is a large number of service suppliers, including flights, hotels, and food and beverage outlets, as well as travel services for the wedding party on the day of the wedding.

Destination weddings are frequently advertised as a package. One of the key causes for this, is that tourism organizations and hotel establishments have accepted the reality that this specialised market can generate significant cash. In a range of methods, the wedding destination sector contributes to local economic growth. The couple would typically employ local goods and services, relying on suppliers including wedding planners,

catering, and transport. As a result of the multiplier effect, such events benefit the local economy by creating additional revenue in accordance with the couple's requests and desires (H.Micallef, 2017). Some destinations include an on-site wedding planner who will assist the pair in planning the entire wedding and are willing to handle the details on their behalf (D.Demicoli, 2017).

Different trends will keep being created in the wedding industry through new couples always searching for ways to have a more unique wedding than other couples before them, thus, by this the market keeps on growing as time passes. This market can offer the uniqueness and authenticity that people are searching for. It may also become a two in one opportunity for some couples that may choose to stay for their honeymoon here too.

2.3 The relation of consumption to destination weddings:

Destination weddings require a high involvement decision-making process with several risks along the way. The final decision is mainly due to several motivators the destination attracts or the consumer desires. A.M.D.B Nawarathna (2017), an academic who analyzed the push and pull factors for wedding destinations mentioned that push factors are socio-psychological motives that lure the wanting to visit a destination. These motives get the consumer to choose another country from his own (E.Cassar, 2020).

The two main push factors for a destination wedding are the geographical location of the destination and the appeal of the destination. Another push factor may be the easy access, low cost, and short-haul flight which guests could also take a vacation or holiday out of the wedding experience (E.Cassar, 2020). A.M.D.B Nawarathna (2017), states that pull factors are extrinsic motivators that attract the consumer to that destination. Marketing helps the destination by creating and implementing these motives. The main three pull factors stated by A.M.D.B Nawarathna (2017) and Seebaluck, Munhurrin,

Naidoo & Rughoonauth (2014) are the overall cost of the wedding if it is reasonable or not, the availabilities, variety of service and the ease of wedding formalities from civil status officers (E.Cassar, 2020).

E. Cassar (2020) argued that Fred Schumann & Charlene Amado (2010) said that weddings abroad are cheaper than normal weddings because the number of guests willing and can afford to travel to the wedding destination is less than the setting at home. D. Cassar, 2019 states that according to wedding planners catering for the Maltese weddings declare that a local wedding starts from €30,000 up to €80,000. On the other hand a foreign wedding held in Malta by a foreign wedding planner who provides their services in Malta cost around €10,000 to €15,000 (E. Cassar, 2020).

Other factors that may affect couples to choose a wedding destination, is the social factor, this aspect is linked to consumer behavior as it's normal for clients to ask for advice or views from people outside of their immediate family, like colleagues, peers from the same socioeconomic class, and government officials. Brides-to-be get influenced and inspired by contacting external entities for advice and concepts on what to enhance the setting and layout of their wedding celebration. By merely reading bridal publications, viewing wedding shows, or researching from internet wedding company websites, customers are undertaking a social consultation which clearly demonstrates their awareness of societal factors. As a result, advertisers must assess the potential of this societal impact in order to guarantee that advertising techniques actually fulfill clients' constantly changing behavior

Farzana, G. (2015).

The cultural factor might also influence the couple's choice, the fact that people originate from various nationalities and cultures explains why there are so many distinct types of weddings. As culture refers to a collective's manner of living, it is critical that they adhere to and emphasize it on as many occasions as feasible. Lastly, there is the personal factor, which relates to the clients' personal preferences that may influence their actions. Personal influence is amongst the most important predictors of consumer

action, outside of cultural and social elements, due to its additional convincing and terms of inter effect. Such can be seen in situations where clients' good feelings regard goods or services have a significant impact on the impulsive behavior, which in turn has a beneficial effect on good or service advertising Farzana, G. (2015).

As stated by Farzana, G. (2015) individual characteristics, in truth, it is looked as the most significant aspect that all marketing professionals will need to comprehend, as it considers many subject areas, including:

- Anthropology, is concerned with ways of life and social customs.
- Sociology, which centered on belief systems and traditions that may cause aid or debate.
- Psychology whereby incorporates the evaluation of principles from the perspective of behaviors and particular needs that straightforwardly affect customer behavior, particularly throughout decision-making process.

2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Wedding Destinations:

Destination weddings, like everything else in life, have advantages and disadvantages. Before deciding to organize a destination wedding, the couple should consider a number of factors that will assist them in choosing the best alternative for them. One advantage of destination weddings is that most honeymooners choose to spend their honeymoon in the same location as their wedding, bringing extra money into the economy of the country. Another benefit would be that partners may choose to revisit the site on their anniversary in reminiscence of past times, which would improve the location's tourist appeal even more (B. Albums, 2013).

A disadvantage may be that due to the wedding not being held in their home country, requiring the legal and administrative parts of such weddings to be handled from afar might be a hassle or stressful for the wedding couple. Thus, also making appropriate preparation and constant contact across both spouses and the professionals in control of their wedding in the chosen venue is also very essential (B. Albums, 2013). A problem may arise about guests feeling burdened. People might face financial strain if invited to a destination wedding. Regardless of how much they want to be a part of something like the couple's most significant day, they would have to spend their own money on airfare, lodging, and a wedding present. They will also have to take time off from work, make arrangements for animal care, secure travel documents as needed, and fulfill a whole slew of responsibilities that come with flying to a foreign area. Many people will travel regardless of how hard it would be for them, therefore the couple must keep this in mind who to invite while organizing their destination wedding, so that it's not problematic for their guests (B. Albums, 2013). -

Some sacrifices have to be made if a couple opts for a destination wedding, such as the planning of their wedding not being fully in their hands, and they may not be able to see the planning and arrangement progress due to being in another country. They will also have to choose who to invite while leaving some guests out if needed be. A destination wedding, on the other hand, can bring the passion, thrill, joy, and moments that the bride and groom plus their guests will remember for a lifetime.

2.5 Competitiveness of Malta as a wedding destination:

Malta's allure as a destination for weddings seems to be unquestionable. With the exception of spouses with Maltese ancestors who choose to revert back to Malta to exchange pledges on their ancestor's land, there are other marriages who do not have family connections to the island and merely insist on having their own marriage ceremony here due to the appeal of what Malta has to offer (A World of Choice - Who Are Malta's Competitors As A Wedding Destination?, 2022).

Helping in this is the ever-expanding wedding industry, where it is filled with skilled wedding planners and organisers ready to take on any challenges, these all contribute towards the island's growing popularity as a wedding destination.

There are quite a few destinations that compare to Malta and are competing in this sector. Six big competing countries that were acknowledged were Cyprus, Spain, Croatia, Sicily, Turkey, and Morocco. These countries are competing with Malta due to having a lot of similar factors to Malta for instance, enjoyable sunny weather, rich historical value, and beautiful scenery. The majority of these countries are more popular and well known amongst tourists and thus may have an advantage when it comes to couples choosing a wedding destination, as most couples opt for a country that is more well known than maybe a tiny island like Malta.

Even though Malta's figures are increasing more work needs to be conducted on these areas, the competitiveness of prices, environmental sustainability, and cultural, natural and human resources. For Malta to establish itself as a wedding destination that is well known and gain more popularity, it must engage and strengthen the regions in which it falls short.

In Conclusion there are a lot of things and factors that affect couples in choosing Malta as their wedding destination but as a result from this study, it is showing that competitiveness of one wedding destination above another is based on showcasing the best features of the location that customers are interested in. The country needs to be more focus on marketing the potential growth segment which will initiate the wedding market, and not just focus on marketing it for holiday vacations only. This would improve Malta's international recognition as a wedding destination and give overseas spouses the impression that the country may be a viable option for their wedding. Another big factor also is the media because it has a huge impact on the wedding industry, this may also be one of the causes why spouses seem to be more intrigued in destination weddings, and therefore maybe a reason why marriage traditions are

evolving. Overseas marriages was something only wealthy and renowned people could manage in the past but now, almost all of the destinations that offer wedding services are inexpensive to almost any working couple. Thus, In addition to this these days more couples are opting for wedding destinations.

3. Methodology

In the methodology, the author will explain about what methods were used in this research, further explaining why they were used, what they are and the disadvantage as well as advantages concerning them.

3.1 What is research methodology

Research methodology is an essential layout to show how a certain study would be conducted. This explains the methods and strategies chosen to evaluate and understand data on a proposed study. This finding technique, then, is concerned with whether an investigator conducts research in such order so they can achieve accurate and trustworthy data while also meeting the study goals (Voxco, 2022).

3.1.1 What is qualitative research

In this study qualitative research was chosen to be used. Qualitative data acts as realistic investigative system that aims for more extensive apprehension of sociological phenomenon within its situational context, it is indeed a marketing intelligence technique that is based upon gathering information via clear and colloquial contact. This concentrates upon "why" instead of the "what" underlying sociological phenomenon and therefore is based on individuals' firsthand perspectives and views of significant entities throughout their regular lifestyle. Instead of relying on reasoning as well as mathematical methods for examining human occurrences, qualitative methods

employ a variety of investigation methods, such as biographies, case analysis, historical research, conversation analysis, ethnographic, theory building, and phenomenological (Subject and Course Guides: Quantitative and Qualitative Research: What is Qualitative Research?, 2022)

This research technique is good to expose both attitudes and behaviors of such a target market with relation to a specific subject. Overall findings using qualitative approaches are much more detailed, hence conclusions may be derived from the information collected relatively simply. Qualitative methodologies have their roots within natural and social sciences. Today's society seems to be more convoluted, making it tough to comprehend whatever individuals believe and see. Hence it being more conversational and detailed, digital qualitative methodologies make things less hard to grasp (Qualitative Research: Definition, Types, Methods and Examples, 2022).

3.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of Qualitative research:

Due to the use of sheer sample numbers, the majority of qualitative studies are done quickly. Such form enables social researchers to swiftly collect responses from people, resulting in a conclusion which can subsequently be applied to both demographics and the public at large (Miller, B., 2019).

Another advantage is, that investigators can be significantly highly imaginative as to what subjects they like to examine as well as how they do qualitative research analyses (Vaughan, T., 2022).

Another major benefit of qualitative studies is it does not depend upon restricted interrogation. Investigators can present open-ended inquiries to study participants anytime it is important to gather further data. Such framework provides us to comprehend why emotional reactions arise in the start (Miller, B., 2019).

Implicit bias is among the most serious problems in collective research. Individuals acquire predetermined opinions regarding specific populations and individuals, which may affect overall study. Such phenomenon affects both scientists and engineers. Since this research method examines the real framework of such choice processes, it's able to leave off any assumptions (Miller, B., 2019).

During qualitative studies, information should be identified by the investigators so that it can be gathered. Investigators who are unfit to notice important information once they encounter it might miss it, reducing overall reliability of qualitative study outcomes (Gaille, B., 2018).

3.2 interviews :

An interview is like a discussion that is used to collect data. An interviewer coordinates the interviewee and ask open - ended questions during a qualitative interview, as a respondent replies to such questions. Interviews can be done in person, online or even on call. Conducting this method research is quite a good way to gather extensive data about people's views, thinking, interactions, and emotions (Easwaramoorthy, et al., 2006).

3.2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of conducting an interview:

Due to a lot of people who can be reached and a lot of responses to this approach, the question and answer session technique is used to obtain almost the ideal representative sample demography (The Interview Method: Advantages and Limitations | Social Research, 2022).

Another positive thing is that when an interview is conducted it is easy and quick to fix any misinterpretations or mishaps. This is due to both the researcher and participant being present physically in the interview. Interviews also give the

opportunity to gather the most recent and relevant information that the researcher wants to obtain through the questions being asked.

Since recreating the findings may be difficult, it may be challenging to confirm that the information obtained from the interview is true. This may lead some to doubt the conclusion drawn by the researcher (What is the advantages and disadvantages of interview method?, 2021).

Another disadvantage interviews have is that it may take a bit of time to plan, conduct and take out the results from them. It's also hard to ascertain whether the queries getting questioned are indeed the greatest or most appropriate for such research work. Investigators could find it difficult to choose the right question to ask, especially if time is limited (What is the advantages and disadvantages of interview method?, 2021).

3.3 Ethical considerations

The author will ensure that no personal data or confidential data is divulged by destroying all data that was given once the results have been published. The author will ensure that no person gets hurt during the research due to asking generic and no personal questions during the interviews. The author will ensure that participants' identities are not divulged by not naming any names unless consent is given from the participants. Due to all questions being asked in the interviews being generic and not personal this will avoid unduly offending or disturbing the well-being of the participants and also avoid any possible psychological, spiritual, or cultural offence to participants. The author again will ensure that the interests and rights of minors / vulnerable / disabled persons / specific social groups are safeguarded where necessary by asking generic and non-personal questions. Since no names will be named unless consent is given this will ensure that participants do not suffer any competitive disadvantage as an outcome of the research. Finally ensuring that confidential business ideas and data are protected and not divulged due to destroying of all data given after results have been published.

4. Results and Analysis

These results were found from the questions used whilst conducting two interviews with two wedding planners owning their own businesses. Generic and nonpersonal questions were asked about the recent factors that may be affecting the foreign wedding industry in Malta and also couples choices in their wedding.

4.1 Results:

The first question that was asked in the interviews was if the interviewee had the chance to organize foreign weddings before, and if so what percentage of weddings they have done would be of foreign couples. To this, both interviewees A and B said that they have done foreign weddings before with interviewee A having done 40 percent of their wedding being of foreign couples, while interviewee B said that 60 percent of their weddings were of foreign couples.

The next question asked was about what factors influence couples' motives for having their wedding be done in Malta. Both interviewees A and B acknowledged that the weather and location of Malta are very important factors that attract foreign couples due to the almost all year round sunny weather and that Malta is so close to other European countries which makes it easier for traveling, while also the benefit of Malta's short distances for traveling since it is a small island. Interviewee B also mentioned that other popular factors may be the law of how they can get married in Malta and if the couple has any relatives living in the country.

The third question was about which venues and locations are popular amongst foreign couples. Interviewees A and B agreed that Hotel locations are the most popular due to them having packages included usually, while interviewee A also said that couples also opt for hotels with private beaches like The Excelsior hotel and Paradise Bay hotel. Interviewee B commented that heritage sites are also popular due to their uniqueness throughout the world since in Malta heritage sites are open for weddings to be held.

Lastly, another good point that was mentioned by interviewee A is that usually the location would depend on the different budgets couples would have as well.

The following question asked was about which countries most of the foreign couple clients come from. Interviewee A said that before Brexit most of the clients would come from Ireland and England were interviewee B agreed but also added that the Chinese market is also increasing recently, while interviewee A said that recently the clients are now coming from Poland, Slovakia, and Germany. This interviewer also noted that some of the client couples are mixed for example a Polish person marrying a Maltese person, so it's not just fully foreign weddings being done by them but also mixed racial weddings.

The next question that was asked was about if foreign couples opt for grand weddings or for more normal typical weddings were interviewees A and B both commented that compared to Maltese weddings, foreign weddings are smaller and not more than 200/250 people attending. Interviewee A continued by adding that couples tend to stay away from having too much of an expensive wedding due to already having the traveling expenses, so due to this a lot of foreign couples are opting for a cash bar where guests pay for their own drinks, so the couple does not have the cost of the bar, this is also typically done in English weddings.

The followed up question was about if the interviewees had witnessed any changes to weddings decreasing due to Covid-19 pandemic throughout the last two years. Both interviewees agreed that there was a decrease in foreign weddings due to a lot of weddings getting postponed at the time, also because of travel restrictions and Covid regulations. Interviewee B added that the wedding industry now is picking up quickly due to Malta's Covid statistics being very good.

The subsequent question that was asked was about if it is typical for the couple to opt for their honeymoon to be held in Malta too after the wedding. To this interviewee A said that, yes, the couples usually opt for their honeymoon to be held in Malta too,

especially if the wedding was held in a hotel since wedding full packages are usually offered with it. On the other hand interviewee, B said that not all of them do but the majority do spend another week in Malta, or else they would combine the wedding to be held in Malta but the honeymoon to be held in Sicily.

The succeeding question was if foreign couples have a bigger or smaller budget than a typical Maltese couple does. In this, both interviewees A and B agreed that foreign couples normally have a smaller budget than that of a Maltese couple would have, due to the extra expense of traveling from their home country to another, and maybe also paying for their closest relatives as well.

The proceeding question asked about the average of how many guests would foreign couples invite for their destination wedding. Interviewee A said that it depends if the couple is paying themselves for the trip of their guests, this would consist of a smaller wedding around 20 people. The same interviewee said that the biggest usually are around 150 – 200 people but not more, and this would usually also includes Maltese guests not just foreign. Alternatively, interviewee B said that normally the weddings are not more than 200 people, but for example in the Irish market they would typically invite 60 – 80 guests not more.

For the final question, the author asked about how involved the foreign couples were in their wedding planning process. To this question interviewee, A said that due to the distance usually meetings about their wedding would be done online. The interviewee continued by saying that if the couple has never been to Malta before the organization planner would schedule a visit for them on the last meeting to view their wedding venue with them, in other instances where the couple has been to Malta before they schedule their last meeting in the last week before their wedding to see the venue and other things. While interviewee B said that they would only visit Malta for the main and most important decisions but for the rest they leave it to the planner, also online meetings would be used prior to them visiting due to distance.

In conclusion, the main key findings from these interviews were that both interviewees were agreeing a lot with each other, about the weather and location of Malta that it is a good aspect for couples, for favoured locations for weddings, and the countries they had most clients come from that were the Irish market and English market, as well as couples budget comparing to Maltese and scales of the wedding. Both interviewees had agreed about the pandemic having an effect on the industry. For the honeymoon, both agreed that most couples do stay in Malta too, they both also said the couples only visit Malta before the wedding only for the important things. Thus from these interviews, a lot of good information came out that agreed with the research done prior by the author.

4.2 Discussion

In this chapter the author will discuss the information obtained from the personal research found in Chapter 2. While also combining the research found from the qualitative research which was the conduction of the interviews in Chapter 4.

The first immediate thing that the author noticed was that both the personal research done and the two interviews conducted were in alliance with each other on most of the topics spoken about. From the findings one can see that Malta's industry is growing by the day due to wedding destinations being new and different from traditional weddings. From the interviews it was noted that after the covid pandemic wedding are picking up. While couples are also finding it difficult to find a good price to hold their wedding and fewer couples are having island weddings.

Factors that were found affecting couples' choices for choosing Malta are, the good weather, being in the middle of the Meditaranieum, short-haul flights, and the short distance to travel within the island. Other factors affecting are the Maltese marital laws and wether the couples have any relatives or ancestors from/living on the island. The most common pull factors for couples found were, the overall cost of the wedding (if reasonable or not), the ease of wedding formalities from civil status officers, and the availability and variety of services being offered.

Hotel establishments seem to be amongst the most popular venues for foreign couples, due to them generally having a set wedding package for the wedding couple, as it is profitable for hotel revenue. Other popular venues are also heritage sites since they can be opted as wedding venues.

It was found that foreign weddings are relatively cheaper with less of a budget than that of a Maltese couple and smaller in comparison to a Maltese wedding. The maximum capacity for a foreign wedding is typically around 200 – 250 guests or even smaller like 20 guests only attending. It may be cheaper due to the number of guests that can afford a destination wedding is less, due to having already the travel expenses of themselves.

The author also established that most of the foreign couples spend their honeymoon in the same country they got married in, especially if the wedding was held in a hotel due to packages that may have been offered, thus investing more money into the country's economy.

A disadvantage that was discovered is, that some guests may feel a burden to take leave from work, pay, and travel for a wedding, but most people still do it because it is meaningful for the couple, thus the couple has to see and make sure that who they invite is not burdened by this.

Getting married in a foreign country may be a hassle for the couple regarding the legal and administrative parts can be stressful. In some instances, some destinations include an on-site wedding planner helping the couple plan their wedding while also handling the details on their behalf. In other cases, due to the distance online meetings are conducted between the planner and the couple, and in the end, a meeting in Malta is scheduled to show them the most important choices for their wedding like the venue, caterers, and so on.

Growing competition, is noted between countries having similar factors like Malta. These countries are seeing the economic impact of this sector, and they are bettering

their services while also marketing themselves to attract this market sector. Malta's industry promoters must better their marketing strategies, and the competitiveness of cost, look out for environmental sustainability ways and improve cultural, natural, and human resources. This will help Malta get picked over more known popular countries.

5. Final Arguments

The main outcome of the findings are to address what are the impacts for foreign couples to choose Malta as their wedding destination.

The main factors the author drew out from this research and thinks are affecting the couple's motives are the following, geographic location and weather, the variety of locations acting out as wedding venues, costings, and the ease of marital laws while also considering personal, social and cultural factors.

While conducting this research the author found it difficult to find relative previous studies on Malta especially. Another thing the author had difficulty with was finding wedding planners to conduct interviews with.

5.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, the aims mentioned in the beginning have been met, as the author found the impacts that are affecting couple's wedding destination choices threw this research. Overall the author gained a lot of good knowledge about this sector, due to conducting this research, and it can be useful for the author to know for a further future carrier in this sector.

5.2 Recommendations

The author also would like to point out that this sector should be recognised more as there is great potential for generating income for the economy, but must also keep in mind similar competing countries. Thus Malta's industry promoters need to improve these three main points, the pricing of the wedding market, to be more environmentally sustainable, and improve cultural, natural, and human resources for further popularity in this sector.

5.3 Evaluation, Reliability and Validity

The author can verify that true this research the aims mentioned in the beginning were met.

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Appendices

Interview Questions:

1. Have you had the chance to organize weddings for foreign couples before? If so what percentage of weddings you've done would be of foreign couples?
2. What factors do you think influence their motive for having their wedding done in Malta and not another country?
3. Which venues and locations would you say are the most popular amongst foreign couples?
4. From which country do most of the foreign couple clients come from?
5. Do the foreign clients usually go for grand weddings or for more normal typical weddings?
6. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, have you seen a difference in foreign weddings decreasing in these last two years?
7. After the wedding celebrations do the couples usually opt for their honeymoon to be in Malta too?
8. Do foreign couples have a bigger budget or smaller budget than a typical Maltese couple would?
9. On an average how many guests would foreign couples invite for their destination wedding?
10. How involved are the foreign couples in their wedding planning process?

