



# Analyzing Wedding Photography in Kerala: A Survey

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## Abstract

*This research adopts a comprehensive approach to comprehending the intricate dimensions of wedding photography and its consequential influence on societal norms. The utilization of a simple random sampling method ensures the attainment of a representative and unbiased participant cohort, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Focusing on the culturally rich state of Kerala as the research setting, the study endeavours to explore how wedding photography reflects and, in turn, shapes cultural practices. The temporal aspect is duly considered, with the survey scheduled over a three-month period aligning strategically with Kerala's peak wedding season. This temporal alignment aims to capture dynamic and representative data, providing insights into current trends, seasonal influences, and the evolving role of wedding photography during the prominence of celebratory events. The data collection methodology employs a dual approach, combining online surveys distributed through various platforms with targeted in-person surveys conducted at wedding-related events and establishments in Kerala. This methodological choice seeks to maximize both reach and inclusivity, thereby facilitating the collection of diverse and rich data. The study sheds illuminating insights on the cultural and economic dimensions of wedding photography, underscoring the imperative of aligning choices with individual preferences and navigating the evolving landscape of digital platforms.*

**Keywords: Wedding Photography, Photographic Styles, Survey, Kerala**

## **Introduction**

This research paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted realm of wedding photography within the cultural and demographic context of Kerala. Wedding photography is a pivotal aspect of the marriage celebration, and this research aims to unravel the intricate dynamics shaping preferences, choices, and trends in this domain. By delving into the diverse demographic landscape of Kerala and collecting survey responses from individuals immersed in the wedding planning process, the study seeks to unearth valuable insights that illuminate the patterns and motivations guiding the selection of wedding photography styles, services, and platforms. Through a meticulous analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, this research endeavours to contribute nuanced perspectives to the understanding of the evolving role of wedding photography in the rich tapestry of Kerala's cultural and social milieu.

Wedding ceremonies are significantly influenced by professional photographers (Lewis, 1998), as they capture negotiated interpretations of 'reality' within specific social and cultural contexts (Lewis, 1997). The camera and photographs play a crucial role in shaping rituals like weddings and funerals, offering resources for individuals' 'experiments with self-making' (Lozada, 2006). Photographic income aligns with the terms and conditions of the Ijarah al-amal agreement (Dissarami, 2022). Photographers actively promote Trash the Dress (TTD) images as creative alternatives superior to traditional wedding photography in various promotional channels (White, 2012). Photographs, serving as extensions of social witnessing, become vital validating elements in the wedding process (Kendall, 2006). Large-scale key portraits of brides and grooms gain popularity regionally (Adrian, 2006), facilitated by technology that transforms weddings into sought-after fantasies with practical and entertaining elements (Massimi et al., 2014). Images depicting weddings may unintentionally reinforce heteronormative ideals, adhering to societal expectations of individual and couple presentations during marriage (Kimport, 2012). The analysis of photographs should go beyond forensic and semiotic examinations of content alone (Edwards, 2009). Wedding media branding often appropriates romantic narratives of traditional femininity (Winch & Webster, 2012). The future of domestic photography will witness a shift in core activities (Sarvas & Frohlich, 2011), as weddings increasingly become forms of display work (Mamali & Stevens, 2020). Family photographs are gaining visibility in public media (Rose, 2016), reflecting changing cultural and social landscapes (Kay et al., 2019). A successful wedding company requires a clear brand positioning and corporate image (Wang, 2022). Photographers in Taiwanese bridal salons aim to elicit specific subjective states from clients, resulting in attractive and naturalistic poses and expressions (Adrian, 2004). The democratization of photography allows even amateurs to create and comment on everyday images with relative authority and ease (Murray, 2008). The intersection of snapshots with the Internet gives rise to new photographs, where images interact with established and experimental media forms (Rubinstein & Sluis, 2008).

Moonrise Photowork exemplifies a photography business growing within the community (Yhattaun & Aestetika, 2022). Wedding photographs and albums symbolically underscore the enduring centrality of ritual in contemporary America (Bezner, 2002). The design of a wedding photo service information system at Alive Studio Photo Based on Java aims to optimize the company's information and data processing for the future (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

Modern bridal photography is rooted in self-image realization and the collectively shared culture of new brides (Lin et al., 2012). While the wedding album was a popular medium for showcasing wedding photographs from the 1950s to the 1980s (D'Agostino, 2021), the study of photographs and photography has gained traction among scholars interested in their social and historical dimensions over the last decade (Spyer, 2001). In the Wringin Pitu village, pre-wedding photos have become an integral part of the wedding procession (Mahmud, 2021), offering insights into the reduction of the ceremony itself and the evolving lexical elements that accompany it (Tyshchenko & Tkachuk, 2022). Bridal photography and wedding video recording mirror social changes among newly married couples in society (Cheung, 2006).

## **Methodology**

To comprehensively understand the intricacies of wedding photography and its impact on societal norms, a robust survey methodology will be employed. This approach will facilitate the collection of diverse perspectives from both professional wedding photographers and clients who have engaged with wedding photography services.

1. **Survey Design:** The survey instrument will be meticulously designed to capture a wide range of variables, including but not limited to, preferences in photographic styles, the influence of technology, and the evolving significance of wedding photographs in different socio-cultural contexts.
2. **Sampling Method:** To ensure a representative and unbiased selection of participants, the research will employ a simple random sampling method. This approach involves randomly selecting individuals from the population of interest, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings. The randomness of the selection process minimizes biases and allows for a more accurate reflection of the diversity within the wedding photography landscape.
3. **Place of Survey:** The survey will be conducted in the culturally rich state of Kerala. Renowned for its diverse traditions and customs, Kerala provides an ideal setting to explore how wedding photography both reflects and influences cultural practices. Conducting the survey in Kerala allows for a nuanced understanding of regional variations in wedding photography preferences and trends.
4. **Timeline:** The survey was scheduled to take place over the span of three months, from July 2023 to September 2023. This timeline is strategically chosen to coincide with the peak wedding season in Kerala, ensuring that the study captures the most dynamic and representative data. Conducting the survey during this period allows for a comprehensive

examination of current trends, seasonal influences, and the evolving role of wedding photography during a time when these celebrations are most prominent in the region.

5. Data Collection: The survey will employ a combination of online and offline methods to ensure accessibility and participation from a diverse group of respondents. Online surveys will be distributed through various platforms, while targeted in-person surveys will be conducted at wedding-related events and establishments in Kerala. This dual approach aims to maximize the reach and inclusivity of the survey, enabling the collection of rich and varied data.

## Results

What type of wedding style do you prefer on your big day?

200 responses

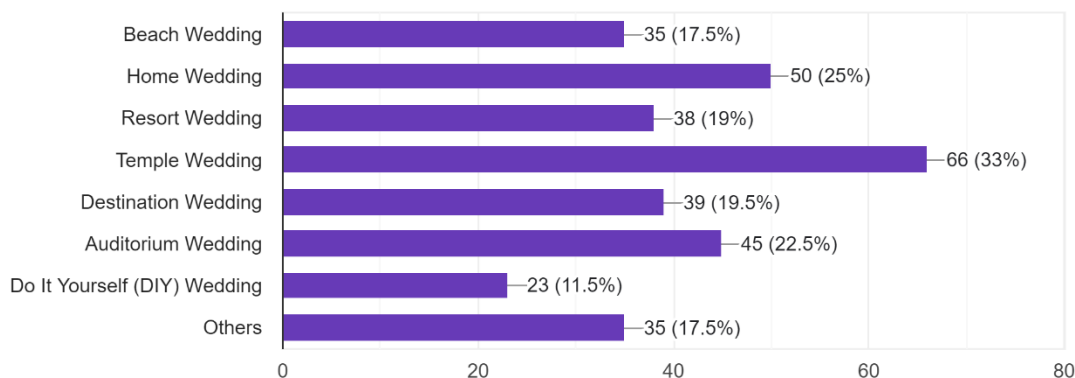


Figure 1: Wedding preference

In Kerala, the prevalent preference for temple weddings stems from a confluence of cultural, religious, and societal factors. With a predominantly Hindu population, temples hold profound cultural significance, and weddings conducted within these sacred precincts are often perceived as traditional and spiritually auspicious. The elaborate rituals associated with Hindu weddings are believed to bestow divine blessings upon the union, fostering a sense of cultural continuity. Social approval and adherence to established norms also play a crucial role, as families may choose temple weddings to align with societal expectations and maintain social respectability. The simplicity and cost-effectiveness of temple weddings appeal to many, offering a contrast to more extravagant alternatives. Temples' ubiquity across the region ensures accessibility and convenience, contributing to their popularity.

Did you get any inspiration to incorporate any of your wedding events from the wedding photographs that you came across online/offline?

200 responses

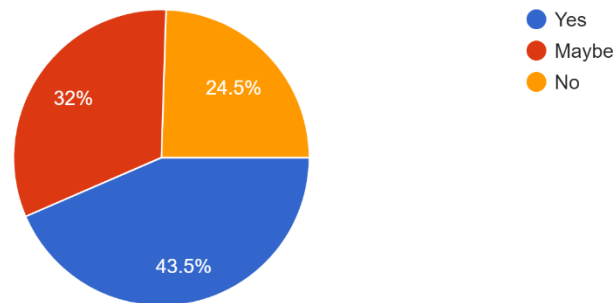


Figure 2: Wedding photography inspiration

The notable statistic of 43.5% responding affirmatively suggests a substantial impact of visual inspiration on the planning process. The positive responses indicate a significant role played by online and offline wedding photographs in shaping the ideas and preferences of nearly half of the surveyed individuals. This underscores the evolving nature of wedding trends and the increasing reliance on visual content for inspiration. The "Maybe" category implies a nuanced influence, suggesting that while not all decisions are directly inspired, there might be some subtle influence or consideration of visual elements in the planning process. However, it is crucial to critically assess the potential implications of this trend. While drawing inspiration from wedding photographs can enhance creativity and help individuals envision their ideal wedding, it also raises questions about the authenticity and uniqueness of personal choices. The risk lies in the potential homogenization of wedding events, where trends popularized through online platforms may lead to a replication of similar themes and styles. The impact of social media and online platforms on shaping wedding aspirations might contribute to unrealistic expectations, potentially leading to disappointment or dissatisfaction when real-world constraints and budgetary limitations come into play. The question also opens avenues for exploring how societal and peer influences, often reflected in online content, may shape individual preferences and contribute to a collective consciousness around wedding aesthetics.

Which of the wedding ceremonies/events will you incorporate on your wedding?  
200 responses

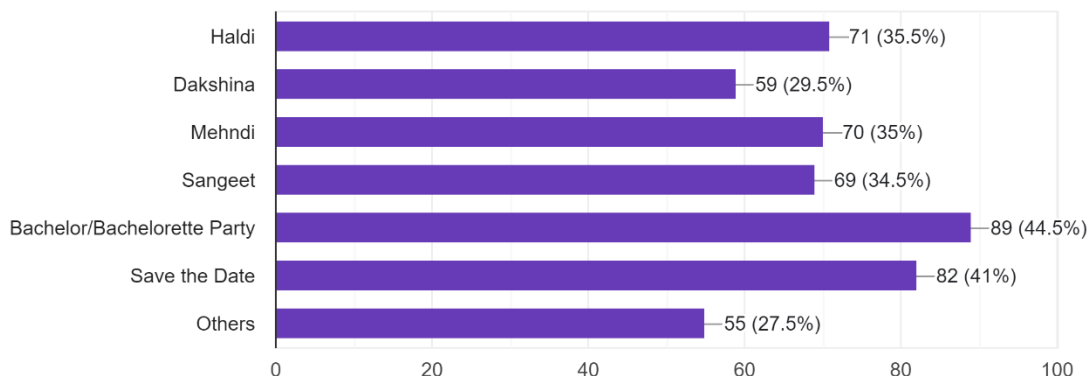


Figure 3: Wedding types

Each mentioned ceremony represents a specific cultural or traditional aspect, and the responses can provide insights into the participants' inclination towards preserving or adapting cultural practices in their weddings. Firstly, the inclusion of ceremonies like Haldi, Mehndi, Sangeeth, and Dakshina reflects the rich tapestry of cultural diversity in wedding customs. These ceremonies are often deeply rooted in specific cultural traditions, with Haldi representing auspiciousness and purity, Mehndi symbolizing beauty and love, Sangeeth focusing on music and dance, and Dakshina involving giving and receiving gifts. The respondents' choices may indicate a desire to honour and uphold their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of continuity and connection with their roots. On the other hand, the inclusion of "Others" suggests a recognition of the evolving nature of wedding ceremonies, where couples may choose to incorporate personalized or contemporary rituals that hold personal significance. This openness to customization reflects the changing dynamics of wedding planning, with individuals seeking to create unique and meaningful experiences that resonate with their values and preferences. However, a critical perspective should also consider potential challenges or risks associated with these choices. While embracing cultural traditions is commendable, it's essential to ensure that these practices are approached with respect and understanding, avoiding cultural appropriation or tokenism. Additionally, the pressure to conform to certain cultural norms might lead to dilemmas for individuals navigating between different cultural backgrounds.

Which of the below rituals/events would you like to be photographed?

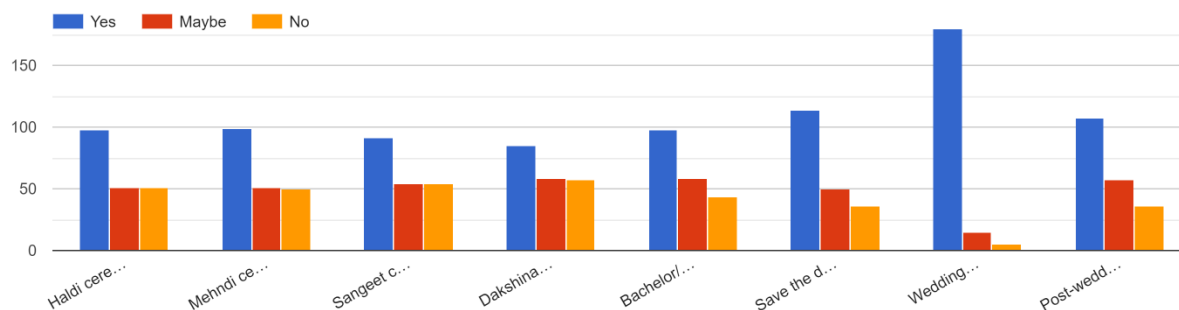


Figure 4: Wedding photography ceremony preferences

The act of photographing ceremonies such as Haldi, Dakshina, Mehndi, Sangeeth, and analogous rituals during weddings holds pivotal significance for diverse and interrelated reasons. Primarily, it serves as a crucial mechanism for the systematic documentation of cultural practices, facilitating the preservation and visual representation of deeply entrenched customs and traditions inherent in these ceremonial observances. Beyond its documentary function, wedding photography assumes a role of emotional resonance, encapsulating moments of joy, laughter, and sentimentality, thereby constituting invaluable mementoes for both couples and their familial cohorts. This visual medium also plays a fundamental role in narrative construction, contributing substantially to the holistic portrayal of the entire matrimonial trajectory and underscored by the distinctive nature of each ceremony. Additionally, wedding photographs function as instrumental agents in the construction and articulation of cultural identity, a facet particularly pronounced in the context of multicultural weddings, where the amalgamation of disparate customs finds visual manifestation. The artistic dimension of photography further augments the aesthetic allure of these ceremonial proceedings, transforming them into visually captivating representations. Furthermore, in the contemporary landscape dominated by social media, these photographic artefacts assume a critical role in disseminating the joyous occasion, thereby exerting influence and inspiration upon prospective couples in their matrimonial preparations. It is imperative, however, for photographers to approach the documentation of diverse traditions with a nuanced sensitivity to cultural contexts, ensuring the faithful representation of the ceremonial significance and authenticity.

What type of photography styles do you prefer for your wedding related events?

200 responses

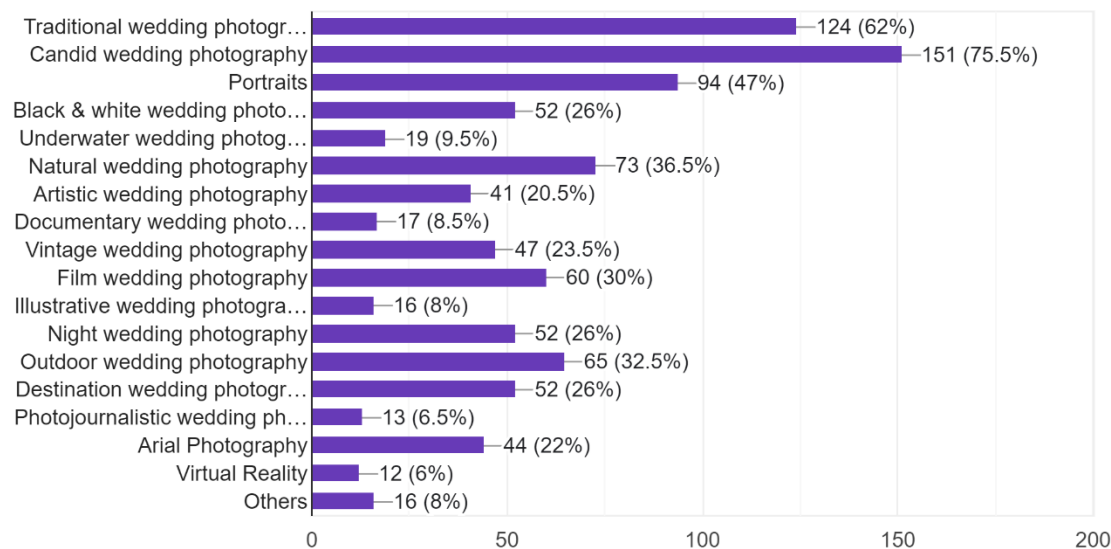


Figure 5: Types of photography styles

The inclusion of traditional wedding photography in the repertoire underscores the enduring appeal of formal and posed imagery, capturing pivotal moments with a classical and timeless approach. Conversely, the notable emphasis on candid wedding photography reflects a discernible proclivity for authentic and spontaneous captures, prioritizing the emotive and unscripted facets of the wedding day. The enumeration of a diverse array of styles, including but not limited to portraits, aerial, VR, black & white, underwater, natural, artistic, documentary, vintage, film, illustrative, night, outdoor, destination, and photojournalistic photography, delineates the multifaceted visual vocabularies available to couples in conceptualizing their wedding memories. Each style, with its distinct visual language, caters to varied aesthetic preferences and artistic sensibilities. A critical perspective necessitates an examination of the potential implications of such preferences on the overall narrative and representation of the wedding day. The ascendant popularity of candid, documentary, and natural styles indicates a pronounced shift towards a more authentic and immersive portrayal of the wedding experience, aligning with contemporary values that prioritize genuine moments over contrived aesthetics. The inclusion of unconventional styles, such as underwater or aerial photography, signifies a pursuit of innovation and uniqueness. While these avant-garde approaches may yield visually arresting results, careful consideration is imperative to ensure their harmonization with the overarching thematic and emotional tenor of the wedding, preventing a discordant impact on the narrative. The diverse spectrum of preferences elucidates the democratization of wedding photography, affording couples the agency to tailor their visual narrative to align with personal tastes and the thematic ethos of the event. This phenomenon underscores the adaptability of photographers in accommodating varied client demands and the perpetual evolution of the industry to incorporate novel technologies and creative expressions.



How much money are you willing to spend for a wedding photography coverage?  
200 responses

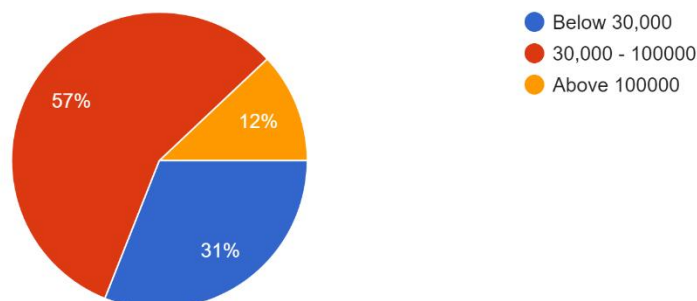
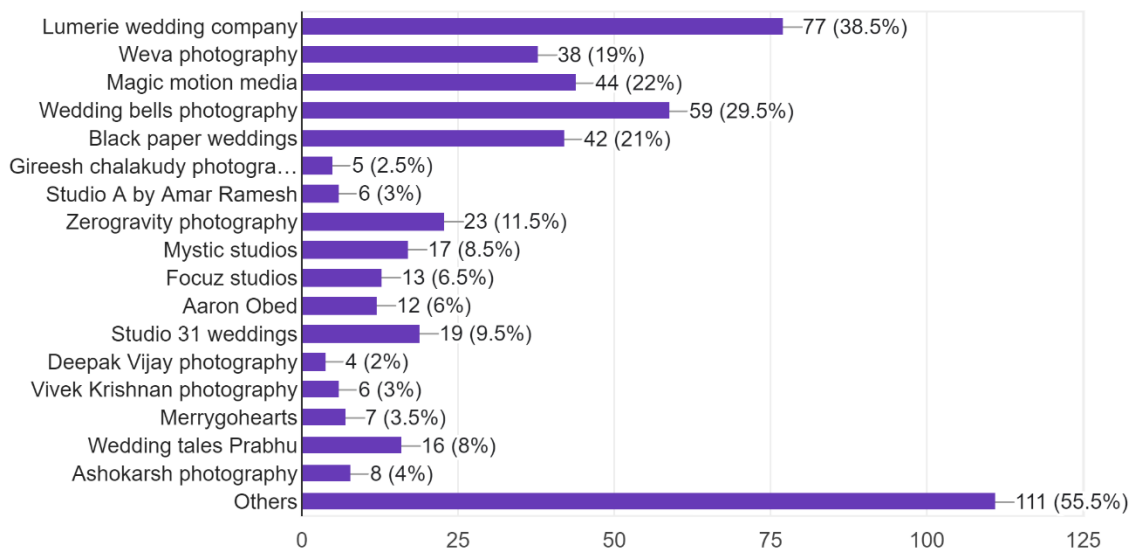


Figure 6: Budget for wedding photography

The collective response indicating that most individuals allocated a budget ranging from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 100,000 for wedding photography warrants critical examination. The provided financial range reflects a considerable spectrum, signifying diverse financial considerations and priorities among respondents. Firstly, the lower end of the spectrum, Rs. 30,000, may suggest a budget-conscious approach, possibly driven by financial constraints or a deliberate choice to prioritize other aspects of the wedding budget. This could be indicative of a pragmatic mindset where individuals seek cost-effective solutions without compromising the importance of documenting the event. Conversely, the upper limit of Rs. 100,000 suggests a willingness to invest significantly in wedding photography, indicating a perceived value in securing high-quality services, experienced photographers, and comprehensive coverage. This could be associated with a recognition of the enduring importance of wedding photographs as timeless mementoes, prompting a more substantial financial commitment. A critical perspective involves considering the factors influencing the diverse budgetary allocations. Factors such as geographical location, photographer reputation, package inclusions, and the duration and scale of the wedding event could contribute to this wide financial range. Moreover, the variance in socioeconomic backgrounds among respondents might also play a pivotal role in shaping budgetary considerations. It is essential to assess whether the allocated budget aligns with realistic expectations. A lower budget might necessitate compromises on certain aspects of photography services, such as the level of expertise, equipment quality, or post-production enhancements. Conversely, a higher budget warrants an expectation of elevated standards, demanding a careful evaluation of the photographer's portfolio, reputation, and service offerings.

Have you heard of the below photography companies?

200 responses



**Figure 7: Preferred Wedding Photography Companies**

The surge in wedding photography companies has become a significant phenomenon, highlighting the increasing emphasis placed on capturing and preserving moments from life's pivotal events. The expanding wedding photography industry has multifaceted implications for the economy, and its role in contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can be critically assessed from various angles. This growth has led to the creation of job opportunities, with companies hiring photographers, videographers, editors, and administrative staff. Moreover, it stimulates consumer spending as couples allocate substantial portions of their wedding budgets to photography services, encompassing pre-wedding shoots, albums, videography, and related services. The industry's technological advancements and innovation, such as high-quality equipment and drone usage, contribute to the overall progress of the photography sector. Wedding photography companies are also influential in destination weddings, a burgeoning trend that bolsters tourism by attracting couples and guests, benefiting local economies. However, a critical analysis is imperative, considering challenges like price variations, potential ethical concerns related to commercialization, and societal trends impacting the industry's practices. Striking a balance between economic contributions and ethical considerations is pivotal for the sustainable advancement of the wedding photography sector.

Which of the Wedding photography curators/apps would you prefer for your marriage?  
200 responses

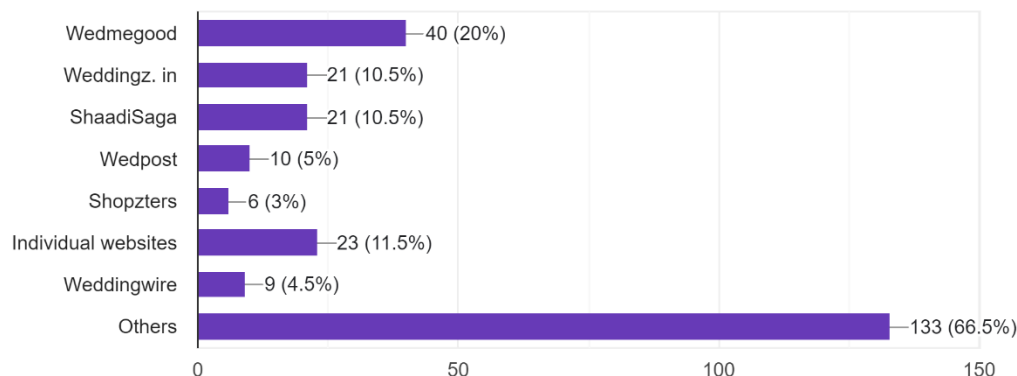


Figure 8: Curator Apps for Wedding Photography

The inquiry regarding the preferred wedding photography apps underscores the contemporary trend of utilizing digital platforms for wedding planning. Each app, from Wedmegood and Weddingz. into Shopzters, Wedpost, ShaadiSaga, and individual websites, presents a distinct set of attributes catering to varied aspects of the wedding planning process. Wedmegood, for instance, is renowned for its extensive vendor directory and personalized tools, while Weddingz.in offers a comprehensive venue-centric approach. Shopzters specializes in bridal fashion, Wedpost focuses on invitation management, ShaadiSaga excels in vendor recommendations, and individual websites provide a personalized touch. A critical analysis of these options considers factors such as user experience, comprehensiveness of services, reliability, and customization. The success of a wedding app hinges on its ability to provide a seamless and intuitive user interface, offering efficient navigation and planning tools. The comprehensiveness of services is crucial, with couples likely to favour apps that address multiple facets of wedding planning, including vendor connections, inspiration boards, and organizational tools. Reliability, as indicated by positive reviews and testimonials, is a key consideration, influencing the trustworthiness of the chosen app. Customization and personalization options play a pivotal role, allowing couples to tailor the planning process to their specific preferences, thereby enhancing the overall user experience. Ultimately, the critical analysis emphasizes that the selection among these wedding photography apps is contingent on individual needs, preferences, and the extent to which each app aligns with the couple's vision for their wedding. Balancing user-friendly interfaces, comprehensive services, reliability, and customization will likely guide couples in making informed choices for their wedding planning endeavours.

In which social media platform would you like to post your wedding photos?

200 responses

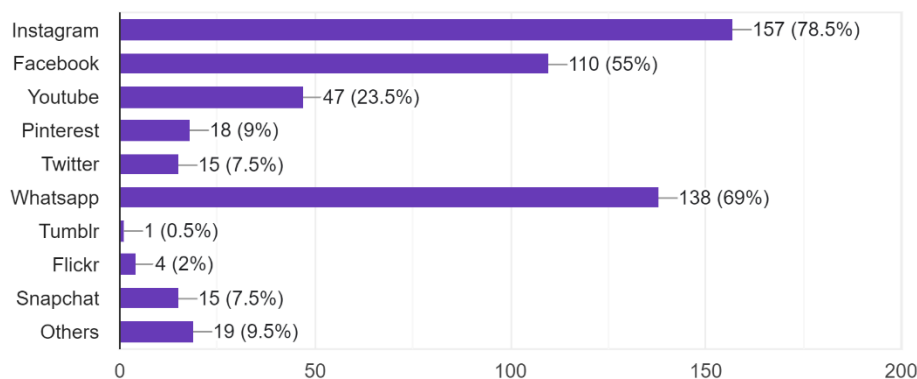


Figure 9: Preferred Social Media Application for wedding photograph sharing

The inquiry about the preferred social media platform for posting wedding photos critically evaluates the nuances and functionalities offered by different platforms in the realm of photo-sharing. Instagram emerges as an ideal choice due to its visually oriented design, filters, and caption-driven storytelling platform for aesthetically pleasing photo sharing. Facebook, with its extensive user base, allows for broad audience reach and organized photo sharing through albums. YouTube caters to those interested in longer-form wedding videos, offering a dynamic medium for comprehensive content. Pinterest serves as a virtual wedding vision board, ideal for thematic or stylistic element sharing, while Twitter's real-time updates and hashtags facilitate concise and immediate highlights. WhatsApp, on the other hand, provides a more private sharing space for intimate moments. The mention of "Others" acknowledges potential platforms with unique features, emphasizing the importance of tailoring the choice to audience preferences, content format, and desired visibility and privacy levels. Ultimately, the critical analysis encourages consideration of these factors to align with the couple's goals for sharing their wedding memories.

The preference for temple weddings in Kerala is rooted in cultural, religious, and societal factors, offering a traditional and cost-effective choice. However, the influence of wedding photographs, indicated by 43.5% affirmative responses, raises concerns about potential homogenization and unrealistic expectations in wedding planning. The inclusion of diverse ceremonies reflects a nuanced approach to preserving culture or embracing personalized rituals, with photography serving as a vital tool for documentation and cultural identity construction. Wedding photography preferences demonstrate a shift towards authenticity, allowing couples to tailor their visual narrative. Budgetary allocations ranging from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 100,000 highlight diverse financial considerations. The rise of wedding photography companies contributes to economic growth, but challenges like pricing and ethical concerns warrant attention. The critical analysis of wedding photography apps and social media platform preferences underscores the importance of aligning choices with individual needs, user experience, and desired visibility levels. In essence, these analyses provide a concise overview of the intricate dynamics within Kerala's wedding traditions, photography, and digital platforms.

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