The variety of wedding traditions

Image caption: Scene of the traditional wedding ceremony in Lithuania: stacking of bride dowry to the cradle. Photo of Kupiškis Museum of Ethnography (Lithuania)

CONTENT

General overview

Many of us will agree that a wedding is an important event in a person's life. A new social structure, continuing the thread of the country's tribal traditions and customs, and at the same time able to create its own ones, is formed during it. For many years, most of the countries have had weddings as a clearly structured, tightly framed traditional ritual, organized by the efforts of family and close relatives, nurturing country-specific cultural traditions. Today, looking around or searching on the internet, we can easily discover the new wedding trends - wedding tourism, the popularity of which is growing every year.

Wedding Tourism is a travel concept where a couple, and typically their guests, travel to a foreign location to get married. Wedding tourism is often termed as 'Marriage Tourism' or 'Destination Weddings', but the market also encompasses honeymoons. Other sources of wedding tourism relates to the trends of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism means travel concerned with experiencing cultural environments, including landscapes, the visual and performing arts, and special (local) lifestyles, values, traditions, events as well as other ways of creative and inter-cultural exchange processes (www.unesco.com)

Exotics, mild climate, global wedding parties trends, the desire to avoid tedious and complex wedding attributes that can be considered as too archaic for today, the desire to gain different cultural experiences - these are just some of the reasons for the fast development of this market. For this purpose, travel agencies, hotels, manors offer service packages that help newlyweds to avoid many of the preparation worries associated with this occasion. Undoubtedly, this has a positive effect on the development of the tourism market and the economic benefits for such countries.

Wedding tourism plays a vital role for the businesses involved in the travel and tourism sector. Destination wedding tourism annual spending is estimated to account for US$16 billion and the revenue share of wedding tourism in the overall industry. For example Italy wedding industry, one of the most popular destinations of the couples, from 2015 to 2019, fixes a significant increase of the total turnover. Data shows that this sector registered a turnover of roughly 380.3 million euros in 2015. This figure rose to approximately 540 million euros in 2019 (source: www.statista.com).

In addition to the opinions of such wedding supporters, we can also find apprehensive feedback that this negatively affects the authenticity of country-specific wedding traditions - country-specific cultural identity. This exercise invites to examine 2 aspects of this celebration - the fostering of traditions during the wedding and the potential economic benefits for the service provider participating in the wedding organization market.

Is wedding just a party or an opportunity to continue family and national traditions? Activity overview

Activities provided in this exercise, like most of this part of the Workbook, are developed by the storytelling method.

A young couple, who decides to get married abroad, face the challenges. In order to help students better understand the wedding symbols of different countries and to prepare them properly to act successfully in the wedding tourism market, in the first task, students will have the opportunity to learn more about the colors used for decor and its related symbols (e.g. flowers) during this occasion. Due to the aims and content of the subject, the exercise will be integrated in, the presented situation will provide an opportunity for a valuable discussion about the possible actions of the service staff in resolving cultural misunderstandings within the class.

The second activity of the exercise, in which the staff seeks to find a way out of the situation in order to meet the customer's expectations will enable students to develop and demonstrate their entrepreneurial skills - to prepare a decor project, calculate its initial cost and present it.

For wedding parties, which usually includes a variety of decorative attributes, guest safety is essential. The third part of the exercise is designated for this. It will help to acquire and improve practical fire safety skills.

The last, fourth part of the exercise will invite us to discuss situations where the news of improper customer service spreads outwards. Misunderstandings arising from a lack of focus on cultural preferences can cause significant damage to the reputation of an institution specialized in customer service. Specialized Internet portals and social networks can make the function of advertising also anti-advertising, therefore management of such customer complaints has to be planned ahead.

We hope that the story presented and the consistent resolution of its situations will help students prepare to successfully serve newlyweds and their guests from different countries during the wedding parties with the appropriate respect to the different cultural practices and preferences.

General objective: To encourage students to become familiar with the wedding traditions of different countries and develop their knowledge and skills necessary for successful entry into the growing wedding tourism market.

The activity can by applied for the VET students of various programmes during the subject related to #(inter)national traditions,#foreign languages, #marketing, #ICT, #economics, #entrepreneurship, #client service, # cultural history related subjects, #safety at work.

Descriptive activity sheet

1st activity "It's just bouquet?"

Resources for the activity implementation. Network, computer.

Activity starts by introducing the situation, the students have to empathize with:

Tomas and Monika – young couple from Lithuania, who decided to organize the wedding party in France, Provence region. They contacted the hotel by email and agreed about the details of the party. They arrived a few days before the planned date and find out that everything goes in line with their plan and meets their expectations - the weather is nice, the hotel – cozy and hospitable, ready to make their wedding dream come true. But what happened? Why did the bride begin to cry when she saw the wedding bouquet of flowers brought by the hotel assistant?

8 beautiful lilies were organized in a bouquet. Monika - a proponent of traditional Lithuanian customs, where these flowers are usually used for the funeral bouquet, but not for the wedding... She is also allergic to these flowers!
Imagine, You are a manager of the hotel staff – what can You do to avoid such awkward situations in the future?

The tasks for the students:
1. Surf the internet and find information about at least 5 countries:
   - meaning of different types / colors of flowers in different countries (focus on Europe);
   - the origin of these traditions.
2. Prepare a questionnaire for the broom ordering the bouquet to predict and avoid such situations in future (we recommend Google Form, tutorial of it can be found here: https://support.google.com/docs/answer/6281888?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en).

Recommendations for the teacher:

- The task can re-organized according to the needs of the different subject – colours of the decoration of the venue, wedding dress, food/drinks (e.g. kosher food) end ect.
- To avoid possible stereotypes / information based on the personal opinion, encourage students to check the reliability of the used source (for example, visit few similar sources);
- Define the length/ appointed for the information search / questionnaire according to the students pre-entry level.
- Decide on the language of the presentation/ questionnaire in line with the learning subject and lesson goals defined.
- The form of the presentation can be adapted according to the subject and the goals of the lesson: written form, presentation, infographic (example bellow) and ect.
- Discuss with the class, what are other possible steps to avoid a similar situation in the future?
- To deepen the knowledge of the quest service invite the students to play the dialog between the Monica and hotel staff representative. The purpose of the dialogue – apologize politely for the misunderstanding and collect the necessary information for the next bouquet. Try to integrate the knowledge of the information collected – why the lilies (or other flowers) were chosen for the first bouquet, their positive meaning at the different countries. Maybe we can interest clients to try local traditions? Discuss about it within class.

Results of the activity.
- Presentation on information about at least 5 countries' flower – giving traditions / its origins, the national flower of the country, meaning of it, its use on the national symbolic, objects of the cultural heritage (example below).
- Questionnaire for the broom the wedding bouquet order (example: https://www.jotform.com/form-templates/wedding-event-plan-questionnaire)

The Meaning Behind Mother's Day Flowers.

Orchids
– represent love, luxury, beauty and strength. The orchid is also a Chinese symbol for "many children." In ancient Greece women believed that if the father of their unborn child ate large, new orchid tubers, the baby would be a boy. If the mother ate small orchid tubers, she would give birth to a girl.

Red Roses
– if your mother is very traditional, roses might be the best option for her. Red roses are traditionally associated with romantic love while a lighter red or deep pink color denotes gratitude and appreciation.

- Yellow roses are believed to represent a caring nature
- White roses are associated with purity and brightness.

Tulips
– Tulips are a perfect choice if your mom is light-hearted and easy-going. Tulips represent comfort, coziness and above all happiness. Yellow tulips symbolize that "there's sunshine in your smile".

- White tulips symbolize heaven and purity.
- Pink tulips mean affection and caring

Carnations
– Carnations signify purity, faith, love, beauty and charity. Pink carnations carry the greatest significance at Mother's Day. Legend has it that they first appeared on earth from the Virgin Mary's tears shed over Jesus' death– making them the symbol of a mother's undying love.

Lillies
– Particularly beloved by many mothers, lilies come in a number of different varieties. A white lily connotes purity and majesty. The day lily is a Chinese symbol for motherhood. Calla lilies stand for beauty.

Gerber Daisies
– Gerbera Daisies represent cheerfulness. If your mom radiates happiness, gerbera daisies are a perfect pick for her bouquet. They also symbolize innocence, purity and beauty.

This activity 1 should help students to broaden their knowledge of symbols and its related customs variety and similarity in the different countries also develop these [key competences](#):

Literacy competence/ Multilingual competence, by developing their skills
- to identify, understand, interpret facts and opinions in written form;
- to use visual and digital materials across disciplines and contexts, in a national and foreign language, by integrating a historical dimension and existing intercultural competences;
- to formulate and express findings and arguments, appropriate to the context, through the critical thinking and assessment of information.

Digital competence, by developing their skills:
- to take a critical approach to the validity, reliability and impact of information and data made available by digital means;
- to absorb and use new softwares to support them towards goals set.

Personal, social and learning to learn competence by developing their skills:
- to work with others in a constructive way;
- to focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions.

Cultural awareness and expression competence by developing their skills:
- to understand the different ways of communicating ideas to the audience within text/ presentation/ infographic form;
- to understanding identity and cultural heritage within a world of cultural diversity;
- to explore different cultures and participate in different cultural experiences.

The evaluation of the activities of this stage:
Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest a number of assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.
1. Assessment in relation to the requirements of the particular subject (ICT subject: questionnaire prepared using the new software. Cultural history related subject: presentation is prepared on verified information, information related to the cultural heritage identified and integrated into the presentation. Marketing: competitiveness of the questionnaire).

2. The whole task can be evaluated in the frame of group workflow – are the students involved in the activity, do they understand the task and can present their findings during it. The main criteria of such task evaluation should be presented to the class:
- scope of the analysis;
- identification of required info;
- quality of structured presentation;
- ability to work in group, organize and present the group work findings;
- creativity in the presentation of findings;
- ability to express their opinion, knowledge and perceptions in a respective way.

3. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects:

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the literacy competence/ multilingual competence:
- the presented findings are in line with the provided task;
- different sources used to collect information in the mother tongue and in foreign languages;
- the all required info is presented/ students are able to motivate reasonably why some info is missing in the presentation;
- the provided info is essential, clear, valid and systemized;
- the path of the narrative is clear, catching the attention of the audience.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the digital competence:
- ability to use search engines;
- critical approach to the validity and reliability of information;
- creativity to use the digital technologies/ software to present the findings/ create questionnaires.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the personal, social and learning to learn competence:
- individual involvement in group work;
- ability to communicate constructively, collaborate during the group work.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the cultural awareness and expression competence
- the idea of the presentation is clearly expressed through text/ presentation/ infographic form;
- knowledges about the cultural heritage applied and improved;
- the ability to compare the cultural practices of different countries is demonstrated.

2nd activity "Calculate the cost of the bouquet"

Resources of the activity. Network, computer.

The situation, the students have to empathize with is, goes following:

The hotel apologized for the misunderstanding with the bouquet and promised to bring the new one as soon as possible. You need to plan and calculate the price of the new bouquet (upon the knowledge gained in the Activity 1).

The students have to fill the table below.

	Amount	Unit price	Total price
Flowers:			
Flower 1			
Flower 2			
…..			
Décor:			
e.g. strip			
Beads			
Hourly rate			
Taxes			
Mark-up			
		Total price:	

Results of the activity.
- Filled tabled with correct calculations.
- Quality of bouquet (or other agreed) plan.

Recommendations for the teacher:
- The students can use calculation planning programs such as https://bloomypro.com/, also Excel program or other similar calculation tools.
- The task can be re-organized according the needs of the different subject – calculation of the decoration of the wedding venue, wedding dress, dinner end ect.
- Class can agree on the number of the components should be included in the project (1-5, 6-10, 11-15 and ect.)
- Students should integrate the knowledges, obtained in the activity 1 and provide motives of their choice of the components (colors, symbols and ect.)

This activity should help students to integrate the knowledges if the project cost calculation according information collected about the specific needs/background of the client also develop these key competences:

Digital competence by developing their skills:
- to use different softwares of the service or product project cost planning.

Personal, social and learning to learn competence by developing their skills:
- to identify the goals/ outcomes of the task and purposeful work towards it;
- to focus, deal with complexity in order to reach agreed the results in the agreed time framework;
- to select and use appropriate tools for particular problematic situations.

Entrepreneurship competence competence by developing their skills:
- to work both as an individual and collaboratively in team, to mobilize available resources;
- to define of the criteria necessary for decision making at individual and (or) group level;
- to work creatively towards the required result.

Cultural awareness and expression competence by developing their skills:
- to plan the project with the respect to the different cultural expectations;
- to apply knowledge of national symbols, custom related to the wedding ceremony;

The evaluation of this stage:
Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest a number of assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.
1. Assessment in relation to the requirements of the particular subject (Economic: ability to calculate the initial cost of one of the items. Decor: ability to integrate symbols specific to different EU countries: application of the knowledge gained during the survey of the symbols (Activity 1), application of prie-gained interdisciplinary knowledges).

2. The whole task can be evaluated in the frame of group workflow – are the students involved in the activity, do they understand the task and can present their findings during it. The main criteria of such task evaluation, should be presented to the class, is the general particularity/ quality of the presented project:
- the idea of the project expressed clearly;
- the filled table in line with the planned idea.

3. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects:

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the digital competence:
- proper resources, including reliability, used to fill the table;
- the table is completed correctly.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the personal, social and learning to learn competence:

- purposeful work towards the goals of the task/ completeness of the result was demonstrated;
- the results prepared in the agreed time framework;
- appropriate tools were selected to implement the task.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the entrepreneurship competence:

- the potential resources available within the group were exploited properly;
- fulfillment of the idea according to its commercial goals.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the cultural awareness and expression competence:

- details of agreed national symbols were integrated;
- proper application of knowledge of European cultures, history and national symbols was expressed during the task.

3rd activity "Safe traditions"

Resources of the activity. Network, computer, safety equipment (fire extinguisher, alarm system, evacuation plan).

The situation, the students have to empathize with is, goes following:

The wedding party is going on. At midnight, as usual, the parents of the Monika brought the traditional present of the weddings – the fireplace of the family, which has the open flame inside. The table is full, so the waiter decided to put it on the windowsill. Suddenly, a gust of wind caught the flame and lid the curtain. Fire alarm is on.

Task: Write the detailed steps of serving personnel.

Results of the activity.
Written plan of the detailed steps of the personnel during this accident:
- fire fighting procedure;
- evacuation of the guests;
- responsibilities/activities of the serving personnel.

Recommendations for the teacher:
- discuss other fire-security related issues related to the various traditions to light up the candle (advent, Christmas and ect.)

This activity should help students to develop the practical knowledges meet the client needs, respect their cultural traditions in line with the safety at work requirement also develop these key competence:

Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering, by developing their skills:
- insafety management using appropriate technological processes, machines, tools and human efforts.

Personal, social and learning to learn competence, by developing their skills:
- apply the problem-solving attitude to support both the learning process and the individual's ability to handle obstacles and change;
- the desire to apply prior learning and life experiences and the curiosity to look for opportunities to learn and develop in a variety of life contexts.

The evaluation of the activities of this stage:
Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest 2 possible assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.

1. Application of the knowledge on the safety at work area within the subject – fire-security / safety at work:

- ability to explain actions of the staff in the described situation;
- ability to identify hazards/ plan preventive actions in the other situations related to cultural traditions of the country (-ies).

2. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects:

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering:

- understanding of general fire-security / safety at work/ principles;

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the personal, social and learning to learn competence:

- ability to apply knowledge of the technological processes, machines, tools and human efforts to solve the concrete problem.

4th activity "Excuse me"

Resources of the activity. Network, computer.

The situation, the students have to empathize with is, goes following:

The next day, Tomas and Monika went for breakfast to the hotel restaurant. The hotel housekeeper went to clean their room and found a little crown made of rue on the table. She decided that it was just weed and threw it to the garbage. Actually, it was not! According to the Lithuanian traditions, a bride traditionally wears a little crown made of rue, which is a symbol of maidenhood. During the wedding the crown is burned (or braids dry it for the memory) symbolizing the loss of careless childhood and entrance into the world of adulthood. It was the last drop in the patient cup of the new married couple. Monica wrote a post to the social network group for the future newlyweds.
What are possible actions of the hotel? Plan and discuss them in detail in the class.

Results of the activity.
- Plans of the corrective actions;
- Written public response to the client.

Recommendations for the teacher:
- The situation can be re-organized according to the different needs/ traditions (e.g. something borrowed, family heirloom and ect.)
- Discuss the work process of the hotel housekeeper before the task start (e.g. https://setupmyhotel.com/formats/house-keeping/394-service-stnd-checklist-daily-service.html)
- Discuss the good practices of client complaint management (e.g. https://setupmyhotel.com/train-my-hotel-staff/front-office-training/94-how-to-handle-guest-complaints-in-hotels.html) also management of the hotel reputation in the social media (e.g. https://hotelfriend.com/blogpost/hotel-reputation-management) before the task start.

This activity should help students to deepen their knowledge about the wedding traditions of the different countries, details they have to pay special attention at, also develop their communication/ marketing skills using social media channels and skills of the client complains management and develop these key competences:
Literacy competence, by developing their skills:
- develop the skills to be able to choose appropriate communication style in line with the concrete requirements of the situation;
- to expand the available vocabulary and use it in a positive and socially responsible manner.

Digital competence, by developing their skills:
- use social media channels creatively towards commercial goals.

Entrepreneurship competence, by developing their skills:
- accept and act constructively towards the challenges facing an organization;
- to think strategically in order to achieve the commercial goals.

The evaluation of the activities of this stage:

Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest a number of assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.

1. Assessment in relation to the requirements of the particular subject (Literacy: grammar/ punctuation, style/ vocabulary of the text. Marketing: commercial attitude of the text, ethical approach. Client service: structure/ logic of the corrective actions plan).

2. The whole task can be evaluated in the frame of group workflow – are the students involved in the activity, do they understand the task and can present their findings during it. The main criteria of such task evaluation should be presented to the class:
- planning actions for the negative response situation management;
- presentation of action plan / answering the questions of the colleagues;
- ability to provide questions for the colleagues;
- ability to express respect to the cultural diversity/traditions.

3. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects:

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the literacy competence:
- the text is in line the common etiquette rules of the social media;
- there are no grammatical or stylistic errors in the text;
- the text is expressed in a positive and socially responsible manner.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the digital competence:
- the possibilities to use the digital technologies/ software to support the communication between the staff and clients are described in a proper way.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the entrepreneurship competence:
- the discussed good practices/ examples are taken into account for the plan preparation;
- possible strengths and weaknesses of the service processes are described in the plan;
- creative and innovative solutions are reflected in the plan.

Resources

http://touristwedding.com/

https://www.theflowerexpert.com/content/aboutflowers/national-flowers

https://franinsurance.com/media/59881/Restaurant%20Employee%20Safety%20Manual.pdf

https://resources.impactfireservices.com/who-is-responsible-for-fire-safety-in-the-workplace

https://www.socialpilot.co/blog/negative-social-media-comments

https://socialhospitality.com/2017/01/3-amazing-examples-customer-service-social-media/

https://www.siteminder.com/r/hotel-marketing-this-year/