

SHARIAH COMPLIANCE IN MALAY WEDDING CEREMONY EXPENDITURE

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Malay weddings are fast becoming an expensive affair these days, mainly due to escalation in its overall expenditure, and compounded by some additional rituals, overpriced wedding trappings and services by event managers. While the trend to spend lavishly during weddings is on the rise, the Malay community seems to ignore concerns related with wastefulness which is against Islamic values. This article examines wedding expenditures in Islam and attempts to justify its excessiveness vis-à-vis shariah compliance through the qualitative research method. The data have been collected by interviewing the wedding planners and shariah experts. Data from interviews are analysed by using the thematic content analysis method. These interviews revealed that the Malay community tends to justify high expenditure in four different categories of expenditures. Four categories are examined from the shariah perspective with regard to shariah ideas and validation from shariah experts. Theoretically, Islam acknowledges the Muslims' right to own and manage their property according to their abilities. The Islamic concept of spending focuses on halal resources, i.e., wholesome, good, and beneficial things, which bring about spiritual rewards. Wedding expenditure is considered shariah-compliant so long as it adheres to the basic concept of not glamourising events and resources not wasted on rituals considered unIslamic. Extra expenditure such as beauty treatment, beautification,

dais and photography requirement must comply with relevant shariah edicts. As for the moral aspect of the wedding, the study concludes that the ceremony is only considered shariah-compliant if it conforms to the rules of modesty, gender segregation, awrah, wearing of jewellery, and entertainment. Further, traditional wedding dances should not contain inappropriate elements, and songs sung on the occasion should not contain inappropriate and crude language.

Keywords: shariah compliance, wedding expenditures, ceremony expenditures, spending in Islam, Malay society

INTRODUCTION

A typical Malay wedding ceremony is only considered complete if it involves a big budget on trendy and expensive items. Compared with the other communities, the Malays are quite particular about their wedding customs (Sabariah 2005) and emphasise greatly on ceremonial details of the event (Halimah 2010). Families of the bride and groom are willing to spend more for the event, particularly on clothing, interior designs and food. High-end wedding expenditure is considered a necessity, from the customary *berandam* (beautifying the bride), dais for *bersanding* (couple sitting on a sofa on a decorated stage facing the guests), *makan beradab* ceremony (feast for the newlyweds), indoor and outdoor photography, entertainment (Mohd Khairuddin and Mohamad Fauzi 2016), special dresses for ushers, photo as well as candy booths.

While examining the basis of allowed expenditure, Islam permits expenditure on individuals or others to purchase basic comforts in life (Fuad 1982; Noor ‘Ashikin and Nur Amani 2011) with permission limited to shariah-compliant items. Al-Najjar (1973) said although Muslims are free to spend their money as they see fit, there are limits in doing so. The Malays were observed to have paid more attention to “what” was being spent rather than “why”. In other words, some Malays could not be bothered about the morality in expenditure and seldom ask themselves whether it is shariah-compliant or not.

The rise in wedding management services in response to society’s demands has increased considerably the overall expenditure. Today, wedding planners have come a long way, replacing the traditional practice of *gotong-royong* in which members of the community come together to organise the event (Hasnidarwina 2009). Ina Najiyah and Suharyanto (2017) said the Malays have increasingly been depending greatly on professionals.

Consequently, the ability to spend plays an important role in making a wedding ceremony a “success” by current standards, thus zeroing down to the fact that the more one spends, the more elaborate the ceremony will be and the greater the attention paid to trivial matters to the satisfaction of personal whims and fancies (Mohd Khairuddin and Mohamad Fauzi 2016). The Malays have largely ignored the shariah compliance aspect as far as wedding expenditure is concerned.

Out of the eight paradigms listed in the Malaysian Shariah Index, the cultural index scored 66.47%, which is the second lowest compared to the legal score of 87.19% (JAKIM 2015). This shows that the cultural area has a correlation with society’s customs and practices conducted in ceremonies and celebrations, where the wedding ceremony is central that compresses most of the customs and rituals, giving culture its unique identity.

Based on our search in the Scopus database, Mendeley and Google Scholar using the keyword search “Malay wedding” and “shariah compliance”, we discovered that research on Malay weddings focuses more on traditions than it does on the cost of celebrations. On the other hand, shariah compliance is not expressly covered in the study of wedding expenditures. This is evident from the fact that the majority of research that addresses the subject of Malay wedding expenditure places a greater emphasis on present expenditure reality, expenditure management, and wedding expense organised in Islam.

Mohd Khairuddin and Mohamad Fauzi (2016) discovered the Malays of today celebrate wedding events through items and wedding services in industry. According to Mohd Khairuddin, Muhammad Ridhwan and Mohamad Fauzi (2020), the consumer style of the society for wedding events was greatly influenced by the acceptance of the sub-rituals of Western-style weddings. Prudent financial management techniques are highlighted by some scholars as a measure to address the burden of spending. Mass weddings are found to be extremely successful by Sa’id (2012), whereas a study by Nurul Athirah and Sanep (2016) developed the Zawaj Scheme in an effort to mitigate incurring debt before marriage. Research by Zainorinyana and Vivien (2017) and Syh Noorul Madihah, Raihanah and Asmak (2020) reveal that some in the Malay community are susceptible to the idea of reciprocal cooperation as a way to manage expenditures. The concept of *taysir* (simplifying the burden) was studied by Syh Noorul Madihah, Raihanah and Asmak (2014), while Siti Zaleha et al. (2018) researched the concept of simplicity. Syh Noorul et al. (2022) and Siti Zaleha and Noraini (2018) looked into spending priority based on the principles of Maqasid Shariah, which prioritises the demands of necessities (*daruriyat*), followed by needs (*hajiyat*) and embellishments (*tahsiniyat*). Additionally, research by Syh Noorul Madihah, Asmak and Raihanah

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(2022) identified three principles that should be applied: (1) maintaining one's budget, (2) simplification and (3) cooperation management. Researchers outlined every idea that may be utilised to reduce wedding costs and is in line with shariah.

This article focuses on wedding expenditures and identifies its shariah-compliant features, having had the expenditures measured in many ways, including the source of expenses, the method of spending, and items spent. However, shariah compliance which is the focus of this article is limited to the aspect of what was being spent on, especially from usefulness of the goods and services' points of view.

Although there are still other observations possibly linked to shariah compliance, such as the issues of wastage and priority in spending, the scope of shariah compliance is quite important, given that wedding expenditures often involve purchases to only fulfil customary practices and wedding trends irrespective of the legality of its implementation in shariah.

This study is divided into four parts. The first part describes in detail the various traditions and fashions presented in modern Malay wedding festivities and outlines the expenditures involved. The second part examines the general idea of spending in Islam, the principle of beneficial, and the notion of spending beneficially in wedding expenses. The third part presents and discusses the results, and the fourth is the findings.

MULTIPLICITY OF RITUALS AND TRENDS IN MALAY WEDDING

A Malay wedding tends to be a flashy affair, laden with tradition, customs and rituals. Apart from rituals practised from one generation to the next, many new trends are incorporated due to changes in lifestyle. Prior to the event, the bride must undergo *berandam* (beautification), such as *berasah gigi* (teeth filing) and *berinai* (applying henna) (Karafi 2010). The *berandam* ritual is performed by a *mak andam* (makeup artist) who adorns and brings out the bride's radiance. Many believe this ritual ought to dispel bad luck and prevent misfortune (Yaacob 1995). The *berinai* consisted of *berinai curi* (witnessed only by the immediate family members), *berinai kecil* and *berinai besar* (henna witnessed by the guests) (A. Aziz and Wan Ramli 1995).

These days, families prefer to have henna applied in beauty parlours. The *berandam* is still considered to be obligatory, subject to some changes. *Mak andam* is responsible for enhancing the bride's appearance with modern

cosmetics (Yaacob 1995). *Mak andams'* services were further improved with the participation of professional male and non-Malay makeup artists (Karafi 2010). Besides traditional *berandam*, current trends in preparing the bride-to-be include spa treatment, and application of *lulur* and facial, which are easily available with wedding planners available on websites (Kahwinmall 2014; Blog Airellyn Beauty Studio 2014).

Insofar the older Malay tradition is concerned, the couple must have at least three wedding costumes – one each for *akad nikah* (solemnisation), *berinai* and *bersanding* (sitting on the dais). Every couple invests in the best preparation they can afford for their special day (Abbas and Norwani 2003). The village community usually rents costumes, such as *songket* and the likes, from a *mak andam*. In the cities, however, people prefer to wear more elaborate and colourful costumes. If the groom wears *baju Melayu* with *songkok* and *sampin*, the bride dons a *baju kurung* made of *songket*, French lace, saree or brocade (Fatimah 2009). The more resourceful and those with a penchant for quality and perfection hire services of wedding planners to have their special costumes produced, exclusively designed, and tailored to match the body, personality and comfort of the couple. Following the current trend, special costumes are not only prepared for the couple but their family members as well with thematic outfits. Dresses with a certain colour code for family members are among the latest trend.¹

Previously, the colour of family members' outfit was only to match that of the wedding couple's dress (Fatimah 2009), but now similar colours and patterns are made for the ushers too. This trend is, however, not limited to the well-to-do only for all sections of community have long caught up with it. *Bersanding* and *makan beradab* are among the most important wedding customs still in practice. *Bersanding* is defined as seating the couple on a well decorated stage with their chaperons, who stand on their sides to fan the couple (Fatimah 1989). This custom is meant to introduce the newlyweds to their families and guests (Yaacob 1995). The dais set is meticulously prepared to glamourise the ceremony. Those days, the dais was made of wood and thick paper, adorned with a variety of colourful flowers, cloth, and lights (Syed Alwi 1980), and following a certain theme (Strange 1981). Nowadays, dais must exhibit great creativity and are available in a multitude of motifs, shapes, and sizes.² Elders in the families and special guests will approach the dais and sprinkle *beras kunyit* (rice infused with turmeric) and *bertih* (popped rice) onto the couple, followed by *tepung tawar* (sprinkling of water mixed with flour) (Amran 1989). The couple is then invited to *makan beradab* (Karafi 2010). *Makan beradab* is a customary feast for the newlyweds after *bersanding* (Sheikh Othman 2007), the dishes finely decorated comprising the main course, fruits and desserts (Tengku Luckman 1994).

Makan beradab is meant to create intimacy between the couple and allow their families to bond (Amran 1989). The wedding event breaks up into certain stage and part. Upon the arrival of the groom with his entourage, they will be greeted upon arrival with the beatings of *kompang*, a Malay drums performance. The couple is then invited to watch a *silat* performance (Mohtar 1979). Soon after the cultural custom of *bersanding*, religious rituals such as *berzanji*, *qasidah*, *tahlil* and Al-Quran recital are performed by villagers. *Ghazal* bands and dancers too are invited to entertain the guests (Amran 1989).

Wedding entertainment has been maintained until this day with some changes, and nowadays, popular songs are played via the public address system usually arranged by a hired DJ. Sometimes, popular songs are performed by a professional singer, or the couple's close friends. Such performances are specially paid for by the host (Fatimah 2009). It is customary for the host to prepare small gifts for the guests as a gesture of gratitude. Traditionally, the gifts given away by the host (Sidin 1964) are hard-boiled eggs (Strange 1981) in small containers, like baskets or colourful plastic wraps (Sidin 1964). The gift and its presentation have also undergone certain changes too, for instance, porcelain, ceramic, or glass containers and fancy paper boxes (Fatimah 2009). The gifts are not limited to eggs but other food items, such as sweets, chocolates, cakes, soap bars, potpourri, picture frames, and assorted items, while the more affluent hand out costlier gifts, some even have the gifts ordered from abroad with the names of the couple and details of their wedding event inscribed (Fatimah 2009). Other trends include wedding photography, which is different from the ordinary photography.

Previously, photography was more focused on the wedding event and pictures taken only in the bride's room along with *Mak Andam* (Amran 1989). These days, indoor photography does not only take place in the bridal bedroom but also in other settings with different poses whether formal or informal. Newlyweds prefer being photographed in more relaxed and unique poses (Yuliandi 2012). After the wedding ceremony, couples have their photos taken in some outside setting, a practice which is fast becoming a popular trend with the aim to appear unique and having an artistic touch. Couples often pose akin to fashion models and their photos are further embellished with scenery and other decorative elements (Yuliandi 2012).

CONCEPTUAL THEORY SHARIAH-COMPLIANT SPENDING ON WEDDING EXPENDITURE

According to relevant literatures, Islam has generally laid down rules on spending, which apply to wedding expenditure as well and help determine areas of permissible spending in weddings. This section discusses in detail the concept of spending in Islam, the principle of beneficial spending, and the notion of spending beneficially in wedding expenses.

Spending in Islam

Islam regards spending as a necessity in life, while at the same time keeping within the lawful limits (Shukeri 1996). Islam emphasises greatly the mode and spirit behind spending because the way a Muslim spends his resources could have implications on his character. Allah SWT links a Muslim's personal piety with his readiness for spending in His path in the following words:

This is the Book about which there is no doubt (about its origin which is from Allah), a guidance for those pious towards Allah – Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out (in charity) of what We have provided for them. (Al-Baqarah 1: 2–3)

The verse mentions that one of the criteria of being pious is to spend whether in the form of zakat, household expenses, or alms, to be nearer to Allah SWT (Ibn Kathir 1998), or any other permissible ways of spending (Al-Qurtubi 2002). The level of one's piety is measured not only on the basis of the one's faith and quality of one's deeds, but it depends on the amount of and spirit behind one's spending in the path of Allah SWT.

Shariah recognises individuals' right to own and manage their property (Abi al-Dunya 1992). As the owner, individuals are entitled to dispose of what they own, however they wish to do so. According to Maududi (1978), properties can be managed either by spending, investing, or freezing it.

As a property owner, any Muslim must spend according to the spirit and edicts of the shariah since an individual is not an ultimate owner of his or her property (Mahmud 1980). In other words, whatever money or good is spent, the spender is still morally bound to Allah SWT as its ultimate owner (Al-Najjar 1973).

Principles of Beneficial Expenditure

Spending is permissible only when one obtains from its proceeds something that is beneficial either to the individual or society. Goods or services that one wishes to acquire through one's money must comprise things that are *halal* and beneficial (Abdul Halim, Nor 'Azzah and Baharom 2013). Only *halal* goods and services are permissible in Islam (Mohd Anuar and Nora 2009) since such expenditure will bring true benefits to consumers. Islam decrees that spending for meeting the demands of piety towards Allah SWT is fundamental in beneficial spending. Therefore, spending for the sake of attaining piety and closeness to Allah SWT is highly encouraged in Islam, and Muslims are urged to compete with each other in spending in His path (Ashraf 2010).

Besides ensuring that Muslims spend only on *halal* and good things, Islam also requires that what is being spent does not have negative implications. Using one's property to bring harm to one's own self (Martan 1983) and others is prohibited (Al-Najjar 1973). Harm is inclusive of external harm, such as spending on weapons, and implied harm which could lead to immorality (Mannan 1983).

Spending on vice is considered a sinful and transgressive act (*ma'siah*), and is completely forbidden in Islam (Ashraf 2010). In order to ensure beneficial expenditure, the person who desires to spend must make it clear that what is being spent can yield the best return and benefit (Surtahman 2007), either to them or others.

According to Abdul Halim, Nor 'Azzah and Baharom (2013), legality, standard and value of the merchandise and the service spent must be transparent in the light of shariah. The principles of beneficial spending in Islam lays greater emphasis on productive returns on individual expenditure. It encourages spending only on merchandise and services that are clearly *halal*, good and pure. On the other hand, it discourages expenditure on things and services which are considered prohibited.

Notion of Spending Beneficially in Weddings

Islam advocates that wedding expenses should be limited to items which are beneficial, and that goods and services must be *halal*, not those which are not shariah-compliant (Abdul Halim, Nor 'Azzah and Baharom 2013). Surtahman (2007) said goods spent must also give a return of interest either to the individual who spends it or to others.

This recommendation can clearly be seen in the concept of dowry acceptance as an element of expenditure that must be spent as part of weddings. Legal scholars determined that property received as dowry is something that has value in line with the shariah (Al-Khatib al-Sharbini 1994) and can be handed over perfectly to the spouse (Al-Ramli 1967). Determining the dowry is meant to ensure that expenditure by the husband will be of real benefit to his spouse. The emphasis on beneficial elements in wedding expenses can also be understood from the necessity of giving dowry in the form of benefits whether property benefits, services, or work (Zaidan 2009).

The suggestion of giving dowry in the form of reciting verses of the Al-Quran by the Prophet SAW to a friend (Al-Asqalani 2001) clearly illustrates that wealth is not a condition for giving dowry, what is more important is the value of the benefits that the wife will receive.

Earlier discussions on shariah compliance of wedding expenditures demonstrated that Islam stipulated specific guidelines on spending, which emphasise greatly on utilising tangible and intangible resources on things that are beneficial either to the individual or society. Broad principles are being outlined on spending in general and beneficial spending in particular, which applies to all types of expenditure, the wedding events included. Therefore, the objective of this research is to assess spending on different elements of Malay weddings in the light of Shariah and make recommendations for their compliance with the divine moral order.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses qualitative research methods and collects data from documentation and interviews. Sources of secondary data are writings of scholars, academic books and journals on spending in Islam, the different items of expenditure in Malay-Muslim weddings, and their shariah compliance justification.

The semi-structured, interpersonal interviews produced primary data on spending on widespread elements in customary wedding events. These interviews were conducted with two experienced wedding planners, and with three legal experts. The reason wedding planners were chosen as respondents for this study is that they have extensive knowledge in organising Malay wedding events and are able to ascertain its actual costs. The expert group was limited to individuals with more than 10 years of expertise in family *fiqh*, consumer *fiqh*, and current *fiqh*, since these three fields are related to the emphasis of the research. This study

focuses on issues surrounding marriage, the Islamic spending principles, and the reality of marriage in modern society.

The interviews in this study were conducted in two parts. An interview with a wedding planner was conducted in the first stage to know how much Malays typically invest for weddings. As a result of the analysis of the data presented by the marriage consultant, the next study focused on some elements which are part of the customary practises but were subjected to spending patterns to be analysed from the aspect of shariah. The location of the chosen elements was assessed in the second step to know whether they conform to shariah code via interviews with shariah experts.

Data collected were analysed through content analysis and thematic analysis, coded and thematised according to shariah compliance objectivity, and its theoretical framework on expenditure as discussed above. According to Bowen (2009), this thematic method helps examine the obtained data before recording and categorising them based on their characteristics to propose a theme related to the objectives of this study as discussed below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A multitude of dimensions of customs and trends were unveiled throughout the discussion on the subject of Malay-Muslim weddings. According to Mohtar (1979), a wedding event which reconciled to the demands of customs, trends and culture requires a larger budget, outlining the expenses for elaborate preparation for wedding events, which is deemed necessary. Results from interviews with two experienced wedding planners highlighted the various elements of expenditure, some of which involving Malay customs, such as dais, and the insistence of following the latest trend in entertainment.

The analysis of the interviews pointed out that despite the fact that our modern society is a consumer-based society, there are four elements which have largely been part of the traditional practice, and are still predominant in our modern society with increasing cost.^{1,2} However, these elements are not considered essentials, such as banquets, dowries, and remittances. Such elements are not included in the analysis since they are seen to be basic expenses in the Malay community, and their position in terms of usefulness is very clear, which is to fulfill the mandatory demands for dowry and sunnah for the banquet (Syh Noorul Madihah 2017). As for remittances, it involves the giving of an agreed sum of money by the groom to his bride (Raihanah, Khairun Najmi and Raihana 2009; Ahmad Haziq and Miszairi

2022). The four elements are beauty enhancing treatment, bersanding (enthronement ceremony), entertainment and photography.^{1,2}

This study concentrates on examining the shariah compliance of those four elements since they are perceived by consultants as items which have influenced the spending habits of the Malay-Muslim community. The community's desire to keep spending is the basis for this decision, and they require rules to determine compliance with such expenditure.

Beauty Enhancing Treatment

Beauty enhancing treatment or *andaman* is one of the major marriages must-do in which the future bride is physically prepared. This item involves a considerable sum of money when the couple opts for a paid service by wedding planners, beauty parlours, and beauticians. Preparing the bride for wedding is permitted in Islam for it is based on a *hadith* which reported that Aishah binti Abi Bakr RA (Muslim 2000) and Safiyyah RA (Muslim 2000) were prepared and beautified before they were married to the Prophet SAW. Al-Nawawi (n.d.) stated that preparation in terms of cleansing, decorating and beautifying a woman is a *sunnah* (commendable practice) before uniting the couple because it will increase the groom's love and affection towards his bride (Abd al-Maqsud 2001).

However, Al-Nawawi said that such adornments were meant only for the groom's eyes. The beautification of Aishah RA and Safiyyah RA was meant for their groom, and they were presented to the Prophet SAW only in the presence of female companions (Al-Nawawi n.d.).

On the contrary, today, beauty treatments and beautification are done not only for the eyes of the would-be-husband but also—and mostly—for the invited guests. Hence, those who are involved in the business of beautification must abide by the limits of shariah and comply with the edicts about a woman's conduct in public view, as stated in this verse:

And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity, and not to display their charms [in public] beyond what may [decently] be apparent thereof; hence, let them draw their head-coverings over their bosoms. (Surah Al-Nur 24: 31)

Ibn Kathir (1998) said beautifications of women which conforms to shariah is to be understood that “what may [decently] be apparent thereof,” meaning the face and hands on which rings and bracelets can be worn without having to expose further

parts of the body (Al-Sabuni n.d.; Al-Qurtubi, 2002; Al-Tabari 2009). Ornaments such as this are permitted in Islam, contrary to wearing of jewellery that exposes the body (Al-Maraghi, n.d.). If such ornaments are worn on the body and made visible to non-*mahrims* (strangers), it becomes *tabarruj* (indecent behaviour), which is not permissible as in the following verse of Al-Quran: And abide quietly in your homes, and do not flaunt your charms as they used to flaunt them in the old days of pagan ignorance (Al-Ahzab 33: 33).

Tabarruj mentioned above refers to the practice of beautifying oneself and exposing the *awrah* (Al-Qurtubi 2002) to public view. Indecent exposure of one's *awrah* (Ibn Kathir 1998) and showing the ornaments or body movements means to attract the eyes of strangers (Al-Kiya al-Harrasi 2001). If such expenditure on beautification leads to *tabarruj*, then it is definitely not shariah-compliant.

To ensure that expenditure on beauty enhancing treatments and beautification is shariah-compliant, then it must be of services by female beauticians. Beauty treatments for females are only allowed to be rendered by another female (Amr 2000). Treatment done by non-mahram males is prohibited (Al-Masri 2013) since the Prophet SAW had once forbidden skin contacts between non-mahram men and women (Al-Tabarani 1984), except in times of emergencies. Furthermore, it must be ascertained that materials used in such beauty treatments and beautification procedures are *halal*.

The usage of cosmetics which contain *najas* (impure) and *haram* ingredients is forbidden (Al-Zuhayli 2005). Beauty treatments, such as teeth-filing custom, shaving eyebrows and beautifications, which borders on altering Allah's SWT creation are also not allowed as well (Al-Bukhari 2000).

***Bersanding* (Enthronement Ceremony)**

The *bersanding* ceremony in which the newlyweds are positioned on the dais is one of the most significant customs in Malay weddings. Such ceremony is staged for the purpose of photography without actually performing the *bersanding* (Syh Noorul Madihah 2017). If the *bersanding* ceremony is performed only for the sake of photography, then the session needs to be done in a permissible manner.

The *bersanding* ceremony as itself is not against shariah as long as it does not involve forbidden acts, and the newlyweds seating on the dais only before family members (Fatimah 1989). Although the *bersanding* ceremony is staged in the open as in a courtyard or in a hall, the ritual could still be considered to be shariah-compliant if the newlyweds are careful about their appearances in public, for the

bride must be covering her *awrah*. Among the stipulated element of *tabarruj* is adorning of improper clothes or see-through veils, revealing her neck and necklace underneath (Ibn Kathir 1998), and showing off the assets in bold poses to attract the eyes of the men present (Al-Qurtubi 2002; Al Kiya al-Harassi 2001). Therefore, an appropriate *bersanding* ceremony is one which adheres to the shariah guidelines on how a woman should conduct herself in public. According to a specialist in *fiqh al-munakahat* (laws governing marriage and family institution), the following rules should be observed:

In Islam, there is no clear directive that *bersanding* is *haram* [unlawful]. Any matter devoid of a *dalil* [evidence] against its justification is considered permissible. In my opinion, if one wants to do *bersanding*, it has to be in a permissible way. Firstly, *bersanding* is only limited to *mahrams*, and not to be done in public. Secondly, the bride must not be revealing her *awrah*, and she must not be with excessive makeup. There should be no *ikhtilat* [intermingling] and shaking of hands among strangers during the ritual sitting on the stage.³

As mentioned above, *bersanding* is allowed as long as it complies with shariah, and must also be done behind closed doors with strict observation on the limits on the bride's attire. In compliance with shariah, one must also observe that *bersanding* is not performed under certain superstitious beliefs. Major features of rituals involved in the *bersanding* ceremony are the sprinkling of rosewater, turmeric rice, and flour mixed with water on the newlyweds for good luck (Amran 1989), and it also needs to be established whether these rituals are not against *aqidah*. Che Zaharah et al. (2015) discovered that such beliefs and rituals are against Islamic fundamentals and the belief in Allah SWT having the uncontested power to cause harm or bring good to His creatures (Al-Taghabun 64, 11).

Thus, if the spending on the dais and the ritualistic sprinkling of rice and water are not actuated by any deviant belief and are performed only as a source of merriment, then it is permissible, as stated: "Sprinkling water, if only limited to ceremonial formality, is not a problem. But if there is a belief behind it, it is not allowed."⁴

It is clear that the rituals are not wrong in Islamic law as long as they are not actuated by beliefs that may lead one to shirk or associating partners with God.

Entertainment

Spending on entertainment in wedding events usually involves playing songs through a PA system, live music or dance performance by singers or dancers. Entertainment is meant to liven up the atmosphere at the event and entertain those

present. In ensuring that payments for entertainments is shariah-compliant, the services should be beneficial to all and permissible. As a rule, celebration of the occasion with entertainment and wedding songs is encouraged by the Prophet SAW, who said: “The distinction between the lawful and the unlawful is the duff (drum) and the voice” (Al-Tirmizi 2000, Hadith no. 1088).

According to Al-Mubarakfuri (2011), the voice the *hadith* refers to permission for singing. Permissible singing has lyrics that portray joy and positivity (Al-Dusuqi n.d.) such as *qasidah* (Al-Sawi 1995) and the lyrics celebrating the joy of the special occasion (Al-Qaradawi 1996). It does not, however, include songs with inappropriate lyrics, such as describing a woman’s beauty and attractiveness (Al-Shawkani 1996). Entertainment must also not be accompanied by immoral acts (Al-Qaradawi 2006), or sinful acts such as consuming alcohol and intermingling of the sexes (Ibn Qudamah 1986).

A lawful form of entertainment must not have dance and song performances to conjure the audience towards sinful acts, such as dance performance with lewd and amorous movements (Al-Qaradawi 2006). Similarly with entertainment performed by women in public (Nasih Ulwan n.d.). According to Mahmood, a woman is not permitted to soften her voice during singing in front of men. “The act of a woman singing in front of men is *haram*. Because singing with a soft voice and swaying herself is *haram*”.⁴

Briefly, these experts clarify that performances by females with soft voice and swaying their bodies in front of guests in a wedding ceremony do not comply with shariah. This prohibition includes open karaoke performances in public by women at wedding events.

Photography

Photography is fast gaining popularity as being trendy at Malay-Muslim weddings. Aziel and Syed Fadhil (2012) pointed out that photography captures special moments of a wedding event, which enables one to relive the memories in the future. Wedding planners hire professional photographer(s) to ensure better quality pictures taken (Siti Zaleha and Noraini 2018). Scholars agreed that photography is permissible (Al-Qaradawi 1998) on the basis that “the fundamental ruling on a matter is permissible” (Al-Qudah 1988).

Expenditure on wedding photography for indoors or outdoors is allowed as long as it is shariah-compliant. Among the principal guidelines to be observed during photography sessions is maintaining the limits on *awrah* and ornaments, especially

worn by the bride (Al-Qaradawi 1998), if the photographer is a non-*mahram* male (Surah al-Nur 24: 31 and 33). No indecent exposure is allowed in as far as the newlyweds is concerned since Islam insists on maintaining one's dignity (Salman 2000).

According to Yusuf (n.d.), photographers who seek uniqueness in their work usually direct the newlyweds to pose in a certain way, including hugging, kissing, touching foreheads, sitting in a passionate fashion, which is truly against Islamic values.

Islam teaches its ummah to maintain their dignity and avoid indulging in anything which tarnishes their dignity (Salman 2000). Al-Ramli (1967) stated that groom's kissing his bride and putting his hand on her chest in public is an undignified act. It is corroborated by a *fiqh* scholar who stated:

In my opinion, taking pictures is improper if it involves hugging and kissing. Married couples should not hug and kiss in front of others because it can cause unease. It is worse if the photographer is an *ajnabi*. To me, it is an improper act. Taking pictures is okay, but one should refrain from excessive acts.⁵

The evidence presented above makes it clear that the practice of taking revealing photos in front of non-*mahrams* is improper. Although couples taking pictures together is ruled as permissible, improper poses are disallowed and against Islam.

CONCLUSION

Traditional Malay wedding is usually a communal affair in which families spend lavishly on all rituals such as beauty enhancing treatment services to ensure it is a memorable occasion. Although such expenditure is meant for merriment, it is, however, subjected to shariah guidelines on spending. Islam allows expenditures only for good and beneficial things.

The concept of benefit not only covers the good and expedient returns as well as spiritual rewards but also that the items spent should be noted for their purity and permissibility. Fulfilment of such concept is, therefore, considered shariah compliant as expenditure is channelled towards obtaining items that are allowed in shariah. One should, therefore, ascertain the status of expenditure on the various wedding rituals in view of Islamic laws while managing the events' overall

expenditures. Shariah compliance could be determined when one adheres to all regulations and avoids its contra.

Based on most common four elements spend for the wedding discussed above we conclude that expenditure for wedding is complies with shariah if it is spent for permissible expenses, has benefit, does not have negative implication and purpose of spending is to celebrate the couple and the guests.

The study has significance for the trend of wedding expenditure among Malay Muslims since it offers recommendations for choosing products and services in light of pertinent shariah laws. The study's conclusions are good to conceptualise wedding expenditure in as far as the Islamic standards are concerned. Attention on expenses should be given priority in Islam and avoid anything it forbids.

The contribution of this research is the integration of study in Islamic economics and marriage in Islam by focusing on shariah parameters in spending for wedding from the Maqasid Shariah perspective. This research contributes by discussing expenditure from the Islamic economics' point of view in wedding ceremonies, which can be developed as one area of studies in the future.

NOTES

1. An interview with Azrin Ahmad, Manager of Issyaz Wedding Enterprise on 31 December 2015.
2. An interview with Nor Haliza Sapari, Manager of Nazlieza Canopy, Catering and Wedding Planner on 16 April 2016.
3. An interview with Associate Professor Normadiah Daud, Syariah Study Centre, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin on 28 March 2016.
4. An interview with Professor Emeritus Mahmood Zuhdi Abdul Majid, Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya on 2 September 2016.
5. An interview with Associate Professor Wan Mohd Yusof Wan Chik., Syariah Study Centre, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin on 5 April 2016.

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