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Although brides and their mothers still tend to do the majority of wedding planning, it is becoming more common for grooms to play a role in the process. This paper represents a preliminary attempt to examine whether gender differences exist in determining the importance of specific aspects of this significant “consumption ritual” (Rook, 1985).

Four focus groups were conducted during the summer of 1991 -- two with brides and two with grooms. A total of 17 brides and 14 grooms participated in these focus groups. The groups were videotaped and transcribed, resulting in 164 pages of text.

Our study revealed that while brides’ priorities revolved around sacred aspects of the wedding ceremony itself, the majority of grooms were more concerned with the atmosphere of the reception and the comfort and convenience of their guests.

One reason for this dichotomy could be the sociocultural restrictions placed on the grooms’ ability to help with particular aspects of the wedding planning. Another reason could be the reluctance on the part of most grooms interviewed to “buy into” the more commercial aspects of the wedding ritual.

This paper attempts to gain greater understanding of the differences between brides’ and grooms’ priorities in constructing meaningful weddings. Exploration of this topic will provide greater insight into the wedding as consumption ritual.