

# How Sales Interpersonal Skills Drive Wedding Organizers to Recommend Venues B2B

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study examines the influence of sales interpersonal skills on wedding organizers' (WOs) trust and their willingness to recommend venues in business-to-business (B2B) relationships.

**Methodology/approach:** A sample of 41 members of the Bali Wedding Association was used, with 15 indicators assessed on a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate the impact of interpersonal skills on trust and recommendation behaviours. It is that these members do not all belong to the same organization.

**Results/findings:** The results show that sales interpersonal skills significantly enhance both the trust that WO's place in sales personnel and their willingness to recommend venues. Additionally, the study reveals that trust acts as a mediator in this relationship, meaning that interpersonal skills not only directly impact recommendations but also do so indirectly by fostering trust.

**Conclusion:** Despite the small sample size and geographic focus, which limit the generalizability of the findings, this research provides valuable insights into the key drivers of successful B2B relationships in the wedding industry.

**Limitation:** The study suggests that sales professionals and venue managers should prioritize developing strong interpersonal skills to enhance trust and foster positive recommendations from WO's. Future research should explore larger and more diverse samples to verify these findings across different regions and industries, expanding the understanding of interpersonal dynamics in B2B relationships.

**Contribution:** Specifically, it highlights the crucial role of interpersonal skills in building trust, which in turn increases the likelihood of venue recommendations.

**Keywords:** *Sales, Interpersonal Skills, Wedding Organizers.*

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## 1. Introduction

The wedding industry in Bali especially in hotels has evolved into one of the primary pillars of the island's economy, attracting couples from around the globe who wish to celebrate their special day in an exotic and captivating setting. Bali, with its renowned natural beauty, stunning beaches, and rich cultural heritage, has long been a dream wedding destination for many couples. The growth of this industry has not only boosted the overall tourism sector but also strengthened related sectors such as hospitality, catering, decoration, and particularly Wedding Organizer (WO) services (Hanani, Triyuni, & Mataram, 2022).

As demand for weddings at Hotels in Bali has increased, the wedding industry has undergone significant diversification. Mandagi, Pasuhuk, and Kainde (2024), suggest that sensescape, story, stakeholder, and servicescape can significantly and positively influence brand personality, highlighting the importance of social media marketing as a key determinant of both brand gestalt and brand personality. Services that were once limited to venue provision and catering have now expanded to include more complex

aspects, such as detailed planning, event management, and guest experiences (Santosa, 2021). WOs have become key players in this value chain, playing a crucial role in coordinating the various services required to bring about a flawless wedding.

WOs not only function as event planners but also as consultants who help couples select the best services and vendors that align with their preferences and budgets. In this role, WOs act as intermediaries between couples and the various wedding service providers, including venues, catering, decoration, and entertainment (Fauziah, Faeni, & Fikri, 2024). They are responsible not only for ensuring that all wedding elements run smoothly but also for providing recommendations on the best options for couples.

However, in the process of providing recommendations, WOs often need to build strong and mutually beneficial relationships with wedding service providers, especially venue providers (Umri, Samsudin, & Harahap, 2024). These relationships are not solely based on business contracts but also on trust and high levels of cooperation. WOs are often in a challenging position where they must balance the interests of their clients while maintaining good relationships with service providers. Therefore, interpersonal skills in sales possessed by service providers become essential in building trust and increasing WOs' willingness to recommend their venues.

In the highly competitive wedding industry, B2B (Business-to-Business) relationships between WOs and service providers, particularly venues, are key to success (Riswanto, Hansopaheluwakan, Wibisono, & Bangun, 2024). These relationships not only affect the quality of services delivered to couples but also contribute to the reputation and sustainability of both parties' businesses. Strong and mutually beneficial relationships between WOs and service providers can create synergies that enhance the overall wedding experience, while weak relationships can lead to operational issues and decreased customer satisfaction. Hsu, Chen, and Feng (2024) conducted a Pearson correlation analysis, revealing a high correlation between product quality and customer satisfaction, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.85.

Successful B2B relationships in the wedding industry are built on effective communication, trust, and mutual respect. WOs, as the parties who interact directly with clients, have significant influence in determining the choice of services and venues. They often act as the decision-makers for couples, who rely on WOs' recommendations to make crucial decisions about their wedding. Therefore, venue providers must build good relationships with WOs to ensure that they are considered in the recommendations given to clients. However, building and maintaining effective B2B relationships is not an easy task. There are various challenges that wedding service providers must face in establishing strong relationships with WOs. These challenges include intense competition, differing interests between WOs and service providers, and differing expectations and perceptions of service quality. Moreover, trust plays a critical role in these relationships. WOs need to be confident that the service providers they recommend will deliver services that meet or even exceed their clients' expectations.

Interpersonal skills in sales become a crucial factor that can influence the success of B2B relationships between WOs and service providers. These skills include the ability to communicate effectively, build strong relationships, understand the needs and desires of WOs, and create deep trust. Service providers with good interpersonal skills are more likely to succeed in building long-lasting relationships with WOs, which in turn increases their chances of being recommended to clients (Nasution, Susanti, & Abidin, 2022). While existing studies have extensively explored the role of interpersonal skills in general sales and customer relationships, there is a limited understanding of how these skills specifically influence B2B (business-to-business) relationships within the context of the wedding industry. Particularly, The dynamics of interpersonal skills in B2B relationships, particularly between sales personnel and wedding organizers in the wedding industry, involve a complex interplay of trust, communication, and mutual understanding. between sales personnel and wedding organizers, who play a crucial role in venue endorsements, remain underexplored. Most literature focuses on traditional sales processes or B2C (business-to-consumer) interactions, neglecting the unique nature of B2B relationships in this niche industry.

Additionally, the specific impact of interpersonal skills (Trust, Relationship Development, Enhancing Perceived Value, Influencing Key Decision Factor, Facilitating Collaboration and Long-Term Partnerships, Overcoming Resistance, Impact on Business Outcomes) on the decision-making process of wedding organizers when endorsing venues has not been thoroughly examined. This gap highlights the need for focused research on how sales interpersonal skills can be leveraged to build trust, foster strong relationships, and ultimately drive venue recommendations in B2B settings within the wedding industry. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical studies that quantify the direct impact of these skills on business outcomes, such as venue endorsements and long-term partnerships between wedding organizers and venues.

Interpersonal skills in sales encompass a range of abilities required to interact effectively with others and build positive relationships. In a sales context, these skills include the ability to listen well, communicate clearly and persuasively, show empathy, and build and maintain strong relationships with customers. These interpersonal skills are not only essential for creating a good rapport between seller and buyer but also play a key role in building customer trust and loyalty (Rosadi, Harahap, & Azhar, 2023).

In the B2B relationship between WOs and wedding service providers, interpersonal skills in sales hold significant importance. WOs often serve as the decision-makers in their clients' purchasing decisions, and they are more likely to recommend service providers they trust and with whom they have a good relationship (Pramita & Claretta, 2024). Service providers who demonstrate good interpersonal skills in their interactions with WOs are more likely to build trust and establish long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. Putri and Sugiarti (2021), explain that the increase or decrease in employee performance quality is influenced by several factors, including learning agility, competence exploration, and training and development, which are also related to the impact of commitment within an organization.

Interpersonal skills in sales also help service providers handle conflicts or disagreements that may arise in their relationships with WOs. In a highly competitive industry like the wedding industry, conflicts and tensions can emerge from various sources, including differing expectations, service delivery delays, or dissatisfaction with service quality. Service providers with strong interpersonal skills can handle these situations constructively, maintaining a positive relationship and ensuring that issues are resolved in a way that satisfies both parties. Additionally, interpersonal skills in sales contribute to creating a pleasant experience for WOs during the sales process. Service providers (Hotels) who communicate clearly, show empathy for the needs and desires of WOs, and provide responsive and personalized service are more likely to succeed in building good relationships with WOs. These relationships are not only beneficial for service providers in the short term but can also lead to sustained recommendations and loyalty from WOs in the long term.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Interpersonal Skills in Sales***

Interpersonal skills are often defined as the abilities that allow individuals to interact effectively with others, particularly in a business setting. These skills are essential in the sales domain, where building relationships, establishing trust, and influencing decisions are key components of success. According to Mushi, Ismail, and Mchopa (2024), interpersonal skills in sales include a variety of competencies such as communication, active listening, empathy, negotiation, and conflict resolution. These skills enable salespeople to engage with clients, understand their needs, and provide solutions that align with their expectations.

The role of interpersonal skills in sales has been extensively studied across various industries. Rayo, Rayo, and Mandagi (2024) emphasize that interpersonal skills are critical for developing strong customer relationships, which are a significant determinant of long-term sales success. In the context of B2B relationships, these skills help in building rapport with clients, understanding their specific needs, and tailoring the sales approach accordingly. As noted by Good and Schwegler Jr (2022),

salespeople who excel in interpersonal interactions are better positioned to foster trust and loyalty, ultimately leading to increased customer satisfaction and retention.

## **2.2 Trust in B2B Relationships**

Trust is a fundamental element in the success of B2B relationships. Morgan and Hunt's (1994) seminal work on trust in marketing relationships underscores its importance as a precursor to commitment and cooperation between businesses. Trust reduces perceived risk in transactions, facilitates smoother exchanges, and enhances the likelihood of long-term partnerships. In B2B contexts, trust is often built over time through consistent, positive interactions, where one party demonstrates reliability, competence, and integrity (Gulati, McDonagh, Sousa, & Lamas, 2024).

In the wedding industry, trust is particularly crucial due to the high stakes involved in event planning. Wedding organizers (WOs) must have confidence that venue providers and other service vendors will deliver as promised, as failures can lead to significant disruptions and dissatisfied clients. As a result, WOs are likely to recommend venues they trust to their clients, making trust a critical mediator in the relationship between interpersonal skills in sales and the willingness to recommend (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998). When sales representatives from venue providers exhibit strong interpersonal skills, they are more likely to establish trust with WOs, leading to more frequent and enthusiastic recommendations.

## **2.3 Willingness to Recommend (WTR)**

The willingness to recommend, often abbreviated as WTR, is a concept closely linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty. In a B2B context, WTR reflects the degree to which one business is willing to endorse another to third parties, such as clients or partners. Handoyo (2024), work on Net Promoter Score (NPS) highlights WTR as a key indicator of customer loyalty, suggesting that businesses with high WTR are more likely to experience growth through word-of-mouth referrals.

Within the wedding industry, WTR is a significant outcome of the trust established between WOs and venue providers. When WOs trust a venue provider, they are more inclined to recommend that venue to their clients, knowing that doing so will reflect positively on their own reputation. This recommendation can be a powerful driver of business for venue providers, as word-of-mouth and personal endorsements are highly valued in the wedding planning process. Research by Garbarino and Johnson (1999) suggests that WTR is influenced not only by the quality of the services provided but also by the quality of the relationship between the recommending and recommended parties. In the context of the wedding industry, this implies that interpersonal skills in sales, which enhance the quality of the relationship between WOs and venue providers, can significantly impact WOs' willingness to recommend those venues.

## **2.4 The Wedding Industry and the Role of Wedding Organizers**

The wedding industry is unique in its reliance on a network of service providers working together to create a seamless event. Wedding organizers (WOs) play a pivotal role in this ecosystem, acting as intermediaries between couples and the myriad vendors involved in wedding planning. As noted by Hasikin and Harmonis (2024), WOs are responsible for coordinating all aspects of the wedding, from venue selection to catering, decoration, and entertainment. Their recommendations carry significant weight, as couples often rely on WOs' expertise and local knowledge to make informed decisions.

Given their influential role, the relationships WOs maintain with venue providers and other vendors are critical. These relationships are built on trust, as WOs must ensure that the vendors they recommend will deliver high-quality services. Interpersonal skills in sales are, therefore, essential for venue providers seeking to establish and maintain these relationships. As suggested by Palmer and Bejou (1994), the ability of salespeople to build trust through effective communication and understanding of WOs' needs is a key determinant of the strength of these B2B relationships.

## **3. Research Method**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a powerful statistical technique often used to analyze complex relationships between variables in social sciences, including business and marketing research. SEM

allows researchers to examine the direct and indirect effects of multiple variables simultaneously, making it particularly useful for studying B2B relationships where multiple factors may influence outcomes like trust and WTR (Hair et al., 2010). A total of 15 indicators were developed and distributed to wedding organizers to assess various aspects of sales interpersonal skills and their impact on trust and willingness to recommend venues. Each indicator was evaluated using a Likert scale, where respondents rated their level of agreement with each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. A score of 5 indicated "Strongly Agree," reflecting a high level of agreement with the statement, while a score of 1 indicated "Strongly Disagree," showing a strong lack of agreement. This method allowed for a nuanced understanding of the respondents' perceptions, enabling the identification of key factors that drive trust and recommendations in B2B relationships within the wedding industry. According Nainggolan (2024), changes in book value can lead to more significant shifts in market value, aligning with the direction of the information content.

### 3.1 Sales Interpersonal Skill (X)

Table 1. Sales Interpersonal Skill Variable

Description	Freq						Score					
	SA	A	N	NA	STA	total	SA	A	N	NA	STA	total
The active listening skills of hotel sales personnel enable them to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts in business interactions.	30	11	0	0	0	41	150	44	0	0	0	4,73
The importance of active listening for hotel sales personnel lies in their ability to build trust and enhance communication in business relationships.	33	8	0	0	0	41	165	32	0	0	0	4,80
The persuasive abilities of hotel sales personnel are crucial skills in B2B decision-making processes	20	21	0	0	0	41	100	84	0	0	0	4,48
The persuasive abilities of hotel sales personnel are essential in B2B interactions for effectively presenting product information.	28	13	0	0	0	41	140	52	0	0	0	4,68
The delegation skills of hotel sales personnel expedite the process of securing and agreeing on pricing.	22	19	0	0	0	41	110	76	0	0	0	4,53

The delegation skills of hotel sales personnel play a critical role in interpersonal communication related to B2B pricing agreements.	28	1 3	0	0	0	41	140	5 2	0	0	0	4,68
The ability of hotel sales personnel to provide excellent service is pivotal in influencing B2B relationships.	35	3	1 0	0	0	41	175	1 2	0	0	0	4,78
Hotel sales personnel who can ensure service needs are met are highly valuable in B2B relationships.	37	4	0	0	0	41	185	1 6	0	0	0	4,90
<b>Average</b>												<b>4,70</b>

Source: Primary Data (Processed), 2024

### 3.2 Trust (Y1)

Table 2. TrustVariable

Description	Freq						Score					
	SA	A	N	SA	A	total	SA	A	N	SA	A	total
I feel very comfortable communicating with hotel sales personnel who possess strong interpersonal skills.	35	6	0	0	0	41	17 5	2 4	0	0	0	4,85
I believe that the interpersonal skills of hotel sales personnel will positively influence my business decisions.	30	1 1	0	0	0	41	15 0	4 4	0	0	0	4,73
Even without lengthy communication, I would trust a salesperson with strong interpersonal skills.	22	9	1 7	0	0	41	11 0	3 6	4 8	0	0	4,29
Sales personnel with strong interpersonal skills will enhance my trust in a brand or venue	29	1 2	0	0	0	41	14 5	4 8	0	0	0	4,70
<b>Average</b>												<b>4,64</b>

Source: Primary Data (Processed), 2024

### 3.3 Willingness to Recommend (Y2)

Table 3. Willingness to Recommend Variable

Description	Freq						Score					
	SA	A	N	SA	A	total	SA	A	N	SA	A	total
If my client needs a recommendation, I will recommend a wedding venue with hotel sales personnel who possess strong interpersonal skills.	29	5	7	0	0	41	145	20	27	0	0	4,53
I would be more than happy to recommend a venue that is represented by hotel sales personnel with excellent interpersonal skills.	28	4	9	0	0	41	140	16	27	0	0	4,46
With the strong abilities of the sales personnel, I will continue to recommend the same brand to my clients in the future.	23	15	3	0	0	41	115	60	9	0	0	4,48
<b>Average</b>												<b>4,49</b>

Source: Primary Data (Processed), 2024

In the context of this study, SEM is used to explore how interpersonal skills in sales impact WOs' trust and WTR in the wedding industry. By modeling the relationships between these variables, SEM provides insights into both the direct effects of interpersonal skills on trust and WTR, as well as the indirect effects mediated by trust. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in these B2B relationships and highlights the importance of interpersonal skills in sales as a key driver of success in the wedding industry.

This research was conducted among Bali Wedding Association (BWA) members. The research instrument is using a questionnaire, with the determination of the sample is using purposive sampling technique. The respondents used were 41 respondents who were total members of BWA. Data was collected through Google Form wedding organizer representatives from each company. This study uses a quantitative approach and was analysed based on SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) by using SmartPLS program.

The hypotheses in this study are as follow:

1<sup>st</sup> Hypothesis

H01 : Sales Interpersonal skill has no influence on WO's Trust

Ha1 : Sales Interpersonal skill has influence on WO's Trust

2<sup>nd</sup> Hypothesis

H02 : Sales Interpersonal skill has no influence on WO's WTR

Ha2 : Sales Interpersonal skill has influence on WO's WTR

3<sup>rd</sup> Hypothesis

H03 : WO's Trust has no influence on WTR

Ha3 : WO's Trust has influence on WTR

4<sup>th</sup> Hypothesis

H04 : WO's Trust does not mediate Sales Interpersonal skill to WTR

Ha4 : WO's Trust mediates Sales Interpersonal skill to WTR

\*\*WO : Wedding Organizer, WTR : Willingness to Recommend

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Result

This study employs path analysis techniques for hypothesis testing, which are utilized to describe and examine the causal relationship model between variables. Path analysis is particularly useful for exploring cause-and-effect relationships among variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) allows for the execution of path analysis involving latent variables (Ghozali and Latan, 2015). The primary aim of this research is to analyze and test the causal relationships between constructs or latent variables. In this study, there are seven latent variables: sense, feel, act, think, relate, tourist satisfaction, and intention to camp again. The research includes a total of 15 indicators, as illustrated in Figure 1.

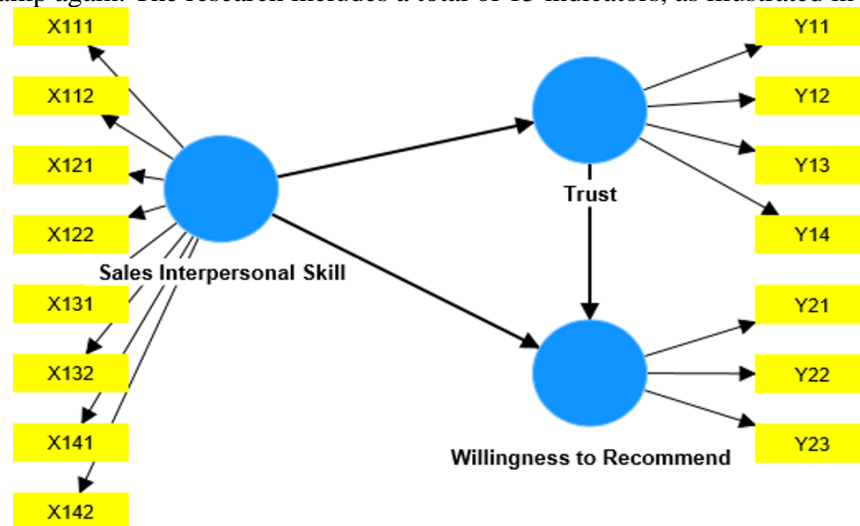


Figure 1. Research Structural Model  
Source: data processed with smartpls software

The questionnaire data collected were initially evaluated through validity and reliability tests, focusing on the criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. The SEM-PLS analysis comprises two sub-models: the measurement model, also known as the outer model, and the structural model, referred to as the inner model.

#### 4.1.1 Validity and Reliability Test

The validity of research variables can be assessed by examining the values of convergent validity and discriminant validity. In confirmatory research, convergent validity is considered high if the loading factor values correlate with the reflective indicator variables by more than 0.7. However, for the initial stage of scale development, values between 0.5 and 0.6 are considered acceptable (Chin, 1998 in Ghozali, 2014). Therefore, in this study, to test convergent validity, the minimum loading factor value for each indicator should be above 0.6 to meet both convergent validity and discriminant validity. Consequently, loading factor values below 0.6 will be eliminated.

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Cronbach's Alpha

Variabel	AVE	Result	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Result
Interpersonal Skill	0,687	Valid	0,935	0,937	Reliable
Trust	0,677	Valid	0,840	0,840	Reliable
Willingness to Recommend	0,630	Valid	0,722	0,761	Reliable

Source: Primary Data (Processed), 2024



Cronbach's Alpha is a widely used coefficient that assesses the internal consistency of the research instrument. It measures the extent to which the indicators or items within the instrument are measuring the same underlying construct. A Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.6 is generally considered acceptable for research purposes, indicating that the instrument has a reasonable degree of internal consistency. As presented in Table 1, all variables meet the criteria for reliability, as their Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are all above 0.6.

#### 4.1.2 Model Test Feasibility Test Result

Table 5. GOF Model

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0,099	0,099
NFI	0,716	0,716

Source: Primary Data (Processed), 2024

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is a widely used goodness-of-fit index for structural equation models (SEM). It measures the average discrepancy between the observed and predicted correlations among the variables in the model. Lower SRMR values indicate a better fit of the model to the data.  $SRMR < 0.1$ : This is considered an acceptable fit for SEM models.  $SRMR < 0.08$ : This is considered a good fit for SEM models. In the provided context, the SRMR value for the structural equation model is 0.099. Since this value is less than 0.08, it can be concluded that the model exhibits a good fit to the data.

#### 4.1.3 Path Coefficient Estimation

In the structural model (inner model), the estimated path coefficient is seen through the influence between latent variables, both direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects.

##### a. Direct Effect

Table 6. Path Coefficient, Direct Effect

	Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
H1	Sales Interpersonal Skill -> Trust	0,647	0,653	0,076	8,548	0,000
H2	Sales Interpersonal Skill -> Willingness to Recommend	0,695	0,694	0,053	13,087	0,000
H3	Trust -> Willingness to Recommend	0,172	0,174	0,064	2,681	0,007

Source: Primary Data (Processed), 2024

The direct effect refers to the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables without the involvement of any mediating variables. The direction of this relationship is determined through significance testing, which reveals how the exogenous variables impact the endogenous ones. A 5% significance level ( $p$  value = 0.05) was used to assess the path coefficient, which indicates a positive relationship. The outcomes of the direct effect significance test are presented in Table 6.

## b. Indirect Effect

Table 7. Path Coefficient, Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
Sales Interpersonal Skill -> -> Trust -> Willingness to Recommend	0,111	0,114	0,046	2,425	0,015
H4					

Source: Primary Data (Processed), 2024

The indirect effect refers to the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, which occurs through mediating variables, as shown in Table 4. This effect is assessed using bootstrapping to evaluate the t-statistics of the measurement model and determine the significance of the relationships between latent variables. A 5% significance level (p value < 0.05) was used to assess the significance.

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Sales Interpersonal skill has influence on WO's Trust

From Table 6, The results indicate a strong positive relationship between sales interpersonal skills and trust, with an original sample path coefficient of 0.647. The high T statistic (8.548) and the very low p-value (0.000) suggest that this relationship is statistically significant, meaning that better interpersonal skills in sales are significantly associated with higher levels of trust in B2B relationships. From table 1, The data reveals a strong consensus among respondents regarding the importance of interpersonal skills in hotel sales personnel, particularly in B2B interactions. The majority of respondents strongly agree that active listening skills are essential for avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts, with an average score of 4.73. Similarly, persuasive abilities are viewed as critical for effective decision-making and presenting product information, reflected in high agreement levels with average scores of 4.48 and 4.68, respectively. Delegation skills are also recognized for their role in expediting pricing agreements and interpersonal communication, with scores of 4.53 and 4.68. The ability to provide excellent service and ensure service needs are met is considered pivotal, with scores of 4.78 and 4.9, indicating the highest levels of agreement. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the critical role of interpersonal skills in enhancing trust, communication, and overall relationship quality in B2B contexts (Evans, McFarland, Dietz, & Jaramillo, 2012)

### 4.2.2 Sales Interpersonal Skill has Willingness to Recommend

This hypothesis shows an even stronger positive relationship between sales interpersonal skills and the willingness of wedding organizers to recommend venues, with a path coefficient of 0.695. The T statistic (13.087) is very high, and the p-value is 0.000, indicating that this relationship is also highly statistically significant. This suggests that interpersonal skills are crucial in influencing wedding organizers' willingness to endorse a venue. The data illustrates a clear preference among respondents for hotel sales personnel who possess strong interpersonal skills, particularly in their influence on business relationships and decision-making. A significant majority of respondents strongly agree that they feel comfortable communicating with sales personnel who have strong interpersonal skills, and that these skills positively influence their business decisions. Even without extensive communication, majority trust salespeople with strong interpersonal skills, and believe that such skills enhance their trust in a brand or venue, average score 4.7. These findings are consistent with existing research, which emphasizes the critical role of interpersonal skills in building trust and fostering strong business relationships. Interpersonal skills in sales are thus essential for enhancing client trust and influencing positive business outcomes. Chen and Shun (2023), argue that enhancing customer engagement and online interaction has become a critical challenge in the service sector, highlighting the importance of integrating the Importance-Satisfaction Model and Performance Evaluation Matrix to improve service quality.

#### *4.2.3 WO's Trust has influence on Willingness to Recommend*

The relationship between trust and the willingness to recommend has a smaller, but still positive, path coefficient of 0.172. The T statistic (2.681) and p-value (0.007) indicate that this relationship is statistically significant, though weaker compared to the other two hypotheses. This suggests that while trust contributes to the willingness to recommend, it is not as strong a predictor as direct interpersonal skills. The data strongly suggests that the interpersonal skills of hotel sales personnel play a pivotal role in shaping client recommendations for wedding venues. A majority of respondents indicate a high likelihood of recommending venues where sales personnel demonstrate strong interpersonal abilities. This sentiment is consistent across scenarios, whether recommending a venue to clients or maintaining loyalty to a brand represented by such personnel. These findings align with established research that highlights the importance of interpersonal skills in building trust, enhancing customer satisfaction, and fostering long-term business relationships, which are critical in influencing client decisions and ensuring continued recommendations (Gronroos, 1990; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

#### *4.2.4 WO's Trust mediates Sales Interpersonal skill to WTR*

Referring to Table 7, The data suggests that sales interpersonal skills positively influence the willingness to recommend a venue, and this effect is strengthened by the presence of trust. The relationship between these factors is statistically significant, indicating that trust plays an important role in how interpersonal skills lead to positive recommendations. This emphasizes the need for hotel sales personnel to not only develop strong interpersonal skills but also focus on building trust to enhance client recommendations. These findings are consistent with research that highlights trust as a key factor in successful business relationships. The data suggests that sales interpersonal skills significantly influence the willingness to recommend a venue, with trust acting as a crucial mediator in this relationship. The statistical significance underscores that trust enhances the impact of interpersonal skills on recommendations, aligning with contemporary research in relationship marketing. For instance, a study by Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) found that trust mediates the effect of perceived value on customer loyalty, indicating that trust is essential in translating positive interpersonal interactions into actionable outcomes like recommendations. Furthermore, recent research by Balaji, Roy, and Quazi (2017) highlights that trust, developed through effective interpersonal communication, is vital for fostering customer advocacy in service settings. These findings reinforce the notion that hotel sales personnel must cultivate both interpersonal skills and trust to drive client recommendations and ensure sustained business success.

### **5. Conclusion**

The research concludes that sales interpersonal skills play a crucial role in influencing wedding organizers' (WO) trust and their willingness to recommend venues. The findings demonstrate that not only do these interpersonal skills directly impact both trust and willingness to recommend, but trust also serves as a significant mediator in this relationship. This means that the positive effect of sales interpersonal skills on willingness to recommend is, in part, facilitated through the trust that WOs develop as a result of these skills. Therefore, cultivating strong interpersonal skills in sales personnel is essential for building trust, which in turn enhances the likelihood of WOs recommending venues, highlighting the interconnected nature of these factors in B2B relationships within the wedding industry.

#### **Limitation**

One limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size, with a total population of 41 participants representing the Bali Wedding Association. While this sample provides insights into the perspectives of wedding organizers in Bali, it may not fully capture the diversity of opinions and experiences that could be present in a larger or more varied population. The findings may therefore have limited generalizability beyond this specific group. Additionally, the study focuses solely on members of the Bali Wedding Association, which may not reflect the broader wedding industry across different regions or contexts. Future research could benefit from a larger and more geographically diverse sample to enhance the robustness and applicability of the results. Furthermore, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies, and does not account for potential confounding factors that could influence the relationship between sales interpersonal skills, trust, and willingness to recommend. (Chen & Huang, 2024)

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