

Research in action

[ECPS5006]

Portfolio of competencies

Reflective log

I was very apprehensive about the Research in Action (RIA) module; However, I was looking forward to expanding my knowledge in the area of research. Paul and Katie explained that we were going to be split into groups of no more than six individuals and that as a group we were required to design two small-scale studies. They would be investigating people's attitudes to conspiracy theories, one to be qualitative and the other quantitative. This worried me as I had had previous experience in group work, which was not an enjoyable experience. I analysed my apprehension towards the group aspect and attempted to dismiss it as I was aware that collaboration and compromising with colleagues would be crucial attributes that employees would be looking for going forward in my career path (Chapman et al. 2006; Liden et al. 2004). Therefore, I was adamant I was not going to let it impact my learning and promptly began meeting up with the group to get started on the task before us.

The task was to conduct a systematic literature search (SLS) to identify key journal articles and appropriate scales that could be applied to our research studies. Based on our SLS findings we proposed the two questions for each of the studies, we then had to begin the design of the studies. This would first require completion of proposal forms for the principle investigators (PIs) and also along with the proposal form an ethics form for the school research ethics committee; this was what worried me most about the group work, as stated before the bad experience was having to complete an ethics form almost solo. I worked with the group to complete the SLS, using the advice from the PIs to split up the databases. Splitting up the databases allowed the large group to ensure that there was no overlap within our searches, keeping the information gathered clearer. This clarity allowed the group to know what direction we wished to take both studies and potential ways to conduct them.

My group decided to divide up the proposal forms for both studies. However, it is important to note that this was a small document with six individuals working on it, previous research has shown that this brings with it a large risk for confusion and difficulties in group work (Maiden & Perry, 2010). I chose to colour code the mock example for all to have a clear idea of what sections would be worked on to reduce any confusion or complications from having multiple people working on the small document. The proposal form was split into sections but not all group members were available to complete their sections, or if they were completed it was not academic enough to be proposed to the PIs. This brought back all the worries and anxiety that I had at the start of the module, instead of letting it affect my work, myself and another colleague worked together to combat the issues of collaboration that had started to occur. Together we tackled the large challenge of completing the document we had split originally into smaller tasks for all. With the completion of the proposal form, we turned our attention towards the other forms that were required to present to not only the PIs but the ethics committee. The pressure on just the two of us was even more so, due to the time restraint on when the ethics committee gather to look at ethics forms presented.

We got together and split the two ethics forms into one each, I took the interview ethics form, and she took the questionnaire. One other colleague stated that they could take section e from both forms, and we obliged. Miller et al. (1994) spoke about the tension that grows within groups, which was evident in the arrival of a colleague who wished to partake in the ethics form. Confusion occurred when not only were they unable to understand what was expected of them, but also fit into our personal way of working when completing the task at hand. I feel had they engaged with the materials more, they would have had a better understanding of the other forms and the collaboration would have been greater between us all.

With the lack of collaboration in mind, what was supposed to be six individuals came down to simply myself and one other caused not only pressure on the two of us, but also resentment towards the rest of the group. This was becoming clear through the module and we both felt that the colleagues that were not pulling their weight on our group work would be rewarded for little to no contribution. Dyrud (2001) and Strong & Anderson (1998) put forward this idea called free-riding, I believe this was evident here within this group work, as the effort and contributions were not equal between all individuals, even some not even contributing anything. This did cause my motivation towards the task to fall dramatically towards the end, to the point where it upset me greatly. As I have always prided myself on maintaining high standards within my work, and the frustrations of working within this team had forced me to simply wish it to be over and not place as high as standards as I should have.

This lack of motivation and frustration grew and conflict within the group was apparent when individuals were getting percentages of recognition in work that both myself and another colleague had actually done, however it grew to acceptance after a certain point. While we both contemplated on how to address the next task that was required, which was the assignment, we realised we had been allowed to fulfil the assignment at a level different to those and looked at the experience differently, more positively.

I believed this realisation of those who did not apply themselves to the task would be the ones who would be unable to complete the assignment to the fullest, and that the focus should be more towards what I can learn and gain from each experience. Espin et al. (2012) discussed the differences in how free riders should be punished, I feel that if I show patience and continue my efforts towards the task, that will be the best choice of action when applying myself to group work in the future.

Competency one:

**Research in Action - Completion of Research
Proposal.**



Research in Action (ECPS5006) Proposal Form

Research proposal (1,000 words). This form will be reviewed and signed off by the PIs prior to the research project taking place. The boxes below will expand as you type.

Student Name and University ID number:	
Proposed Supervisor's name:	Paul Hutchings Katie Sullivan

Suggested Research Title/Area: (between 10-15 words and must reflect the essence of your proposed research question, study design and study population and should be more specific than a broad topic area).

Exploring levels of belief in conspiracy theories of those with different personalities and different political alignments.

Please state the aim and rationale of your research

This study aims to explore whether a relationship between personality and belief in conspiracy theories exists. With their compliance with following rules has

Working alongside we created the research title, many suggestions were formed together before we settled on this, as felt it met APA standards and was most succinct.

as the COVID-19 outbreak and people's compliance with following rules set by the government (Wang et al., 2021).

Jost et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis on personality and political orientation which confirmed several psychological variables which predicted political orientation. However, Jost et al. (2003) used narrow facets of personality, such as dogmatism, which proposes how much core personality traits are reliably associated with political orientation.

Using interviews, this study aims to explore whether there is a correlation between individuals' political alignment and if they believe

Please state the main research question(s):

Do political orientation and associated personality
conspiracy theories?

Please state the hypothesis/hypotheses (if appropriate):

The study will not have a hypothesis, as this study looks at individuals' potential reasons as to why people believe in conspiracy theories.

John, O. P., Donahue, E. M., & Kentle, R. L. (1991). Big five inventory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sulloway, F. J. (2003). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(3), 339–375. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.3.339>

Wang, D., Marmo-Roman, S., Krase, K., & Phanord, L. (2021). Compliance with preventative measures during the COVID-19 pandemic in the USA and Canada: Results from an online survey, *Social Work in Health Care*,

From the systematic literature search (SLS), we were able to formulate the main research question, Me and [REDACTED] rewrote this section to include items from the SLS to provide a stronger rationale to the study.

What theory and empirical research evidence supports your research question? (Please provide a brief review of relevant psychological literature and theory and a minimum of eight references).

There has been much research on conspiracies and the personal implications that produce the foundations on why people believe in conspiracy theories (Bost & Prunier, 2013; Radnitz & Underwood, 2015). Hofstadter (1964) devised a theory named 'paranoid style', this theory explored the connection between individuals feeling of being powerless and their attitudes towards society. The feeling of powerlessness was found to naturally foster paranoid feelings and give a less positive outlook towards society and this results in poor relationships with government and a distrust towards figures of power and how they lead society. (e.g., Van Prooijen & Douglas, 2017). Research conducted by Swami et al (2011) put forward the idea that when an individual believes in one conspiracy, they are then at risk of believing in multiple conspiracy theories, regardless of the topic that the theory is about. It has been argued that being aware of conspiracy theories is not enough to explain as this does not measure the level of conspiracy theory, just knowledge of them.

There has been truly little research into the subject of conspiracy theories with links to political alignment and the relationship individuals' have with these two topics (Enders, 2019).

However, some studies have suggested that people who lean more towards being politically right-wing are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories (Mancosu, 2019). Individual differences in personality and cognitive style can also show that some people are more prone to believe in conspiracy theories, indicating that there are individual differences in the tendency to believe in conspiracy theories. Using the systematic literature search that we found surrounding our topic area, we found that while there was research on both personality and conspiracy theories, there was not much data surrounding the political aspect (Enders, 2019). This allowed for our group to wish to take this path with our study going forward.

agreeable traits. While right wing people were found to have more conscientious traits (Furnham & Fenton-O'Creevy, 2018). Jost et al. (2003) provided evidence that political ideology is a form of motivation and that individuals differences, such as personality, could be involved in this process.

Our study aims to focus on the relationship between personality has in belief of conspiracy theories research that has been done.

Reference List:

Bost, R. P., & Prunier G. S. (2013). Perceived motive. *Psychological reports: S*

Enders, M, A., (2019). Conspirational thinking and political constraint, *public opinion quarterly*, 83(3), 510-533.

Furnham, A., & Fenton-O'Creevy, M. (2018). Personality and political orientation. *Personality and individual differences*, 129, 88-91.

Hofstadter, R. 1964. *The paranoid style in American politics*. New York: Vintage Books.

Linden, S., Panagopoulos, C., Azevedo, F., & Jost, T.J. (2021). The paranoid style in American politics revisited: An ideological asymmetry in conspiratorial thinking. *Political Psychology*, 42(1).

Mancosu, M., Riccardo, L., Salvatore, V. (2016). Political consequences of conspiratorial thinking: evidence from 2016 Italian constitutional referendum. *Political Science*, 56 91) 69-88.

Swami., Viren., Coles, R., Stieger, S., Pietschnig, J., Furnham, A., Rehim, S., & Voracek, M. (2011). Conspiracist ideation in

While this was first tasked with the whole group having an input in creating this section, it was left up to me to complete solo, with [REDACTED] assisting with proofreading. This allowed me to gain a strong understanding on how to complete this section of proposal forms.

I produced the reference list in the American Psychological association (APA) 7th publication manual (APA, 2020).

belief system and associations between individual psychological differences and real world and fictitious conspiracy theories, *British journal of Psychology*, 102, 443-463.

Van Prooijen, J-W., & Douglas, M, K. (2017). Conspiracy theories as part of history: the role of societal crisis situations. *Memory studies*, 10(3), 323-333.

Zyhan, B., & Zeitzoff, T. (2018). Conspiracy and misperception belief in the middle east and north Africa. *The journal of politics*, 80(4).

Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sulloway, F. J. (2003). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(3), 339–375.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3809.129.3.339>

Methodological

Please describe

The group split up the proposal form into sections, and I was allocated to complete this section. This required me to research and learn about conducting thematic analysis (TA) and how participants are used when creating studies using TA. Learning about Power analysis and how this affects research.

and any specific inclusion/exclusion criteria:

The participant sample will include Psychology & Counselling students at UWTSD over the age of 18, who will be able to sign up using the department's Experimental Management system (EMS) in exchange for course credit. To widen the scope of potential participants. All potential participants will also be informed that participation is entirely voluntary.

The study will target participants that have access to a microphone and camera, the reason being would be that the interview is conducted over Microsoft Teams.

The participants will all be asked the same open-ended questions regardless of political alignment.

The study will be analysed using a thematic analysis so the number of participants required will be 5 to 8, this allows the sample size to be small enough to manage the materials and large enough to prove a new understanding of experience (Sandelowski,1995).

Please describe the anticipated design (e.g., Qualitative/quantitative, between/within-subjects, mixed design, regression, focus groups, interviews, experimental, questionnaire, etc.):

This study will be a qualitative interview conducted with Microsoft Teams. Each participant will be asked the same set of questions (appendix 1) by the interviewer, with the opportunity for the interviewee to be prompted to expand on the questions where necessary, allowing for themes to be analysed by Thematic analysis.

This study does not contain any Independent variables or Dependant variables as it focuses on the relationship between individual's political alignment and belief in conspiracy theories therefore are not reliant on each other.

What materials/measures are you planning to use? (e.g., tests/tasks, interview schedules, audio recordings, etc.)
possible here - what specific topics/measures will be used with this data?)

I was aware of how the study was going to be conducted, using information gathered while conducting systematic literature search (SLS) This allowed for both me and [REDACTED] to rewrite this section when previous colleague had been unable to complete correctly.

Interviews will be conducted and recorded on Microsoft Teams. The interviews will be scheduled, all participants will be asked the same set of questions which will be planned before the interview stage starts. Questions will ask participants to specify their political views and their beliefs in conspiracy theories. Once all interviews have been conducted a transcript of each interview will be typed. Participants will be assigned a different number to continue anonymity. Each interview transcript will be analysed using a Thematic analysis to distinguish common themes.

Please describe the study procedure (what will your participant have to do from start to finish? It should be clear from this how you are actually planning to collect data from your participants):

We will recruit participants aged 18 or over on the Experimental Management System for this questionnaire. The data will be collected using an interview style using Microsoft Teams as the main mode of communication.

This study will be completed by all researchers and participants at home in a quiet and confidential space where the distractions could be kept at a minimum thus allowing the transcribing process to be done more accurately.

Prior to the start of the interview the participants will be sent a consent form and a demographic sheet. Both will be required to be filled out/signed and both must be sent back to the lead researcher no later than 24 hours before their interview timeslot. If this is not completed before the allotted interview time, it will be rescheduled until consent can be given. After the interview has been completed the lead researcher will send the participants another email thanking the participants for their time and participation. The email will also contain a debrief form with contact details for each researcher and supervisor.

Me and [REDACTED] were able to use what [REDACTED] had placed in this section, however it was incomplete in some sections, so we used our previous knowledge on the study to complete and reword some aspects. Allowing for a clear direction this study was going to take.

Please describe the data you will obtain and how it will be analysed (e.g., test or questionnaire scores calculated as a mean and analysed quantitatively, recorded verbal reports analysed qualitatively, etc.):

Interviews will be recorded using the software program Microsoft teams. In each of the interviews a set of questions will be asked of the participants (appendix 1). Once the

interviews have been conducted, they will be transcribed into separate word documents and assigned code numbers.

A thematic analysis will be performed on the transcripts to identify common themes that highlight reasons why people might believe in conspiracy theories and to which level of engagement people of a certain political alignment display.

This section I worked alongside [REDACTED] to complete the information required to a professional standard and to include key details which I felt was important to the study itself. Creating a template for the interview to give prompts and assist the interviewee with points and direction to take interview.

Appendix (not included as part of the 1,000 words)

1. Attach any questionnaires/materials to the end of the report.

Appendix

Interview Structure (rough).

Do you have any questions before we begin?

<Remind them of the anonymity process: 'names will be changed to protect identities.'>

Start of personality.

How would you describe yourself?

What do you think that your friends and family would describe you as?

<remind the participants that they can only share things that they are comfortable with>

Lead towards political alignment

Do you think that this [personality] affects the way you align politically?

Ask them how they come to align that way, Family/friends influence/etc.?

<remind the participants that they can only share things that they are comfortable with>

Bring it to conspiracy theories.

How do you feel about the current state of world politics?

Could you tell me some conspiracy theories you know regarding politics?

Do you believe in any of these? And why do you think that way?

Could you tell me about other theories from the past or outside of politics you know about and what your views are on them?

Do you have anything else?

Do you have any other questions?

2. Ethics: Describe the

(Refer to the BPS ethics

students will need to

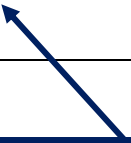
collection commencing).

Completing the ethics form was used via guidance from Paul and Katie, they provided us with what was required to complete this section correctly. Using their guidance, I was able to identify key details that are important not just for this study, but all studies conducted. This gave me an understanding behind the importance of ethics when conducting any research.

In accordance with the BPS code of human research ethics (2018) the following ethical considerations will be applied: A digital consent form will be provided to participants to ensure they are able to provide informed consent, and that they understand what the study will require. They will be informed of their right to withdraw at any time during the study if they so wished to. Participants will also be provided with a digital debrief form to inform them of the full purpose of the study, with contact details for both the researcher and the supervisor at the end of the study. The participants will be informed of their opportunity to ask questions relating to study. In addition, the participants will also be informed of their right to withdraw their data as they will not be able to do so once the study is over as the data is anonymised and will not be able to be traced back to them.

Ethical issues that may arise may include the possibility that the information gathered will be of a personal nature for participants, as such participants will be ensured that their data will be held strictly confidential and anonymously and will be informed of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time during the study, to mitigate this potential issue of discomfort.

No set times on interviews to allow the pace of interviews to be set by the individual themselves, with set prompts available to the interviewer to use as required, with the main goal to allow the individual to express themselves and opinions without outside input.



While I had assistance with proofreading and sentence structure from [REDACTED], I feel the understanding gained from writing this section with little assistance has given me confidence in completing proposal forms, with the inclusion of ethical implications going forward.

Competency two:

Research in Action

Ethical Considerations- Ethics Form completion.

☐ APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications”. As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the “principal researcher”.

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity.

Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

Full Name:	[REDACTED]			
	[REDACTED]			
Tick all boxes which apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
Undergraduate Student	Taught Postgraduate		Postgraduate	☐
The data on this section was taken from Microsoft teams, Full names of colleagues and their email addresses. This was very helpful, as had we not had access to this information, this would be incomplete.				
Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre	[REDACTED]			
Campus:	IQ, SA1, Swansea			
E-mail address:	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]			
Contact Telephone Number:	N/A			
For students:				
Student Number:	[REDACTED]			
Programme of Study:	BSc Psychology			
Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Paul Hutchings Katie Sullivan			

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
			Date	
	Committee	☐		
	Committee	☐		
	Paul Sullivan	☒	01/02/2021	

Using guidance from Paul and Katie, this section was completed using the ethical guidance sheet provided on our group on Microsoft Teams. This helped me know what was expected when looking for approval and what guidance materials I should use to complete the entire form.

materials

this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
UWTSD Student Code of Conduct	☒
BPS Code of Human Research Ethics	☒
BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct	☒
BPS Ethics for Internet Mediated Research	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?	YES	☐	NO	☒
If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared as part of this collaboration.				
Institution				

Research Question

Does political orientation and associated personality traits influence the beliefs people have in conspiracy theories?

(this box should expand as you type)

Aims of Research Activity

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between political orientation and personality traits on how the study was to be completed. consideration of individuals personality and political implication.

(this box should expand as you type)

Objectives of Research Activity

- To question each participant on their political alignment and how they and others would describe their personality.
- To question each participant on their level of belief in conspiracy theories and why they may or may not believe in them.
- To identify how each participant aligns politically and how their perception of their personality lines up with the associated traits found in the literature.
- To identify themes using thematic analysis suggest reasons why people may or may not believe in conspiracy theories.

(this box should expand as you type)

Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)

Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.

This study will be a qualitative interview conducted with Microsoft Teams. Each participant will be asked the same set of questions by the interviewer, with the opportunity for the interviewee to be prompted to expand on the questions where necessary, allowing for themes to be analysed by Thematic analysis.

Interviews will be recorded using the software program Microsoft teams. In each of the interviews a set of questions will be asked of the participants. Once the interviews have been conducted, they will be transcribed into separate word documents and assigned code numbers.

A thematic analysis will be performed on the transcripts to identify common themes that highlight reasons why people might believe in conspiracy theories and to which level of engagement people of a certain political alignment display.

(this box should expand as you type)



This information was taken from the combination of me,
[REDACTED] from the proposal form.

Location of research activity

Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

All group meetings will take place on Microsoft Teams at home to allow for the design of the study and to discuss any group concerns. Interview timeslots will be made available to participants through the Experimental Management System (EMS) where participants will be able to choose their preferred timeslot. Interviews will be taking place on Microsoft teams which will be recorded to allow for future transcription.

(this box should expand as you type)

Research activity outside of the UK

If research activity will involve any ethical stipulations (e.g., from local professional bodies or regulatory considerations are considered). Also specify where research activity is taking place and how participants will be recruited.

The issue that our study came up against during a time where in person interviews are not possible, the design had to consider where the interview could still be conducted. The Microsoft Teams software allowed the study to go ahead as we hoped, with the inclusion of audio and video capabilities that Teams provided, which was a relief to our group.

N/A

(this box should expand as you type)

Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?

NO



YES



If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales.

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
Use of interviews?	☒	☐
Use of diaries?	☐	☒
Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally, or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
Administration of any substance, agent, or placebo?	☐	☒
Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box. For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☐	☒
Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES
has b

This section proved to be not as daunting as it first came across, but with using the guidance form that was provided by Paul and Katie, it was completed and provided a surprising new aspect of what is required to consider when putting together a study. Giving me a new perspective going forward with the form.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
Students or staff at the University?	☒	☐
Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
Prisoners?	☐	☒
Young offenders?	☐	☒
Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.	☐	☒
Other – please indicate here: (this box should expand as you type)		

Participant numbers and source	
Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
How many participants are expected?	This study will be expected to engage at least 8 participants. (this box should expand as you type)
Who will the participants be?	Participants will be students studying at the University of Wales Trinity Saint Davids. (this box should expand as you type)
How will you identify the participants?	The participants' names will be assigned codes to give participants anonymity to protect identities. (this box should expand as you type)

The BPS ethical guidelines were followed stringently (British Psychological society, 2018). This is shown when we assigned codes to protect identities to any participant that wishes to partake in our study.

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☐	☐	☒
Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐

If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation

The interview is being taken place with the program Microsoft teams due to the global pandemic, so the consent form will be sent prior to the interview being taken place. The consent form will be emailed to participants and they will give consent by sending the form back to the researcher. The same applies to the debrief form, the participant will be emailed the form at the end of the interview. This will allow participants' data to remain confidential.

This form of study does not require the use of questionnaires; therefore, the participants will not require opt

(this box sho

Since the global pandemic meant that we could not do face-to-face interviews, meant we had to improvise in how we would obtain consent to our study.

Information	We all agreed that e-mailing the participants prior to the interview would be the	A
Will partici	solution. We then had to consider the ethical implications that this addition to our	☐
Is specialis	study had, measures we had to put in place to keep the participants identity	☐
Are there a	confidential.	☐
arising from		

Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
If YES to any question, please provide full details			
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them If you have research co Full risk ass	
The risk section was met with much confusion and took some time to read through using guidance provided by Paul and Katie. This was rewritten a few times, to really cover what the question asked, and what the study would need to consider. Once one risk was thought of and explained, it became clearer at exactly what was required however putting it in professional and academic words proved challenging.	
Risks to participants For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information	
Risk to Participant: 1. The topic area discussed during the interview will be of a personal nature, therefore some participants may become uncomfortable or upset with some aspects of the topic area in which they are being asked.	<i>How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant?</i> 1. In line with UWTSD and BPS research guidelines, participants will be informed of the nature of the study prior to taking part. Therefore, any participant who would prefer not to take part in a study involving a study around political, personality or conspiracy

2. The participants are required to be either audibly recorded or if comfortable enough visually recorded also to allow for transcription of interviews. This may make some participants very self-conscious and suffer from stress or agitation. 3. As the data gathered from the interview is of a personal nature there is a potential of participants worrying about the data being able to be traced back to them.	theories would have the option to not continue. Participants will also be informed prior to taking part that if they feel they do not wish to continue at any point during the study, they have the right to withdraw without penalty. 2. Again, participants would be informed of the nature of the study prior to taking part. Therefore, any participant who would not be comfortable being recorded either visually or audibly would have the option of not continuing. They will also have the right to withdraw at any point during their study without penalty. 3. Data collected from participants will be put I chose to number the risks and the implementations in the ethics form to keep clarity on exactly what was being discussed and how we were going to address the risk. format within 48 hours of is saved with a unique student numbers or EMS ed. Participants will be or to taking part in the study. The researcher would need to give reassurance to the participants that the data collection will remain anonymous and will only be used for the purpose of the research. <i>this box should expand as you type</i>
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If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g., sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g., criminal activity), give details of the project (e.g., helpline numbers) to be discussed. Procedures should make it clear that the researcher is not responsible for the course of a project, it may need to be discussed with the research supervisor.	
N/A (this box should explain why)	This section was surprising to myself, as prior to completing this ethical form, I would not have thought of such details towards the risks of the researcher. This was a difficult task to think of more than three items, but they are important details and should not be ignored.
Risks to investigator For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
Risk to Investigator: 1. Researcher emails will be provided to participants. Therefore, a potential risk could be for the researcher to receive negative or unwelcome emails from a participant. 2. The student researchers may find themselves being asked for information outside of their scope of knowledge as an undergraduate student.	<i>How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator?</i> 1. Only university student email addresses will be provided, and not personal ones. If the researcher does receive any unwelcome emails from a participant, this will be reported to the research supervisor (module lead) immediately. 2. Any queries sent to the researchers that they are unable to deal with will be passed on to the research supervisor (module lead).

3. There is also a potential for the student researcher to be accused of harm/impropriety if the participant feels they are not happy about something that has taken place during the research.	3. It will be ensured that the student researcher follows all UWTSD and BPS researcher codes of conduct and research guidelines, and the study will not take place until all elements have been approved by the
(this box should expand as you type)	
University/institution For example: adverse	
Risk to University:	
1. The reputation and integrity of UWTSD and the discipline of Psychology could be endangered if researchers do not adhere to codes of ethics and research protocols. 2. Data could be exposed, leaked, or used for other purposes. (this box should expand as you type)	1. The University Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice and the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct will be followed at every stage of the proposed study to minimise any potential risks to the Institution from arising. Professionalism will always be exhibited by all researchers. 2. The data collected will be stored in accordance with UWTSD Research Data Management (RDM) rules and only used for the intended purpose, in compliance with ethical guidelines set out by UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice policy and British Psychological Society

Using guidance, I was able to consider two potential risks to the university, like before with previous section, I had not even considered the university risks. This section had truly made clear that it is very important to ensure the safety of all that are included, following the BPS code of ethics to ensure it. (British Psychological society, 2018)

	(BPS) code of ethics. To minimise any risk to UWTSD and the psychology department, all collected data will be stored securely through the Qualtrics platform. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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Disclosure and Barring Service			
If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

Feedback
What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when? We will provide a debrief form online at the end of the research task providing participants with the true aims of the study, their right to withdraw up until submission after submission data becomes confidential. We will also provide the researchers student emails and the supervisors emails for any further questions and details. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

I was confident in completing this section, using previous knowledge from completing proposal form and the research conducted it was clear on how to complete this form efficiently. Ensuring that we were following the ethical guidelines on confidentiality was of high importance. (British Psychological society, 2018)

obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.

At the beginning of the study the aims of the research task will be explained, and the participants will be asked whether they consent for their data to be used for this study's purpose. As the study is being conducted online it is not possible to gain written consent. Instead, participants will be required to read a consent form that will be emailed to them prior to the study if they are happy to do so after reading the study information and consent related information pages, they then give consent to take part in the study by emailing them back to the researcher.

They will also be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time during the research without penalty up until the end when the data is submitted.

(this box should expand as you type)

Confidentiality / Anonymity

Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.

All data collection will take place online and since this study is being conducted through the use of an interview and communications through the use of emails. This process cannot be kept anonymous; however, participants will be assigned a code to allow for their data to be kept confidential.

Data collected will be kept confidential and will be stored on Microsoft teams where only researchers have access to the information.

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In complete
extensive
(<http://uwtsd.ac.uk>)

This section was very interesting to learn about, the different types of data that are gathered, and what policies consider data and how to treat the data. To ensure the ethical guidelines are being adhered to, the explanation of what we were going to use the data to do, was important.

(British Psychological society, 2018)

and the
pages

Does the Data Protection Act (DPA) apply to your research?	NO	
“Personal data” means any information relating to an individual who is identified or identifiable, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.	☒	☐
If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
Data on participant age and gender will be collected as these forms a standard reporting measure in psychology reports within the participant subsection of the method. According to the UWTSD Research Data Management Policy, this constitutes personal data. However, this data will not be attached to any identifying data about the participants. In addition, these data are collected only for the purpose of providing descriptive data and upon completion of data collection a mean age score will be calculated and aggregate data on gender will be used. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☒	☐
If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		

For the purposes of the study specifically looks at alignment, and their belief <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	With a lot of our data for this study being conducted online, it was important to clarify exactly how we planned on keeping the data protected and importantly how we would approach the inclusion of confidentiality to the data.	
Will the research activity involve the collection of category data on one of the following?		
Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
University computers?	☐	☒
Private company computers?	☐	☒
Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
"Cloud" storage or websites?	☐	☒
Other – specify:	☐	☒
For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
Participant names will be applied to a coded number, the raw data will be kept in a password protected file on Microsoft Teams with access only to researchers or supervisors. Consent forms will be placed in a different file to ensure they stay separate from the data. The data will be transcribed into word documents using the coded number, these word documents will be kept secure in a password protected file on Microsoft teams. All data will be handed to supervisors. This process allows the participants data to remain confidential. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
All Data Storage		
Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
Sharing of data with others at the University?	☐	☒
Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒

Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails, or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
Use of data management system?	☐	☒
Data archiving?	☐	☒
If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent): In accordance with the GDPR, Transfer of data from Microsoft Teams to Microsoft word will only be carried out with anonymised data and transferred between researchers via Microsoft Teams cloud sharing. At the end of the project all electronic data will be stored by the UWTSD academic staff. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity: Dr Paul Hutchings, Katie Sullivan. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not. Data will be stored on the Microsoft Teams platform under password protection. Any data that is downloaded from the system for analysis purposes onto the researcher's personal computers will not contain any participant identifiable information.		

Consent forms will always be kept separate from the data. All data will be passed to the researchers' supervisors on completion and writing up of the study.

Data storage arrangements will all be in line with the universities data management policy which can be found at <http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>.

(this box should expand as you type)

Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see <https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/>). If so please explain. *(Most relevant to academic staff)*

Data will not be held in the UWTSD research data repository at this stage of the study.

(this box should expand as you type)

Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
	NO	☐

Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has c	YES	☒
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SECTION K: De

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attempted to id
obligations and

The storage of the data was an important process to learn about, with the key detail that I did not consider before partaking in this section. This was the process of keeping consent forms distant from data, I was not aware of the importance of the separating of data. It allows for the data collected to be kept confidential and limits the risk of loss or being exposed.

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my

In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/>

Signature of applicant:

[Redacted Signature]

Date: 04/03/21

For STUDENT Submissions:

Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
☒	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore, it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:

<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/>

Application Process

All staff research projects, and all research students must submit the Ethical Approval Form to the **University Research Ethics Committee** via the Academic Office (pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk). Staff research directly in relation to personal study for taught undergraduate or master's programmes should be submitted via the Institute procedures explained below.

Taught masters and taught undergraduate research Ethical Approval Forms are considered **within Institutes**. Institutes will provide details of the specific processes for this. Where the Ethical issues within any single ethical application are of particular concern the Institute will refer these to the University Research Ethics Committee. Any student activity that involves the collection of primary data needs to undergo Ethical approval; this includes assignment work as well as dissertations.

Competency Three:

Research in Action - Data Collection

Centre for Psychology and Counselling

SA1 Campus

Swansea



Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Study Consent Form

I understand that this research study is being carried out by a group of second year Psychology Students for the purpose of a module assessment. We are interested in understanding if an individual's political orientation and personality traits have an influence in their levels of belief towards conspiracy theories. You will be presented with information relevant to your political orientation, big five personality traits and eight conspiracy theories which I will be required to answer.

I am free to withdraw participation at any time during or before the end of the study without giving a reason by closing the computer browser without any repercussions. I understand that once I complete the study, I will not be able to withdraw my data, as it will be anonymised.

The study should be conducted in a way that is ethical and follows the guidelines of the British Psychological Society. I was aware of the study protocol, this allowed me to make the consent form clearer and providing more details that would allow for participants to give fully informed consent, as this is essential when conducting research studies (British Psychological society, 2018).

[Redacted signature area]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

or the study leads should I have any concerns.

Dr Paul Hutchings: paul.hutchings@uwtsd.ac.uk

Katie Sullivan: katie.sullivan@uwtsd.ac.uk

I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially, with a number assigned in place of my name. This data will be stored indefinitely in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

I also understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with a debrief form.

Please click here to download the Consent form.

Please tick the boxes below and press the blue arrow to proceed.

☐ I am aged 18 years of age or over.

☐ I understand I can withdraw at any time without penalty by closing the browser.

☐ I understand my data will be held confidentially and my identity will remain anonymous.

☐ I understand all the above information on this consent form.

☐ I consent to taking part in this study.

Centre for Psychology and Counselling

SA1 Campus

Swansea



Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Debrief Form.

Thank you for taking part in this study.

The main aim of this study was to explore whether a relationship exists between an individual's political alignment and their level of belief in conspiracy theories. As the participant you have a right to withdraw and not consent to your results being stored and later used for analysis without penalty. However, once you leave this experiment you will not be able to do so.

The results gathered from this research will remain confidential and anonymous as to not be traced back to you.

If you wish to withdraw your data from the study, please close your browser now.

If taking part in this study has raised any questions, please speak to the researchers, or contact the academic supervisors:

Dr Paul Hutchings: paul.hutchings@uwtsd.ac.uk Katie Sullivan: katie.sullivan@uwtsd.ac.uk

Student researchers:

T I assisted on the completion of the debrief form, alongside colleague Tegan.

J I was aware of the study protocol, therefore this allowed me to assist my colleagues by

D applying the questionnaire aspect towards a clearer debrief form. Informed participant consent is essential (British Psychological society, 2018).

Qualtrics design of Questionnaire study.

9

The screenshot displays the Qualtrics interface for designing a questionnaire titled "Research in Action Questionnaire". The top navigation bar includes "Projects", "Actions", and "Contacts". Below this, a secondary navigation bar shows "Survey", "Actions", "Data & Analysis", and "Reports". The "Survey" tab is active, and a sub-navigation bar includes "Look & Feel", "Survey Flow", "Survey Options", and "Tools". A "Preview" button is located in the top right corner.

The main content area lists the survey blocks in a vertical sequence:

- Information sheet 1 Question
- Consent Form 1 Question
- Demographic form 2 Questions
- Political Orientation Questions 1 Question
- Thank you 1 Question
- Big Five questions 45 Questions
- Thank you 1 Question
- Conspiracy Theory Questions 8 Questions
- Debrief form 2 Questions

Each block has a "Block Options" dropdown menu to its right. A blue callout box with a dark blue border and an arrow pointing to the "Information sheet" block contains the following text:

The creation of the questionnaire was completed by me, [REDACTED]

This shows I am competent in creating studies using the Qualtrics platform, alongside colleagues.

At the bottom of the list, there is an "Add Block" button.

Reference list.

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