

A study on Customers' Behavior towards Online Shopping amid the COVID-19 Pandemic Environment in Hong Kong

Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 is both a health and an economic crisis. It has affected every aspect of our lives. Due to different restrictions, consumers and their shopping patterns have undergone significant changes in Hong Kong. The pandemic has accelerated a positive shift in the online shopping trend. But it is still uncertain whether or not this new normal will reside when the coronavirus is brought under control. Hence, it is necessary to determine the factors influencing new buying habits to ensure sustainable businesses for online shops.

Introduction

The first case of coronavirus was detected in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019 and subsequently spread to Hong Kong before expanding to the rest of the world. Having experienced a severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, Hong Kong government was cautious about the novel epidemic. Various public health measures were introduced in response to the crisis, including social distancing, lockdown, and quarantine for inbound travelers. Under these circumstances, new ways of work, teaching, and shopping habits have emerged. Due to the lockdown, many retail stores were closed, and services were suspended, people have shifted to source for groceries and other necessities through online platforms.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, Hong Kong has experienced drastically downturn in the retail industry. The market has shifted into an online operating mode to cope with the lockdown and social distancing measures. Although the pandemic is an economic crisis, it also brings opportunities to retail businesses. It promoted many retail stores to establish online platforms amid the pandemic. According to the report released by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), online sales transactions have grown rapidly since the outbreak of COVID-19 (UNCTAD, 2021). In fact, the online shopping penetration rate in Hong Kong was increasing even before the outbreak of the pandemic (Abbas, 2021). It is worth noting that the health crisis has triggered the shift in consumers' behavior.

It is undeniable that consumer behavior has a direct impact on every business, especially in the pandemic environment. The aim of this research is to identify the influencing factors of customers' online shopping behavior in Hong Kong under the pandemic environment. There are many research papers that analyzed the change of global consumer behavior amid COVID-19 (Arora et al., 2020). Because consumer behavior can be different significantly from one location to another due to cultural and geographical diversity, it is worth focusing on one region.

The research objectives are to capture the change in consumers' behavior towards online shopping under the COVID-19 environment and the influencing factors that affect the consumers' behavior. Due to the change in all aspects of consumer behavior, it is necessary to identify the appropriate strategies to maintain a competitive edge in the market.

No one knows how long the online shopping boom may last in the post-pandemic. However, past experiences often provide clues to how consumers behave after the health crisis. For example, the spread of SARS has left a lasting impact on people who lived through the event. Most people still maintain the habits of hand washing, wearing masks, and other preventive behaviors. There is no doubt that the pandemic has dramatically increased the frequency of online purchases. Today, online shopping has become an essential part of our lives.

Literature Review

The impact of COVID 19 is widespread and has affected the behavior of businesses management and consumers. According to Nielsen's study in March 2020, social distancing, isolation, and working from home will significantly impact media consumption (The Nielsen Company (US), LLC., 2020). Since the first detected coronavirus case was confirmed on 23 January 2020 in Hong Kong, behavior in the local community began to change. Consumers tend to spend more time at home, which leads to increased entertainment activities, exercises, and shopping online. As more consumers opted to stay home, the online shopping penetration rate increased by 8%, according to the Nielsen Media Index Study between January and February 2020 (Laungani et al., 2020).

Amid the outbreak of the pandemic, consumers are responding in a variety of ways and have differing attitudes, behaviors, and purchasing habits. Consumers are also likely to become accustomed to new ways of shopping. For example, online grocery shopping with home delivery is likely to become more popular (Roggeveen and Sethuraman, 2020).

The survey conducted by UNCTAD and Netcomm Suisse eCommerce Association, in collaboration with the Brazilian Network Information Center (NIC.br) and Inveon, shows that online purchases have increased by 6 to 10 percentage points across most product categories (UNCTAD, 2020). The survey found that women and people with tertiary education increased their online purchases more than others. The age group between 25 and 44 reported a more substantial increase than younger ones during the pandemic (UNCTAD, 2020). The survey concluded that changes in online activities are likely to outlast the COVID-19, particularly in China and Turkey (UNCTAD, 2020).

The study of the relationship between consumer characteristics and attitude toward online shopping found that the most significant factor that motivates consumers to shop online is convenience (Wu, 2003). The result of the study had proven the benefits factors such as purchase convenience, service quality, delivery speed, and homepage design had a significant relationship with the attitude toward online shopping. Additionally, the consumer group with higher monthly income, ages between 36 to 40, and with junior high school educational background, appeared to be the most frequent online shoppers (Wu, 2003).

The pandemic has compelled consumers to adopt a new normal concerned with their health and safety (Mehta, Saxena and Purohit, 2020). As a result, many businesses have undergone significant changes to rethink their business operations in the context of digitalization. Such technological channels are expected to play a powerful role in transactions, reaching consumers, and retaining them in the post-pandemic environment (Al-Hattami, 2021). In order to understand the most suitable goods and services for the consumers, it is important to investigate the behavior of consumers under the pandemic while shopping online and properly target their needs and desire (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

Methodology

To adequately address the research questions, the study will adopt a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative approaches. To attain this, several independent variables relevant to the research objectives are defined after reviewing the works of literature. Then a questionnaire of 20 questions will be distributed to 300 respondents of Hong Kong through a convenient quota sampling procedure during 15 December 2021 and 15 January 2022. The researcher aims to capture different age groups ranging from 18 to 24, 25 to 39, 40 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and above. To broadly understand the different characteristics of the population, this study will select a representative sample of the target population based on the age group population ratio of the Census and Statistics Department.

The questionnaires are employed with closed-end questions and the 5-point Likert-type scale for easy analysis. Moreover, the choice of answers can clarify the question's meaning for the respondents and eliminate the respondents' inability or unwillingness to respond. The survey will be conducted using Google Form in English and distributed via social networks such as WhatsApp, WeChat, and emails. Snowball sampling will also be used among the respondents' acquaintances, which helps the researcher to obtain the numbers of participants in the target age group. Prior to the questionnaire distribution, 10 to 15 responses will be conducted as a pilot run to test the reliability and validity of the study design. Then 300 questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents, and the data collected will be analyzed by the analytical tool SPSS.

Throughout this study, hypotheses are suggested to test whether there is any relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The researcher will adopt several techniques to analyze the collected data, including descriptive statistics, reliability tests, cross-tabulation, correlation regression, and hypotheses testing.

Descriptive statistics will summarize the data set of online purchase frequency, the most purchased products from online platforms, and the expenditures based on the demographics such as age group, gender, and income level. The analysis will illustrate the factors that impact consumers' behavior to purchase online amid the pandemic. For example, the highest scores of a specific age group will purchase groceries through an online platform represents this product

category significantly affects consumers' behavior towards online shopping during the pandemic. On the other hand, the highest scores of the high-income class are expected to have higher purchasing power compared to other classes, especially the elderly who are in retirement.

The reliability of the questionnaires will measure by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to check the internal consistency of the constructs. The result of the reliability test is expected to fall between 0.7 to 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011), indicating the questionnaires constructed are reliable for measurement and free from error. If the result of the reliability test falls below 0.7, the questions in the category will be deleted in order to increase Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Similarly, the Likert scale questionnaires are subject to increase from a 5-point scale to a 7-point scale depending on the result of the reliability test.

The researcher will also use regression analyses to inspect each suggested hypothesis. The process of performing the regression analysis is to determine the relationships between the defined dependent variable and the independent variables. For example, the change of consumer behavior's factors in relation to the change of online shopping. If the result is found to be positive, it represents there is an existence of the relationship between the variables. Conversely, if there is no correlation between the variables, the hypothesis is unacceptable. For example, the payment method is insignificant to affect the consumer behavior to purchase online. The coefficient result is expected to be greater than the usual significance level of 0.05.

Apart from the primary source of data collection through the self-conducted survey, secondary data will also be collected from various sources such as reviews of literature, academic journals, statistical reports, and reference books. The researcher will leverage these data sources to justify and support the research work throughout the study.

Results

As a consequence of health measures such as self-isolation, social distancing, and quarantine, Hong Kong consumers gradually change their buying habits from shopping in traditional stores to online stores. This new normal creates opportunities for online retailers while traditional stores are being devastated by the pandemic. Given that the sustainability of online businesses and the

retention of consumers are critical to the success of online stores, it is important to examine the factors that influence consumers' behavior amid the pandemic. After the research, the results should show that there has been an increase in online shoppers in the pandemic environment as compared to before the pandemic. The age group of 25 to 44 is expected to shop online more frequently than others regardless of product categories. Regarding the gender differences, women are expected to purchase necessities items whereas men will purchase more on non-necessities.

Limitations

This research is focusing on consumer behavior amid the pandemic crisis in Hong Kong. Thus, this study may have some limitations that need to be addressed in future research. Since the first confirmed case was found in January 2020, Hong Kong had experienced serious phases of the coronavirus. The data collection is taken from the existing situation where only a few confirmed cases from inbound travelers. Thus, the study is limited in Hong Kong only during the pandemic and the outcome does not apply to other countries. The sample size selection is 300 and may not be significant compared to the entire population of Hong Kong. Therefore, the respondents' views cannot be used to represent the actual online shoppers of Hong Kong. Moreover, the public health measures vary depending on the development of coronavirus. Due to the release of the local movement measures and the vaccination program, consumers might choose to shop from traditional stores instead. These situational variables will eventually impact the actual result of the survey. Hence, it is worth conducting future research over time to assess the online shopping behavior in Hong Kong or investigate whether consumers will permanently change their consumption habits in the post-pandemic environment.

Time Scale

Planning of Research	24 Oct to 31 Oct 2021
Literature Review	01 Nov to 28 Nov 2021
Research Proposal	29 Nov to 10 Dec 2021
Development of Questionnaire	01 Dec to 15 Dec 2021
Pilot Test	16 Dec 2021 to 9 Jan 2022
Data Collection	10 Jan to 31 Jan 2022

Analysis of Data	01 Feb to 13 Feb 2022
Research Writing	14 Feb to 31 Mar 2022
Submission to Dissertation Supervisor for Review	01 Apr 2022
Final Editing before Submission	01 Apr to 28 Apr 2022
Submission of Dissertation	29 Apr 2022

References

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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.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Luk Man Yee Wendy			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	University of Wales Trinity Saint David			
4	Campus:	South Seas Centre, Tsim Sha Tsui			
5	E-mail address:	bee_bee07@ymail.com			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	6012 6688			
For students:					
7	Student Number:	2019401			
8	Programme of Study:	Master of Business Administration			
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr. Poon Che Cheong			

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	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
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☒		28 Nov 2021
		Other (write in)	☐		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-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. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	[List any other relevant documents here]	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution	
2	Contact person name	
3	Contact person e-mail address	
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES ☐ NO ☐
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES ☐ NO ☐
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary YES ☐ NO ☐
7		Employed YES ☐ NO ☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered. YES ☐ NO ☐
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue. YES ☐ NO ☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
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	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).
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SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	A Study on Customers' Behaviour towards Online Shopping Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic Environment in Hong Kong		
2	Proposed start date:	24 Oct 2021	Proposed end date:	29 April 2021
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	Purpose of Research Activity The pandemic outbreak (COVID-19) is not only a health crisis, but it has also invaded our societies and daily lives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, world trade and commerce, education, and other activities have been interrupted. The global supply chain is interrupted by the blockade of various countries. Undoubtedly, it has also adversely impacted our lives in Hong Kong. With the spread of the coronavirus, people are worried about losing their jobs and are cautious about spending money. Many companies have seen their customers are cutting down their spending, the businesses have begun to lose money, and many have had to lay off workers. The Hong Kong government has imposed strict social distancing and home-stay measures in rapid succession, resulting in partial or complete cessation of local business activities. People have found themselves rethinking their daily lives and changing their shopping and consumption habits. The purpose of this research is to assess the relationships and the degree of influence of the factors activating the customers' purchasing behaviour towards online shopping under the pandemic and how online retailing businesses sustain amid COVID-19.			
4	Research Questions Q1: What are the impacts of the COVID-19 on the online retailing businesses of Hong Kong? Q2: How can the online retailing businesses of Hong Kong survive the COVID-19? Q3: Can online retailing businesses sustain after the pandemic?			
5	Aims of Research Activity The study's aim is to investigate the customers' preferred ways to purchase online during the pandemic and the determinants to their choices.			
6	Objectives of Research Activity (1) To indicate the customers' shift from brick-and-mortar to online stores amid the Covid-19 pandemic.			

	(2) To capture the shift in customers' behaviour towards online channels under the pandemic situation. (3) To provide recommendations for the sustainable development in online retailing businesses.
	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. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	To adequately address the research questions, the study will adopt a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative approaches. To attain this, several independent variables relevant to the research purpose are defined after reviewing the works of literature. Then a list of 20 questions will be distributed to 300 respondents of Hong Kong through random sampling in December 2021 and January 2022. The researcher aims to capture different age groups ranging from 18 to 24, 25 to 39, 40 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and above. In order to broadly understand the different characteristics of the population, this study will select a representative sample of the target population based on the age group population ratio of the Census and Statistics Department. The questionnaires are employed with closed questions and Likert scale type for easy analysis. Moreover, the choice of answers can clarify the question's meaning for the respondents and eliminate the respondents' inability or unwillingness to respond. The survey will be conducted using Google Form in English and distributed via social networks such as WhatsApp, Wechat, and emails. Snowball sampling will also be used among the respondents' acquaintances, which helps the researcher to obtain the numbers of participants in the target age group. Prior to the questionnaire distribution, 10 to 15 responses will be conducted as a pilot run to test the reliability and validity of the study design. Then 300 questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents and the data collected will be analyzed by the analytical tool SPSS. Throughout this research study, hypotheses are suggested to test whether there is any relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The researcher will adopt several techniques to analyze the collected data, including descriptive statistics, reliability test, and regression analysis. Apart from the primary source of data collection through electronic survey, secondary data will also be collected from various sources such as reviews of literature, academic journals, statistical reports, reference books. The researcher will leverage these data sources to justify and support the research work throughout the study.
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	The research activity will take place in Hong Kong
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.

9	N/A		
10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11	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 the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. N/A		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	N/A		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒

13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	Details of any other primary data collection method:	☐	☒

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 to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:		YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☒	☐
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.		
	Details of any other participant groups: N/A	☐	☒

Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected? 300
11	Who will the participants be? Adults with age 18 and above
12	How will you identify the participants? Random sample and snowballing

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

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	N/A			

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 completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.						
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	☐	No	☒
Yes	☐					
No	☒					
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information					
	Risk to participants: Participants will be asked to disclose their age, education level and income level.	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: Set range for age group, education level, and income level.				

3	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 procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	N/A	
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator:	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:
	Nil	Nil
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University:	How you will mitigate the risk to the University:
	Nil	Nil
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment:	How you will mitigate the risk to environment:
	Nil	Nil

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
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.	Nil		

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	N/A
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	All participants aged 18 or above will be selected randomly through friends, classmates, colleagues, families, relatives and spread further thereafter. The questionnaire will be conducted using Google Form in English with an explanation of the nature of the research. Moreover, the researcher will

	fully explain the purpose of the survey before sending the Google Form path to the participants. Therefore, the researchers are confident that all participants will be able to consent freely.
3	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 participants will not be asked to provide their names in the surveys to ensure they feel more open in answering the questions and the collection of data will be more accurate to the researcher.

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, 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. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	N/A		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	"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:		
4	N/A		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐

11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Data collected will be stored in the researcher's personal laptop and only be accessible to the researcher. The digital copies of the files will be encrypted, password protected and stored securely.		

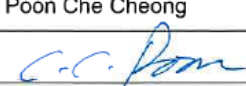
Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	N/A		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher of this study		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher of this study		
24	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 securely at the researcher's Google Drive during the period of preparing the dissertation and will be destroyed immediately after submission of the dissertation. Data files will only be available to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David upon request. Should any participant choose to withdraw from the study, all data referring to them will be immediately destroyed.		
25	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)		

	No		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. 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/		
1	Signature of applicant:	 Date: 28 November 2021

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr. Poon Che Cheong	Date: 28 November 2021
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	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 (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.

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.