Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

PG1 - FULL RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This form is to be completed by both the student and supervisory team within **THREE** months for full-time students and **SIX** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

This document is also available in Welsh.

Student Details

Student Family / Surname:		Chan	
Student Given / First name:		Tai Man	
Student Number		23XXXX	
Start Date		End Date	

PhD by Research	PhD Practice Based	PhD by Published Works	Professional Doctorate (including DBA, DProf, Ed D)	MPhil by Research	MPhil Practice Based
☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
MA by Research	MSc by Research	MRes			
☐	☐	☐			

Proposed Research

Current Proposed Title (20 / 30 words):
Linking Tour Guide Performance to Tourist Satisfaction: A Study of Mainland Chinese Tour Groups in Hong Kong
Background & Context (approx. 500 words)
In this section you will need to: • Place the research topic in its historical, cultural and social context. • Explain why the research is significant and important. • Place the research in the current academic context. Parallel to the economic development of China, overseas travel has increased rapidly in the past two decades. Due to Hong Kong's proximity to the mainland, it has become one of the most visited places by Chinese tourists. Last year alone, over 10 million Chinese tourists went to Hong Kong. While there has been a relaxation of restrictions on independent travel, guided tour is still

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the predominant mode of travel outside of the country. Research evidence suggests that tourists' satisfaction judgements with guiding services wield substantial influence over their overall satisfaction with tour services (McDonnell, 2001). Very often, it is the tour guides' skills and performance that make a great difference to the tourists. Despite the significant role that tour guides play in tours, hardly any research has been conducted, and little has been done to ensure that the service they provide actually lives up to tourists' expectations.

In previous attempts to explain tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction, researchers tended to focus on the formal duties of tour guides and did not recognise that social aspects could be even more important. Recent studies in marketing have called attention to the service provider role performance, a previously neglected construct, as a determinant of customer satisfaction. The origin of role theory can be traced to performances on stage, where actors manifest a role's obligations and responsibilities through stereotyped behaviour and attitudes. The theory suggests that tourists will communicate verbally and non-verbally with the tour guide about what he should or should not do. They are not satisfied when a tour guide's performance falls short of their expectations.

The intent of the proposed study is to develop and validate an instrument capable of assessing the role performance of tour guides in Hong Kong based on the role theory. A specific interest is to understand whether and how Hong Kong tour guides' role performance relates to Chinese tourists' satisfaction with guiding services. The importance of the Chinese tour market to Hong Kong, in combination with the fact that there is a dearth of research into tour guiding, provides a strong rationale for the development of a tour guide performance assessment instrument. The results could be used as a benchmark for identifying training needs and formulating training programmes for tour guides. This instrument developed can also be adapted to other countries where Chinese group tours are common.

Aims and Objectives (approx.. 250 – 500 words)

In this section you will need to:

- Explain what you want to achieve through the research.
- Outline the aims of the research.

Role theory has been applied in areas such as marketing (Netemeyer, Boles, McKee & McMurrian, 1997), human resources (Welbourne, Johnson & Erez, 1998) and organisational behaviour (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991) with fruitful results. Despite the centrality that role performance takes in the service encounter, only a limited number of tourism researchers have cited role theory in their studies. Role theory offers a different route to understanding service performance and customer satisfaction in service environments. The proposed study will add to the existing body of work in this area by examining how tour guide role performance relates to tourist satisfaction with guiding services. Specifically, the study will investigate:

- the underlying constructs of the role performance of tour guides as perceived by tourists;
- the reliability and validity of an assessment tool in measuring the role performance of tour guides; and
- the link between the role performance of tour guides and tourist satisfaction with guiding services.

The contribution of this research will lie in critically and systematically assessing the underlying constructs of tour guide role performance and their effect on tourist satisfaction. It will constitute a new approach to the study of service quality in general and guiding services in particular. The identification of specific forms of expected tour guide role behaviour will be a theoretical and managerial outcome of the study. The resulting instrument will advance the theoretical understanding of role theory in the context of tour guiding. In addition, the resulting role behaviour

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and expectations will form the basis of developing strategies for the recruiting, training and management of tour guides. The challenge to build and maintain a pool of professional and committed tour guides who are able to take on a variety of roles is a critical undertaking in today's marketplace. Tour operators that are able to do this gain a definite advantage over others.

Proposed plan of work including timetable

Proposed plan of work

In this section you will need to complete a proposed plan of your work explaining the timeline for key elements of the thesis. This can be set out as a table like below or as a gantt chart (for example)

This plan should indicate that the research will be completed by the end of the fee paying period (the minimum period of candidature.

Planned Development (e.g. submission of form, completion of chapter, submission of thesis)	Target Date

Proposed methodology (approx. 500 words):

In this section you will need to explain how you will achieve your aims and objectives:

- Explain your disciplinary orientation/ approach
- Describe the methods you will use to carry out your research: (eg library-based research, on-line research, fieldwork (interviews/ participant-observation), analysis of visual data, combinations of these)

For an improved understanding of the role performance constructs and their relation to tourist satisfaction, a two-stage approach will be adopted. The first stage, that is qualitative in nature, will involve a literature review, focus group discussions, expert panel, and pilot test. The aim of this part is to generate a meaningful sample of items for tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction. In the second stage, a quantitative tourist survey will be undertaken to validate the instrument and analyse the causal relationships in the research model. The procedures employed at each stage are described below:

Stage 1
To ensure a valid and reliable instrument, the step-by-step approach for instrument development that Churchill (1979) suggested will be adopted. First, the domain of each construct will be specified based on a literature review. Second, relevant items that represent the domains of these constructs will be derived from focus groups interviews. Third, the items' face and content validity will be assessed by a panel of experts. Finally, a pilot study will be undertaken to assess the reliability of the items. The process will be repeated as necessary until a valid and reliable instrument is obtained.

Stage 2

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The goal of the second stage will be to validate the instrument and support or refute the hypothesized relationships. Survey research will be conducted, using the questionnaire developed in the first stage.

Survey procedure – The sample for this study will consist of tourists who have joined a group tour, visited Hong Kong, and experienced the services of a tour guide. The required data can be collected either through self-administered surveys or personal interviews. A self-administered survey will be used because personal interviews are too expensive and require many well-trained staff. The surveys will be given to land operators for distribution at the end of the tour. There are more than 300 land operators that offer tours to mainland tourists, but the majority of them are very small or do not have full-time employees. Land operators with more than 10 full-time employees will be invited to participate in the survey. Participating operators will be given an assigned number of survey packets. Each packet will contain a questionnaire and a self-addressed pre-paid return envelope. As an incentive, respondents will be included in a lottery to win $200.

Sample size – Although there is no clear standard for how many subjects who should be surveyed in structural equation modelling, Joreskog (1993) proposed a rule of thumb based on the number of indicators that are included in the study. Specifically, when there are k indicators, the minimal sample size should be k (k+1)/2. The largest subscale in this study is expected to be composed of a maximum of twenty-five indicators; therefore, a sample of 325 will be adequate using this criterion. Stevens (1996), however, argued that a sample of at least 400 is necessary to avoid misspecification errors. To ensure reliable results, a conservative approach will be taken in the present study, whereby the sample size will be increased to 600. Assuming the usual response rate to voluntary questionnaires of 50% (Kerlinger, 1973), about 1,200 tourists will be approached to derive a sufficient sample size.

Data analysis – In accordance with the objectives of the study, data will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Frequency of distribution and means will be used to describe tour guide role performance and tourist satisfaction. Exploratory factor analysis will be used to identify the key components or factors underlying tourists' responses. Structural equations via LISREL will be employed to validate the factors and verify the relationships.

Introductory bibliography:

In this section you should list a minimum of 30 titles that are relevant to your research.
You should include all works cited in this form.
The list should be alphabetical using the referencing system appropriate to your discipline.

Chan, A., Hsu, H., & Baum, T. (2015). The impact of tour service performance on tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions: A study of Chinese tourists in Hong Kong. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 32, 18–33.

Chan, A., Go, F., & Pine, R. (1998). Service Innovation in Hong Kong: Attitudes and Practice. The *Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 112-124.

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Price, L., Arnould, E., & Tierney, P. (1995). Going to extremes: Managing service encounters and assessing provider performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 59 (April), 83-97.
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Weiler, B., & Davis, D. (1993). An exploratory investigation into the roles of the nature-based tour leader. *Tourism Management*, 14(2), 91-98.
Welbourne, T. A., Johnson, D. E., & Erez, A. (1998). The Role-Based Performance Scale: Validity analysis of a theory-based measure. Academy of Management Journal, 41, 540-555.
Yung, E., & Chan, A. (2001). Business Traveler Satisfaction with Hotel Service Encounters. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 11(4), pp. 29-41.

Facilities and resources available for the investigation: please indicate if you expect to need any special resources

In this section you should indicate:

- What facilities you will need access to including libraries, archives, institutions, specialist IT facilities
- Whether you have permission to access the facilities and resources

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- Whether you need to travel to access the facilities and resources – where do you need to go, for how long, and how will this be financed
- Whether you will be carrying out fieldwork or interviews and whether you have followed the correct protocols, secured permission and ethical clearance.

Intellectual Property IP

It is anticipated that Intellectual Property (IP) will be produced as a result of this research.

Tick √

	YES	NO
Is the IP already subject to a separate agreement with a third party (e.g. employer, sponsor or external funder)? If so please provide details below	☐	☐
Is the research dependent upon background IP owned by: If so, please provide details below	UWTSD ☐	A third party ☐
Text box will expand		

Tick √

I understand that:	YES	NO
If any party other than the student is likely to be involved in the development of IP a separate IP agreement will be needed and it may be necessary for the student to assign the IP rights to the University.	☐	☐
If there are no third parties involved in the creation of the IP the student is deemed to own the IP, however should the student wish to commercially exploit their IP and require the assistance of the University to do so, they will be required to assign their IP to the University. https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/iiced/protecting-innovation-and-creativity---intellectual-property/	☐	☐

Student Signature

Signature or Print Name:		Date:

Supervisory Team

Has the student proposed a viable research project that is appropriate for this programme that should be supported by the Institute?	
Supported: ☐	**Not Supported:** ☐

Authorisation

Director of Studies	Signature or Print Name:	Date:
Institute Manager of Research Degrees	Signature or Print Name:	Date:

Once complete, submit this form via the MyTSD Doctoral College Portal at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

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