

HOW DO ONLINE SALES AFFECT THE
TRANSFORMATION OF THE TRADITIONAL
BEREAVEMENT SERVICE INDUSTRY DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

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BY

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A final year project submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

- (1) This undergraduate Final Year Project (FYP) is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the references to ALL sources of information be they printed, electronic, or personal.
- (2) No portion of this FYP has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institutes of learning.
- (3) Sole contribution has been made by me in completing the FYP.
- (4) The word count of this research report is 9481.

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DEDICATION

TO

Miss Lee Sim Kuen

Dear Miss Lee,

I truly appreciate your guidance, encouragement and patience during my investigation processes for this research project.

Your APRIL 2022 FYP student,

Tan Yen Thong

TO

Miss Ching Elvian

My dearest mom,

My deepest gratitude for your trust, confidence, encouragement and treasured support throughout my life.

Your beloved daughter,

Tan Yen Thong

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SKLHA	Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association
GFP	Good Fortune Pavilion (Sales department of Ancestral tablets and Columbarium registered under SKLHA)
KTC	The Association of Kwong Tong Cemetery Management Kuala Lumpur

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PREFACE

Chinese community around the world including Malaysia needs bereavement service at the end of their life. However, the Movement Control Order (MCO) imposed by the government to contain the spread of COVID-19 virus caused a shock to the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia which have been relying of traditional sales methods in attracting customers. The traditional bereavement industry which relied primarily on physical contacts and the print media faced a big disadvantage in getting across their message due to MCO during this COVID 19 pandemic period. Therefore, the bereavement service industry is looking for better sales strategies to transform traditional sales technique to attract more customers. At the same time, Chinese community in Malaysia are not aware that the traditional bereavement industry is also providing affordable prices for the bereavement service.

The topic of this research project is “How do online sales affect the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry during the COVID-19 pandemic”. In this research paper, the researcher investigates the gap of transformation from traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia to online sales techniques during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research paper would attempt to provide the understanding of the various key elements, that could affect the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry.

Finally, new hypotheses will be proposed with supporting tested data.

ABSTRACT

This research paper is investigating whether online sales could support the traditional bereavement service industry to achieve the transformation goal and let the Chinese community be aware of this industry. Besides, the transformation from traditional bereavement service to modern bereavement service can affect the behavioural of Malaysian Chinese community. Hence, it could help Malaysia to overcome the existing land constraints and environmental air pollution issues. The research method used in this project is quantitative research method. To avoid physical contact during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher conducted survey through distributing Google survey form to the respondents.

Keywords: Bereavement industry in Malaysia, COVID-19 pandemic, Online sales

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research examines how the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry evolved as a result of online sales during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The “traditional bereavement industry” in Malaysia, mainly refers to the “Chinese public cemetery or graveyard”, Chinese refers public cemetery as “义山, yì shān”, the term “义, yì” means for the public’s good or non-profit. The Malaysian Chinese public cemeteries are managed by non-profit organization such as “Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association (SKLHA)”, etc (Deng & Ling, 2016).

The traditional bereavement industry managed by non-profit or charitable Chinese Associations are normally based on different dialect groups or places of origin of their ancestors; their cemetery is located at different location based on their dialects. (Chee-Beng, 2008) For example, the bereavement service for Malaysian Chinese whose ancestors came from Hokkien Province in China, would be provided and serviced by the Hokkien Association.

The traditional bereavement service providing by the traditional bereavement industry included burial plot¹ (product) and cremation² (service), and the methods used by the Associations are still mainly traditional sales strategies.

Figure 1 shows the Associations in Malaysia adopting traditional sales strategies (E.g., they advertised their product promotion on news media, such as Sin Chew Daily) before COVID-19 pandemic. So, this research paper is to help this traditional bereavement industry to attract new customers, to drive Malaysian Chinese community’s attention and allow the industry move forward to the digital age.

¹ Burial plot: Is known as a graveyard, a small space for the customers to bury their ancestors.

² Cremation: Refers to the disposal of an ancestor’s body by burning it to ashes, normally after a funeral ceremony.

Figure 1: Traditional communication skills adopted by the traditional bereavement service industry



Banner Notice

The Star, Perak cemeteries to decide for themselves if they should open for Qing Ming (2021)



Journalistic interview/
Internet News

The Star, Observing Qing Ming with caution (2022)



Online News Publication

The Star, 'Make appointments for Qing Ming, observe SOP' (2022)



Television News Media

8TV Mandarin News, 'SOP during Qing Ming' (2022)



1.1 Research Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic started in the year 2019 has cause a shock to Malaysia industry, in particular the traditional bereavement industry (Keshavarzi et al., 2021). The traditional bereavement industry is not well equipped in online information and simply because they have no developed any form of online sales. Hence, they are not able to provide any information through online.

The most important event in Chinese bereavement culture is to pay respect to their ancestor during Ching Ming festival³ (Tan, 1983). In Malaysia, there are quite a number of existing commercial bereavement industry that are also provide bereavement products and service to Malaysian Chinese community, such as Nirvana Group, Xiao En Centre, etc., which have developed a quite significant marketing model (Salmon, 2016). Since the commercial bereavement industry are run by profit orientated companies. Hence, the cost of bereavement service and products would be higher as compare to traditional bereavement service industry.

Figure 2 below shows that main products of traditional and modern bereavement industry. The traditional bereavement industry has the same target customers group as the commercial bereavement industry, since the main product and service offered by both industries are the same.

Figure 2: Main product list of traditional and modern bereavement industry

Traditional bereavement industry	Modern bereavement industry
 <p data-bbox="347 1566 773 1640">Malaysian Chinese cemetery/public grave (Product: burial plot)</p> <p data-bbox="347 1667 821 1740"><u>Image Adapted from:</u> The Star, <i>Cemeteries in Penang to stay closed for Qing Ming</i> (2021)</p>	 <p data-bbox="867 1566 1292 1640">Memorial Park from commercial industry (Product: burial plot)</p> <p data-bbox="841 1667 1315 1782"><u>Image Adapted from:</u> Nirvana Malaysia, <i>Burial Plot Malaysia, Burial Plot for Sale, Nirvana Burial Plot</i> (n.d.)</p>

³ Ching Ming Festival: also known as Tomb-Sweeping Day, it is a traditional Chinese festival celebrated by Malaysian and Singaporean ethnic Chinese.

The bereavement service industry is vital in Chinese community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has imposed conditions to limit Malaysians' outings on purchasing daily essentials and so on (Azlan et al., 2020). Without the online system in hand, the traditional bereavement industry is unable to provide online information during the COVID-19 pandemic. The existing and potential customers are unable to compare pricing, environmental factors, etc. Hence, they will prefer to go for commercial bereavement industry which can provide online services. However, the traditional bereavement industry will continue to provide services through their administration offices at restricted hours. For example, during the Ching Ming Festival, they still continue to introduce various sales plans and discounts to boost sales which is incomparable to the online strategies.

Furthermore, the traditional bereavement industry adopted traditional advertising and sales tactics relied on third-party media services (E.g., newspaper publicity, press conferences, etc.). With the above investigation, the researcher is of the opinion that the traditional bereavement service industry must adopt comprehensive online development operations, including the social media advertising to attract potential customers. In order to have an efficient communication with the customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, they may also develop new methods of sales strategies and attractive discounts to attract potential customers through the internet facilities.

In a nutshell, under such circumstances, the targeted customers were not able to obtain relevant information to do comparisons with respect to price, location, environment and after sales services. In comparison, the advertisement developed and used in matured online platforms (E.g., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.), gave the commercial bereavement industry a huge competitive advantage.

1.2 Research Problem

The traditional bereavement industry has been in existence not only in Malaysia, but also in China, Moscow, Australia, and other Chinese communities across the world (Abraham, 1999). All Chinese across the world have an ancestral city/land (in Chinese, 籍贯, jí guàn), however they may not be able to notice the traditional bereavement industry is providing affordable prices for the bereavement service. As a result, traditional bereavement industry should adopt challenging online strategies to attract potential customers.

Many Asian towns, particularly those facing growing urban land limits, are reducing the utilisation of space for the deceased and make existing land available for living people. For example, the most significant trend initiated by the commercial bereavement industry in Singapore are taking steps to do away from traditional tombs and move towards modern bereavement service, such as sea burial⁴ (Kong, 2012).

In short, land scarcity has had an impact on Chinese cemeteries in Malaysia. For those cemeteries that have fully occupied, it is quite difficult to get new site for burial. For example, SKLHA was founded in 1885, and they are responsible for the Hokkien Chinese cemetery in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur area and they are facing the problem of getting new sites for burial. To overcome this problem, SKLHA has established Good Fortune Pavilion (GFP), which house the Columbarium and Ancestral Tablets⁵ was only constructed and put into operation in year 2015.

The researcher has the opinion that the GFP site will become more congested in the years to come, prompting the Chinese cemeteries association to develop new “environmentally friendly” burial options (E.g., sea burial, natural burial, etc.) and more diversified sales methods.

⁴ Sea burial: People would dispose the ashes of their ancestors in the ocean.

⁵ Columbarium and ancestral tablet: details explanation had provided in Figure 4.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only caused the death rate in Malaysia increased, also caused a bad effect of Malaysian's economic situation (Aw et al., 2021). In order to carry out funeral rites for their loved ones, people need a bereavement service that is both suitable and acceptable in light of their current particular economic condition.

To assist customers in making purchases depending on their personal financial position, the traditional bereavement industry provided discounts and sales programmes at various options (China Press: *Kulai Chinese Memorial Park announced a promotion sale in columbarium.*, 2020).

According to the Oriental Daily News, the Malaysian Consumer Protection Association Perak Branch (Persatuan Perlindungan Pengguna Malaysia Cawangan Perak) think that the pricing of private cemeteries is prohibitively exorbitant for low-income households. As a result, it is proposed that the government limit the cost of cemeteries so that low-income people can have decent funerals and “burial places” after death (Oriental Daily News: *Urged to control cemeteries price until an affordable price for lower-income citizen*, 2018). Online sales, on the other hand, could help traditional bereavement industry to transform and attract customers who are looking for low-cost bereavement service through the internet.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the traditional bereavement industry is facing the following problems to deliver the SOP instruction message for funeral to all customers, advertising the discount plan, etc. Due to the lacking of online platforms, customers are unable to obtain the most up-to-date information from the Associations directly through the online services, and hence the Associations couldn't satisfy the customers' request. Thus, the Associations still relied mainly on traditional communication skills such as banners conspicuously displayed at the cemetery's main gate, and so on.

Other than that, one of the traditional communication skills for Associations to communicate with existing customers is to by mail the promotional booklet to their home addresses; hold press conferences and news publicity to attract potential customers (Figure 3); and rely on the word of mouth from the existing customers to new customers.

Figure 3: Holding press conferences and newspaper publications



Image adapted from: *Sinchew Daily: Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Cemetery hopes that public will follow the public road map to facilitate grave-sweeping, (2020)*

However, in the long term, the Associations would face enormous promotional expenditures, such as printing fees for those publicity materials (Figure 4), conventional mailing charges, newspaper layouts, and so on. Direct mail marketing campaigns incorporate a variety of components. Despite the fact that it is not a successful advertising approach, the expenses of design, copywriting, printing, and sending papers are all added together, resulting in high expenditure for the Associations. Furthermore, direct mail has a relatively poor response rate, with the majority of receivers just discarding these advertising materials (Yu, 2010).

Figure 4: Traditional Publicity Documents to Existing Customers



Image Adapted from: Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, <News of 2020 > (2020)

1.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore and demonstrate how online sales can help to revolutionise the traditional bereavement industry and make their bereavement service more accessible to Malaysian Chinese community. Besides, this study is to look into the impact of internet sales on the traditional bereavement industry. The study will examine the following impact on the traditional bereavement industry: -

1. To investigate whether online sales are the key element in transforming traditional bereavement service industry.
2. To investigate whether online sales can contribute to higher sales and strengthen the potential customers loyalty to the traditional bereavement service industry.
3. To investigate how would online sales affect the future of the traditional bereavement service industry.

1.4 Research Questions

To pursue the research objectives, the researcher proposes the following study questions:

1. Why is online sales are so important to the traditional bereavement service industry during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How do online sales drive the customers traffic to the traditional bereavement service industry?
3. What is the main reason that traditional bereavement service industry prefers to use online sales in the process of their transformation?

1.5 Research Significance

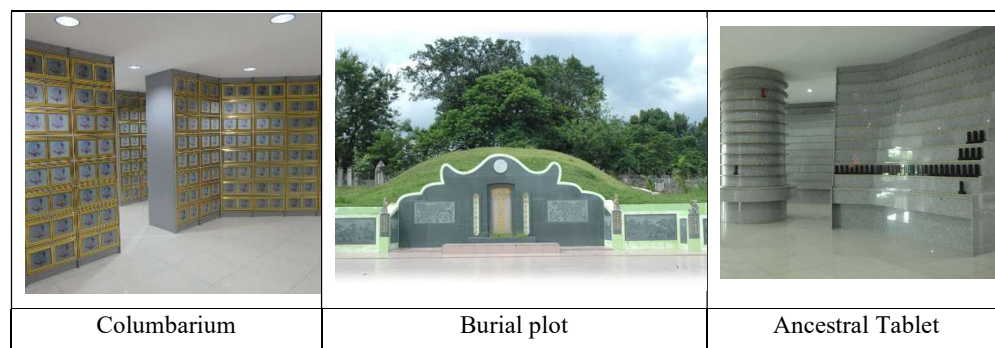
The purpose of this study was to look into the positive and negative impacts of internet sales on the traditional bereavement industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority of the Association's directors and managers are Malaysians in their forties and fifties. Traditional advertising and sales strategies are difficult to attract and retain customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bulk of potential customers will be drawn to commercial bereavement industry that offer bereavement service through internet advertising and marketing, resulting the drop in sales year-by-year for the traditional bereavement service industry.

This study uses a variety of online sales tactics, such as websites and online sales, to reach existing and potential customers online. This would not only help the traditional bereavement industry to increase sales profit, but it will also provide a more affordable bereavement service to the Chinese community.

Figure 5 shows the columbarium⁶, burial plot⁷, and ancestral tablet⁸: which are the main products that the traditional bereavement industry provides to Malaysian Chinese community.

Figure 5: Products of Traditional Bereavement Industry



⁶ A building or chamber with niches for holding funeral urns.

⁷ When a person dies, his or her remains are buried in a little plot of land.

⁸ Chinese people traditionally use ancestral tablets, as well as other funeral paraphernalia for ancestor worship. The name of the preceding ancestor is generally carved on the tablet.

Image of Figure 5 adapted from:

Kwong Tong Cemetery KL, *Pagoda.*, (n.d.)

Kwong Tong Cemetery KL, *Master Burial Plot.*, (n.d.)

Kwong Tong Cemetery KL, *Columbarium Complex.*, (n.d.)

The researcher's point of view: If this customers group is unfamiliar with the traditional bereavement industry, the industry should continue to promote their product through adopting online sales tactics, allowing customers to be aware of these products before their life cycle⁹ ends.

⁹ Product life cycle: A product's life cycle is the time it takes for a product to go from being introduced to being phased out of the market. A product's life cycle has four stages: introduction, growth, maturity, and decline.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Underlying Theories

2.1.1 Marketing and sales

Marketing is a vital component in the transformation of the traditional bereavement industry to a contemporary business model. Companies can adopt a variety of strategies to enhance sales, depending on the value of the product itself, such as advertising to grab consumers' attention (Rahnama & Beiki, 2013). According to the researcher, the market in the industry refers to the entire traditional bereavement industry; the product refers to the columbarium, burial plot, and ancestral tablet; and the marketer refers to bereavement industry frontline personnel who are responsible for communicating product details to consumers.

In the industry, only products or services that provide consumers with more benefits than expenditures are effective. The industry should prioritise the requirements of the family over the attributes of their products and services. The benefits of working with the cemetery must be emphasised in the company's marketing approach. Businesses must also develop their market position. For example, if the company wants to focus on the cemetery industry, it may develop a customised sales plan to highlight the company's sales emphasis to all existing and prospective customers (Gillpatrick, 2019).

On Facebook, image adverts are the most common type of sales and marketing. Image advertising may be created by businesses to convey product information and commodities. The primary benefit of picture advertising is that it allows customers to concentrate on product features and information. Advertisers may utilise data from Facebook users to target their ads to particular audiences, limit the audience of each advertisement they publish on Facebook, and develop alternative advertising methods depending on the audience's features (Djurica et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the platform's advertisement network makes use of "Audience Insights," which collects information on individuals who interact with the company's page as well as how they connect with the rest of Facebook. Employees may create custom audiences in Audience Insights and move them to Facebook's "Advertisement Manager" tool (Curran et al., 2011).

2.1.2 Online publicity

Network propaganda is multidimensional propaganda. For the Associations, traditional media has always been two-dimensional; however, internet exposure is multi-dimensional. It has the ability to organically integrate text, visuals, and audio to provide multi-sensory information. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Associations need to adopt internet advertising strategies, and these online promotional production costs were low, quick, and variable. The production cycle for online advertising is short. Even if it is introduced in a short cycle, it may be made quickly in response to consumer demands. Traditional production costs are significant, and the release cycle is fixed. Furthermore, it is difficult to change after traditional media exposure and publication, and even if it can be changed, it often comes at a great cost. Depending on the promotional strategy in place at the time, online publicity might change the content of the publicity in real time (Dash & Chakraborty, 2021).

When compared to the traditional publicity ways such as newspapers and magazines, the cost of internet exposure is generally minimal, and the content of the site may be updated at any moment as promotion management choices change. This is one of the reasons why internet exposure may be an effective method of product promotion. (Suleiman et al., 2020)

2.1.3 Leadership

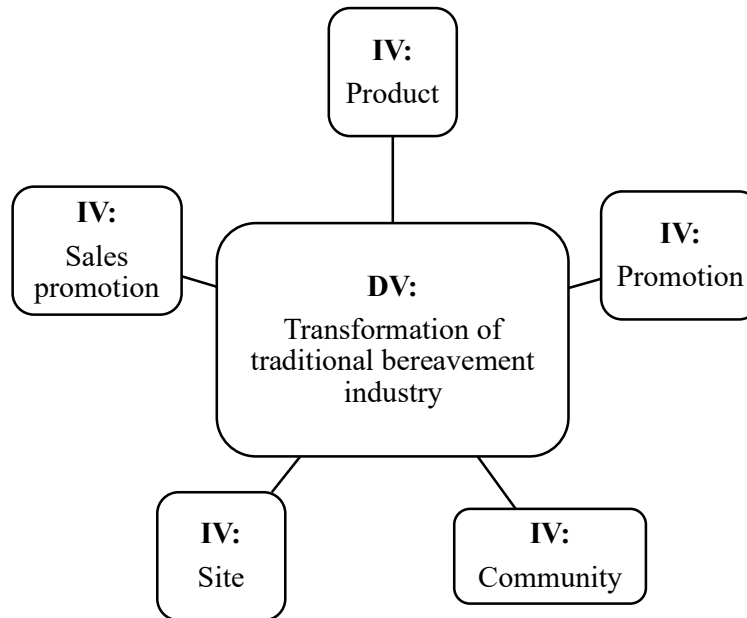
The most challenging component of making a comprehensive transformation is existing employees' reluctance to accept new technologies or methods. The size of the business is also important; the larger the corporation, the more difficult it is to persuade individuals to accept change. Leaders must cultivate employees' enthusiasm for digital transformation opportunities while their companies are going through digital transformation. Companies must also develop customer-centric business goals. Leaders must create customer-centric transformation goals for their teams in order to assist managers in picking technologies that will truly help the organisation transform. Furthermore, business leaders should strive to integrate strong communication and management practises with digital technology in order to improve transparency and efficiency. One of the most important jobs of leaders in the process of converting traditional organisations and selecting to utilise new technologies to lower expenditures is to demonstrate to the team how technology can lessen their load while also assisting the company in creating more value. Rather than viewing technology as a threat to their organisation, businesses should invest time and money in training technical workers to help them recognise its value (Sow & Aborbie, 2018).

2.1.4 Social networks

Email, the social medium used by Malaysia's business industry to communicate with consumers, is the beginning point for online social networking. Social networking is more than just a trendy business technique; it's also a driving force in the conventional mourning sector, pushing the Internet's limitless proximity to clients. Furthermore, network social networking has grown to encompass mobile phone platforms. Because of the universality of mobile phones and the utilisation of wireless networks, various online sales platforms are being used to make mobile phones the carrier of new social networks. People are linked together as a carrier across the network to form a group with a given characteristic, which is the traditional bereavement industry's target customer group. In recent years, the government has encouraged people to limit their outings, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic, and social media has become a platform for people to obtain promotional information, exhibit themselves, and enhance marketing. As a consequence, in terms of management, execution, and other criteria, social networking may support the traditional bereavement industry in expanding numerous sales opportunities. This sector may also make advantage of social networking to build an online communication platform with target customer groups (Bacik, 2016).

2.2 Review of Variables

Figure 6: Independent Variable (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV) from the researcher

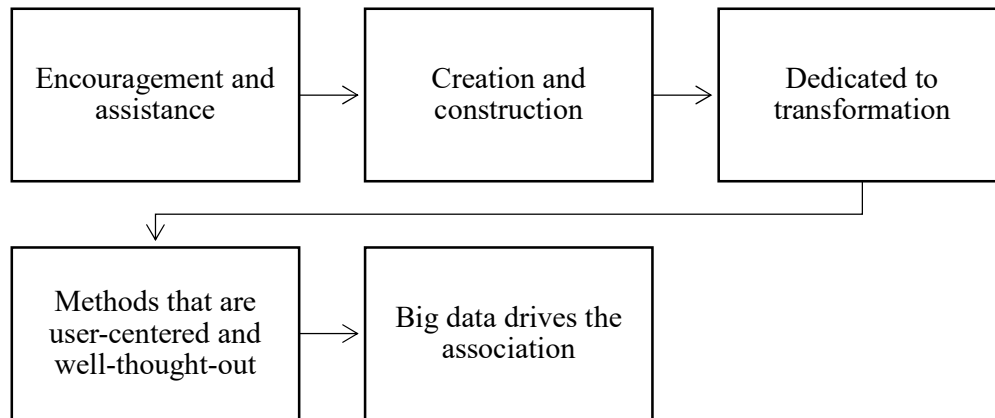


When Malaysians considering the bereavement industry, the traditional bereavement industry is unlikely to be their first option. The unmanaged, overgrown public mound is most people's first impression of the traditional bereavement industry. However, when the Associations experimented with or entered the realm of online sales, the sector became more recognisable to the Malaysian Chinese community. (Guang Ming Daily: *Competing with modern cemetery, cemetery must beautify and improve facilities*, 2017)

The term variable refers to a trait whose value fluctuates from one entity to the next. In this study, the two most common types of variation are dependent and independent variables. The variable is viewed as autonomous, and its modification will have an effect on another variable, the transformation stage of the traditional bereavement industry. And, if the variable is dependent, it will change in response to changes in other factors, i.e., the different stage improved or changes in the independent variables, would affect the transformation stage of the industry(Shukla, 2018).

The five stages of digital transformation are depicted in Figure 7. According to the researcher, as the traditional bereavement industry transforms, it will be in several stages of transition, ranging from encouragement to big data drivers. Depending on the pace of transformation, DV will change at different stages changes of the IVs. During the first stage, for example, the Associations' advertising techniques may include emailing. During the fourth or fifth step, the Associations might analyse their customers' large data and tailor the promotion approach or plan depending on customer segmentation.

Figure 7: 5 stages of digital transformation



Adapted from: (Berghaus & Back, 2016)

2.3 Proposed Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Proposed Theoretical

2.3.1.1 Product

Customers who choose the traditional bereavement industry have already acclimated to the “transformed” bereavement industry. As a result, “products” introduced in the traditional bereavement industry must also adapt to the demands of new consumer groups. According to the study, because the charitable Associations are managing Malaysian Chinese’s traditional bereavement products and service, the core idea of new items must be low-cost and environmentally friendly (Wong Tze Ken, 2016).

Customers see the product they buy as more than just a component; it is also a relationship-based service. Customers like to have a sense of a product before purchasing it, whether through reviews or suggestions from other customers. As a result, Associations should consider connecting their goods to platforms or networks that allow customers to share them. Customers’ needs are now at the forefront of the digital age’s expansion process. It’s the same if the conventional bereavement business wants to hear from customers about new products or services they are working on (Hallstedt et al., 2020). For example, the traditional Malaysian bereavement industry may learn from Hong Kong’s bereavement industry and adapt the sea burial technique to provide a new service to the traditional bereavement industry. The Associations may collect customers’ comments and views online and take a new step in the planning process, allowing new items or services to be more precisely tailored to customer satisfaction.

2.3.1.2 Promotion

The commercial bereavement industry is pursuing digital transformation one step at a time. They all have one thing in common: improving the customers' experience with their online services/products. Particularly in terms of how companies operate online and engage with customers. As part of their digital transformation, marketers are embracing digital channels such as email and social media, as well as web apps and other communication platforms. The primary objective of the Associations' present transformation is to locate and select the best online platform that will allow them to exert multi-channel effect. Through internet advertising, they may establish a two-way relationship with customers and help them understand their needs. When Associations can promote digitalization through data organisation, it becomes a more useful and successful approach. It will assist Associations in gathering a large amount of critical data (Gillpatrick, 2019).

2.3.1.3 Community

When a company has successfully transformed, product reviews become an important component of online sales. It helps to build trust and loyalty, and they typically highlight the differences between the traditional and commercial bereavement industry. The apparent advantage of product evaluations is that they may instil trust in potential customers. And, the better feedback traditional bereavement service receives, the more certain customers feel that they made the right decision (Ren & Nickerson, 2014). Furthermore, reviews and feedbacks contribute to the Associations' online image. Because customers feedback shows on each product's page, reviews can assist search engines identify the page by using unique keywords. If customers share the items they've rated on social media, these products and established "brands" in the grief sector will get more visibility (Zia et al., 2021). From the researcher's viewpoint: Reviews and feedbacks may also aid Associations in better understanding current products and researching new ones. From the customer's perspective, they might provide a variety of comments or suggestions for improvement.

2.3.1.4 Site

The success of the Associations' websites is dependent on page layout and simple navigation. The primary purpose of a homepage is to guide customers through the website. Make a clear distinction between the options and have a thorough understanding of what is underneath the linkages. Customers should be able to see the site's most significant material in the primary navigation section so they know what to expect (Flavian et al., 2009). For examples the latest information is shown in the Associations websites as illustrated in Figure 8 below -

Figure 8: Latest information shown on Associations' website (KTC & SKLHA)



Image adapted from:

Official website of The Association of Kwong Tong Cemetery Management Kuala Lumpur. (n.d.). Retrieved from The Association of Kwong Tong Cemetery Management Kuala Lumpur

Official website of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association. (n.d.). Retrieved from Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association

From the researcher's viewpoint: The Associations' webpage should provide interesting information, because it is the first impression that new customers or web viewers see when they access the website's homepage, the title becomes the most crucial content on the website. The title should promote or publicise the most up-to-date facts about the product. For example, if an association is trying to offer a promotion for the columbarium, the title can convince or entice new customers to visit the website.

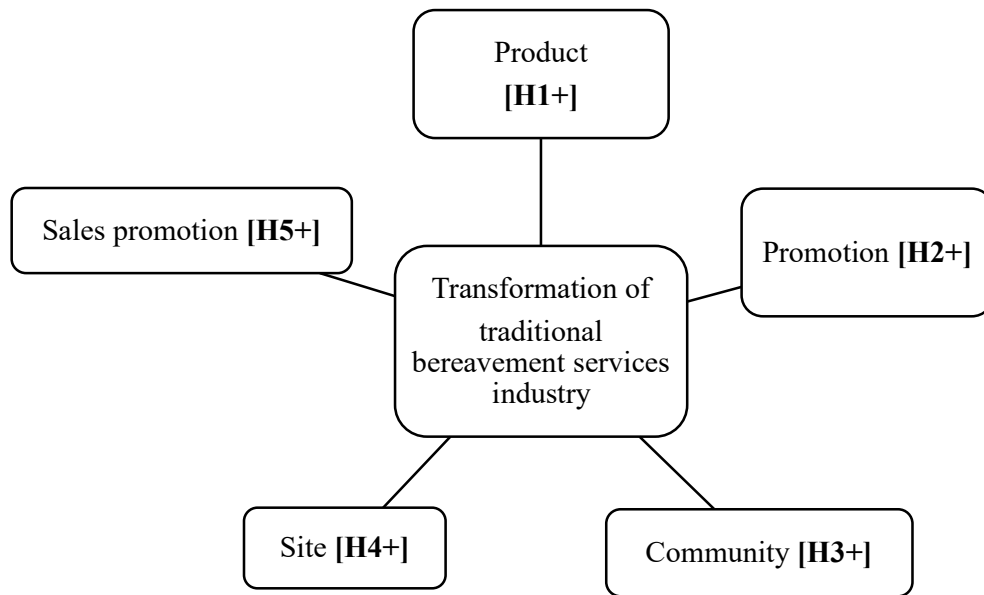
2.3.1.5 Sales Promotion

E-coupons have an edge over traditional bereavement industry in that they provide access to comprehensive and thorough information, as well as the ability to achieve quantitative marketing outcomes. The Associations can see how many coupons were issued, how many downloads there were, how many customers used it, and how many sales were produced as a result of it (Barat & Ye, 2015). From the researcher's viewpoint: E-coupons can aid in the development of brand loyalty and encourage buyers to return to the same business for a second purchase. Through various internet means, the traditional bereavement industry may connect with a younger consumer base. Besides, because of the technological component of electronic coupons, Associations can track the number of times each coupon is used, limiting the number of false redemptions. In addition, since e-coupons are supplied digitally, they are both cost-effective and efficient.

2.3.2 Conceptual Framework

In Figure 9 shows the conceptual framework of this research from the researcher. Based on existing literature reviews, a theoretical framework was developed and the researcher proposed there are all positive relationship of each independent variable with the dependent variable.

Figure 9: Conceptual Framework from the researcher



2.4 Hypotheses Development

2.4.1 The relationship between product and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry

Product innovation is required for the traditional bereavement industry to compete with the commercial bereavement industry and to transition seamlessly. New product creation allows Associations to target new customers, improve market share, increase sales, and diversify their revenue streams. Simultaneously, revamping current items may save costs, boost profitability, and eventually raise profits. Associations could choose to implement technologies that can bring genuine value in order to create new products that meet customers' demands. They must also focus on customers' demands in terms of features, new products, and customers' feedback, as well as soliciting suggestions and comments from anybody who interacts with the product at any point during its life cycle (Nataya & Sutanto, 2018).

The nature of service and the rate of change have changed dramatically in recent years. Thus, mastering conventional features of service delivery will no longer suffice. To take advantage of the opportunity, the Associations could learn to harness the potential for service innovation brought on by the development trend. Customers' expectations for new services must be raised. Greater than ever, customers seeking more engagement, customisation, personalisation, and mobility from services. When customers experienced a service innovation in commercial bereavement industry, they expect to see it in the traditional bereavement industry as well, therefore the Associations must search for fresh ideas to outperform the competition (Barrett et al., 2015).

From the study of Decker Junior et al., (2018), the research indicates that a new cremation service which is "Mobile Crematorium" might be introduced into the bereavement industry. Within 24 hours, the service will be supplied. Buyers can book services over the phone, sign contracts, schedule services, and businesses can collect credit card payments concurrently.

The particular staff will adopt GPS technology to locate the buyer's preferred location. At the completion of the operation, they will utilise the cart to bring the coffin to the crematorium, place the ashes in the urn, and sanitise the equipment. In addition, 10 days after the service is completed, a satisfaction questionnaire will be done over the phone with family members to assist diagnose and enhance the process's execution. The organisation will analyse this data for diagnosis and improvement, and these changes will be adopted throughout the whole internal service personnel. With quality as the foundation, all staff will get qualification training via lectures and courses conducted by external consultants.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between product and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry.

2.4.2 The relationship between promotion and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry

Associations may adopt internet advertising to enhance physical sales of certain items while also attract potential customers and deliver them a message: the traditional bereavement industry could provide the most affordable bereavement solution for them. Furthermore, while placing adverts, the Associations merely optimise the target audience based on criteria such as location, interest, and so on, and the audience group can view the company's advertisements when looking for similar items or service. Besides, the Associations must understand the growth of local sales as a result of the effects of internet advertising and use this information to enhance sales plans or tactics, raise the possibilities of successful sales, and limit the possibility of errors. The amount of views and clicks on advertisement may also provide the Associations with real-time feedback and comments from customers. For example, video advertisements receive the highest views, so the association should undertake more in-depth research on advertising tactics to boost local sales (Azlan et al., 2020).

Prior to the economic crisis, businesses sought to boost profits rather than customers. Then, with the advent of the Internet, businesses were pushed to seek true market value and omni-channel procurement, and it also fundamentally altered the way businesses connect with their customers. To move the sales process ahead, the Associations must swiftly learn how to leverage online technology and respond to clients through digital channels, while adding insights to a more personalised, customer-oriented experience. When sales transition to digital platforms, the Associations must modify their sales methods to accommodate digital sales strategies. Not only that, the Associations must also consider new sales budgets and resource allocation. Online data analysis tools may help the Associations make better decisions, give important information, and forecast customers' future purchasing behaviour. This may also provide considerable benefits to the Associations, resulting in improved performance and competitive advantages (Wengler et al., 2020).

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between promotion and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry.

2.4.3 The relationship between community and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry

Digital reviews will affect customers' purchase decisions since they are regarded the most direct impressions of customers and also demonstrate that customers support and agree with the association's products or service. The greater the number of comments posted on the association's official website, the greater the customer's inclination to purchase. Furthermore, the research from Leipzig revealed that honest and high-quality evaluations might help the association's reputation. When new customers witness a high number of customers offering favourable feedback on the association's products, they will indirectly create trust with the Associations, allowing it to achieve its goal of growing sales (von Leipzig et al., 2017).

As more customers offer favourable digital evaluations of the Associations, it demonstrates that an increasing number of consumers utilise the Associations indirectly as a trusted online platform. It is also because the Associations may acquire direct and accurate data from these digital evaluations to enhance products or services, which can better retain existing customers and attract new customers while also accelerating the association's transformation (Kim et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between community and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry.

2.4.4 The relationship between site and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry

As the Associations evolve, they must begin exploring and learning about supporting technologies such as cloud computing, artificial technology (AI), and online learning. One of the most significant implications of digital transformation is the reshaping of the connection between the Associations and customers. New technologies enable the Associations to engage and communicate with their customers in new ways, such as through websites, online searches, etc. ensuring consistency across consumer touchpoints. The function of corporate websites will alter and increase as a result of digital transformation, which will give the creativity and innovation required to promote engagement and communication. Furthermore, the Associations must guarantee that their websites can deliver responsive services on mobile devices and engage online with customers via digital technologies (Onețiu, 2020).

The Associations should utilise AI technology to supply customers with the information they require, as well as send automated emails including highly relevant offers, discounts, and other target material. Increased data relevance guarantees a better customer experience and increases the potential of taking action on messages. Another important characteristic of customer-centric websites is the availability of AI-powered live chat. They not only save the expenses on customer care, but they also allow the company to engage with more customers at the same time. They play an important role in delivering the information about products or services, assisting in the generation of more sales, and being in charge of after-sales (McLean & Osei-Frimpong, 2017).

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between site and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry.

2.4.5 The relationship between sales promotion and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry

According to the findings of Hsu et al., (2020)'s investigation, a platform that leverages blockchain technology to implement complete digital coupons, the Associations may utilise vouchers for a variety of marketing initiatives, and no technical support is necessary. The digital coupons are saved using the blockchain's encryption security and highly controlled technology, and customers may save and redeem discounts using mobile wallets. Furthermore, digital coupons may enable the Associations to create and manage all coupons conveniently, as well as save the cost and time associated with printing physical coupons.

The Associations can include coupons and discounts into their marketing tactics on a regular basis in order to enhance sales conversion rates and customers' loyalty. Furthermore, digital coupon may be an effective way of raising social media attention and email marketing lists, as well as promoting the usage of mobile websites. Printing, insertion, and distribution expenditures are incurred with physical coupons, whereas digital coupons may be distributed by text, email, etc. Besides, making it easier and faster to redeem coupons would give customers with a more comfortable user experience, thus increasing the Associations confidence and goodwill. The Associations may also utilise e-mail to deliver tailored sales information to customers in a timely way. Even marketing methods with a minimum amount of personalisation, such as content or product suggestions based on previous browsing or purchase history, are generally far superior to more broad communications. Bundling coupons with such offers can considerably boost their efficacy if the receiver, offer, timing, and product combination are all perfect(Lee & Choeh, 2021).

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between sales promotion and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

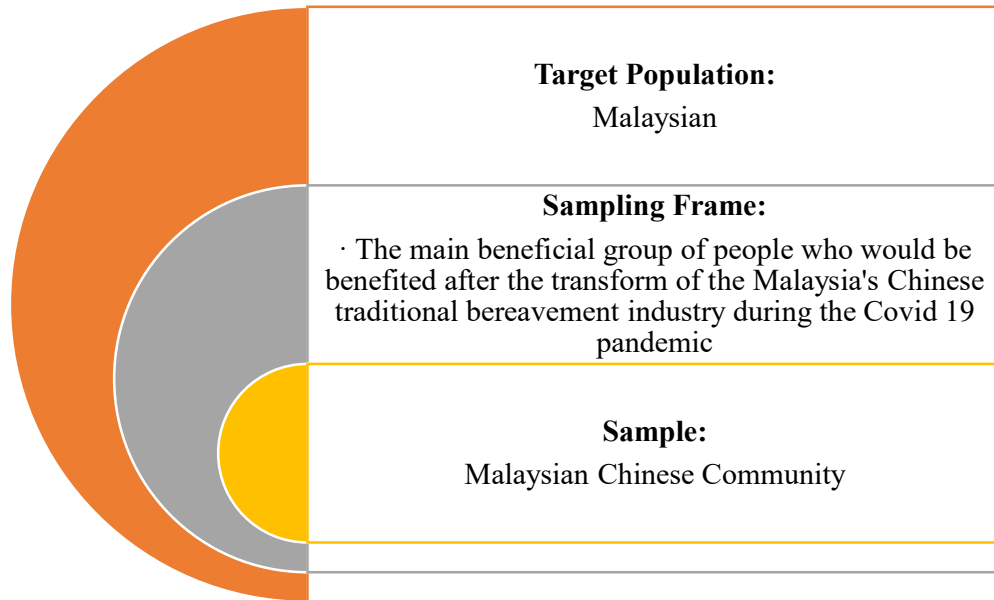
In this study, the researcher adopted a quantitative survey to examine how the five independent variables (product, promotion, community, site, and sales promotion) could help to transform the traditional bereavement industry through online sales during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this research method, the researcher can directly understand the impact of different changes in Chinese community on the transformation of the bereavement industry.

Due to the serious spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia and to avoid close contact with the general public, the researcher conducted an online questionnaire to collect attitudes and group characteristics about the impact of online sales on the transformation of the traditional bereavement industry among the Chinese community. Besides, the descriptive research serves as the basis for quantitative analysis.

3.2 Sampling Design

In this study, Malaysian citizens were the main subjects of the survey as a whole (target respondents), while the group of citizens of Malaysian Chinese community was a sample of the study, shown in Figure 10. In the target population sampled by the study, the researcher used a simple random as sampling technique. That is, the researcher needs to rely on individual judgement to select respondents to participate in the online questionnaire. The aim of the study is: Could the traditional bereavement industry provide benefits to Malaysian Chinese community after successful transformation through online sales during COVID-19 pandemic? Therefore, the participants in this online questionnaire are “Malaysian Chinese Community” and the proposed sample size of this questionnaire is 200.

Figure 10: Target Population and Sample of the Research



3.3 Data Collection Method

The researcher adopted Google forms survey as data collection instrument in order to collect primary data (Appendix A).

The researcher is investigating the relationship between online sales and the transformation of the traditional bereavement industry of Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Take one of the hypotheses in this research paper as an example, which is “The relationship between product and transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry.” As the topic mentioned the term “online sales”, the most important element of this term would be the “product”. This statement is a viable hypothesis because it clearly operationalizes the term “product” and “transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry” such that they can be measured and analysed in an objective way.

In this hypothesis, the dependent variable is the “transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry” while the independent variable is the “product”. The target respondents who are Malaysian Chinese community provide opinions by answering Likert scale questions.

Based on this hypothesis and adopted quantitative studies, the researcher had designed questions that could collect the respondents’ answers as evidence for the hypotheses. Table 1 shows the preliminary works of data collection conducted by the researcher and the research instrument.

Table 1: Preliminary Works of Data Collection and the Research Instrument

Stage 1	
Goals and Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To collect the opinion of “online sales affecting the traditional bereavement service industry of Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic” from Malaysian Chinese community. • To examine the attitude and thoughts of respondents about the transformation of traditional bereavement industry by adopting online sales during COVID-19 pandemic. • To focus collecting the opinion from the respondents who have experienced the bereavement industry in Malaysia.
Stage 2	
Election of data collection method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data (included age, income, etc.). • Adopted Google forms as data collection technique.
Stage 3	
Sample design and respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt random sample as sample technique to reach Malaysian Chinese Community (respondents of the survey).
Stage 4	
Adopt pilot test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a few individuals as a representative sample respondent can test whether the survey question is poor design, to avoid the respondents provide the irrelevant opinion.
Stage 5	
Collect data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After generated the form filling link of the Google survey form, the researcher sends out to the relevant respondent for data collecting purpose. • Google survey form filling link: https://forms.gle/tVNVvEJegBQR34Z57

3.4 Proposed Data Analysis Tools

By adopting SPSS statistics as the computer software for analysing data, the data downloaded from Google form can be directly imported into the software for data editing, data management, statistical analysis, report and graphic generating, etc.

SPSS is mostly for researchers who are proficient in their core papers but lacking in the software aspect, since SPSS provides a graphical representation as well as a suitable outcome for the data entered. SPSS may assist the researcher in quickly acclimating to the programme so that they may complete the analysis and obtain their results (Frey, 2017).

3.4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Data aggregation and data mining are the descriptive analytical approaches used to generate large data. Data aggregation is the process of collecting and sorting data in order to be manageable.

Descriptive approaches involve creating tables of quantiles and means, dispersion methods such as variance or standard deviation, and cross-tabulations or “crosstabs” that may be used to test several hypotheses. These theories frequently emphasise disparities between subgroups.

A table of means by subgroup is used to demonstrate significant differences between subgroups, which usually leads to inference and conclusions.

A crosstab or two-way tabulation is intended to display the proportions of components with distinct values for each of the two variables available, also known as cell proportions. For example, the researcher may look into the gender percentage of Malaysians who are willing to support the transformation of the traditional bereavement service (Susanna et al., 2017).

3.4.2 Inferential Analysis

Inferential statistics could assist researchers in comparing sample data to data from other samples. Model or test of this analysis included generalized linear model, Student's t-tests, ANOVA, regression analysis, and other models that provide straight-line ("linear") probabilities and output. For example, the researcher might investigate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables by adopting Student's t-tests (Allua & Thompson, 2009).

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive data of demographic variable which analysed by the researcher listed in Table 2 (numerical data) and Figure 11 (bar chart).

Table 2: Descriptive data of demographic variables

	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	78	51.3%
Male	74	48.7%
Total	152	100%
Age		
18-24	20	13.2%
25-34	27	17.8%
35-44	35	23.0%
45-54	30	19.7%
55-64	25	16.4%
65 or above	15	9.9%
Current States		
Johor	3	2.0%
Perak	5	3.3%
Selangor	91	59.9%
W.P. Kuala Lumpur	53	34.9%
Marital Status		
Divorced	4	2.6%
Married	75	49.3%
Single	69	45.4%
Widowed	4	2.6%

TRADITIONAL BEREAVEMENT SERVICE INDUSTRY DURING THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC

Number (N)

Percentage (%)

Occupation		
Charity Organization Employee	11	7.2%
Elected Representative	1	0.7%
Entrepreneur	13	8.6%
Government servant	18	11.8%
Grab driver	1	0.7%
Housewife	1	0.7%
Massage Therapist	1	0.7%
Private Sector Employee	85	55.9%
Retired Professor	1	0.7%
Student	19	12.5%
Tour Guide	1	0.7%
Monthly Income		
Above RM 10,000	14	9.2%
Less than RM 2,500	23	15.1%
RM 2,501 to RM 5,000	33	21.7%
RM 5,001 to RM 7,500	55	36.2%
RM 7,501 to RM 10,000	27	17.8%
Place of origin/Native land/Dialect (Chinese Malaysian)		
Foochow	6	3.9%
Hainan	14	9.2%
Hakka	14	9.2%
Hokkien	76	50.0%
Kwong Dong/Cantonese	26	17.1%
Kwongsai	5	3.3%
Teochew	11	7.2%

TRADITIONAL BEREAVEMENT SERVICE INDUSTRY DURING THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC

Number (N)

Percentage (%)

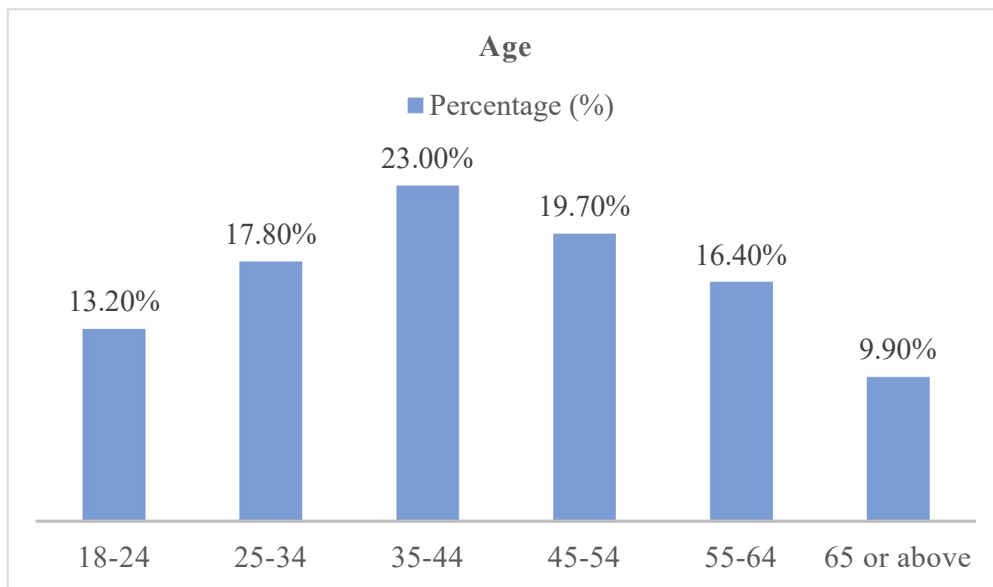
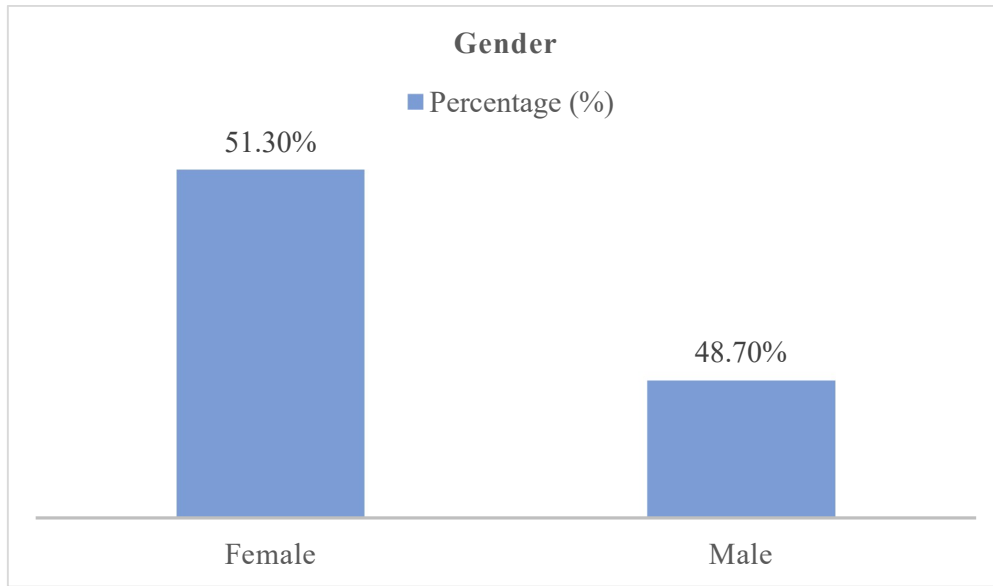
Which bereavement service brand/company/Associations in Malaysia that you have heard of before?		
All of them	1	0.7%
Hokkien Association	21	13.8%
KwangSi Association	3	2.0%
Kwong Dong Association	13	8.6%
Nirvana Group	72	47.4%
Xiao En Centre	41	27.0%
义山(In English: cemetery)	1	0.7%
What is the main reason that motivate you to search for the bereavement service?		
Any of the family members are seriously ill.	6	3.9%
Any of the family members passed away.	118	77.6%
Any of your relatives or friends need the information of bereavement service.	26	17.1%
I am volunteer	1	0.7%
Working	1	0.7%
What is the channel for you to know/receive the information of the bereavement service?		
Agent/Contractor in bereavement service industry	11	7.2%
Internet searching	51	33.6%
Newspaper/magazines	2	1.3%
Relatives and friends	60	39.5%
Social Medias (e.g., Facebook, etc.)	28	18.4%

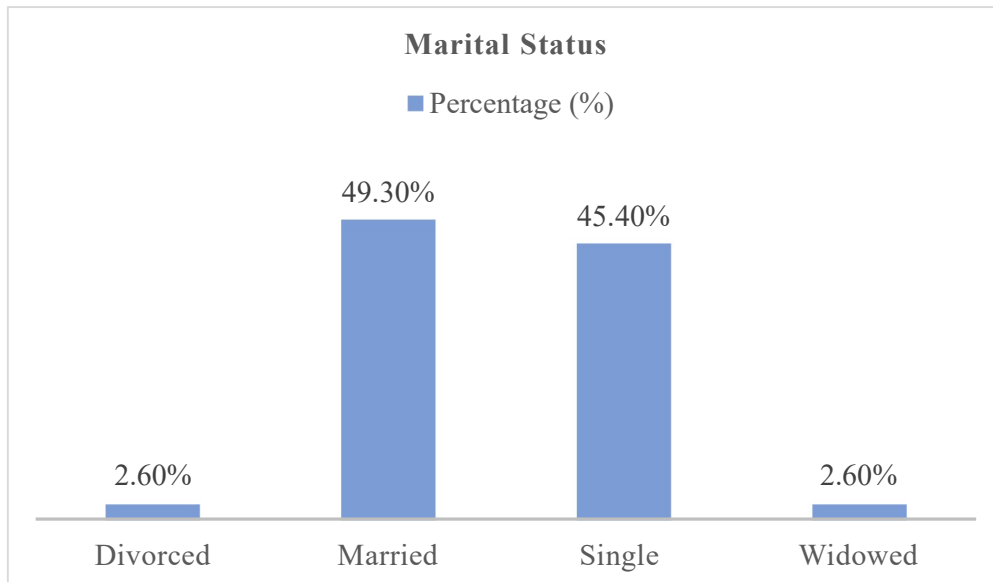
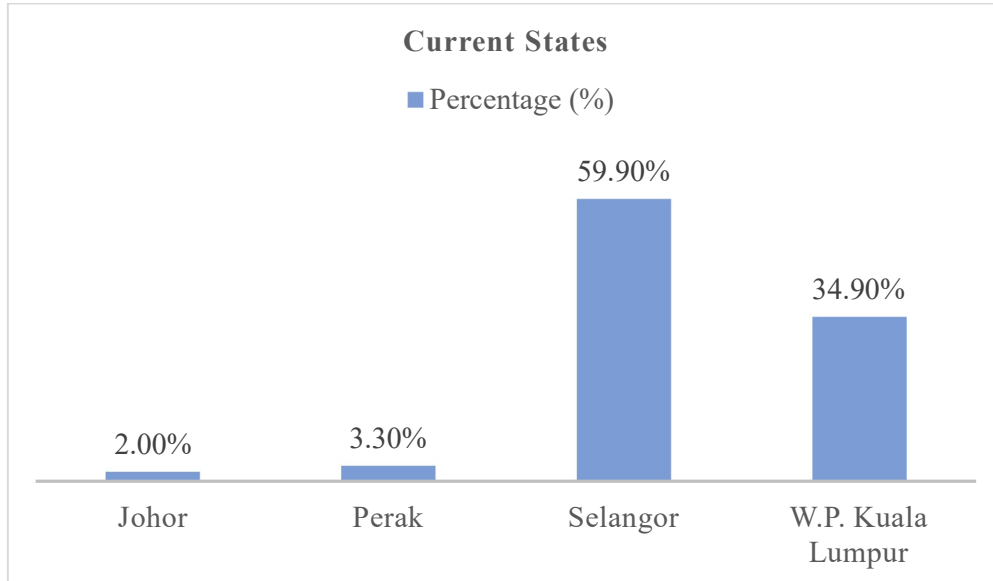
The researcher found that there are 48 survey forms filled with repeated answers, in order to get accurate data from the survey, the researcher decided to remove the repeated data from the survey forms. Thus, the actual respondent's data in the study is 152. From the data generated by SPSS, the highest percentage of the categories concluded in Table 3.

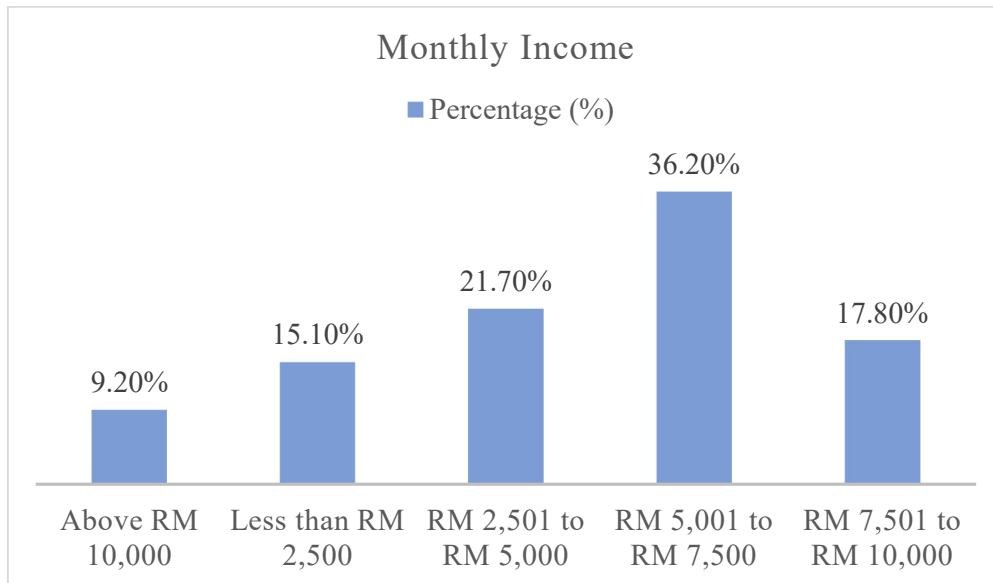
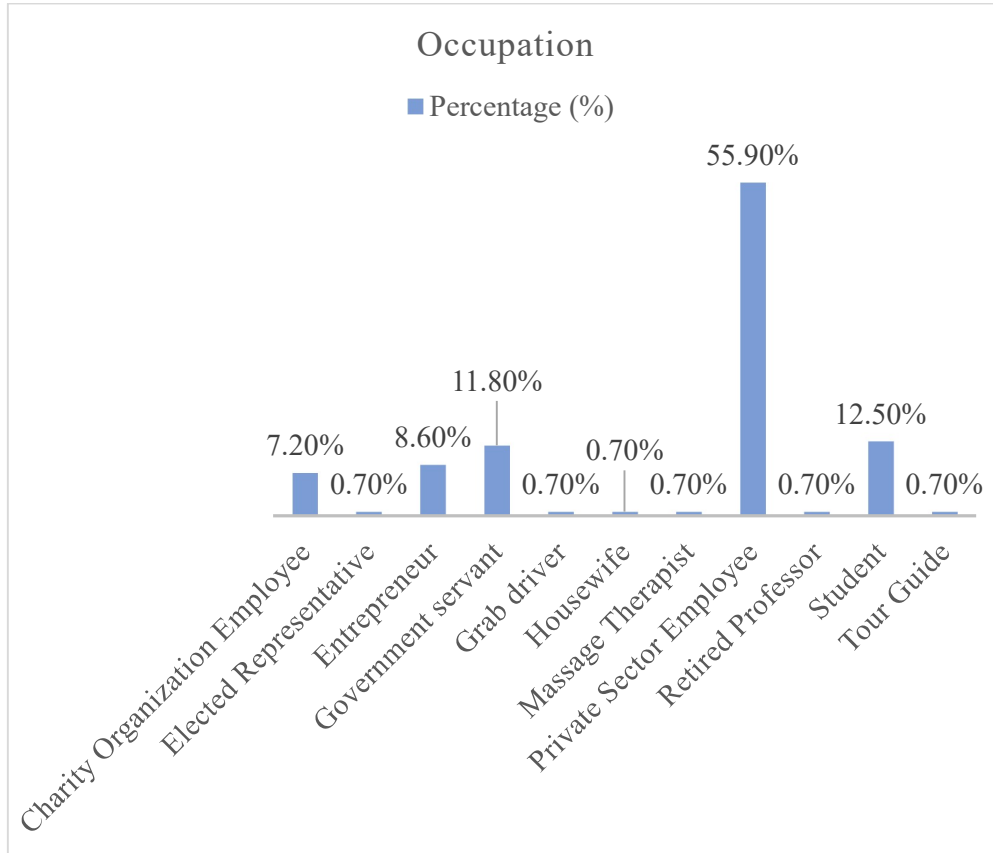
Table 3: Highest Percentage Categories

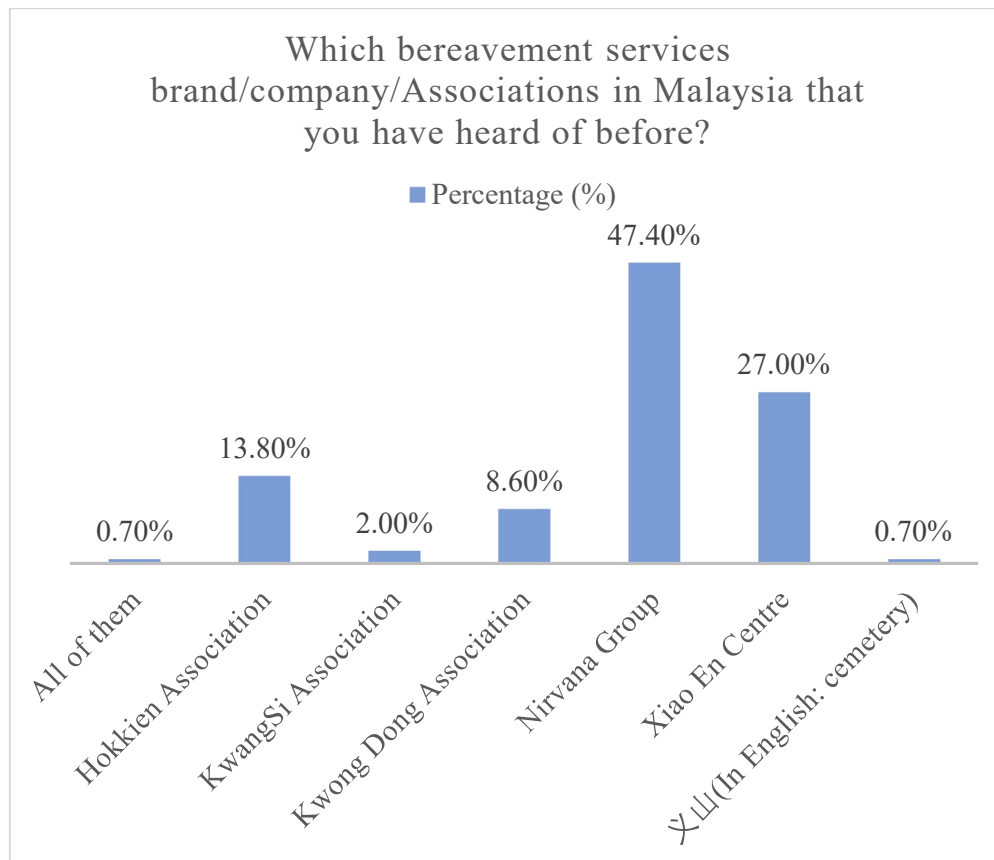
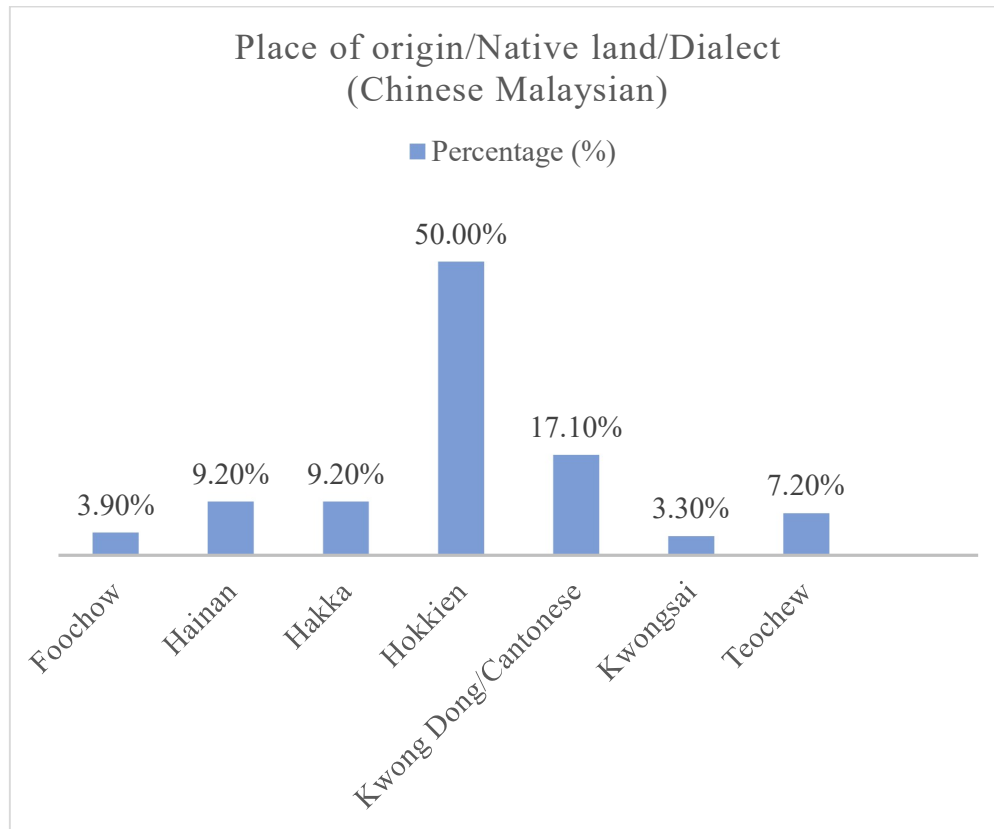
Demographic Variables		Highest Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	51.3%
Age	35-44	23.0%
Current States	Selangor	91%
Marital Status	Married	49.3%
Occupation	Private Sector Employee	85%
Monthly Income	RM 5,001 to RM 7,500	36.2%
Place of origin/Native land/Dialect (Chinese Malaysian)	Hokkien	50%
Which bereavement service brand/company/Associations in Malaysia that you have heard of before?	Nirvana Group	47.4%
What is the main reason that motivate you to search for the bereavement service?	Any of the family members passed away.	77.6%
What is the channel for you to know/receive the information of the bereavement service?	Relatives and Friends	39.5%

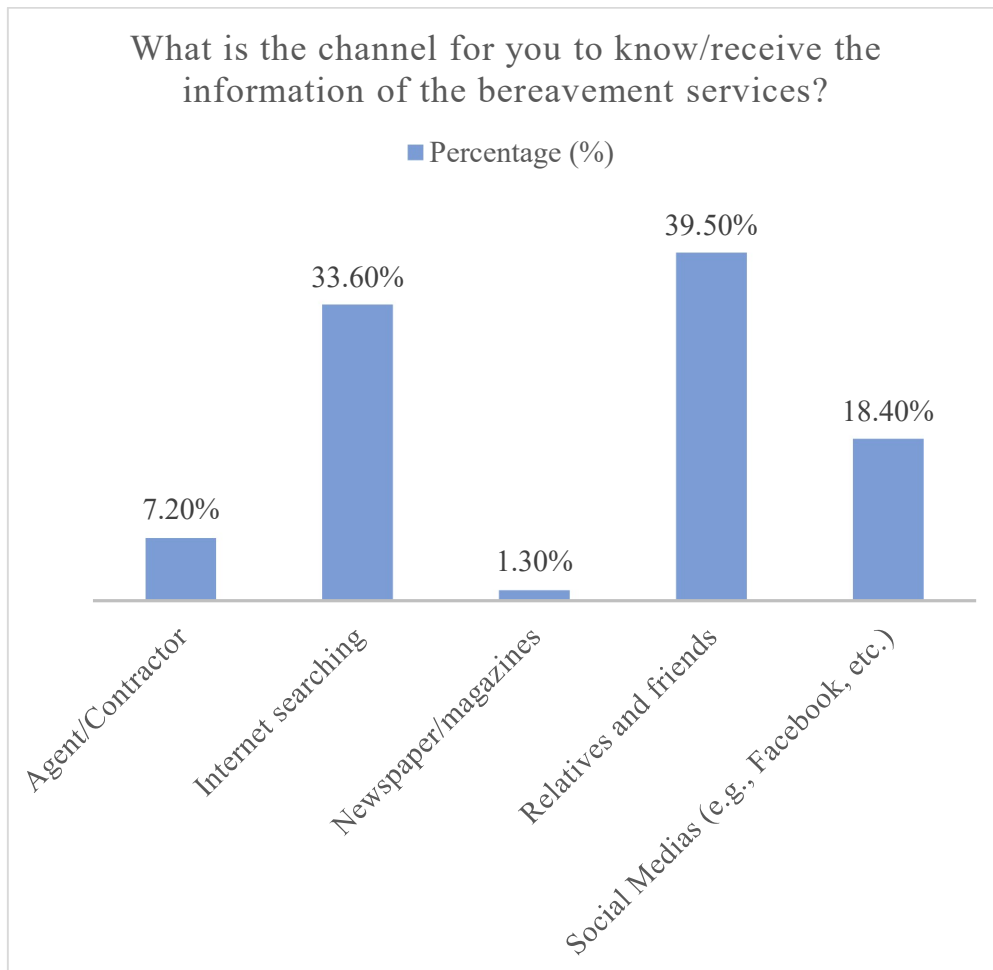
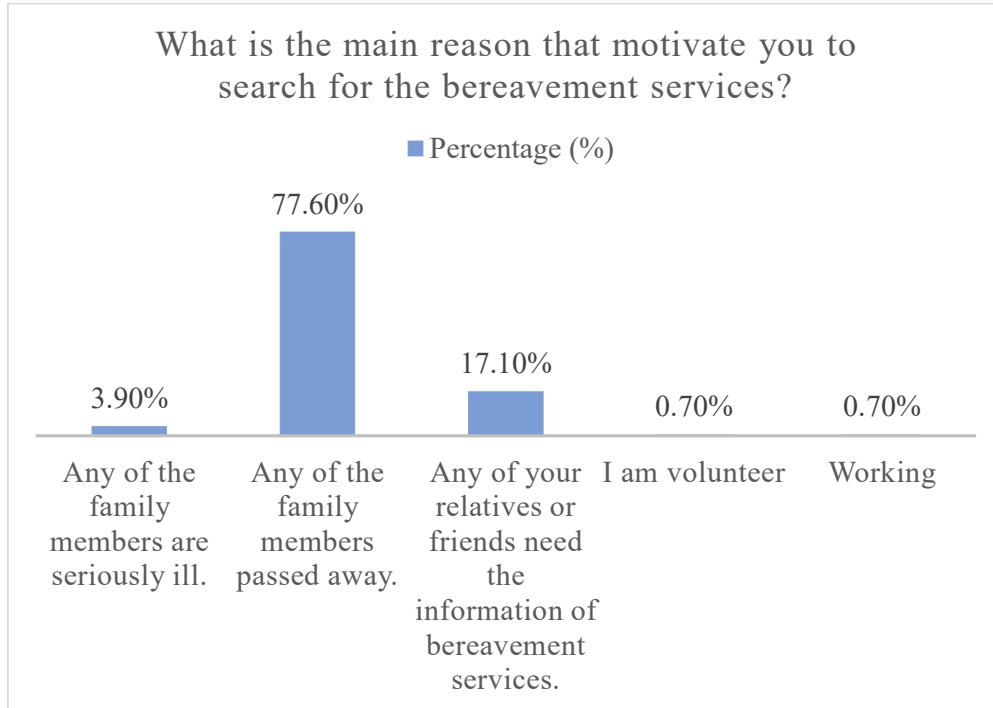
Figure 11: Descriptive data of demographic variables











4.2 Inferential Analysis

4.2.1 T-test and cross tabs results

Table 4: T-test result

	Hypotheses	Relationship
H1	Product and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry	positive
	H ₀ : Product as IV, has no relationship with DV H ₁ : Product has positive relationship with DV	
	T-test result: P value >0.001, shows that researcher should reject H ₀ .	
H2	Promotion and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry	positive
	H ₀ : Promotion as IV, has no relationship with DV H ₁ : Promotion has positive relationship with DV	
	T-test result: P value >0.001, shows that researcher should reject H ₀ .	
H3	Community and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry	positive
	H ₀ : Community as IV, has no relationship with DV H ₁ : Community has positive relationship with DV	
	T-test result: P value >0.001, shows that researcher should reject H ₀ .	
H4	Site and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry	positive
	H ₀ : Site as IV, has no relationship with DV H ₁ : Site has positive relationship with DV	
	T-test result: P value >0.001, shows that researcher should reject H ₀ .	
H5	Sales promotion and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry	positive
	H ₀ : Sales promotion as IV, has no relationship with DV H ₁ : Sales promotion has positive relationship with DV	
	T-test result: P value >0.001, shows that researcher should reject H ₀ .	

As for H1, the researcher proposed there is a positive relationship between product (IV) and transformation of traditional bereavement service industry (DV). The positive relationship also shows by the cross tabs result of 2 survey questions: “age” and “I prefer green/eco burial, without having a grave. (Modern bereavement service)” in figure 11.

In each age group, the highest number of respondents selected “Agree” to green/eco burial as a product/service. Since the modern bereavement service is currently not provided/developed by the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia, it could help the industry to achieve the transformation goal

To contrast, most of the respondents selected “Disagree” to burial plot/cremation service (Traditional bereavement service) in figure 12.

Figure 11: Cross Tabs Result (Age and Modern Bereavement Service)

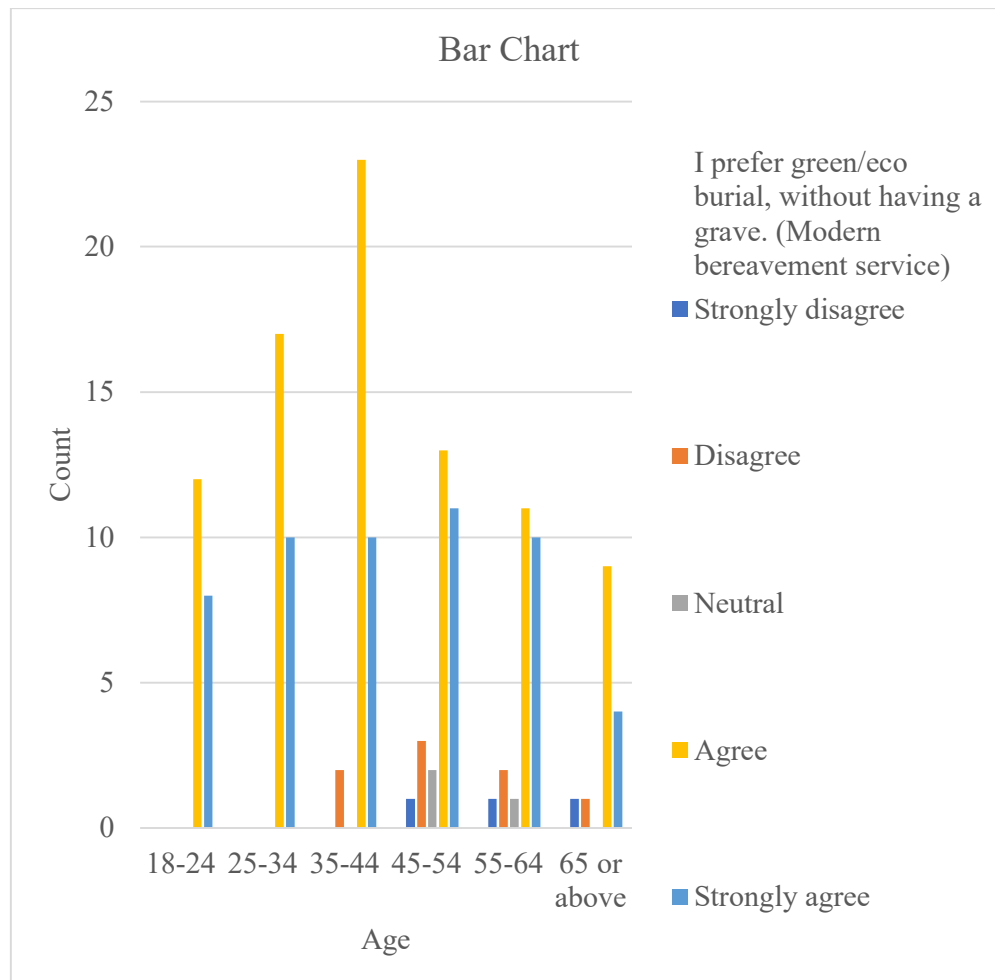
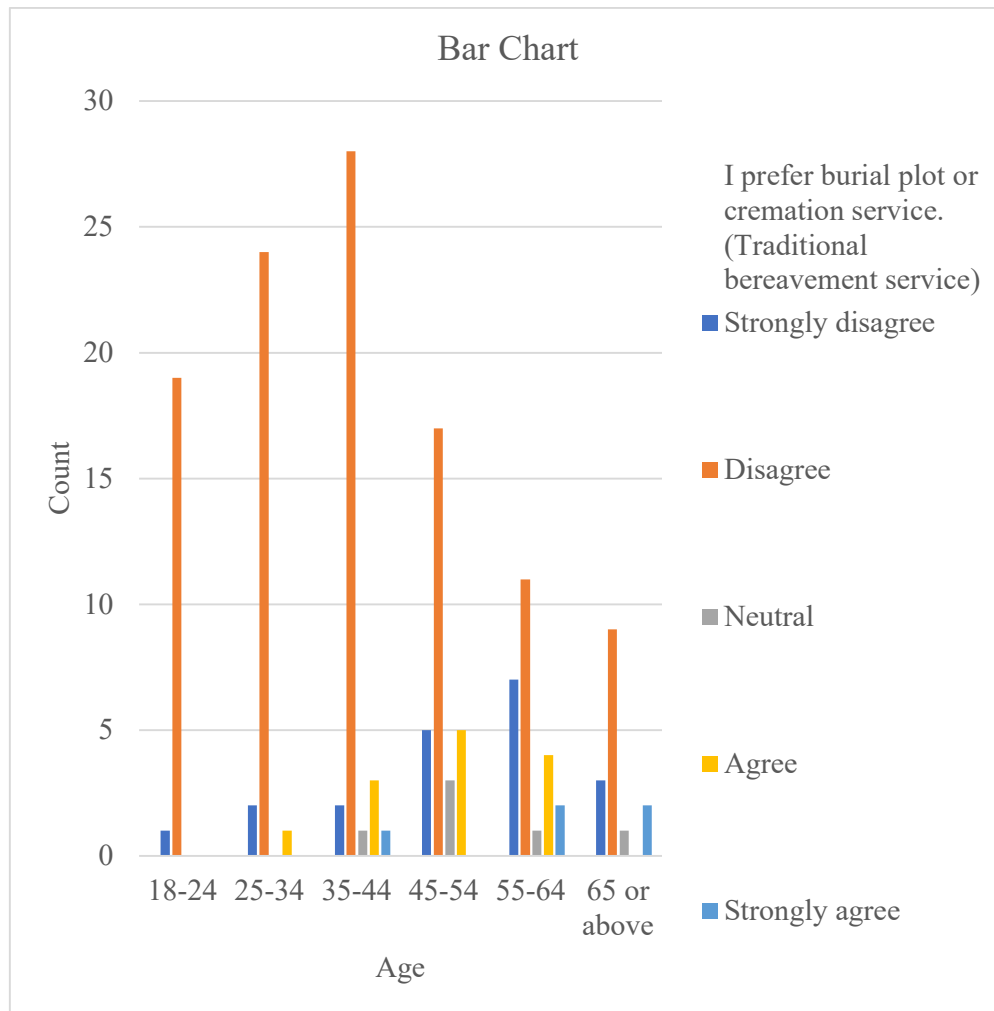


Figure 12: Cross Tabs Result (Age and Traditional Bereavement Service)



4.2.2 Reliability data

Reliability statistics and correlations of the variables showed in Table 5.

The researchers listed a degree from 1 to 5 for “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. By using SPSS, the researcher wanted to analyse the consistency of IV and DV. Result of Cronbach’s Alpha shows 0.870, means that the survey questions have high internal consistency. Generally, the degree of consistency of items is related to the measurement content, and the larger value of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, the stronger of internal consistency.

Table 5: Reliability Statistics of all variables

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N
0.870	0.913	26

From the Pearson Correlation, a value of 0.64 means that there is a high degree of positive correlation between these two variables. IV is growing, and DV also growing.

Correlations

		MEAN_IV	MEAN_DV
MEAN_IV	Pearson Correlation	1	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	152	152
MEAN_DV	Pearson Correlation	.640**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2.3 Regression data of each hypothesis group

4.2.3.1 Regression data of H1

In Table 6, shows the Pearson Correlation of H1 (product) is 0.318, which refer to a medium degree of correlations between the IV and DV.

Table 6: Correlation's data of H1

Correlations			
		MEAN_DV_PRODUCT	MEAN_IV_PRODUCT
Pearson Correlation	MEAN_DV_PRODUCT	1.000	0.318
	MEAN_IV_PRODUCT	0.318	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	MEAN_DV_PRODUCT		0.000
	MEAN_IV_PRODUCT	0.000	
N	MEAN_DV_PRODUCT	152	152
	MEAN_IV_PRODUCT	152	152

Table 7 shows the P value (significant level) is less than 0.001, means that there is strong evidence to reject H₀.

Table 7: ANOVA of H1

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.544	1	1.544	16.869	<.001 ^b
	Residual	13.732	150	0.092		
	Total	15.276	151			
a. Dependent Variable: MEAN_DV_PRODUCT						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_IV_PRODUCT						

4.2.3.2 Regression data of H2

In Table 8 shows the Pearson Correlation of H2 is 0.588, means there is a strong correlation between IV and DV.

Table 8: Correlation's data of H2

		MEAN_DV PROMOTION	MEAN_IV PROMOTION
Pearson Correlation	MEAN_DV_PROMOTION	1.000	0.588
	MEAN_IV_PROMOTION	0.588	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	MEAN_DV_PROMOTION		0.000
	MEAN_IV_PROMOTION	0.000	
N	MEAN_DV_PROMOTION	152	152
	MEAN_IV_PROMOTION	152	152

Table 9 shows the P value (significant level) is less than 0.001, means that there is strong evidence to reject H₀.

Table 9: ANOVA of H2

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.945	1	10.945	79.391	<.001 ^b
	Residual	20.680	150	0.138		
	Total	31.625	151			
a. Dependent Variable: MEAN_DV_PROMOTION						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_IV_PROMOTION						

4.2.3.3 Regression data of H3

In Table 10 shows the Pearson Correlation of H3 is 0.390, which refer to a medium degree of correlations between the IV and DV.

Table 10: Correlation's data of H3

		MEAN_DV COMMUNITY	MEAN_IV COMMUNITY
Pearson Correlation	MEAN_DV_COMMUNITY	1.000	0.390
	MEAN_IV_COMMUNITY	0.390	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	MEAN_DV_COMMUNITY		0.000
	MEAN_IV_COMMUNITY	0.000	
N	MEAN_DV_COMMUNITY	152	152
	MEAN_IV_COMMUNITY	152	152

Table 11 shows the P value (significant level) is less than 0.001, means that there is strong evidence to reject H₀.

Table 11: ANOVA of H3

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.538	1	2.538	26.884	<.001 ^b
	Residual	14.160	150	0.094		
	Total	16.698	151			
a. Dependent Variable: MEAN_DV_COMMUNITY						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_IV_COMMUNITY						

4.2.3.4 Regression data of H4

In Table 12 shows the Pearson Correlation of H4 is 0.263, which refer to a small correlation between the IV and DV.

Table 12: Correlation's data of H4

Correlations			
		MEAN_DV_SITE	MEAN_IV_SITE
Pearson Correlation	MEAN_DV_SITE	1.000	0.263
	MEAN_IV_SITE	0.263	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	MEAN_DV_SITE		0.001
	MEAN_IV_SITE	0.001	
N	MEAN_DV_SITE	152	152
	MEAN_IV_SITE	152	152

Table 13 shows the P value (significant level) 0.001, means that there is strong evidence to reject H₀.

Table 13: ANOVA of H4

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.155	1	1.155	11.186	.001 ^b
	Residual	15.495	150	0.103		
	Total	16.650	151			
a. Dependent Variable: MEAN_DV_SITE						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_IV_SITE						

4.2.3.5 Regression data of H5

In Table 14 shows the Pearson Correlation of H5 is 0.079, which refer to a small correlation between the IV and DV.

Table 14: Correlation's data of H5

Correlations			
		MEAN_DV_ SALES_ PROMOTION	MEAN_IV_ SALES_ PROMOTION
Pearson Correlation	MEAN_DV_ SALES_ PROMOTION	1.000	.079
	MEAN_IV_ SALES_ PROMOTION	.079	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	MEAN_DV_ SALES_ PROMOTION	.	.167
	MEAN_IV_ SALES_ PROMOTION	.167	.
N	MEAN_DV_ SALES_ PROMOTION	152	152
	MEAN_IV_ SALES_ PROMOTION	152	152

Table 15 shows the P value (significant level) 0.333, means that there is weak evidence to reject H₀.

Table 15: ANOVA of H5

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0.079	1	0.079	0.943	.333 ^b
	Residual	12.639	150	0.084		
	Total	12.719	151			
a. Dependent Variable: MEAN_DV_SALES_PROMOTION						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_IV_SALES_PROMOTION						

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Discussions of Major Findings

The validation of the research objectives and hypotheses from the researcher showed in Table 16.

Table 16: Research Objectives validate with hypotheses

Product/H1(DV/Hypothesis)	
SPSS Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-test • Correlation • Regression • One-way ANOVA
Major findings	The IV and DV are positively correlated, shows that launching new products could help the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic.
Notes	Correlation test and ANOVA test shows a correlation between IV and DV, and strong evidence to reject H_0 .
Promotion/H2(DV/Hypothesis)	
SPSS Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-test • Correlation • Regression • One-way ANOVA
Major findings	The IV and DV are positively correlated, shows that adopting new promote techniques or skills could help the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic.
Notes	Correlation test and ANOVA test shows a strong correlation between IV and DV, and strong evidence to reject H_0 .

Community/H3(DV/Hypothesis)	
SPSS Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-test • Correlation • Regression • One-way ANOVA
Major findings	The IV and DV are positively correlated, shows that developing community platforms for customers (which allow them to evaluate the service or provide comments on products) could help the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic.
Notes	Correlation test and ANOVA test shows a correlation between IV and DV, and strong evidence to reject H_0 .
Site/H4(DV/Hypothesis)	
SPSS Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-test • Correlation • Regression • One-way ANOVA
Major findings	The IV and DV are positively correlated, shows that developing websites or online technology could help the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic.
Notes	Correlation test and ANOVA test shows a correlation between IV and DV, and strong evidence to reject H_0 .

Sales Promotion/H5(DV/Hypothesis)	
SPSS Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-test • Correlation • Regression • One-way ANOVA
Major findings	The IV and DV are positively correlated. However, from the analysed data shows weak evidence that developing digitalize coupons or discounts could help the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic.
Notes	Correlation test and ANOVA test shows a correlation between IV and DV, but weak evidence to reject H_0 .

The conclusion of research objectives and hypothesis proposed by the researcher as below: -

Research Objective 1: The IV of H1 to H4 are the key elements of online sales, the positive relationships directly shows that the online sales could be the key element for traditional bereavement service industry to transform during COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Objective 2: The positive correlation and evidence of H1 to H4 shows that the traditional bereavement service industry in Malaysia could achieve higher sales and drive potential customers data through adopting online sales.

Research Objective 3: The positive correlation and evidence of H1 to H4 shows that the traditional bereavement service industry could successfully transform through adopting new technologies and modern concepts.

5.2 Implications of the study

Based on the findings result from the researcher, shows that the behavioural of bereavement service of Malaysian Chinese could able to be change in the future time (Sniehotta et al., n.d.) when the traditional bereavement industry had successfully transformed.

The traditional bereavement service or products¹⁰ starts from the Neolithic period in China, it also became the Chinese's bereavement culture and the inertia behavioural¹¹ (Han, 2012). From the research paper from Hong Kong which discussed about green burial service, citizens in Hong Kong had a thought which the Ching Ming festival need to be respected and it's an important Chinese's culture (because they may pay their respects to ancestors through praying) (Lau et al., 2020).

Green/eco burial as a modern concepts or service could switch the behavioural of Malaysian Chinese Community from tradition to modern bereavement service. According the concepts of behavioural changes model: The Chinese community would be more conscious of the eco/green burial service concepts if they were better informed, and they would be more driven to act adopting the modern bereavement service to their love ones.

The changes of the Malaysian Chinese's behavioural in bereavement service could support the Malaysia government to overcome the existing problem of space constraints which currently used for traditional cemetery burial.

¹⁰ Traditional bereavement services or products: Burial plot and cremation

¹¹ Inertia Behavioural: The propensity to keep doing what individuals are currently doing is known as behavioural inertia. People, like Newton's first rule of physics, which states that an item in motion will remain in that condition until acted on by an outside force, tend to persevere in their conduct until a big intervention occurs.

Besides, Malaysian Chinese would burn the joss sticks and joss paper to show their respects to ancestors during Ching Ming festival, by adopting online technologies and new bereavement service concept, these burning procedures are no longer be needed, so it could overcome the existing air pollution problem.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

There are few limitations which might affect the findings of the researcher. Firstly, the researcher had limited ability to gain access to the geographic scope of Malaysian Chinese in different states for collecting their opinion.

Secondly, the sample size in the study is too small to discover significant relationships in the data when compared to the population of Malaysian Chinese. For quantitative research usually need a bigger sample size to verify that the sample is representative of the population and that the statistical result can be applied to a wider group.

The literature review for the study is based on citing and referencing earlier research studies, and these prior studies give the theoretical underpinnings for the research issue the researcher is exploring. Prior research studies that are relevant to the study are restricted based on the research topic.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher of the study would recommend the researchers who are interested in this field to adopt a combination of quantitative and qualitative research method. Qualitative research method could assist the future researcher to gather the data which unable to discover by quantitative surveys. Besides, the researchers could adopt quantitative method to evaluate the hypotheses from qualitative journals.

The researchers may gather the opinions of Chinese from different states in Malaysia or different countries so the research could be more comprehensive and get accurate research data.

Furthermore, the researchers could conduct face-to-face interview with the selected respondents in order to collect comprehensive opinion and could have deeper investigating through the interview.

Besides, the researchers may do deeper research on the "Mobile Crematorium" which studied by Decker Junior. The service is not existed in Malaysia bereavement industry yet, the future researcher would investigate about whether this modern bereavement service is suitable in the bereavement industry Malaysian or not.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

**How do Online Sales Affect the Transformation of the Traditional
Bereavement Service Industry during the COVID-19 Pandemic?**

Good day to all respondents,

My name is Tan Yen Thong, a final year student from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) and I am currently pursuing Bachelor of International Business (HONOURS). I am conducting a survey on a study on “How do online sales affect the transformation of the traditional bereavement service industry during the Covid-19 pandemic?”.

It’s my honour to receive your responses and kindly answer all the questions as honestly as possible in each section. All responses are highly appreciated and collected for academic research purposes and will be kept strictly confidential.

Estimated time for completion: 5-10 mins

Thanks for your time and cooperation!

Best regards,

Principal researcher

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Supervisor

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Section A: Demography and General information (10 questions)

Please choose the most relevant answer, each question should have ONLY ONE answer.

Q1. Gender

- Male
- Female

Q2. Age

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or above

Q3. Current States

- W.P. Kuala Lumpur
- W.P. Putrajaya
- Selangor
- W.P Labuan
- Johor
- Melaka
- Pulau Pinang
- Terengganu
- Negeri Sembilan
- Perlis
- Sarawak
- Sabah
- Perak
- Pahang
- Kedah
- Kelantan

Q4. Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

Q5: Occupation

- Government servant
- Private sector employee
- Entrepreneur
- Charity organization employee
- Student
- Others:

Q6: Monthly Income

- Less than RM 2,500
- RM 2,501 to RM 5,000
- RM 5,001 to RM 7,500
- RM 7,501 to RM 10,000
- Above RM 10,000

Q7. Place of origin/Native land/Dialect (Chinese Malaysian) (籍贯/方言)

- Hokkien (福建)
- Kwong Dong/Cantonese (广东)
- Hakka (客家)
- Teochew (潮州)
- Foochow (福州)
- Hainan (海南)
- Kwongsai (广西)
- Others:

Q8. Which bereavement service brand/company/Associations in Malaysia that you have heard of before?

- Nirvana Group (富贵集团)
- Xiao En Centre (孝恩集团)
- Chao Ling Group (朝陵集团)
- Hokkien Association (福建会馆)
- Kwong Dong Association (广东会馆)
- KwangSi Association (广西会馆)
- Others:

Q9. What is the main reason that motivate you to search for the bereavement service?

- Any of the family members are seriously ill.
- Any of the family members passed away.
- Any of your relatives or friends need the information of bereavement service.
- Others:

Q10. What is the channel for you to know/receive the information of the bereavement service?

- Agent/Contractor in bereavement service industry
- Relatives and friends
- Internet searching
- Social Medias (e.g., Facebook, etc.)
- Newspaper/magazines
- TV media
- Others:

Section B: Independent Variables

Please rate the questions below and answer them by selecting the most appropriate option for each part.

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5

I am familiar with the general information of the traditional bereavement Associations (e.g., Hokkien Associations, Kwong Dong Associations, etc.) in Malaysia.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the traditional bereavement industry is charitable Associations.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the detail information (e.g., price, environment, etc.) of traditional Malaysian bereavement Associations are too difficult to search online.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I prefer burial plot or cremation service. (Traditional bereavement service)						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I prefer green/eco burial, without having a grave. (Modern bereavement service)						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the traditional online service system for the bereavement industry is immature.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the service model of the traditional bereavement industry is outdated, with complicated process, and so on.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

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I would prefer the commercial and modern bereavement industry (e.g., Nirvana Group, Xiao En Centre, etc.) rather than the traditional bereavement industry.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think that the traditional bereavement industry could not fully meet my funeral requirements.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the price provided by the traditional bereavement industry will be affordable.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think that the environment in the cemetery area in the traditional bereavement industry is poor.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

During the Covid 19 pandemic, my relatives/friends had increased the needs for bereavement service.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

During the Covid 19 pandemic, I think the traditional bereavement industry could develop online platforms to let the public who need the service to check and compare prices, environment, etc.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

During the Covid 19 pandemic, I could provide comments or reviews through the online platforms for the traditional bereavement industry.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the Chinese community will become the main beneficiary of the traditional bereavement industry after the online transformation.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

Section C: Dependent Variable

Please rate the questions below and answer them by selecting the most appropriate option for each part.

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5

I think the management staff was polite and helpful.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the traditional bereavement industry needs digital transform.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I like the nature environment in the cemetery areas.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the traditional bereavement industry should improve more in their products or service, such as developing green/eco burial service.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I prefer the bereavement service industry which is easy to search or could provide online communication channels.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I would share the latest information of the traditional bereavement service with my relatives/friends.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I faced difficulties on getting the SOP information from the traditional bereavement industry during the movement control order period.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

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During the Covid 19 pandemic, I faced financial difficulties so the traditional bereavement industry could be an affordable bereavement service option.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think an online platform for the bereavement industry could help to develop a more convenient and efficient service model.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the traditional bereavement service industry could establish a modern funeral ritual system that respects tradition and conforms to the trend of the times.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the traditional bereavement industry should develop network management affairs.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the cemetery in the traditional bereavement industry is disorderly, and it is difficult to find the relevant burial plot during the Ching Ming Festival or the worship day.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I think the beautification of the traditional bereavement cemetery and the improvement of facilities in recent years are some evidences that they are adapting to the new era.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

I will have more confidence in the traditional bereavement industry after the online transformation because the products/service/operations could be transparent.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

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I think the traditional bereavement industry could provide flexible and diverse religious bereavement service during the Covid 19 pandemic.						
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree