

Carnival Corporation & PLC

*How will Carnival continue to provide
extraordinary vacations & exceptional value
for everyone beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic?*



Market Research Proposal

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Executive Summary

Carnival is a leading multinational cruise company. Carnival hosts close to 13 million cruisers annually. It offers a wide selection of holiday packages with a variety of recreational activities for millions of cruisers. The cruise industry was badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Thereafter, cruise operations were forced to suspend globally in March 2020. Moreover, the COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak on the Diamond Princess and several other cruise incidents might leave everyone with a pessimistic perspective towards cruising.

In this proposal, we aim to find the explanatory variables and measure the extent of the change in perceptions of cruising since the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, and whether it varies across demographic groups. Furthermore, we want to thoroughly understand the degree of concern among cruisers of Carnival about how "safe" it is to go cruising in future, especially those who are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Thereafter, we will investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing strategies that could be adopted by Carnival to address those concerns. Additionally, we want to study the attributes of cruises that impact the decision making of the non-cruisers to attract them to go cruising once it is permitted.

Due to limitations of this study, we will conduct a cross-sectional study and focus mainly on the quantitative-based research objectives (ROs). We will employ causal and exploratory research design and use quantitative and qualitative techniques for each type of design respectively. Our target population is cruisers and non-cruisers of Carnival who are 18 years old and above. We will conduct both the surveys and focus groups online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data will predominantly be collected from the primary sources through questionnaires. We have selected Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, Analysis of Variance, Chi-Square Test, Paired T-test and Discriminant Analysis to analyse the data. We will use stratified sampling and simple random sampling for the first and second stages of the sampling process respectively. Potential respondents will be stratified on two characteristics, which are the region of residence and if they are cruisers or non-cruisers. We intend to survey at least 2000 cruisers and 1000 non-cruisers. Schedule and Costing will be provided towards the end of the proposal and further recommendations are given as well.

There is a saying "If you hit rock bottom, the only way to go is up." Even though the cruise industry faced a significant financial impact on their revenues due to closure and low demand for cruising in 2020, the resumption of cruises have indicated a positive outlook for the cruise operators in 2021. Thus, with some adaptations to the current situation and brand new activities and upgrades to the attributes of cruises will certainly attract even more cruisers in future.

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List of Abbreviations

RA(s)	Research Aim(s)
RQ(s)	Research Question(s)
RO(s)	Research Objective(s)
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
MDA	Multiple Discriminant Analysis

1.

1 Introduction

1.1 About Carnival

Carnival is a leading multinational cruise company. It has several global cruise line brands, such as Carnival Cruise Line and Princess Cruises. Carnival hosts close to 13 million cruisers annually, which is about half of the entire cruise industry. It offers a wide selection of holiday packages with a variety of recreational activities for millions of cruisers coming from diverse backgrounds, cultures and languages. (Carnival Corporation & plc, 2021)

1.2 The Global Cruise Industry Crisis

2020 was badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cruise industry was no exception. Many might have heard of the COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak on the Diamond Princess. Thereafter, cruise operations were forced to suspend globally in March 2020.

Since then, there were enhanced measures and new protocols in place to ensure the safety and wellness of all the passengers on the cruise ships. Resumption of cruising has progressively started in some countries. (Cruising.org, 2021)

Nonetheless, news of onboard passengers contracting COVID-19 continues to surface in the news, which might leave everyone with a pessimistic perspective towards cruising due to negative bias.

1.3 Research Aims (RAs)

Through the client brief, we have come up with four key RAs that will address the current challenges effectively.

1. **RA1: We want to measure the extent of the change in perceptions of cruising since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether it varies across demographic groups.**
2. **RA2: We want to thoroughly understand the degree of concern among cruisers of Carnival about how "safe" it is to go cruising in future.**
3. **RA3: We want to explore and experiment the marketing strategies that could be implemented by Carnival to alleviate any of the safety concerns.**
4. **RA4: We want to influence non-cruisers to reconsider cruising for their next vacation when travelling abroad is allowed.**

1.4 Research Questions (RQs) & Research Objectives (ROs)

For the purpose of addressing the RAs, we propose the following RQs for each RA.

For RA1,

- ❑ **RQ1: Does everyone feel the same about cruising currently and before the pandemic?**

We will distinguish the factors that can significantly impact the change in perceptions of cruising. Then, evaluate the strength of the relationship between the significant explanatory variables and the change in perceptions of cruising.

To address RQ1, we propose the following RO:

- **RO1: We want to determine the variables that have caused the change in perceptions across demographic groups.**

For RA2,

- ❑ **RQ2.1: How much does personal preferences impact the degree of concern over the safety aspects of cruising?**
- ❑ **RQ2.2: To what extent does safety measures implemented by Carnival have an effect on the level of concern about how “safe” it is to go on a cruise trip?**

To thoroughly understand the cruisers’ degree of concern over the safety aspects of cruising, we need to identify the reasons that are hindering them from going on a cruise trip in future. We reckon that there might be 2 types of reasons — personal and external reasons. Hence, we can determine the extent of concern for each type of reason. With that information, we can do market segmentation and targeting.

To address RQ2, we propose the following ROs:

- **RO2.1: We want to determine if the degree of concern over the safety aspects of cruising is different across the age groups and people with underlying medical conditions.**
- **RO2.2: We want to establish if the number of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests before and during the cruise trip has an effect on the level of concern about how “safe” it is to go on a cruise trip.**

For RA3,

- ❑ **RQ 3.1: What are the possible marketing strategies that Carnival can adopt to address any concerns?**
- ❑ **RQ 3.2 : Is proper education of how Carnival has stepped up their safety measures and protocols for cruising. an effective marketing strategy?**

RQ3.1 seeks to explore any plausible marketing strategies that can effectively address the concerns regarding cruising. Thereafter, we will measure the potential success of each strategy and select the top few strategies to be adopted. Furthermore, we suspect that many cruisers are unaware of the improved precautionary measures and emergency protocols implemented by Carnival. Hence, RQ3.2 allows us to verify if cruisers' increased awareness of the cruise safety measures and protocols will successfully boost the perception of cruising.

To address RQ3, we propose the following ROs:

- **RO3.1: We want to identify all the possible marketing strategies that Carnival can adopt to address all the concerns that their customers have.**
- **RO3.2: We want to evaluate the effectiveness of proper education of how Carnival has stepped up their safety measures and protocols for cruising.**

Lastly, for RA4,

- ❑ **RQ4: Is there a contrast in the features of cruises that attracts the cruisers and non-cruisers?**

We want to investigate the attributes of cruises that impact the decision making of the cruisers and non-cruisers. Thus, we want to investigate the degree of interest in various features of cruise ships for both groups and identify the features of cruise ships that appeal to each group.

To address RQ4, we propose the following RO:

- **RO4: We want to assess the significance of different features of cruises that impacts the decision making of the cruisers and non-cruisers.**

1.5 Intended Outcomes

In order to achieve all the RAs, we hope to accomplish the following outcomes:

- 1. To segment people into groups based on their change in perceptions of cruising so that we can do selective marketing.**
- 2. To fully understand the degree of concern over the safety aspects of cruising and determine the top five marketing strategies to implement to overcome the concerns.**
- 3. To identify the areas of interest of the non-cruisers such that we can improve the features of cruise ships to attract them.**

Thus, we will be using exploratory research design for RO3.1 and causal research design for the rest.

1.6 Scope of Research Proposal

This research proposal is developed upon the main RAs derived from the client brief by Carnival. The proposed RQs are sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes based on the RAs. However, due to limitations of this project, only quantitative-based RO will be studied comprehensively.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Approach

As mentioned in the intended outcomes above, we will be employing causal and exploratory research in this study. To carry out all the ROs, we have to perform an inductive approach for RO3.1 and deductive approach for every other ROs. Apart from RO3.1, we need to test the hypothesis for each of the RO based on the respective ROs and RQs. Our target population is cruisers and non-cruisers of Carnival who are 18 years old and above.

2.2 Research Techniques

We use quantitative and qualitative techniques for causal and exploratory design respectively. All ROs except RO3.1 will be tackled using the quantitative approach. Since COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing and some countries are still in lockdown, both the surveys and focus groups will be conducted online.

We propose online surveys as the main technique. We want to survey cruisers and non-cruisers globally and with the pandemic still ongoing, **online surveys are the most preferred way**. Moreover, as sensitive information such as age and education level are required, online surveys can eliminate interviewer bias and encourage honest response, which can raise the response quality. Online survey is the fastest and most cost-effective way of generating required data given the large sample size and the global outreach. We understand that the internet may not be available to everyone, but our target population are cruisers and prospective cruisers who have the means to spend on internet access. We will be providing incentives of paypal credits and Carnival cruise vouchers to increase the response rate and quality. The survey will also be available in multiple languages.

As for RO3.1, we propose an online focus group, which will be conducted after the online surveys, so that we can perform data analysis and select the participants that we are interested to investigate. Thereafter, willing participants will be invited to participate in the discussion. A Carnival cruise representative will join in the discussion to provide a clear explanation of the improved precautionary measures and emergency protocols implemented. Considering the budget and

geographical spread, about twenty focus groups of two hours each with ten participants excluding moderator will be conducted.

From the next section onwards, only information regarding quantitative techniques will be discussed.

2.3 Time Horizons

Cross-sectional studies are conducted when there is a limit of time and resources. (Research methodology, 2021) Due to the time frame of three months to perform the research, **a cross-sectional study is more appropriate**. Conversely, longitudinal study can lead to selective attrition, which is defined as the likelihood of some participants quitting a study is higher than other participants. (Cherry, 2021) When some participants leave the study earlier, the final group of participants cannot be used to represent the original sample group, so the results cannot be generalized to a larger population. This poses a threat to the validity of the study as there is an underrepresentation of certain groups of participants. Hence, **longitudinal study is discouraged**.

2.4 Data Collection

Data will predominantly be collected from the primary sources through questionnaires. We will not be using any secondary sources in this project because the last global pandemic that was worse or as bad as COVID-19 pandemic was the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic (Chen, 2020) and the idea of cruising only began in the 1960s. (Leppert, 2021) Thus, this suggests that none of the secondary sources will be accurate, reliable and specific to the needs of this market research.

Nonetheless, with the given budget, we are confident that we can collect a comprehensive set of data required for the necessary analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

We have selected five statistical techniques to analyse the data collected. Every statistical technique is carefully selected to optimize its potential to address the respective RO extensively, as shown below.

RO	Statistical Techniques
RO1	Multiple Linear Regression Analysis
RO2.1	Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
RO2.2	Chi-Square Test of Association
RO3.1	Not applicable
RO3.2	Paired T-test
RO4	Multiple Discriminant Analysis (MDA)

Table 1: Statistical Technique used for each RO

3 Data Collection

3.1 Data Required

For Demographic Variables,

Variable	Data Level
Gender	Nominal, Ratio
Age	Interval
Region of Residence	Nominal, Ratio
Annual Household Income (In Pounds)	Interval
Number of Children	Interval

Table 2: Demographic Variables

For Variables from the Questionnaire,

Variable	Data Level
Perception of safety aspects of cruising	Interval
Level of concern towards the safety aspects of cruising	Ordinal, Ratio
Change in perceptions towards cruising	Interval
Has underlying medical conditions	Nominal, Ratio
If the respondent is over 60 years old or not	Nominal, Ratio
Number of COVID-19 cases in their country of residence	Interval
Number of lockdowns in their country of residence	Interval
Number of PCR tests before and during the cruise trip	Ordinal, Ratio
Ratings of how appealing the features of cruise ships are. (Features such as Bars and Dining , Live Entertainment, Pools , Casinos , Waterparks and Rooms and Suites.)	Interval

Table 3: Variables from the Questionnaire

3.2 Sampling Design

We propose a two-stage sampling process. We will be using **stratified sampling and simple random sampling** for the first and second stages respectively.

Potential respondents will be stratified on two characteristics, which are the region of residence and if they are cruisers or non-cruisers. (Thomas, 2020) A detailed idea will be shown below.

Characteristics	Strata	Groups
Cruiser or non-cruiser?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cruiser • Non-cruiser 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asia Cruisers 2. Asia Non-Cruisers 3. Africa Cruisers 4. Africa Non-Cruisers 5. Europe Cruisers 6. Europe Non-Cruisers 7. Northern America Cruisers 8. Northern America Non-Cruisers 9. Latin America and the Caribbean Cruisers 10. Latin America and the Caribbean Non-Cruisers 11. Oceania Cruisers 12. Oceania Non-Cruisers
Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia • Africa • Europe • Northern America • Latin America and the Caribbean • Oceania 	

Table 4: Stratified Sampling Design

The reason why they are splitted in this way is because the COVID-19 pandemic situation varies globally and the situation in their region or country might shape their perceptions towards cruising. Their culture and background might influence their perceptions as well.

We intend to survey at least 2000 cruisers and 1000 non-cruisers to achieve a large sample size so that it can be used to reflect the original population size. Therefore, based on weights¹ of each group, they will be chosen randomly using simple random sampling. This is to reduce biases during sampling and improve survey results.

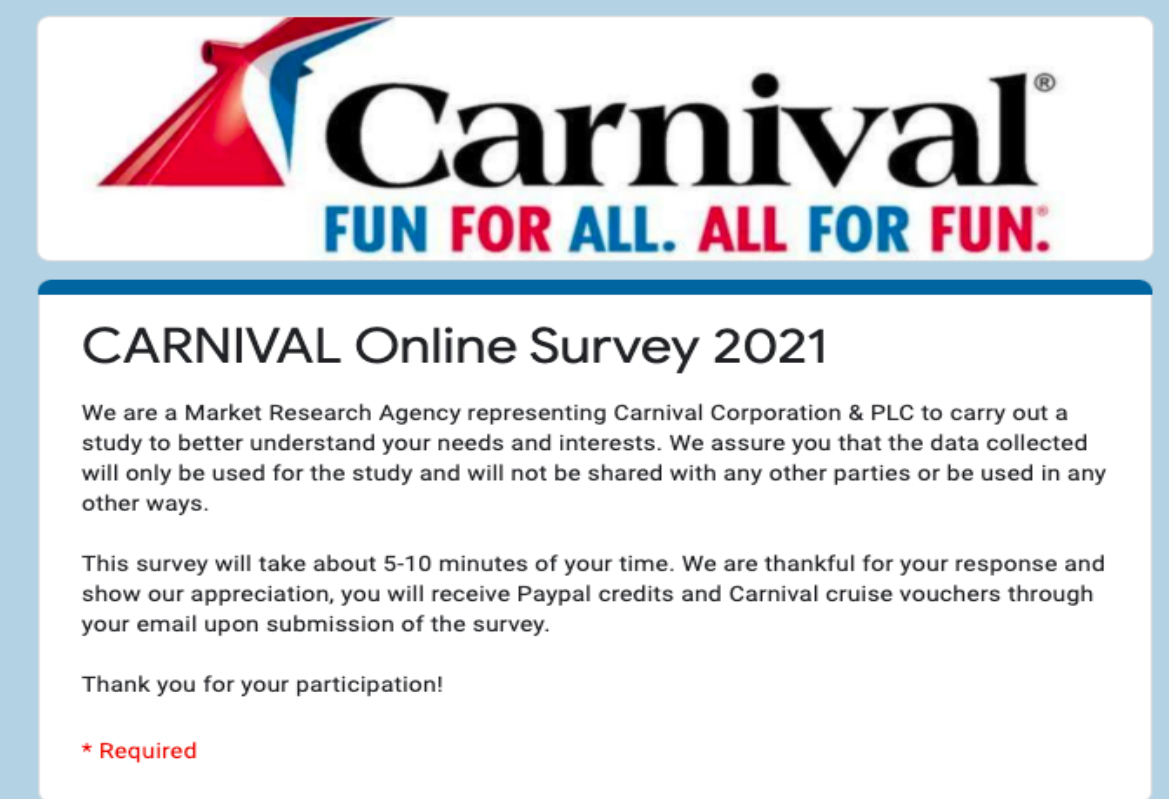
¹ Data obtained from <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-region/>
Refers to the "Regions in the world by population (2021)" Table and "World Share" column.

3.3 Questionnaire Design

We have used Google Forms to build an online survey.

This is the link to the online survey: <https://forms.gle/caFTgtYfWyZn6HZm7>

Alternatively, pictures of the online survey are shown below.



The image shows a screenshot of a Google Form titled "CARNIVAL Online Survey 2021". At the top, there is the Carnival logo, which consists of a stylized red and blue funnel shape next to the word "Carnival" in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the logo, the tagline "FUN FOR ALL. ALL FOR FUN." is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font, with "FUN" in blue and "FOR ALL. ALL FOR FUN." in red. The main title of the form is "CARNIVAL Online Survey 2021" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: "We are a Market Research Agency representing Carnival Corporation & PLC to carry out a study to better understand your needs and interests. We assure you that the data collected will only be used for the study and will not be shared with any other parties or be used in any other ways." This is followed by another paragraph: "This survey will take about 5-10 minutes of your time. We are thankful for your response and show our appreciation, you will receive Paypal credits and Carnival cruise vouchers through your email upon submission of the survey." Below this, there is a line of text: "Thank you for your participation!". At the bottom left, there is a red asterisk followed by the word "Required".

Carnival
FUN FOR ALL. ALL FOR FUN.

CARNIVAL Online Survey 2021

We are a Market Research Agency representing Carnival Corporation & PLC to carry out a study to better understand your needs and interests. We assure you that the data collected will only be used for the study and will not be shared with any other parties or be used in any other ways.

This survey will take about 5-10 minutes of your time. We are thankful for your response and show our appreciation, you will receive Paypal credits and Carnival cruise vouchers through your email upon submission of the survey.

Thank you for your participation!

* Required

Will you be interested to attend an online focus group? Upon completion, Paypal credits and Carnival cruise vouchers will be given. *

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your email address? *

Your answer _____

Gender *

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Other: _____

Age (as of 2021) *

Your answer

Which region are you residing in? (as of 2021) *

- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ Northern America
- ☐ Latin America and the Caribbean
- ☐ Oceania

How many children do you have? *

Your answer

Annual Household Income (In pounds) *

Your answer

Do you have any underlying medical conditions? (ie. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer) *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other: _____

Live Entertainment *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not appealing at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very appealing

Pools *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not appealing at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very appealing

Casinos *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not appealing at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very appealing

Waterparks *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not appealing at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very appealing

Rooms and Suites *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not appealing at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very appealing

Have you gone cruising with Carnival before? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Only for Cruisers

What is the extent of CHANGE in perception of cruising since the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
No change at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	100% change

Given that there is 1 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test 48 to 72 hours prior to the cruise trip, what is the level of safety concern you would have? *

- ☐ High
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Low

Given that there are 1 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test 14 days before and 1 PCR test 48 to 72 hours prior to the cruise trip, is cruising safe? *

- ☐ High
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Low

Given that there are 1 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test 14 days before, 1 PCR test 48 to 72 hours prior to the cruise trip and 1 PCR test for each morning on the cruise, is cruising safe? *

- ☐ High
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Low

Submit

4 Data Analysis

All Hypothesis Tests are done at **5% significance level using SPSS**. H_0 is rejected if p-value < 0.05 .

Legend	Description
H_0	Null Hypothesis
H_1	Alternative Hypothesis
X	Independent Variable
Y	Dependent Variable

Table 5: Legends for Hypothesis Tests

4.1 Research Objective 1 (MLR)

Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) is suitable because we need to consider various demographic variables.

H_0	None of the demographic variables is significant in estimating Y
H_1	At least one demographic variables is significant in estimating Y
X	All the variables in Table 2
Y	Change in perceptions towards cruising

We use F-test to test the overall significance of the model and use adjusted R^2 to check the overall fit of the model. If H_0 is rejected, we can conclude that some Xs are significant in estimating Y. Then, we can use T-test to test the individual significance of the Xs.

Let μ be the coefficient of the particular X.

H_0	$\mu = 0$ (insignificant)
H_1	$\mu \neq 0$ (significant)
X	One of the variables in Table 2 (Test one variable at a time)
Y	Change in perceptions towards cruising

Furthermore, we can use T-test to test the individual significance of the Xs. If for any test, the H_0 is rejected, we can conclude that the particular X is significant in estimating Y.

4.2 Research Objective 2.1 (Two-way ANOVA)

We will be doing three F-tests, as shown below.

Test	1	2	3 (Interaction)
H_0	X does not change the mean of Y.		There is no interaction between the Xs on the mean of Y.
H_1	X changes the mean of Y.		There is an interaction between the Xs on the mean of Y.
X	Are they over 60 years old?	Do they have any underlying medical conditions?	1. Are they over 60 years old? 2. Do they have any underlying medical conditions?
Y	Perception of safety aspects of cruising		

If H_0 is rejected:

- For Test 1, we can conclude that those over 60 years old are more concerned.
- For Test 2, we can conclude that those with underlying medical conditions are more concerned.
-

- For Test 3, which is the test for interaction effects, we can conclude that those who are over 60 years old tend to have underlying medical conditions and they are more concerned. In this case, even though we concluded in Test 1 whether they are over 60 years old or not affects Y, we should ignore the effect of that factor.

4.3 Research Objective 2.2 (Chi-Square Test of Association)

We will be using Pearson's Chi-Square Test of Association here.

H_0	There is no association between X and Y.
H_1	There is an association between X and Y.
X	Number of PCR tests before and during the cruise trip
Y	Level of concern towards the safety aspects of cruising

A cross tabulation of X and Y was conducted using contingency tables. If the "Pearson Chi-Square" gives a Asymptotic Significance of <0.05 or the p-value is <0.05, H_0 is rejected, so we can conclude that there is an association between X and Y.

4.4 Research Objective 3.1 (Focus Group)

We use a constant sum scale to determine the most popular marketing strategies. We will investigate and verify the root cause of why respondents would prefer these marketing strategies. Furthermore, we can also find out what types of marketing strategies that might fail to avoid adopting those strategies. Detailed information will be recorded, processed and presented.

4.5 Research Objective 3.2 (Paired T-test)

The safety concern ratings are taken before and after educating cruisers on the newly implemented measures and using SPSS, we test for the following:

Let μ_c be the change in perspective of the safety aspects of cruising.

H_0	After undergoing the proper education of how Carnival has stepped up their safety measures and protocols for cruising, $\mu_c = 0$ (no change)
H_1	After undergoing the proper education of how Carnival has stepped up their safety measures and protocols for cruising, $\mu_c \neq 0$ (has changes)
X	Safety concern ratings towards cruising (Before)
Y	Safety concern ratings towards cruising (After)

The rejection of H_0 allows us to conclude that increasing awareness of the safety measures that Carnival cruises have adopted can significantly reduce safety concerns. Since the sample size is large, we assume that the data are normally distributed.

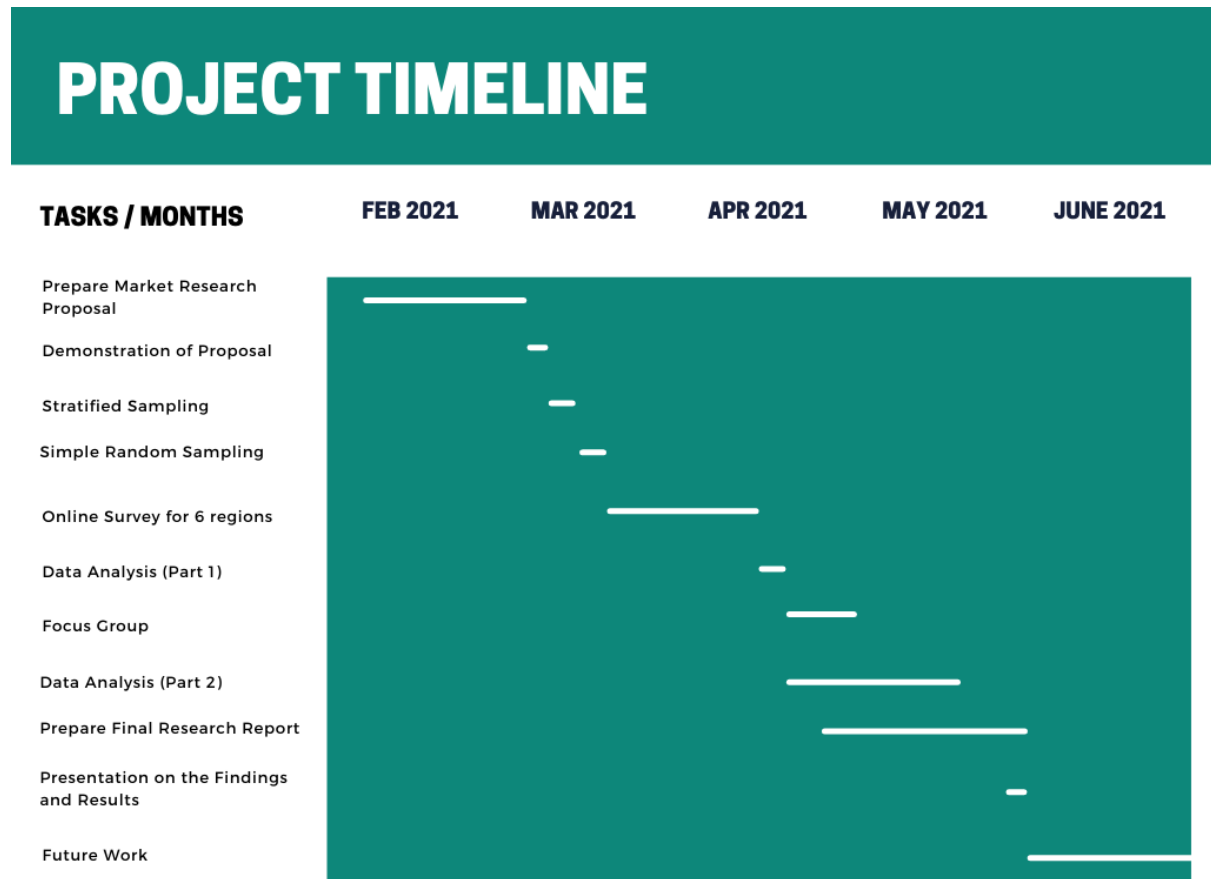
4.6 Research Objective 4 (MDA)

We run the test on SPSS. The independent variables are ratings of how appealing the features of cruise ships are (Refer to Table 3) and the dependent variable is whether the survey respondent is a cruiser or non-cruiser.

Using the “Tests of Equality of Group Means” table, under the “Sig.” column, if the value is <0.05 , the independent variable of that row is significant. The smaller the Wilks's lambda, the more important the independent variable to the discriminant function. We can then generate the potential functions using the coefficients from the “Canonical Discriminant Functions Coefficients” table. Using the “Classification Results” table, the results would provide insights on the features of cruise ships that are more appealing to the non-cruisers.

5 Schedule and Costing

5.1 Project Timeline (Gantt Chart)



5.2 Costing

Description	Cost
Data Collection	£200,000
Data Analysis	£100,000
Consulting & Reporting	£50,000
Research Design	£50,000
Administrative	£30,000
Miscellaneous	£20,000
20% Value Added Tax (VAT)	£90,000
Total	£540,000

Table 6: Breakdown of our best Offer Price

6 Future Work

6.1 Recommendations

Due to the time constraint, there is some additional work we have to forgo in order to complete the study in time. However, if Carnival wishes to further work on this study, we have some recommendations.

1. Conduct another focus group with only the non-cruisers to verify the features of cruise ships to improve on.
2. Features of the cruise ships may not be the only reason, factors such as discounts and services may be important too.
3. Validate the marketing strategies by getting customers to pre-order cruising tickets.

7 References & Appendix

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