**Conference Participation Study during the Pandemic**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Chenwei Zhang from Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. The purpose of this study is to explore the format of future academic conferences by comparing scholars’ perceptions on two formats of the academic conferences—offline and online. You will be invited to fill out the online survey to give your opinion on your previous experience of attending both offline and online academic conferences. The survey would only take you about 15 to 20 minutes to complete, and you can choose to terminate the survey at any time without negative consequences. I would like to stress that all information collected will remain strictly confidential. Individual details will not be disclosed or identifiable from this survey. No personal identifiers will be collected, except for the email address, which the participant could provide in a voluntary base for a potential return visit. Data including personal information will be erased within three years after publication of first paper. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact Chenwei Zhang at chwzhang@hku.hk. If you want to know more about the rights as a research participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee, the University of Hong Kong (+852-2241-5267).

*Notes*:

1. The conferences discussed in this research are academic conferences with submission requirements. Therefore, seminars and exchange discussions between scholars are not within the scope of this research. The required submissions may include but not limited to abstracts, short and long articles, essays, reports, workshops, and posters.
2. Please answer the following questions recalling the experience of participating in online academic conferences in 2020 and offline academic conferences before 2020.
3. **A. Pre-investigate questions**
4. **Please choose one option.**

□I understand the procedures described above and agree to participate in this study.

□I want to stop here.

1. **What is the most recent academic conference? How many people do you estimate that have attended the conference?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Conference Name | Number of Participants |
| a |  | □10-99 □100-499 □500-999 □1000 and above |
| b |  | □10-99 □100-499 □500-999 □1000 and above |
| c |  | □10-99 □100-499 □500-999 □1000 and above |
| d |  | □10-99 □100-499 □500-999 □1000 and above |
| e |  | □10-99 □100-499 □500-999 □1000 and above |

1. **What roles have you played in the conference? (*Multiple choice*)**

□Conference organizer / Volunteer □Session chair / Moderator □Experts / Invited speakers □Presenter (Presenting the submissions) □Audience □Others: (Please fill in)

B. **Survey items**

1. Please compare the differences between offline conferences and online conferences.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | | 1: strongly disagree; 7: strongly agree | |
| *Offline conferences* | *Online conferences* |
| 1 | I easily meet acquaintances in this format of conferences (I know that he/she attends and meets or communicate with them). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2 | This format of conference provides me with additional social opportunities (Such as a dinner after an offline conference, a break, or group communication in an online conference). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3 | The environment provided by this format of conferences helps me meet other scholars or new friends and expand my social circle. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4 | In this format of conferences, seeing the name card and the person at the same time increases my chances of meeting new people. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5 | I maintain confidence in this format of the conference. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6 | I don’t feel stressed or anxious, even if I sometimes need to communicate in a non-native language. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7 | This format of the conference has a relaxed atmosphere and helps me bring up any topics of interest. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8 | In this format of the conference, I dare to speak and ask questions, without being affected by social status and academic authority. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 9 | If classmates/colleagues participate in the same conference as me, we will share our experience about participation during or after the conference. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10 | I can fully interact with other scholars in this format of the conference. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 11 | I think it is more efficient to communicate with people in this format of the conference (I can answer or ask more questions, get or give more answers). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 12 | When I share knowledge in this format of the conference, I can get ample responses or feedback. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 13 | I can get inspiration for research problems or ideas for solving problems in the discussions during this format of the conference. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 14 | Participating in this format of the conference can improve my skills and increase my knowledge. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 15 | Participating in this format of the conference allows me to understand or enter the relevant academic community. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 16 | It’s convenient for me to attend this format of the conference, so I don’t need to make a special schedule arrangement. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 17 | There is no financial problem for me to participate in this format of the conference. Travel expenses and registration fees can be reimbursed by the relevant departments, or I am fully capable of paying. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 18 | Time management in this format of the conference is simple; I can easily arrange activities such as listening to lectures and communicating with other scholars. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

6. Please rate the following feature descriptions of offline conferences.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | | 1: strongly disagree; 7: strongly agree |
| 1 | Before participating in the conference, I will decide whether to participate in the conference based on whether the conference place is safe, whether I can obtain a visa, whether I have visited the conference place before, how easy it is to process the application materials, whether it is fun, etc. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2 | Choosing the right place will increase my satisfaction with offline conferences. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3 | I have seen or used additional benefits such as childcare during the conference. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4 | Souvenirs, group photos, dinners, awards, and other forms of participation recognition make me feel more involved. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5 | If classmates/colleagues and I attend the same conference, we will make the trip together. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

7. Please rate the following description of the characteristics of the online conferences

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | | 1: strongly disagree; 7: strongly agree |
| 1 | Voice-over or other sound interference in the conference has a great impact on my participation. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2 | My network connection for academic conferences is very stable. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3 | I think it will make it easier for me to meet new people if everyone turns on the camera to participate in the conference or turn on the camera at the right time (for example, asking questions). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4 | If the participant log-in name is standardized, I can establish connections with more people. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

C. **Open questions**

1. **Which format of conference do you think more people will attend?**

□Online conferences in 2020 □Offline conferences before 2020

1. **Which format of conference do you think has longer break time?**

□Online conferences □Offline conferences

1. **Do you think the online conference can be organized in a professional way, that is, the arrangement of the online conferences can be hosted by an experienced team?**

□Yes □No

1. **Do you think it is necessary to charge a registration fee for online conferences?**

□Yes □No

1. **If charged, will it bring any obstacle to your participation?**

□Will not bring me any obstacle or I can apply for some funding

□If the registration fee charged for an online conference is 1/4 of that when hosted offline, it will create obstacles for me

□If the registration fee charged for an online conference is 2/4 of that when hosted offline, it will create obstacles for me

□If the registration fee charged for an online conference is 3/4 of that when hosted offline, it will create obstacles for me

□If the registration fee charged for an online conference is the same as that when hosted offline, it will create obstacles for me

1. **Is your institution's financial support for your participation in online and offline conferences the same?**

□Yes

□Not the same, more funding for offline conferences

□Other, please indicate

1. **Which form of academic conference do you prefer?**

□Online academic conferences

□Offline academic conferences

□My attitude towards the two forms is the same

**8. Do you think the epidemic will bring changes to academic exchange activities in the future (when the epidemic is over)?**

□ Yes □ No

**9.** **If you think the epidemic will bring about changes, what kind of changes do you think it might bring?**

1. **How likely do you think online academic conferences will replace offline academic conferences in the future (after the epidemic is over)?**

□ Impossible—Less than 30%

□30%—50%; the current experience is not good so it is impossible

□50%—80%; it is possible, but the current online experience needs to be improved

□80%—100%; completely possible

1. **[Multiple choice] If you think that there is a high probability (more than 50%) that online academic conferences can replace offline academic conferences, what do you think is the absolute advantage of online conferences?**

□The convenience of network technology reduces time costs

□The convenience of network technology reduces financial costs

□Wider academic participation

□Others: (Please fill in)

1. **[Multiple choice] If you think that online academic conferences cannot replace offline academic conferences, what are the factors that make offline conferences irreplaceable?**

□More realistic social environment and cooperation

□A cross-cultural experience

□Others: (Please fill in)

1. **If online academic conferences can improve in areas that you think are currently not good enough (such as establishing a more engaging social environment or interactive methods), how likely do you think online conferences will replace offline conferences (after the epidemic is over)?**

□ Impossible—Less than 30%

□30%—50%; a little possibility

□50%—80%; possible

□80%—100%; completely possible

1. **What do you think will be the format of future academic conferences?**

□Only online is enough

□Only offline is enough

□Synchronize online and offline

1. **If you think that online and offline conferences should be carried out simultaneously, what are the advantages of online and offline conferences that cannot be abandoned? Please list:**

Online conferences: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Offline conferences: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Do you think there is another difference between online conferences and offline conferences? What is it? (Choose any aspects and list the specific differences)**

Communication: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

User experience: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Psychology: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Social: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Professional development: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preparation for participation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Others: (Please fill in) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **So far (as of this moment), which is the most impressive online conference you have participated in, and what are its characteristics?**

Full name of the online conference:

Holding time:

Characteristics:

**C. General questions**

1. **Age: □**18-24 □25-34 □35-44 □45 and over 45
2. **Gender: □**Female □Male
3. **Education：□**Bachelor □Master □Ph.D. □Others: Please fill in

**4. Industry：**

□Finance □Insurance □Telecommunications/Communication □Computer/Internet/E-commerce □Trade/Import & Export □Biology/Pharmaceutical/Medical □Consulting industry (Legal, Financial, Intermediary services) □Education/Training □Media/Publishing □Entertainment/Sports □Non-profit Organization/Government □Cultural Industry □Other Industries: (Please fill in) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Position:**

□Sales □Marketing and Business Development □Engineers □Administrative Staff □Human Resources and Training □Doctors or Medical Staff □Lawyers □Corporate Operations Management/Enterprise Senior Management □Accounting Auditing Staff □Researchers (non-schools) □Customer Service Staff □Institutions/Civil Servants/Government Staff □Teachers (including scientific research staff) □Students □Others: (Please fill in) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*If you select Teachers or students, please fill in subject and department. Otherwise, please continue from question 8.

**6. Subject：**

**7. Department：**

**8. Nation:**

**9. Research area:**

**10. Research experience: □** (0, 2] years **□** (2, 5] years □ (5, 10] years □more than10 years

**11. Email address:**