COVID-19
Epidemic in Hong Kong

Wisers Unveils
"Epidemic Index 3.0" to
Reveal What Netizens Say

WISERS | Advantage Through Intelligence

WISERS AI Lab

Let Big Data Speak:
Wisers Unveils "Epidemic Index 3.0" to
Reveal What Netizens Say

Foreword

In early June, we released our research report "Epidemic Index 2.0". Since then, Hong Kong saw a new wave of ferocious COVID-19 outbreak. Not only did the number of infection cases repeatedly break new record, the epidemic also brought unprecedented level of social and economic repercussion, giving rise to increasingly arduous challenges faced by the Government and people in Hong Kong in relation to governance and livelihood.

With the raging epidemic and public anxiety, how should the voice of Hong Kong people hidden in network big data be deciphered? Under the first two stages of "Epidemic Index", Wisers team analysed for Hong Kong people the impact brought by Government's policies. This time, we are more concerned about the impact brought by the epidemic on people's daily life. We took the lead and made use of analysis on social media big data to explore the impact on seven key life aspects, namely clothing, dining, accommodation, transportation, entertainment, work and study. Public opinions and feelings have also been included, with a view to offering a more comprehensive interpretation and analysis that covers multiple perspectives.

Further to the research conducted under the previous stage, this report included the detection of about 400,000 social media posts, interpreting over 541,000 online messages and scrutinising 81.57 million social media engagement. Through summarising and comparing social media big data, the research team strived to analyse the phased trend of the epidemic in a bid to incorporate into this report the fluctuation in online public opinions over the past four months and public views on the Government's new round of anti-epidemic measures.

With our longstanding roots in Hong Kong, Wisers, like all people in the city, sincerely hopes the epidemic will not come back again, however hard it is to predict the future. Having used our professionalism in summarising the public's fight against the epidemic and deciphering the brewing of public opinions, we hope this report can form an objective and reliable reference for the Government in formulating anti-epidemic policies for the future.

Contents

Research Methods and Spotlights Detected

Research Methods and Spotlights Detected

▌ 1.1 Research Period

From 16 May 2020 to 6 September 2020, Wisers' big data system detected from Hong Kong:

- 396,000 epidemic-related posts (from social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, Twitter, discussion forums and blogs)
- 4.7 million comments left by netizens
- 81.57 million netizen engagement

▌ 1.2 Research System and Directions

This time, the research has applied a variety of Wisers' artificial intelligence technologies including data mining, sentiment analysis, semantic analysis and key hot word discovery. The information was then disassembled by Wisers' professional editorial team to conduct an in-depth analysis. Two research directions include:

1. Wisers Epidemic Index

Consolidated calculation based on "epidemic concern index" and "netizen sentiment index" combined together:

- "Epidemic concern index": It reflected netizens' epidemic-related concern through consolidated data calculation including post volume, post contact volume and netizen engagement. Among them, netizen engagement generally referred to interaction among netizens under epidemic-related posts such as comment, like, share, reaction, among others.

- "Netizen sentiment index": Text analysis was conducted over netizens' posts and comments while making use of Wisers' artificial intelligence system. Different emotions expressed in the text were analysed including happiness, sadness, fear and anger as well as changes under different stages amid the epidemic.

2. Impact from Epidemic on Hong Kong People's Life

We aimed at getting to know how Hong Kong people's life has been hit by the epidemic, which life aspect was the most affected, and the emotional reaction to the related impact. This was achieved through analysing discussion focuses and words used by netizens in their posts and comments in relation to seven key aspects of life covering clothing, dining, accommodation, transportation, entertainment, work and study.

1.3 Spotlights Detected

The following spotlights have been uncovered by Wisers' system after in-depth mining and analysis of tens of thousands of social media big data were conducted by the research team:

Relationship between epidemic and public opinions

- A major characteristic found in online public sentiments over the past four months was the general consistency seen in the trend of heated discussions against the number of new infection cases (please refer to Chapter 2 for details).

- This differed significantly from the discovery from the previous report "Epidemic Index 2.0", where inconsistency was generally seen between the trend of heated discussions and epidemic development. The team found that at that time, topics about anti- epidemic supplies (especially face mask) and border closure were what triggered public sentiments the most. As for the research period covered in this report, consistency was seen between the heated discussions and the number of new infection cases. It showed that epidemic development and Government's anti-epidemic policies were what caused a bigger stir in people's heart.

- As shown in hot word monitoring, netizens were more concerned about epidemic development and Government's anti-epidemic measures that affected local economy and livelihood, in comparison with netizens' major worries in the first half of the year over sales of face mask and other anti-epidemic supplies.

About what Hong Kong people feel

- Further to the discovery about Hong Kong people's sentiment changes reported in "Epidemic Index 2.0", it was found over the past four months that:

  - The most furious, wearisome and saddening day for Hong Kong people was 29 July - the first day of the Government's full-day dine-in ban. Among the three emotions, "fury" was the most overwhelming one.

  - The most saddening period lasted for two days: After the full-day dine-in ban implemented by the Government on 29 July, Tuen Mun saw an infection cluster on 30 July involving a birthday party group. The two incidents pushed the "saddening" emotion to the peak among online public opinions recorded in the research period.

  - The happiest period lasted for two consecutive days: The Government announced on 19 July an infection cluster in Mong Kok involving an evening celebration event for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. On 20 July, many enterprises followed the Government's example and allowed staff to work from home. These were the two days with the happiest sentiment in the research period. With further study made by the research team, it was uncovered that netizens actually used sarcastic remarks when leaving comments about the celebration event for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. For the work from home arrangement on the following day, their happiness was joy, welcoming the idea of working from home to reduce commute time.

Research Methods and Spotlights Detected

- The team further analysed social media data and found that in comparing the "furious", "wearisome" and "saddening" emotions, netizens tended to express "furious" emotion most often in the research period. It showed that "furious" emotion dominated epidemic-related online public opinions in the research period.

About the trend of public opinions

- As a whole, bigger fluctuations were seen in epidemic-related online public opinions in the past four months than those in the first half of 2020. Three stages featuring different spotlights can be classified based on analysis using data calculation model:

  ○ The fourth stage (from 16 May to 28 June): This marked an extension of the last stage (from 19 March to 15 May) from the previous research report "Epidemic Index 2.0". The situation continued with political stand dominating online public discussions;

  ○ The fifth stage (from 29 June to 23 July): Focus was on the third wave of the outbreak;

  ○ The sixth stage (from 24 July to 6 September): Focus was mainly related to Government's anti-epidemic measures including dine-in ban, mandatory face mask wearing and the Universal Community Testing Programme.

How do citizens feel the impact from the epidemic in relation to "clothing, dining, accommodation, transportation, work, study and entertainment"?

- Which aspect of life was the most affected while Hong Kong people continued their fight against the epidemic? As uncovered by Wisers' big data, "transportation" was the most affected life aspect in view of the extent of heated discussions and the sentiment trigger. This aspect covered incidents like the implementation of social distancing rules and cancellation of public activities. In addition, big data found that engagement related to "transportation" ranked at the top compared to other life aspects. In terms of comment sentiments, the negative comment ratio was the highest (75%), while the positive comment ratio was the lowest (15%). In other words, Hong Kong people not only cared about their mobility amid the epidemic, it was also the area which was the most unsatisfactory to them.

- Apart from "transportation", areas related to "clothing" and "entertainment" also saw the highest level of heated discussions:

  ○ "Clothing": Apart from face mask, people cared about appearance and personal hygiene as well;

  ○ "Entertainment": Activities such as outdoor activities, exercises and entertainment were all affected by the epidemic, which triggered heated discussions.

- Apart from "transportation", matters related to "dining" and "work" affected the sentiments of Hong Kong people the most:

  ○ The positive/negative comment ratio for comments related to "dining" was 18:68. People were mainly dissatisfied with the Government's dine-in ban.

- The positive/negative comment ratio for comments related to "work" was 22:71. People were mainly worried about working from home and losing their jobs.

- Among the seven key life aspects, "accommodation" was the least affected and involved the lowest level of heated discussions. Its positive/negative comment ratio was 25:64 and ranked last.

The following included the reading and analysis by Wisers' big data on epidemic-related public opinions in Hong Kong in the past four months.

Chapter 2

Wisers Epidemic Index

2.1 Full Study Period: Summary of Key Points

In mid-May, the epidemic had eased briefly in Hong Kong after the city went through the first two waves of outbreak. The number of new infection cases, however, started surging in early July again with the approach of the third wave of outbreak. In this chapter, we analysed the sentiment fluctuations and changes in epidemic-related public concerns amid the outbreak.

Wisers epidemic concern index trend

Epidemic concern index • Post volume • Engagement
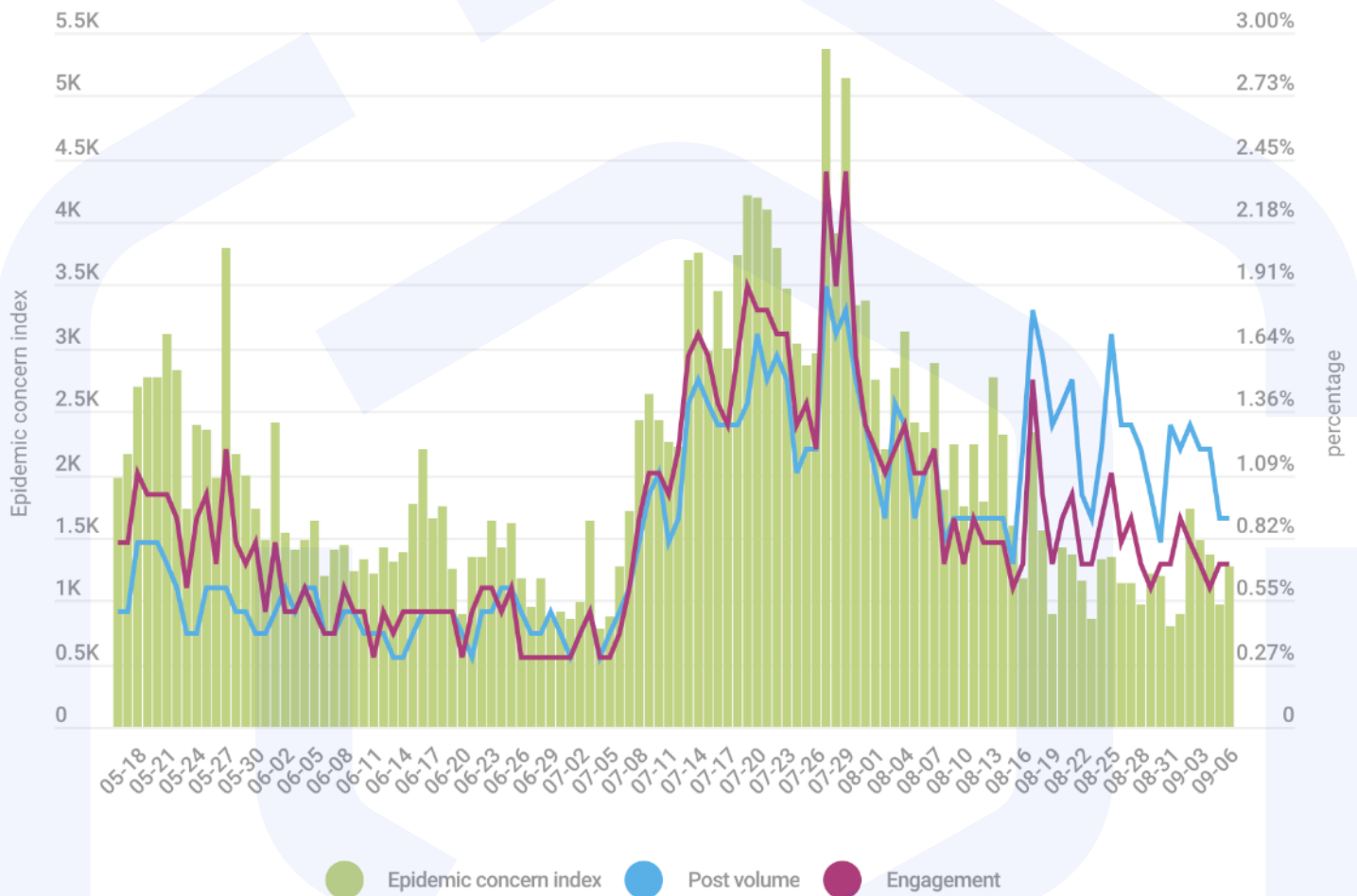
Overall trend analysis

- Further to the first two epidemic reports compiled by Wisers, netizens' epidemic-related concerns and discussions fell gradually while the second wave of outbreak slowed down in mid-April. Online epidemic-related discussions resumed the zest when Hong Kong saw the third wave of outbreak in early July and reached the peak in late July. The overall discussion fervour was, however, not as much as that of the first two waves of the outbreak.

- Regarding the sources of posts in the research period, 85% of epidemic-related posts came from Facebook, the social media platform most frequently used by netizens, followed by discussion forums, which accounted for 5%. Other sources included Instagram, Telegram, Twitter and blogs.

- For the identity of post publishers, netizens were the most important publisher (about 43%) in the research period, followed by media (about 38%) and Internet celebrities and bloggers (about 15%).

2.1 Full Study Period: Summary of Key Points

- The said situation differed from the normal case. According to Wisers team's research experience, media were usually the most active post publisher on the Internet, which may be related to media's work nature and publishing resources. In this study, posts published by netizens accounted for the largest ratio. It reflected netizens' extraordinary concerns over the epidemic in the past four months, triggering active view sharing and discussions among netizens who came from different background.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com   11

2.1 Full Study Period: Summary of Key Points

"The Most Wearisome, Saddening and Furious Day"
29 July: Government Implemented Full-day Dine-in Ban

Weariness index   Happiness index   Sadness index   Fury index
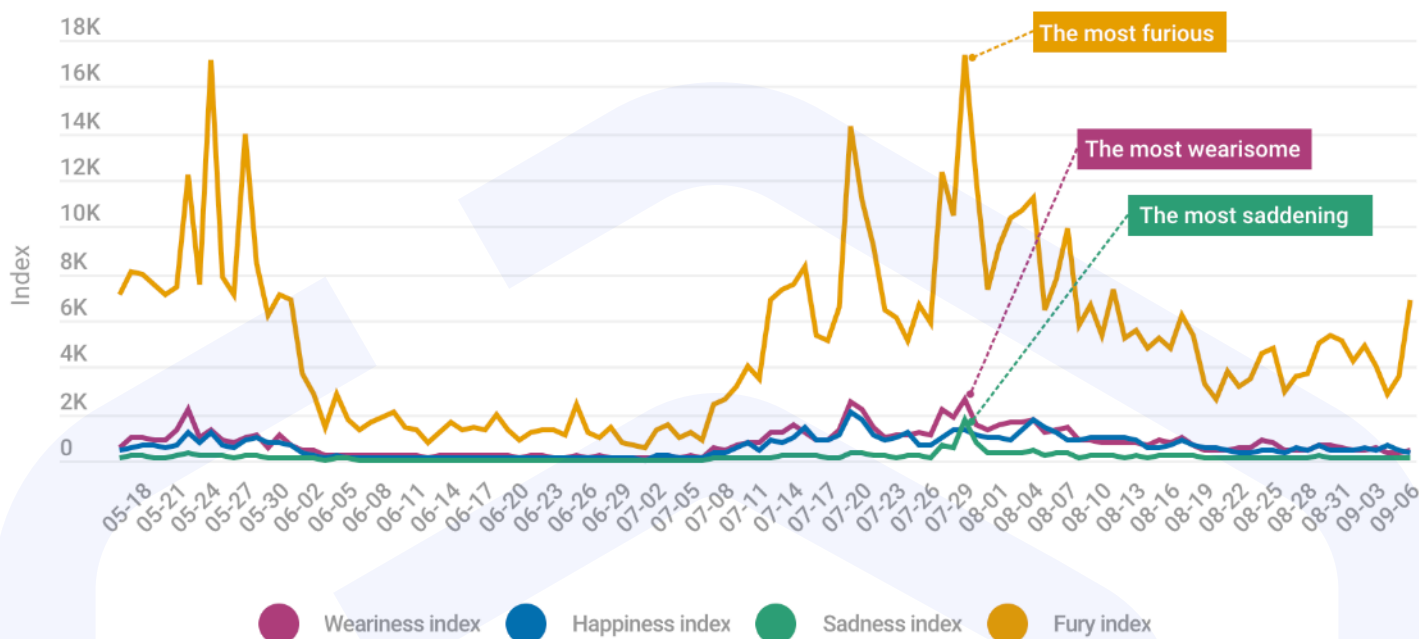
Five most "wearisome" posts

Post	Source
政府明日起開放19個社區中心予市民午膳	香港電台視像新聞 RTHK VNEWS (Facebook)
食飯變成苦難…… 蘋果攝記 攝	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)
咁點解唔開返堂食？//身兼醫生的立法會議員郭家麒斥，小動作反映政府「爛咗」，質疑社區會堂和餐廳同是室內，傳染風險有何分別	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)
可憐市民遍地開餐 立即封關 林鄭回水！29-7-2020	鄺俊宇 (Youtube)
食肆全日禁堂食的措施今日起生效，為了配合新規例，有連鎖食肆在餐枱上擺放「所有座位暫不開放」的告示，甚至圍封座位。	香港電台視像新聞 RTHK VNEWS (Facebook)

Five most "saddening" posts

Post	Source
食飯變成苦難…… 蘋果攝記 攝	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)
食肆全日禁堂食，公園、樓梯等變成「平民飯堂」（肥肥小編）	on.cc 東網／東方日報 (Facebook)
【#TOPick新聞】令人心酸..... 【上班族悲歌】全日禁堂食實施首天下暴雨　打工仔無處開餐坐路邊進食	TOPick 新聞 (Facebook)
其實好多人都無辦公室……【防疫措施生效】食肆全日禁堂食 市民高溫街邊開餐	廿四孝父母 – 24parent.com (Facebook)
【#禁堂食令】地盤工人尹先生：地盤又唔畀飯盒入，咁你教我喇。冇乜人就去嗰度食，希望走得甩，慳番2,000蚊囉。	有線新聞 i-Cable News (Facebook)

Five most "furious" posts

Post	Source
政府明日起開放19個社區中心予市民午膳	香港電台視像新聞 RTHK VNEWS (Facebook)
WTF!!!!!只許州官放火，不准百姓點燈！！！//規例實施不足一天，行政署今日向在政總工作的員工發電郵，通知由明日（30日）起，政總食堂可供堂食......//	華爾街狠人(Facebook)
市民好早就開始自救，同民間抗疫背道而馳嗰個，會唔會係政府呢？	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)
咁點解唔開返堂食？//身兼醫生的立法會議員郭家麒斥，小動作反映政府「爛咗」，質疑社區會堂和餐廳同是室內，傳染風險有何分別	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)
張建宗籲回辦公室食飯　基層工友何處容身？	Stand News 立場新聞 (Facebook)

Hot word cloud from netizens' comments

Wearisome
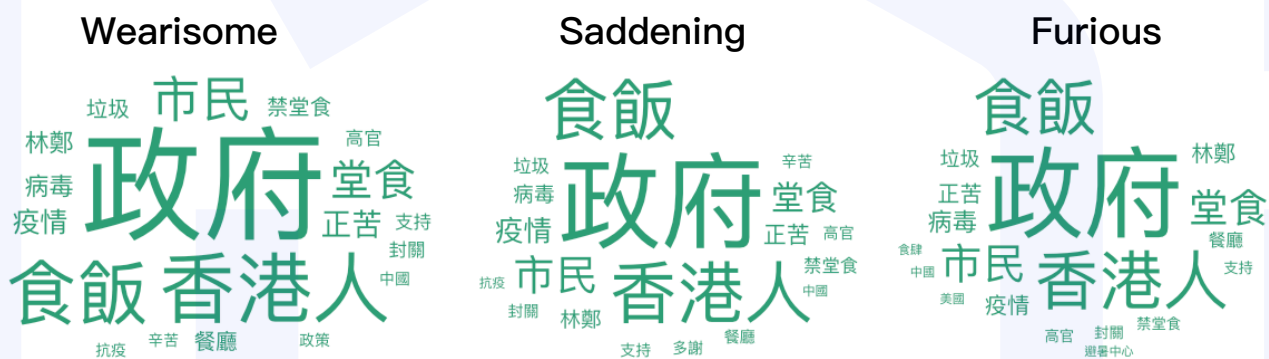
Saddening

Furious

- In the research period, netizens' "wearisome", "saddening" and "furious" emotions reached the peak on 29 July, which were all related to Government's implementation of full-day dine-in ban.

- Having compared different data, the research team found the following incidents which triggered netizens' sentiments on 29 July:

  ○ Media widely reported that many workers involved in outdoor work like construction and cleaning had to take meals on the street under the rain;

  ○ On the following day, the Government announced the opening of community centres for the public to take meals during lunch hours;

  ○ The Government's Administration Wing announced the Central Government Offices staff canteen will resume dine-in services on the following day.

- It is noteworthy that hot words related to "weariness", "sadness" and "fury" were all very similar, while "**government (政府)**", "**Hongkonger (香港人)**" and "**dining (食飯)**" were the top hot words among the three emotions. It reflected the trigger from the full-day dine-in ban leading to netizens' strong and complicated sentiments. Many netizens used negative hot words such as "**rubbish (垃圾)**" and "**really bitter (正苦)**" and cast doubt on the effectiveness of related measures. They slammed the Government for being out of touch with society.

- It was uncovered through further analysis that netizens expressed "fury" more often than "weariness" and "sadness". Apart from 29 July, 24 May marked the second most "furious" day in the research period due to summons issued by the Police against a number of people involved in procession and assembly in protest against the National Security Law. The Police cited social distancing rule violation. Some political party members were arrested after they set up stations on the street to distribute anti-epidemic supplies.

- 29-30 July marked the two most "saddening" days of netizens in the research period. The Centre for Health Protection announced on 30 July the emergence of an infection cluster involving a birthday banquet group in a restaurant in Tuen Mun. It triggered heated discussions among netizens and led to subsequent persistence of high level of "sadness".

"The happiest day" 19 July:

Weariness index ● Happiness index ● Sadness index ● Fury index
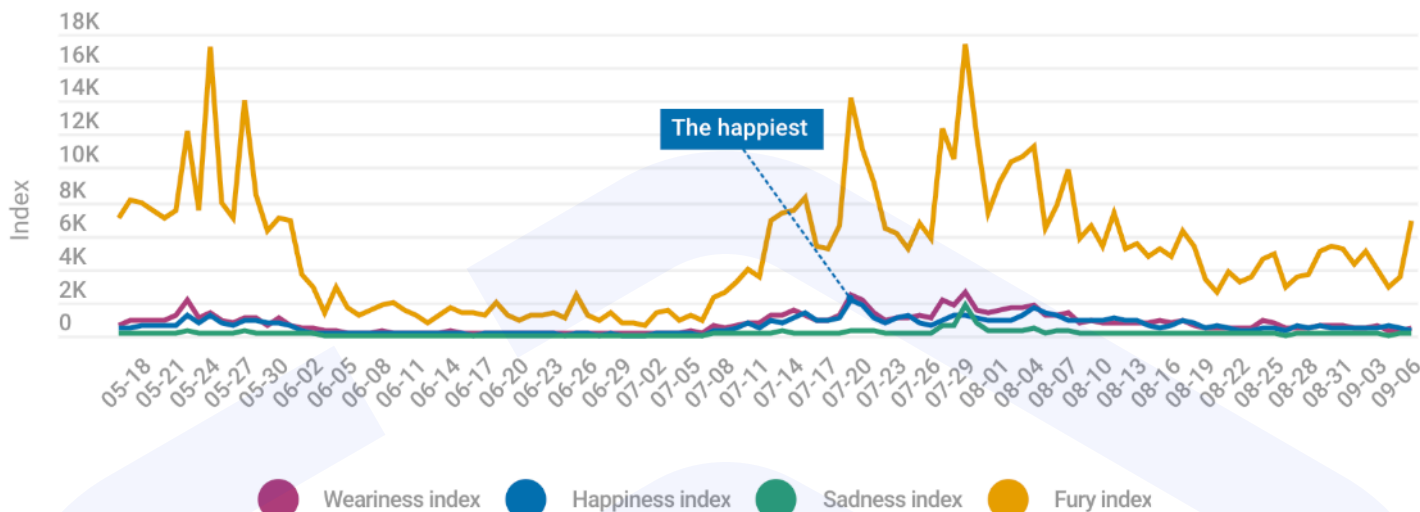
▌ Five "happiest" posts

Post	Source
轉發輝煌會歌舞片後急刪 post　容祖兒：覺得女士很有正能量　被錯誤解讀感無奈	thestandnews (Instagram)
【生活鎖碎｜狼少製作】疫症現場｜回歸開派對 肺炎中結聚 (原曲：隆重登場)	wolf_of_chan (Instagram)
【雅蘭迎回歸聚會群組】　消息指，該聚會為「慶回歸創輝煌歌舞晚會」，出席人士包括公共小型巴士總商會凌志強、海南省政協林博等人。	Yahoo 新聞 (Facebook)
阿媽，如果俾你同小雪同台，我諗你都要企埋一邊~	derekwong726 (Instagram)
【緊貼 01新聞‧#新冠肺炎】三十幾席，大家都分散住喺各區……	香港01 (Facebook)

▌ Hot word cloud from netizens' comments

- In the research period, the day where "happy" emotion was expressed by netizens the most was 19 July. On that day, the Centre for Health Protection announced the emergence of an infection cluster in a restaurant in Mong Kok involving an evening celebration event for the anniversary of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It triggered a great deal of discussions.

- The hot words most frequently used on 19 July seemed unrelated to "happiness" on the surface, yet the research team uncovered from the comments that many netizens used sarcastic remarks. Netizens jeered that the "**government (政府)**" (1,016 times) adopted ineffective anti-epidemic measures without any law enforcement according to social distancing rules against the evening event "**celebrating the anniversary of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (慶回歸)**" (433 times). Netizens also teased the event participants for not wearing "**face mask (口罩)**" (530 times) and thus "**spreading virus (播毒)**" (860 times) and escalating the outbreak.

- Some netizens left rebuttal comments saying that pro-democracy candidates took part in a pre-election in late June ahead of the Legislative Council elections, which led to a surge in infection cases. "**Pre-election (初選)**" (296 times) thus became one of the top hot words.

- 20 July, the next day after the "happiest" day, marked the second "happiest" day in the research period. The research team found that netizens were joyous on 20 July, which was related to Government letting civil servants work from home starting from 20 July while many public and private institutions followed suit and allowed their staff to work from home as well.

2.2 Staged Research: Summary of Key Points

2.2 Staged Research: Summary of Key Points

Relation between epidemic concern index and number of newly diagnosed patients

Sources for diagnosis number: Centre for Health Protection
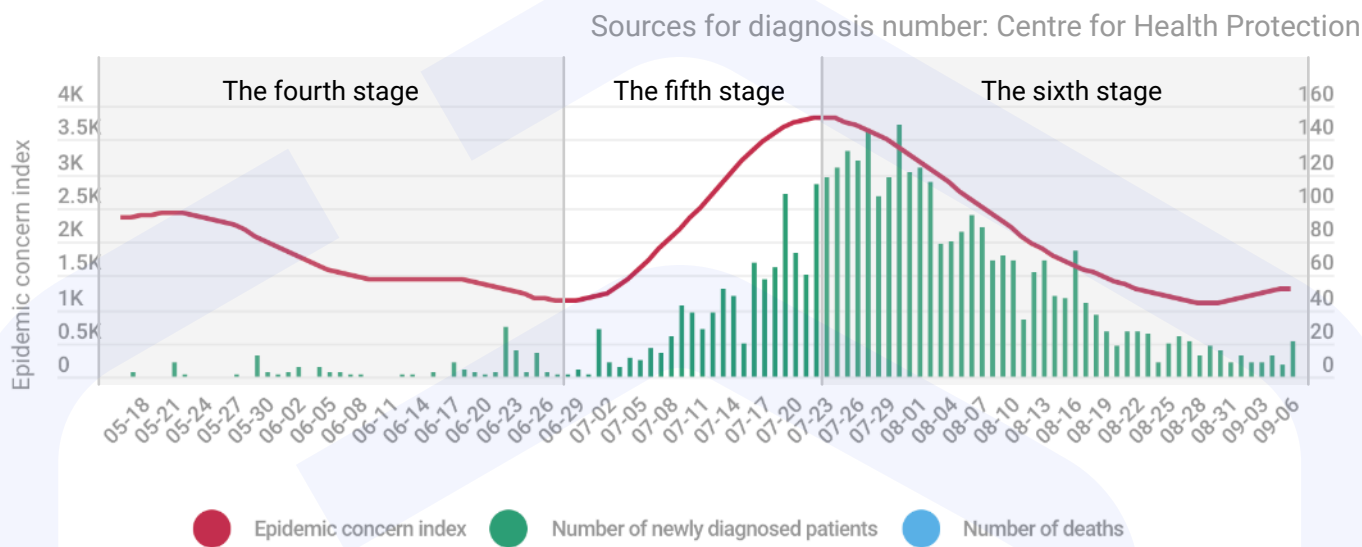
Compared to the first two waves of outbreak in the first half of 2020, the epidemic development under the third wave was more tumultuous. There was higher contention against Government's anti-epidemic policies. Further to the first two reports, Wisers research team made use of big data and mathematics calculation mode to divide online public sentiments into three stages during the research period:

- The second wave of outbreak eased in mid-April. The number of online public opinions fell substantially under the fourth stage (from 16 May to 28 June), while the number of new infection cases remained in single digit for a considerable time.

- The number of infection cases, however, gradually went up in early July. Many overseas seamen exempted from the Government's quarantine requirements were diagnosed with COVID-19, and many infection cases involving unknown sources appeared, which led to the fifth stage (from 29 June to 23 July) seeing the quickest surge in public sentiments in the research period.

- The sixth stage (from 24 July to 6 September) saw over 100 new COVID-19 infection cases each day for 12 consecutive days. The Government stepped up its anti-epidemic measures, dealing a blow to local economy and public livelihood. The Government also launched its Universal Community Testing Programme. These led to the continuation of heated online discussions. With the number of new infection cases falling in early August, online public sentiments fell as well.

The following included analysis conducted by Wisers research team on public sentiments under different stages. It was conducted based on various aspects including posts with the highest engagement (sum of comments, sharing and reactions from netizens) and hot words used in comments.

Fourth Stage (from 16 May to 28 June): Political Stand Dominates Online Public Discussions

Fourth Stage (from 16 May to 28 June):
Political Stand Dominates Online Public Discussions

▌ Five posts with the highest engagement (in descending order)

Date	Post	Source	Engagement
5月30日	中美關係因武漢肺炎疫情、北京強推港版國安法及貿易問題越趨緊張，表明因中國感到不高興的美國總統特朗普本港時間今天凌晨召開記者會，宣佈涉及中國的新決定。	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	21,552
6月1日	有現職前線救護員向《蘋果》爆料，懷疑本港出現首宗救護員中招	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	19,586
5月24日	【1229 銅鑼灣】「快必」譚得志在SOGO對開設健康街站，派發防疫物資。大批全副武裝的防暴警突上前要求解散街站	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	18,916
6月8日	政府宣布重啟經貿活動 海洋公園13/6重開 畫展 15/.7–21/7如期舉行 不受限聚令限制	thestandnews (Instagram)	18,205
5月30日	特朗普發言時再次炮轟中國隱瞞武漢肺炎疫情，在中國最初發現疫情時無及時向世衛報告	Stand News 立場新聞 (Facebook)	17,599

▌ Hot word cloud from netizens' comments

- The second wave of outbreak appeared in mid-March, and subsequently the daily number of new infection cases went down to single digit in mid-May. The Government relaxed most of its anti-epidemic measures, marking an end of the second wave. Under the fourth stage, online epidemic-related discussions continued losing the zest. Some political views even dominated online public discussions.

- The second epidemic report prepared by Wisers covered online public sentiments from 1 January to 15 May. If readers would like to know more about some in-depth analysis on the fourth stage, please download Wisers "Epidemic Index 2.0" report from here.

- It is noteworthy that among the top 20 hot words in comments, four hot words were related to demonstration and politics including "**police (警察)"** (18,334 times), "**police gangs (黑警)**" (16,200 times), "**National Security Law (國安法)**" (14,585 times) and "**cockroaches (甲由)**" (14,067 times).

- The appearance of these political hot words may be due to the Police's dispersal action towards procession participants in protest against the National Security Law on 24 May. Summons were issued by the Police to a number of assembly participants and citizens citing violation of social

distance rules. Some political party members were arrested after they set up stations on the street to distribute anti-epidemic supplies. Some netizens deemed the Police's law enforcement action unreasonable, while some netizens condemned those who joined the assembly disturbing social peace.

- On the other hand, with top hot words in comments like "**United States (美國)**" (43,743 times) and "**China (中國)**" (39,926 times), it showed that the Sino-US tension was also affected by the pandemic and trading and political issues. Netizens focused on it in their discussions apart from the epidemic-related development.

- The said point can be further confirmed by the posts registering the highest engagement. For the top five posts, two of them were related to condemnation made by US President Donald Trump against China on 30 May for not reporting its COVID-19 situation to the World Health Organisation early enough. Many netizens left comments to voice out support.

Fifth Stage (from 29 June to 23 July): Citywide Alert Against Third Wave of Outbreak

Fifth Stage (from 29 June to 23 July):
Citywide Alert Against Third Wave of Outbreak

Five posts with the highest engagement (in descending order)

Date	Post	Source	Engagement
7月16日	If you are not wearing a mask in public transport, keep your distance! Don't argue with me.	Hkerstandwithhk (Instagram)	50,062
7月12日	又爆啦 少啲出街玩啦 雖然好唔舒服但要戴好口罩 可以的話袋多個口罩喺袋	sabrinapingping_ (Instagram)	35,069
7月15日	可以堂食呢就係日頭，禁止堂食嗰陣呢就係夜晚。	applydailyhk (Instagram)	34,265
7月15日	下午6點了，餐廳開始禁止堂食。武漢肺炎有如狼人一樣，過了指定時間就現身。	applydailyhk (Instagram)	33,724
7月13日	本港武漢肺炎未受控 VS 中國地區零個案 萬個「腥港人」自保北上逃亡	chapmantoslateshow (Instagram)	32,462

Hot word cloud from netizens' comments

- Since early July, a number of overseas seamen who were exempted from the Government's quarantine requirements were diagnosed with COVID-19 after arriving in Hong Kong. There were also infection clusters involving unknown sources. The number of infection cases surged at one time. Online epidemic-related discussions surged as well. The fifth stage saw the quickest surge in public sentiments in the research period.

- As shown by "**government (政府)**" (27,792 times) being the top hot word in comments, netizens mainly criticised the Government for waiving the quarantine requirements for overseas seamen giving rise to loopholes in anti-epidemic efforts, which subsequently led to the third wave of the outbreak in Hong Kong. In addition, some netizens urged the Government to tighten its policy on quarantine waiver, "**quarantine (隔離)**" (6,527 times) and "**border closure (封關)**" (6,490 times) thus became top hot words as well.

- Effective from 15 July, the Government required all restaurants to suspend dine-in service starting from 6:00 pm, which became netizens' discussion focus. Among the top five posts with the highest engagement, two posts were about the evening dine-in ban. A large number of netizens left comments and criticised against the related measure saying that it failed to curb infection risk while adding inconvenience to the public.

(852) 2948 3880 www.wisers.com 24

- "**Face mask (口罩)**" (15,240 times) and "**wear face mask (戴口罩)**" (12,810 times) also became top hot words in comments. While the supply of anti-epidemic materials including face mask remained tight, effective from 15 July, the Government mandated through legislation the wearing of face mask for anyone taking public transportation. A large number of netizens called on fellow citizens to wear face masks to minimum virus spread.

- Under the fifth stage, 19 July marked the happiest day for netizens in the research period, which was related to an infection cluster confirmed by the Centre for Health Protection involving an event celebrating the anniversary of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in a restaurant in Mong Kok (please refer to Chapter 2.1 for detailed analysis).

Sixth Stage (from 24 July to 6 September): Widespread Discussions on Dine-in Ban and Universal Community Testing Programme

Sixth Stage (from 24 July to 6 September): Widespread Discussions on Dine-in Ban and Universal Community Testing Programme

▌ Five posts with the highest engagement (in descending order)

Date	Post	Source	Engagement
7月29日	食飯變成苦難…… 蘋果攝記 攝	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	48,440
7月30日	全日禁堂食第二天　「政府真係好X廢！」	thestandnews (Instagram)	45,559
7月29日	COVID horror	9GAG (Facebook)	43,075
7月29日	情侶烈日下公園聚餐 苦笑稱「難忘」 楊先生：辛苦了女朋友	thestandnews (Instagram)	42,034
8月17日	「順帶一提，本人也不會參與全民檢測。」	Alfred Wong Yam Hong (Facebook)	37,644

▌ Hot word cloud from netizens' comments

- Among the three stages in the research period, the sixth stage was the longest one registering the most fluctuating public sentiments.

- "**Government (政府)"** (48,152 times) became the top hot word in comments again, doubling the time it was mentioned under the fifth stage. Netizens' heated discussions on Government's anti-epidemic measures flared up instead of going down amid the escalating outbreak.

- In mid-August, supporting team members from the Mainland gradually arrived in Hong Kong to help with the nucleic acid tests, while the Government launched its Universal Community Testing Programme on 1 September. "**Test (檢測)**" (18,068 times) became one of the measures discussed heatedly by netizens under the sixth stage.

- On the other hand, "**dining (食飯)**" (12,181 times) also became one of the hot words. It showed that the full-day dine-in ban was enthusiastically discussed by netizens. 29 July, the first day of

Government's full-day dine-in ban, even became the most wearisome, saddening and furious day of netizens in the research period (please refer to Chapter 2.1 for detailed analysis).

- Positive hot words such as "**support (支持)**" (25,127 times), "**add oil (加油)**" (14,975 times) and "**thank you (多謝)**" (11,917 times) were widely used by netizens in their comments. They praised the Government for launching the Universal Community Testing Programme and various anti-epidemic measures, which helped to curb the virus transmission chain in the community easing the outbreak in due course.

- Meanwhile some netizens, however, used negative hot words such as "**rubbish (垃圾)**" (13,939 times) to criticise against Government's anti-epidemic measures saying that they were ineffective and brought nuisance to the public. In addition, some people used negative hot words such as "**the Mainland (大陸)**" (17,832 times) and "**Chinese Communist Party (中共)**" (9,516 times) and cast doubt on the motive behind the Central Government's move in sending support team to Hong Kong to help with the Universal Community Testing Programme.

- It is noteworthy that the word "**Lam Cheng (林鄭)**" (13,119 times) representing Chief Executive Carrie Lam also became one of the hot words. While netizens discussed Government's anti-epidemic measures, they also focused on what top Government officials did and said.

- Moreover, hot word "**face mask (口罩)**" (15,112 times) appeared across the three stages, which reflected the view held by most netizens that even though the number of new infection cases fell gradually and the third wave of outbreak was under control, people should continue wearing face masks without lowering their guard.

Chapter 3

Impact from Epidemic on Hong Kong People's Life

Impact from Epidemic on Hong Kong People's Life

- With the outbreak raging on, the Government successively unveiled social distancing rules, the Universal Community Testing Programme, and other counter measures. What did Hong Kong people feel amid the outbreak? Which life aspects were the most concerning and affected?

- Through big data system, Wisers research team searched tens of thousands of posts on the Internet related to daily life and picked and analysed seven life aspects most heatedly discussed by netizens based on post volume and engagement ratio:

Percentage of post volume and engagement involving seven life aspects

Legend: ● Post volume ● Engagement ● Percentage of post volume and engagement
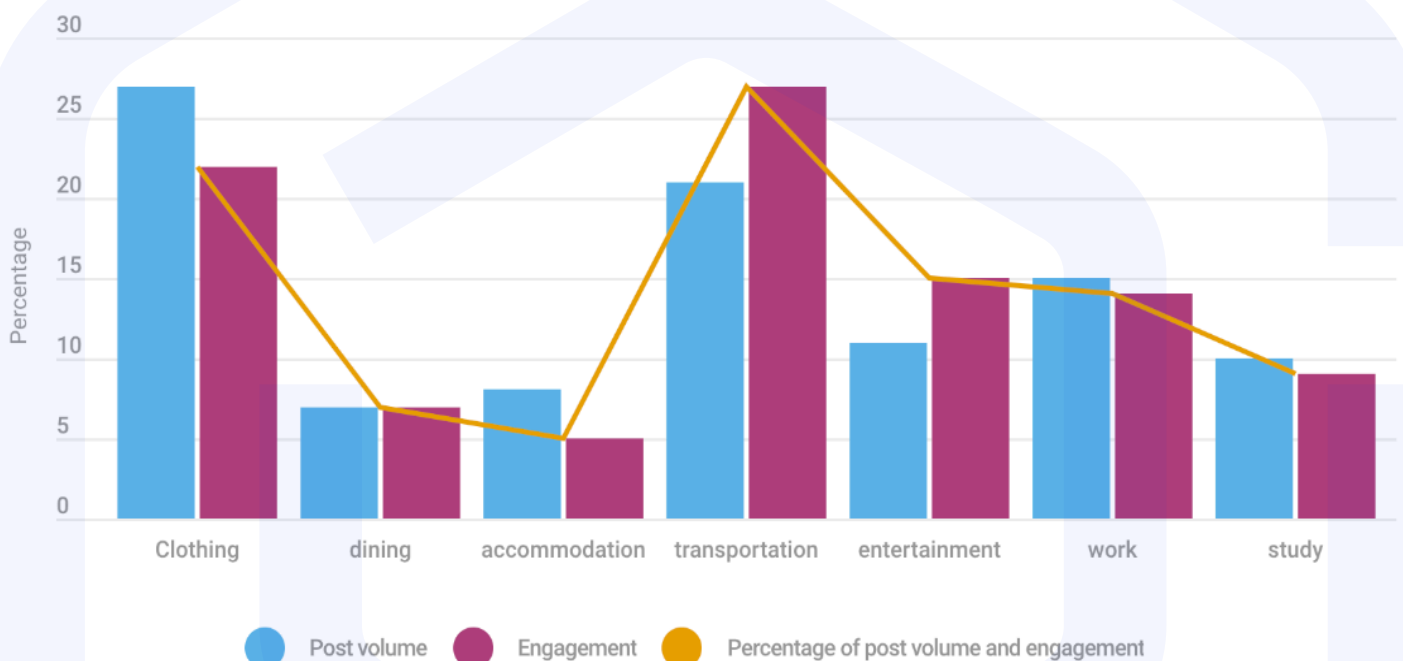
Summary of Key Points:

Calculation based on extent of heated discussions:

- In the past four months, the daily life aspects most heatedly discussed by netizens were "transportation", "clothing" and "entertainment":

  ○ Volume of posts in relation to "transportation", "clothing" and "entertainment" accounted for almost 60% of the total volume. In other words, for every three epidemic-related posts on social media, two posts were about "transportation", "clothing" or "entertainment". The ratio hit 64% if calculating based on total engagement.

  ○ Most frequently used hot words related to "transportation" were "**police (警察)**" (15,532 times), "**support (支持)**" (14,275 times), and "**June Fourth (六四)**" (13,296 times). Most frequently used hot words related to "clothing" were "**government (政府)**" (12,210 times), "**face mask (口罩)**" (11,930 times), and "**thank you (多謝)**" (10,548 times). Most frequently used hot words related to "entertainment" were "**social distancing (限聚)**" (8,312 times), "**book fair (書展)**" (7,510 times), and "**face mask (口罩)**" (6,932 times).

Calculation based on feelings of netizens:

· Netizens left comments in relation to "transportation", "dining" and "work", and these were the three aspects which involved the biggest gaps in positive and negative comments. For discussions related to "transportation", the negative comment ratio stood at 75%. For discussions related to "dining" and "work", the negative comment ratio stood at 71% and 68%, respectively.

· Among the seven key life aspects, impact brought by the epidemic on "accommodation" was the lowest: not only were post volume and engagement related to "accommodation" the lowest, its negative comment ratio was also the last second ("clothing" registered the lowest negative comment ratio). Among the seven life aspects, netizens' comments related to "clothing" saw the highest positive comment ratio of 25%.

3.1 "Transportation": Procession and Assembly of Paramount Importance

3.1 "Transportation":
Procession and Assembly of Paramount Importance

83,984
Post Volume

(accounting for about 21% of post volume during the research period)

22,372,960
Engagement

(accounting for about 27% of engagement during the research period)

Neutral 10%
Positive 15%
Negative 75%
Sentiment
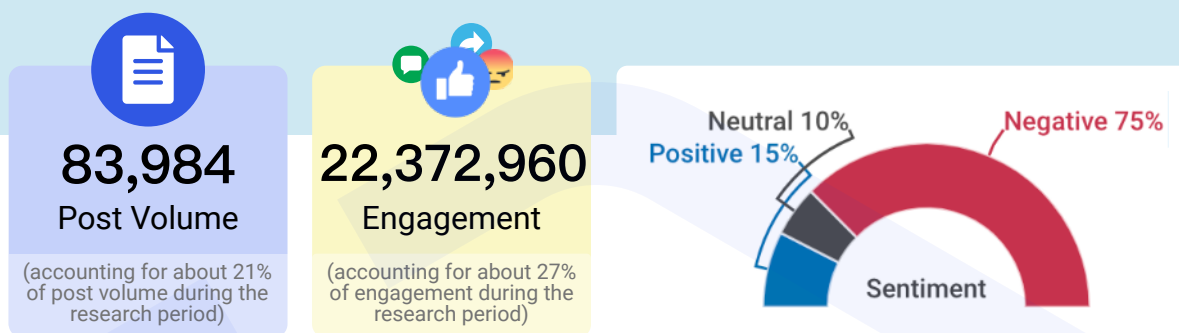
We monitored how "transportation" was affected by the epidemic based on two key directions:

- In relation to "transportation", people's daily activities/action triggering concerns included but not limited to:
  - Many countries continued with their travel ban, making it difficult for people to make outbound travel for sightseeing;
  - With successive tightening of social distancing rules, it was difficult for people to go out together or join social activities;
  - Legislative Council elections, procession, assembly and other large-scale public activities had to be postponed or cancelled due to escalating outbreak.
- In relation to "transportation", situations affected by anti-epidemic measures included but not limited to:
  - 1 and 27 June: The Police issued letters of objection for the June Fourth vigil and the July First procession;
  - 13 July: The Government tightened the rule again and banned any public gathering of more than four persons;
  - 15 July: Through legislation, the Government mandated the wearing of face masks for anyone taking public transportation;
  - 29 July: The Government tightened the rule further and banned any public gathering of more than two persons;
  - 31 July: The Government postponed the Legislative Council elections originally scheduled for 6 September for a year citing the Emergency Laws.

3.1 "Transportation": Procession and Assembly of Paramount Importance

▍Topics of the Greatest Concern Related to "transportation"

Post volume — Engagement — Percentage of post volume and engagement

- For engagement of posts related to "transportation", it ranked the top among the seven key life aspects in terms of total post engagement ratio in the research period (post volume: 27%; engagement: 22%). It showed that people reacted most towards "transportation" related impact from the outbreak.

- According to discussion topic ratio, online discussions related to "transportation" mainly covered demonstration, social distancing rules, travel and Legislative Council elections. These four major topics accounted for 64% of total post volume related to "transportation". In terms of engagement, the ratio stood at 76%.

- Although discussions related to "transportation" mainly covered topics such as social distancing rules, demonstration and assembly, the zest in public discussions over travel-related topics remained high, and it reflected netizens' demand for local travel services including local tours and staycation.

3.1 "Transportation":
Procession and Assembly of Paramount Importance

▌ Trend of heated discussions related to "transportation"

24 May: Netizens initiated a procession in protest against the National Security Law; summons were issued by the Police citing social distancing rules violation.

20 July: David Hui Shu-cheong and Yuen Kwok-yung said a curfew may be necessary if the number of infection cases kept surging.

31 July: Legislative Council elections postponed for a year.

15 July: The Government mandated face mask wearing for anyone taking public transportation.

13 July: The Government banned any public gathering of more than four persons.

6 September: Patrick Nip Tak-kuen said in the future, cross-border travellers may be required to undergo virus tests instead of 14-day quarantine.

Post volume · Engagement

- Data showed that with the Police issuing summons to a number of procession participants and citizens on 24 May citing social distancing rules violation, it triggered netizens' concerns; however, as the number of new infection cases went down in late May, online public sentiments related to "transportation" gradually fell as well.

- The number of infection cases went up in early July and the Government successively tightened social distancing rules and mandated the wearing of face masks for anyone taking public transportation, which once again triggered netizens' discussions over "transportation". On 20 July, Government expert consultants David Hui Shu-cheong and Yuen Kwok-yung recommended the Government implement a curfew. The Government also gazetted the extension of its anti-epidemic measures including social distancing rules on that day. As a result, 20 July became the day registering the most heated discussions on topics related to "transportation" in the research period.

3.1 "Transportation":
Procession and Assembly of Paramount Importance

Top concerning posts related to "transportation"

The most fearsome post	The most saddening	The most furious post	The happiest post
24 May	1 August	24 May	24 May
【蘋果fb live】國安法國歌法殺到 網民發起港島區遊行抗議	Vlog】香港 x 限聚令丨體驗如何在街上吃飯丨全日禁止堂食?丨街頭訪問市民的看	【蘋果fb live】國安法國歌法殺到 網民發起港島區遊行抗議	【蘋果fb live】國安法國歌法殺到 網民發起港島區遊行抗議
香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	Jer仔 (Youtube)	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)
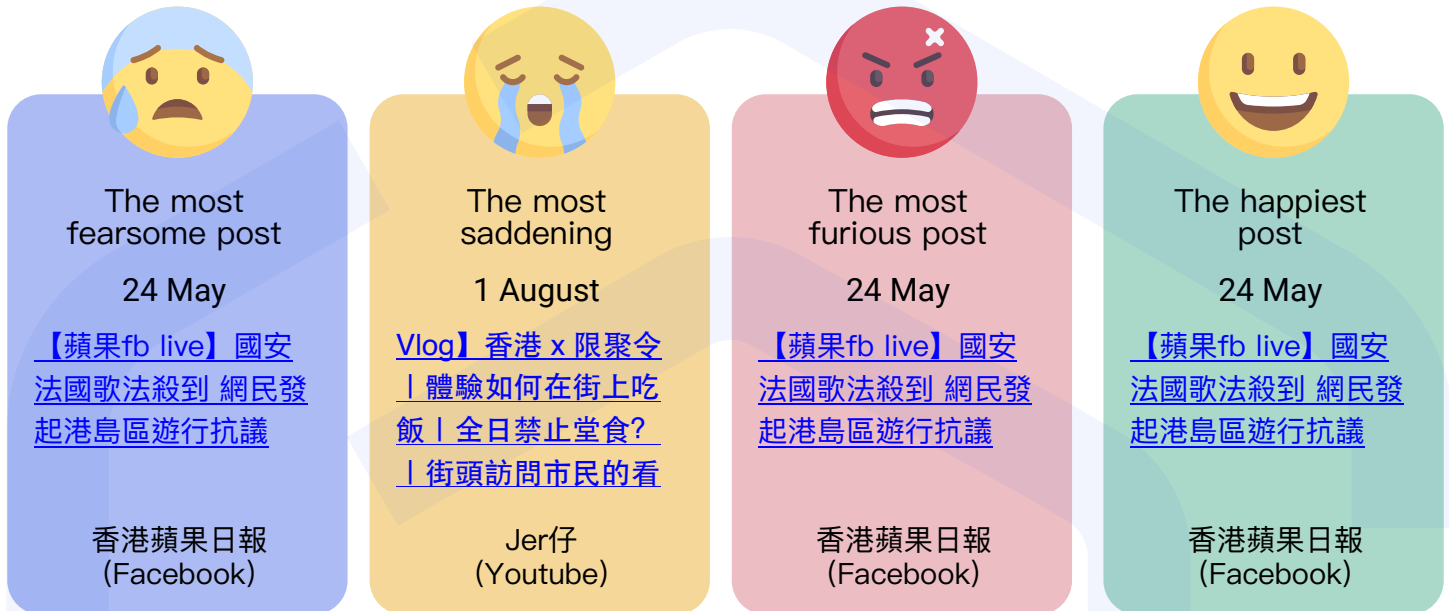
Online public sentiments and positive and negative discussions related to "transportation"

- The research team found that when people discussed "transportation" related issues, as much as 75% of their comments included negative sentiments. They mainly criticised the Government for citing anti-epidemic concern to restrict people's movement and right of assembly. They also cast doubt on the effectiveness in fighting against the epidemic.

- On the other hand, it is noteworthy that among the four top posts that triggered netizens' sentiments the most, three posts were related to demonstration and assembly. Discussions mainly focused on the inability to stage demonstrations as usual due to measures implemented by the Government. Participants would risk getting summons due to social distancing rules. It triggered much concern and engagement from a large number of netizens.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com   36

3.1 "Transportation": Procession and Assembly of Paramount Importance

Hot word cloud from netizens' comments

Positive

支持 加油 警察 政府 感謝 市民 疫情 正能量 美國 中國 國安法 國家 正義 健康 多謝 執法 立法會 安全 選舉 謝謝

Negative

國安法 警察 中共 垃圾 黑警 暴徒 政府 六四 民主集會 大陸 市民 限聚令 示威 國家隊 三萬 手足 延長

- The word "**police (警察)**" became one of the top three among both positive and negative hot words. It showed that netizens reacted most strongly towards the Police issuing summons to procession participants citing social distancing rules violation. Some supporters mainly supported action taken by the Police saying that it effectively minimised public assembly and lowered the risk of virus spread, while opponents criticised the Police for suppressing freedom of assembly.

- Apart from "**police (警察)**" (11,522 times), the most frequently used positive hot words were "**support (支持)**" (13,275 times) and "**add oil (加油)**" (12,710 times). Netizens left comments mainly to support the Government's postponement of the Legislative Council election and other large-scale public activities. They also supported the Police's strict law enforcement action towards people who violated social distancing rules.

- Apart from "**police (警察)**" (15,532 times) and "**police gangs (黑警)**" (9,939 times), negative hot words also included "**June Fourth (六四)**" (11,296 time), "**government (政府)**" (9,884 times), and "**National Security Law (國安法)**" (9,864 times). Netizens cast doubt on Government's motive behind its objection against the June Fourth vigil saying that it was due to the National Security Law rather than anti-epidemic consideration.

3.2 "Clothing":
Face Mask as Top Discussion Topic

3.2 "Clothing":
Face Mask as Top Discussion Topic

107,280
Post Volume

(Accounting for around 27% of total post volume in the research period)

17,768,510
Engagement

(Accounting for around 22% of total engagement in the research period)

Neutral 18%
Positive 21%
Negative 61%
Sentiment
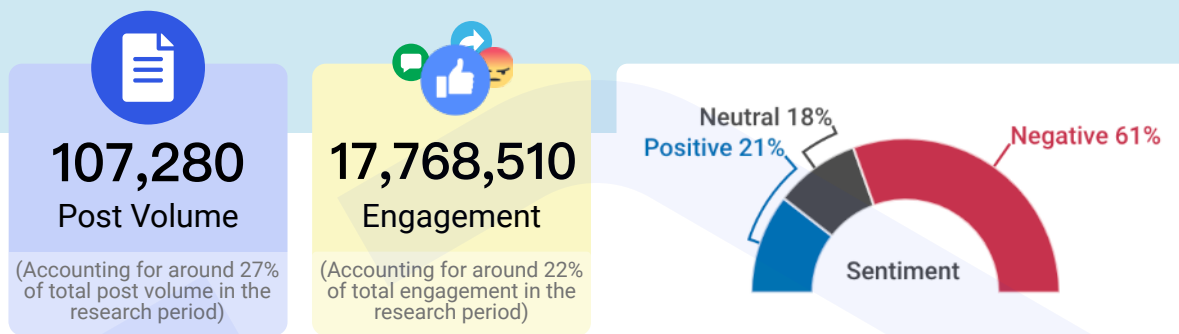
We monitored how "clothing" was affected by the epidemic based on two key directions:

- In relation to "clothing", people's daily activities/action triggering concerns included but not limited to:
  - Face mask and other personal protective equipment became daily necessities. Many local enterprises set up production lines selling a variety of face masks to the public;
  - With the outbreak worsening, the Government mandated the wearing of face masks at all public places;
  - Premises like beauty parlours were ordered to suspend business again; people had difficulties in getting beauty-related services such as skincare, manicure and hairdressing;
  - In light of the outbreak, people went out less and opted for online shopping instead to satisfy shopping needs.
- In relation to "clothing", situations affected by anti-epidemic measures included but not limited to:
  - 8 June: The Government announced its Cash Payout Scheme involving a hand-out of HK$10,000 to the public with a view to lessening people's financial burden for purchasing anti-epidemic supplies including face masks;
  - From 15 June to 15 July: The Government distributed CuMask+ to the public;
  - 30 June: The Government distributed disposable face masks to the public for free;
  - 15 July: Through legislation, the Government mandated face mask wearing for anyone taking public transportation; premises such as beauty parlours, massage parlours and public bathhouses were required to suspend businesses again;
  - 24 July: The Government extended mandatory face mask wearing to all indoor public premises;
  - 27 July: The Government extended mandatory face mask wearing to all public places without granting any waiver to people who exercised or smoked outdoor.

3.2 "Clothing":
Face Mask as Top Discussion Topic

Topics of the Greatest Concern Related to "Clothing"

- Online discussions about masks and the engagement topped the list. They accounted for over 50% of total post volume and total engagement in relation to masks during the research period, as shown on the above chart.

- In addition to "masks", topics related to personal hygiene and shopping also attracted much public attention.

Heated Discussion Trend About "Clothing"

13-15 July: Government made masks compulsory for the public on public transport

23 July: Government extended the compulsory mask-wearing rule to all indoor public venues

27 July: Government extended the compulsory mask-wearing rule to all public venues, no exemptions for those doing exercise or smoking.

9 July: Media unveiled some manufacturers undertaking production of the government's free masks may not have met hygiene standards.

22 & 25 May: Demosisto members arrested for violating Trade Descriptions Ordinance over sale of their "Self-help Masks"

17 August: Government extended the compulsory mask-wearing rule for seven more days

11 June: Government announced arrangements for distribution of CuMask+™

3.2 "Clothing":
Face Mask as Top Discussion Topic

- Data showed that masks have aroused most discussions online   during the research period. Although the online public sentiment was gloomy in May and June, incidents such as Demosisto members arrested for breaching trade descriptions legislation, Government's announcement on arrangements for the distribution of CuMask+™, and more, could still trigger hot discussions for a short time.

- As the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases rebounded in early July and the Government made masks compulsory for the public on public transport, discussions related to "clothing" heated up. The heated discussions related to "clothing" reached the peak on 23 July, after the Government announced extension of the compulsory mask-wearing rule to all indoor public venues.

- Government's announcement on extending the compulsory mask-wearing rule to all public venues on 27 July has set off heated discussions, but the online public sentiment receded thereafter. The extension of mask-wearing rule for another seven days did not significantly flare up discussions.

Posts Of the Greatest Concern Related to "Clothing"

The most scary post	The saddest post	The angriest post	The happiest post
24 July	18 July	27 July	28 July
東張西望｜防疫加辣食肆全日禁堂食｜限聚令｜食肆禁令｜口罩令	【整蠱】因疫情女友幫自己剪頭髮！竟然把我狠剪成清朝人！男友被剪髮	當街除罩食煙　隨時罰款二千	【$1 Happy Thursday ─ FANCL 美健維他命C 】
TVB (official) (Youtube)	arhoTV(Youtube)	衛生署衛生防護中心 Centre for Heal... (Facebook)	Plaza Hollywood (Facebook)

3.2 "Clothing":
Face Mask as Top Discussion Topic

Online Public Sentiments and Discussions Related to "Clothing"

- The research team found that 70% of netizens were mainly negative when discussing topics related to "clothing". Netizens mainly criticised the Government for extending the mask-wearing rule to all the public venues, with no exemptions for those doing exercise and smoking. They said the rule was too strict and called for moderate relaxation. Some netizens called into question the reliability of the CuMask+™, and bashed the Government for lack of transparency in the tender process when selecting the manufacturer, saying there might be collusion of interests.

- Some netizens opined that the premises including beauty, nail and hair salons, have been ordered to suspend business for too long, making it difficult for citizens to find such services to groom up, and causing immense inconvenience in people's daily life.

- It is worth noting that netizens were more positive about posts related to beauty and health supplements, reflecting that citizens' demand for such products surged amid the threat of COVID-19.

Word cloud from netizens' comments

Positive

Negative

- "**Masks (口罩)**" took up the top three places in the positive and negative word charts, indicating that netizens were most easily incensed by the related posts. Most of the netizens with positive views supported the Government's move to extend the compulsory mask-wearing rules to reduce the risk of virus transmission; those with negative views mainly criticised the Government for rolling out unrealistic measures and neglecting the daily needs of citizens, while the mandatory mask-wearing rule might not be effective in controlling the pandemic.

- Despite "**masks (口罩)**" (9,073 times), the positive words that were mentioned most often were "**thanks (多謝)**" (10,578 times) and "**thank you(謝謝)**" (10,414 times). Netizens left comments to thank the Government for distributing masks free of charge to all citizens, easing the pressure they face amidst the shortage of medical supplies in the community.

3.2 "Clothing":
Face Mask as Top Discussion Topic

- Apart from "**masks (口罩)**", the negative hot words that were mentioned most often were "**underpants (底褲)**" (4,627 times) and "**Self-help Masks(自救口罩)**" (4,560 times). Netizens continued to bash the design of the CuMask+™, saying that they would not wear it. Some of them said they would rather buy other Hong Kong-made masks out of their pocket.

- Netizens were quite divided in their views about the Government's HK$10,000 cash handout scheme. Netizens left positive comments mainly to thank the Government for the HK$10,000 cash handout, as they believed that such move could relieve the economic burden of citizens for buying masks. Critics believed that the Government launched the scheme just to cover up its incompetence in combating the epidemic, comparing the HK$10,000 handout to a "**refund (回水)**" (7,609 times).

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com   43

3.3 "Study": DSE Students Worried About Their Prospects

3.3 "Study":
DSE Students Worried About Their Prospects

38,590
Post Volume
(accounting for about 10% of post volume during the research period)

7,565,830
Engagement
(accounting for about 9% of engagement during the research period)

Neutral 13%
Positive 22%
Negative 65%
Sentiment
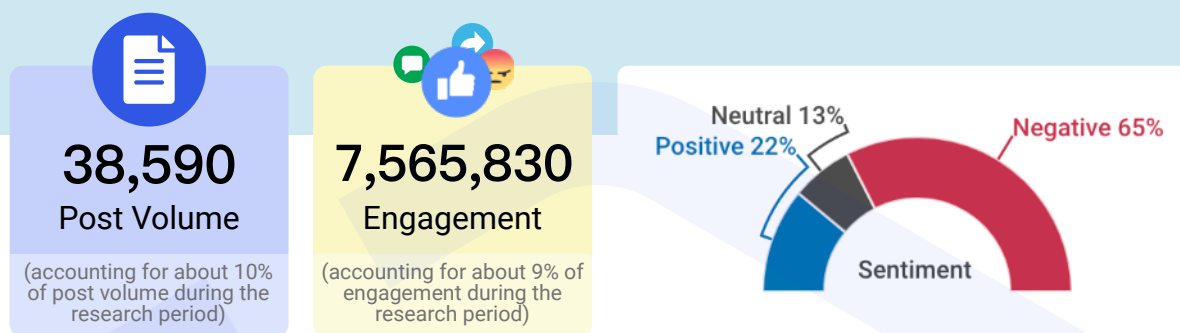
We monitored the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on "study" from two main directions:

- Citizens' daily activities/behaviours related to "study" that had raised netizens' concern, including but not limited to:

  - Students needed to adapt to remote learning amid class suspension, thus increasing teachers' workload;

  - Students collected their result slips of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) online instead of in person at school. Some tertiary institutions conducted their student admission interviews through video conferencing.

  - Schools gradually resume classes in September as the third wave of COVID-19 outbreak has shown signs of easing, but face-to-face classes and extracurricular activities will remain suspended.

- Impact of anti-epidemic measures on "study", including but not limited to:

  - 10 July: The Education Bureau (EDB) announced that all secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong would commence the summer holiday early;

  - 22 July: Release of HKDSE results moved online;

  - 3 August: EDB announced that the new school year could start as scheduled, but all face-to-face classes and extracurricular activities would be suspended, and classes will be moved online;

  - 31 August: EDB announced the gradual resumption of classes at school, and school activities should be limited to no more than one-sixth of student population.

  - 1 September: The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) announced that 2021 HKDSE will be postponed to April 2021, while the results will be released in July 2021. The oral examinations of both Chinese Language and English Language, as well as School-based Assessment of some subjects will be cancelled.

3.3 "Study":
DSE Students Worried About Their Prospects

Topics of the Greatest Concern Related to "Study"
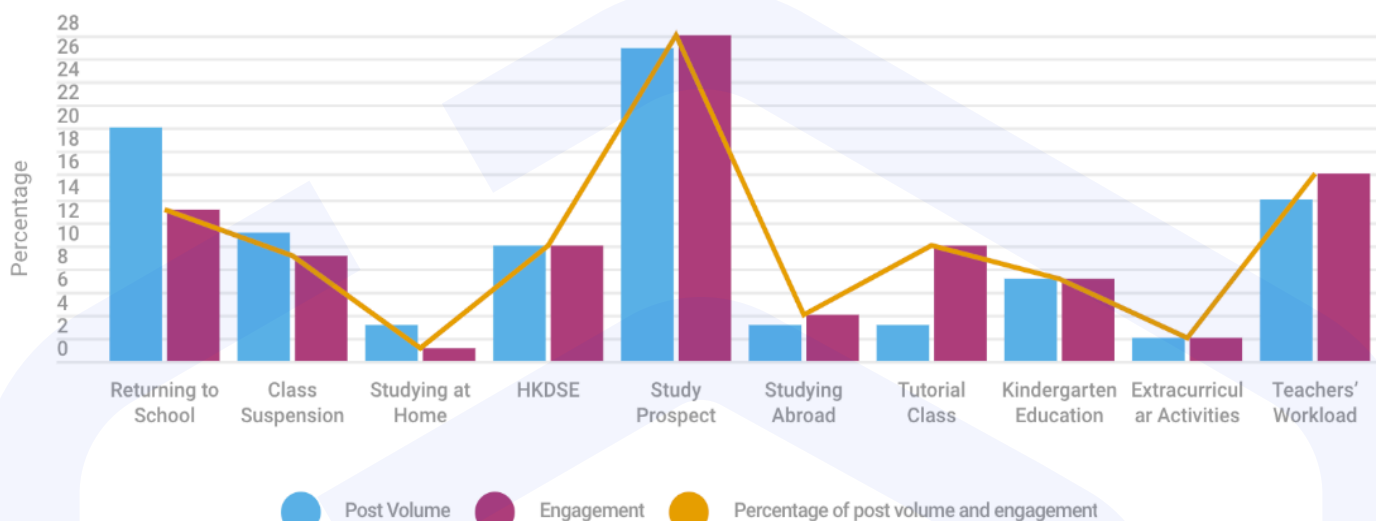
- Form the proportion of topics as shown in the above chart, we can see that online discussions about "study" mainly focused on the academic pathways, teachers' workload, and returning to school. The post volume on these three topics alone accounted for over 60% of total post volume in relation to "study" and over 50% of total engagement during the research period.

Heated Discussion Trend About "Study"

14 July: EDB announced that all the schools in Hong Kong should complete all examinations within three days and suspend all on-campus activities for two weeks

20 July: EDB announced that classes of international schools and kindergartens will not commence earlier than 17 August; arrangements could not be made for cross-border students in Secondary 3 or below to attend class in Hong Kong

10 July: EDB announced that all secondary schools and primary schools in Hong Kong would commence their summer holiday early

22 July: Release of HKDSE results held online

3 August: EDB announced that the new school year could start as scheduled, but teachers will need to conduct classes online

1 September: HKEAA announced that 2021 HKDSE will be postponed

7 July: Students at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (HKAPA) and a secondary school in Wong Tai Sin were diagnosed with COVID-19

31 August: EDB announced timetable of class resumption in phases for all schools

3.3 "Study":
DSE Students Worried About Their Prospects

- As the COVID-19 situation has shown signs of easing since mid-May, the online public sentiment trend remained steady. Discussions heated up after some students at HKAPA and a secondary school in Wong Tai Sin were diagnosed with COVID-19 on 7 July and the EDB announced all secondary schools and primary schools in Hong Kong would commence their summer holiday early.

- With the third wave of COVID-19 outbreak, July was marked as the month with heated online public sentiment in relation to online "study". In particular, the hottest online public sentiment was recorded on 20 July when the Government announced the commencement date of new school year of international schools and kindergartens; as well as its failure in arranging cross-border students in Secondary 3 or below to attend school in Hong Kong.

- Although the release of the HKDSE results was moved online on 22 July, the EDB's announcement about e-learning for all school in the new school year   triggered a surge in online public sentiment. However, "study"-related discussions were on the decline due to fewer number of confirmed COVID-19 cases since early August.

The Most Concerned Posts Related to "Study"

The most scary post	The saddest post	The angriest post	The happiest post
26 May	8 July	21 July	27 June
電腦用足15年 中五女生終獲贈免費新機卻不敢用:怕中毒	小四女童復課日凌晨墮樓亡 死者父親:之前去買糖諗住請同學食 (女兒)臨	楊潤雄稱2020年對學生是困難一年 惟辦法比困難多	我畢業了 大個仔,要升小學喇 今年疫情關係返學既時間少左好多,感恩仍然有畢業
LIHKG 討論區	01新聞(Facebook)	香港電台視像新聞 RTHK VNEWS (Facebook)	babygronnie (Instagram)

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com

3.3 "Study": DSE Students Worried About Their Prospects

Online Public Sentiments and Opinions Related to "Study"

- The research team found that 65% of netizens usually mentioned topics related to "study" with negative emotions. Netizens mainly criticised the EDB for its chaotic arrangements on class suspension and HKDSE, putting unnecessary burden on teachers and students. They also worried the chaotic arrangements will disrupted students' study plans for the HKDSE and affect their chances for admission to universities.

- Some netizens also dropped comments to bash the EDB for not being supportive enough for e-learning. This has not only significantly increased the teachers' workload, but also affected grassroots students' learning progress as they could not afford to buy a computer. The privacy and security of the video-conferencing software were also their concerns.

- From netizens' sharing of news reports about grassroots students being unable to afford a computer for online lessons, it can be seen that there is demand for affordable computers.

Word cloud from netizens' comments

Positive

教育局 DSE 開學
大學 加油 復課
甲由 政府 學生
國歌
感謝 努力 考試 公開試
同學
暑假
安全 健康 停課 國安法

Negative

垃圾 Zoom 黃師
楊潤雄 停課 大學
潤腸 上堂 中國
DSE 政府 政苦
林鄭 電腦 肺炎
國歌
國安法 求職 教育局 公開試

- The most frequently mentioned positive hot word was "**keep it up (加油)**" (5,515 times), netizens left comments mainly to encourage 2020 HKDSE candidates who were gearing up for the exams, telling them not to give up when encountering difficulties. They also praised the Government for its decisive action to start summer holiday early.

- Negative hot words that topped the list were "**class suspension (停課)**" (6,055 times), "**government (政府)**" (4,050 times), and "**computer (電腦)**" (3,922 times). Most of the netizens criticised the Government and the EDB for their chaotic arrangements, adding that the Government's education policy was out of touch with society as not every student could afford to buy a computer.

- It is worth noting that negative hot words that ranked 10th and 14th on the list were "**Zoom**" (1,821 times) and "**China(中國)**" (1,229 times) respectively, reflecting that some netizens had concerns about the security issues of the software.

3.3 "Study":
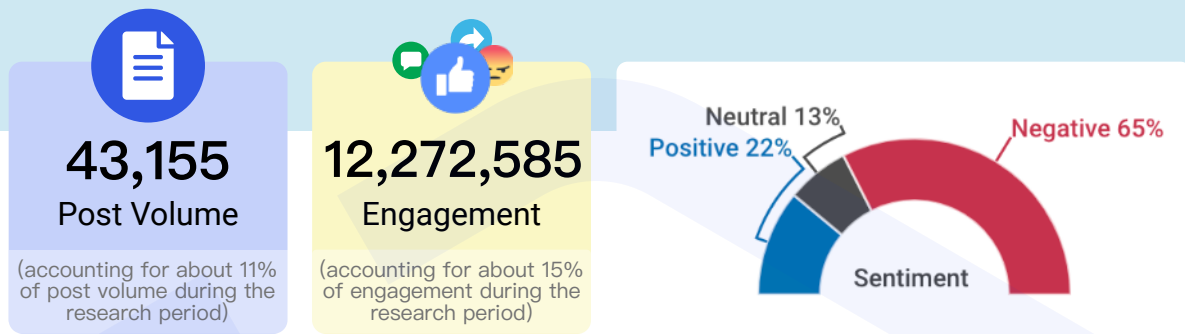## DSE Students Worried About Their Prospects

- Meanwhile, "**Education Bureau(教育局)**" (1,200 times), Education Secretary "**Kevin Yeung Yun-hung(楊潤雄)**" (2,178 times), as well as his nickname "**Yun Cheong(潤腸)**" (1,007 times) were all negative hot words. The research team found that many netizens used these hot words to express their discontent with the education policies in Hong Kong. They also bashed the EDB for its handling of disputes over separation of powers and the "controversial" question in the History paper of HKDSE this year.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com

3.4 "Entertainment":
Mask Rule For Working Out Draws Criticism

3.4 "Entertainment":
Mask Rule For Working Out Draws Criticism

43,155
Post Volume

(accounting for about 11% of post volume during the research period)

12,272,585
Engagement

(accounting for about 15% of engagement during the research period)

Neutral 13%
Positive 22%
Negative 65%
Sentiment

Wisers monitored the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on "entertainment" from two main directions:

- Citizens' daily activities/behaviours related to "entertainment" that had raised netizens' concern, including but not limited to:
  - Government tightened rules on social gatherings again, citizens were prohibited from taking part in group activities such as partying or singing karaoke;
  - Amidst the closure of scheduled sport and entertainment premises and postponement of large-scale events such as Hong Kong Book Fair, not only citizens had nowhere to relax, related industries also suffered huge setbacks;
  - As the Government mandated citizens to wear masks while exercising, citizens may feel unwell more easily in hot weather.
- Impact of anti-epidemic measures on "entertainment", including but not limited to:
  - 13 July: Group gatherings limit tightened to four people;
  - 14-15 July: Ocean Park and Hong Kong Disneyland temporarily closed one after another;
  - 15 July: Government required closure of scheduled sport and entertainment premises (e.g. fitness centres and mahjong establishments) again; Hong Kong Trade Development Council announced the postponement of various large-scale events including the annual Hong Kong Book Fair and Hong Kong Sports and Leisure Expo;
  - 27 July: Government extended the compulsory mask-wearing rule to all public venues, no exemptions for exercising or smoking.
  - 29 July: Group gatherings limit further tightened to two people.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com   51

3.4 "Entertainment":
Mask Rule For Working Out Draws Criticism

### The Most Concerned Issues Related to "Entertainment"
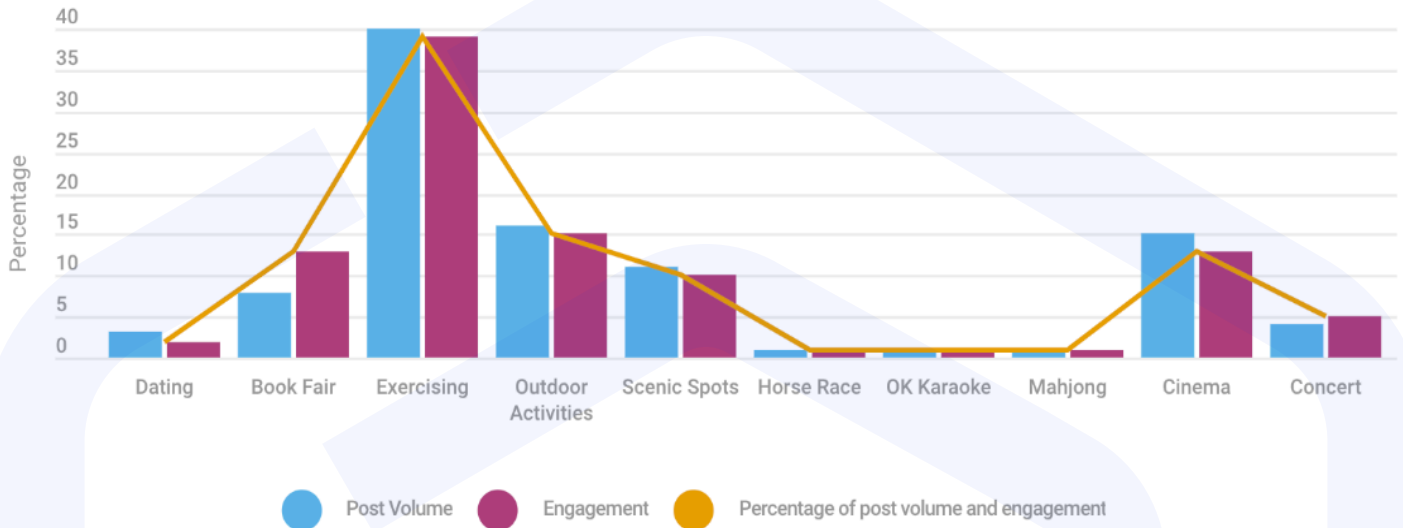
- As shown on the above chart, netizens mentioned topics related to exercising and outdoor activities the most often when discussing the impact of COVID-19 on "entertainment", with post volume and engagement accounting for over 50% of total post volume and total engagement in relation to "entertainment" during the research period.

- Book fairs and cinemas were also frequently discussed topics in relation to "entertainment". Most of the netizens criticised the Government for reiterating that the book fair would be held as scheduled at the outset of the third wave of COVID-19 outbreak, and it was not postponed until many exhibitors announced their withdrawal, and the Government even felt regretful about the postponement. As for cinemas, most of the online discussions were triggered by the Government's announcement of allowing the cinemas to reopen on August 28 with limited capacity. Netizens supported the Government's relaxation, and expressed their excitement as they could watch various masterpieces in cinemas.

3.4 "Entertainment":
Mask Rule For Working Out Draws Criticism

Heated Discussion Trend About "Entertainment"
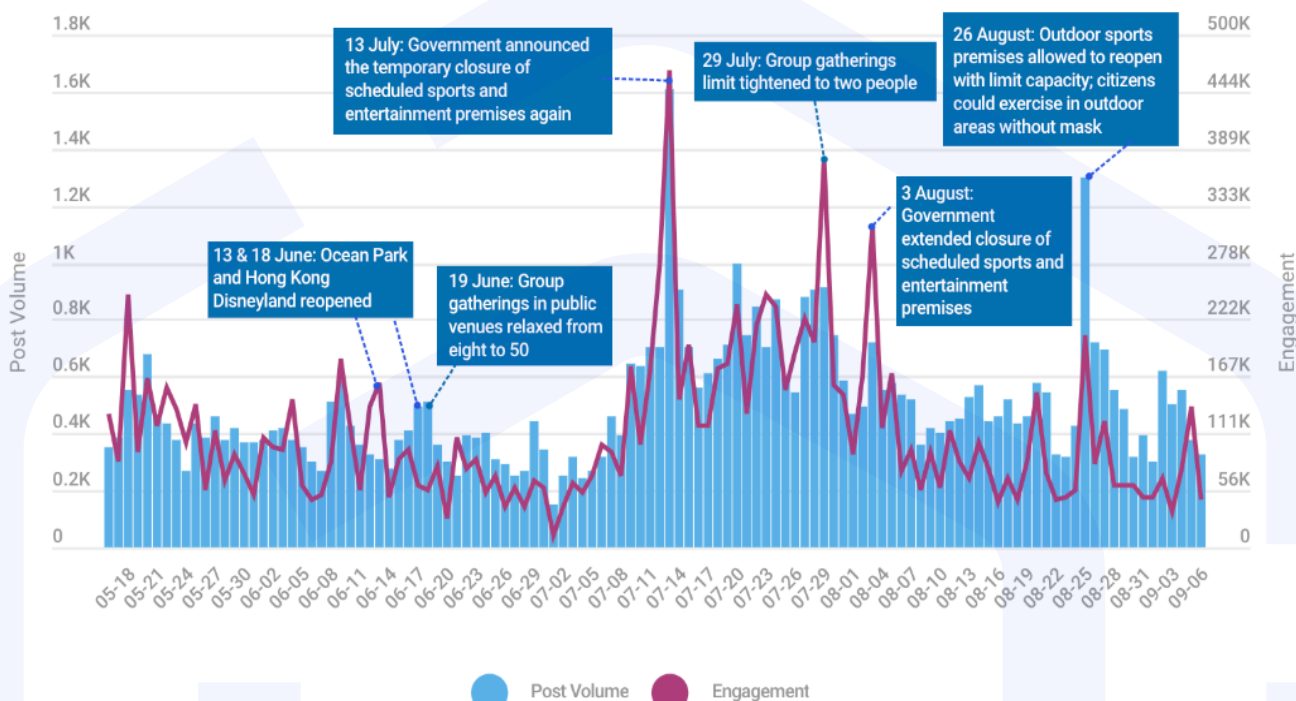
- Online discussions about "entertainment" receded since the second wave of outbreak has shown signs of easing since mid-May. The reopening of Ocean Park and the Hong Kong Disneyland in mid-June and relaxation of group gathering limit from eight to 50 had not significantly triggered online public sentiments.

- The related online public sentiment was fuelled and reached the peak on 13 July after the Government's announcement of tightening the anti-epidemic measures, with sports grounds, fitness centres, game centre, cinemas and other scheduled premises.

- The online public sentiment fell slightly, but the group gathering limit tightened to two people on 29 July and the extension of closure order on scheduled sports and entertainment premises on 3 August had triggered a small rebound for a short period of time, but the netizens' enthusiasm cooled down after the decline in number of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

- The Government relaxed partial anti-epidemic measures on 26 August, including allowing outdoor sports premises to reopen with limit capacity, and allowing citizens to exercise in outdoor areas without wearing masks. These events could only trigger insignificant netizens' discussions.

3.4 "Entertainment":
Mask Rule For Working Out Draws Criticism

The Most Concerned Posts Related to "Entertainment"

The most scary post	The saddest post	The angriest post	The happiest post
19 May	13 July	19 May	26 July
【蘋果fb live】財委會續審議54億元撥款救海洋公園	#Holiday堅熱話 消息指今年書展將延期舉行】香港爆發	【蘋果fb live】財委會續審議54億元撥款救海洋公園	話咁快又到生日正日，今年生日只有一個願望，希望每一個
香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	HolidaySmart 假期日常 (Facebook)	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	derekwong726 (Instagram)

Online Public Sentiments and Opinions Related to "Entertainment"

- The research team found that nearly 70% of netizens usually mentioned issues related to "entertainment" with negative emotions. Netizens mainly criticised the Government for over-tightening the anti-epidemic measures including group gathering limits, closure order of sports and entertainment premises, and more. Such measures did not only bring immense inconvenience to people's daily living, but also dealt a blow to the consumption and business sentiment in the city.

- Some netizens bashed the Government for mandating citizens to wear masks while exercising, adding that it was unreasonable to wear a mask if people exercise outdoors during the hot summer, as physical exertion with face coverings may lead to breathing problems and affect the workout effectiveness. Netizens also compared the performances of different brands of sports masks.

3.4 "Entertainment":
Mask Rule For Working Out Draws Criticism

Word cloud from netizens' comments

Positive

支持 疫情 疫情
跑步 書展 市民 政府
贊成 多謝 感謝 馬會
海洋公園 九巴 相信 健康
口罩 國家 行山 安全 迪士尼

Negative

免檢疫 海洋公園 馬場
肺炎 屋企 限聚 健身
政府 退票 朋友
垃圾 書展 口罩 污染
掛住 撥款 封關
戲院 gathering 跑步

- "**Book Fair(書展)**" dominated the top three ranking in the positive and negative word clouds, indicating that the postponement of Hong Kong Book Fair set off the largest netizens' reaction on the Internet. Most of the netizens who held positive opinions supported the Government's move with positive hot words such as "**support(支持)**" (6,415 times), "**thank you(多謝)**" (3,712 times), "**agree(贊成)**" (1,688 times); those who held negative opinions criticised the Government for reiterating that the book fair would be held as scheduled and underestimating the severity of the epidemic.

- Separately, netizens praised The Kowloon Motor Bus Company for giving the top priority to the safety of its employees and customers, as it was the first exhibitor to announce its withdrawal from the Book Fair. As a result, "**KMB(九巴)**" (6,864 times) ranked second on the list of positive words.

- Some netizens left negative comments blaming that the Government triggered the third wave of outbreak as 200,000 people were "**exempted from compulsory quarantine(免檢疫)**" (6,176 times) after entering Hong Kong exempted over 200,000 people from compulsory quarantine, regarding the closure order of sports and entertainment premises as putting the cart before the horse.

- "**Ocean Park(海洋公園)**" also appeared on the positive and negative hot word lists. It is worth noting that two out of the four posts in relation to "entertainment" with the strongest online public sentiment among netizens are related to Ocean Park's application for the Government funding to maintain operation, reflecting that Ocean Park operation was hard hit by the COVID-19 and the future development prospects of the park have become another discussion focus of netizens.

3.5 "Work":
Unemployment Surges
Due to Economic Downturn

3.5 "Work":
Unemployment Surges Due to Economic Downturn

60,315
Post Volume
(accounting for about 15% of post volume during the research period)

11,150,594
Engagement
(accounting for about 14% of engagement during the research period)

Neutral 7%
Positive 22%
Negative 71%
Sentiment

Wisers monitored the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on "work" from two main directions:

- Citizens' daily activities/behaviours related to "work" that had raised netizens' concern, including but not limited to:

  - It is common for citizens to work from home or work in shifts at office;

  - The epidemic and the global economic downturn have hit all walks of life, and some companies have to cut jobs to reduce operating costs. The unemployment rate in Hong Kong hit a 10-year high;

  - As takeaway meals become popular amid the epidemic, many citizens started to work as food delivers, while some started their own businesses by tapping into emerging segments such as e-commerce.

- Impact of anti-epidemic measures on "work", including but not limited to:

  - 18 May: Government introduced Distance Business Programme, which provides funding support for enterprises to develop distance business;

  - 25 May & 31 August: Government rolled out two rounds of ESS wage subsidy to provide wage subsidies to eligible employers, and offer one-off lump-sum subsidy to self-employed persons;

  - 1 June: Government provided time-limited unemployment support under Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme;

  - 14 July: Government announced that it would arrange free virus testing for high-risk groups such as staff of residential care homes for the elderly, taxi drivers, and more;

  - 20 July: Government implemented work from home arrangement for civil servants, various public and private institutions also followed suit, so as to reduce the risk of transmission.

3.5 "Work":
Unemployment Surges Due to Economic Downturn

### The Most Concerned Issues Related to "Work"
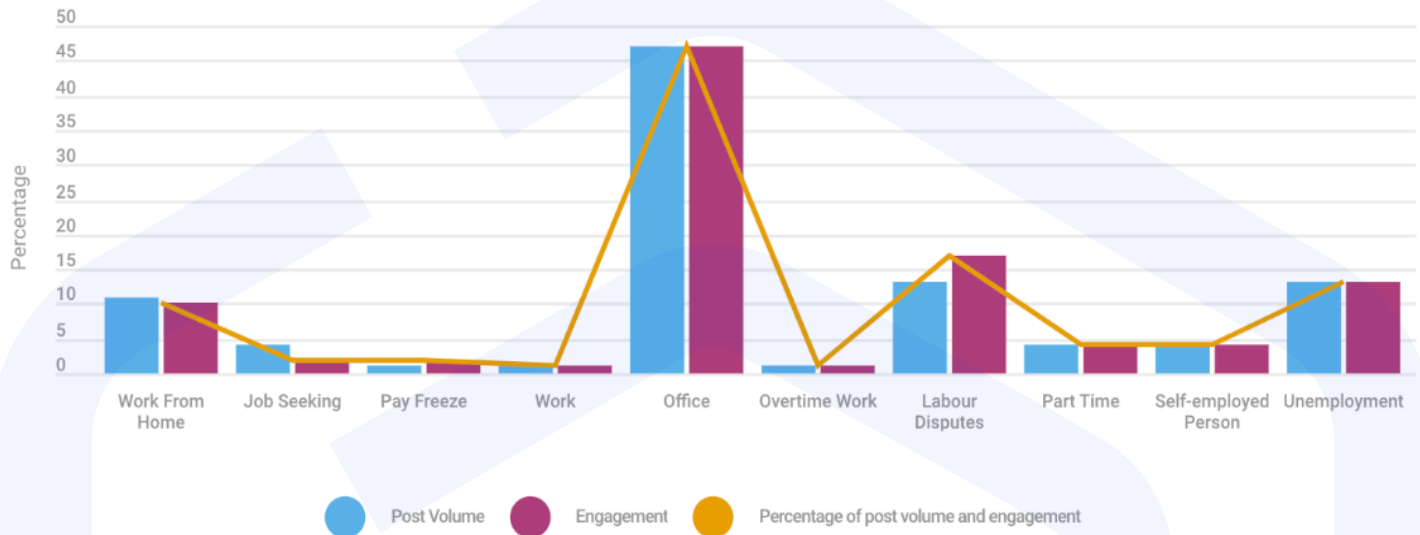
- The majority of online discussions about "work" was related to office. Online discussions about office-related issues accounted for over 40% of total post volume and total engagement during the research period, as shown on the above chart.

- Government's round-the-clock ban on dine-in services at restaurants on 29 and 30 July indirectly heated up office-related online public sentiments. Many netizens pointed out that not all wage earners could work from home or have fixed office space for meals. A large number of outdoor workers were forced to eat on the spot, they criticised the Government for imposing such unrealistic ban.

- Labour disputes and unemployment were also the frequently mentioned topics. Netizens mainly shared their hardships including furlough, pay cuts, or even outstanding wages, and worried that they would be dismissed due to economic downturn, which would affect their livelihoods.

3.5 "Work":
Unemployment Surges Due to Economic Downturn

Heated Discussion Trend About "Work"
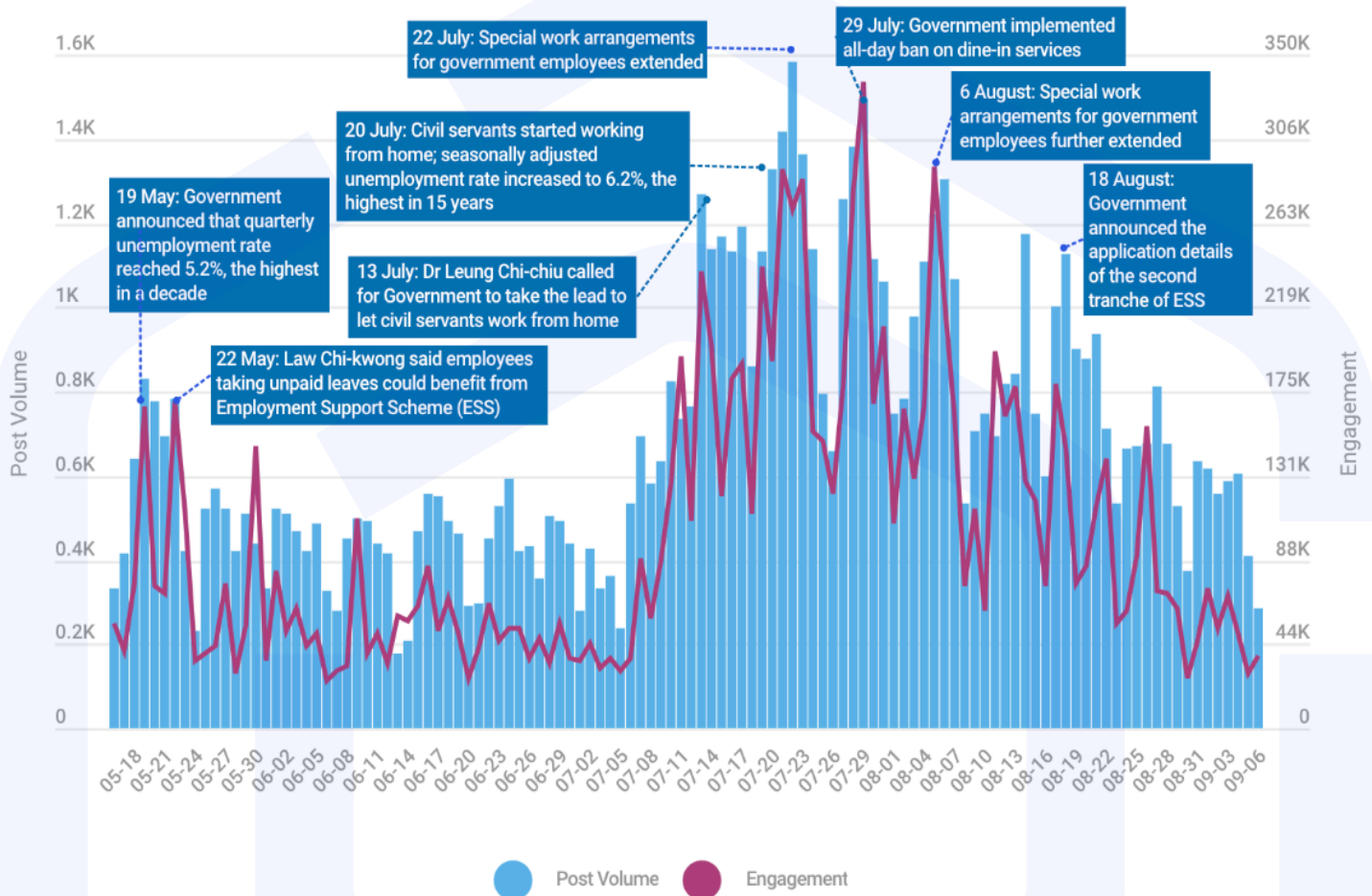
- The Government announced on 19 May that the quarterly unemployment rate reached 5.2%, the highest in nearly a decade. Although the news had triggered online public sentiment at once, netizens' concern for topics in relation to "work" did not raise significantly.

- The surge of COVID-19 cases in early July with many workers from various industries diagnosed with the virus ignited online public sentiments. The sentients continued to heat up when the Government announced the work from home arrangements of civil servants on 20 July and unemployment rate reached 6.2%. The sentients shot up to the peak when the Government announced on 22 July that the special work arrangements for civil servants would be extended, as well as the day when the ban of all-day dine-in services implemented (29 July).

- However, the online public sentiments related to "work" receded in early August as the number of confirmed cases decreased, while employees from public and private institutions also returned to their offices gradually. Although the Government's announcement of second tranche of ESS on 18 August had triggered online discussions, the sentiments still showed a continuous downward trend.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com   59

3.5 "Work":
Unemployment Surges Due to Economic Downturn

- As the happiest post was related to work from home, netizens generally welcomed the Government's move to introduce work from home arrangement and call for the employers to follow suit. However, some netizens criticised the Government for not formulating policies to push employers to allow their staff to work from home or shift to remote working, adding that the special work arrangement could not help reduce the risk of infection.

The Most Concerned Posts Related to "Work"

The most scary post	The saddest post	The angriest post	The happiest post
15 August	1 August	21 July	13 July
黑暴之後又有疫情，經濟受重創，大學畢業生求職陷	【Vlog】香港 x 限聚令｜體驗如何在街上吃飯｜全日禁	站在抗疫前線的醫護，竟然要凍薪。	因為這波疫情涉及多宗社區感染甚至幾天內累積百多宗個案，
Speak Out HK 港人講地 (Facebook)	Jer仔 (Youtube)	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	Ieoku (Facebook)

Online Public Sentiments and Opinions Related to "Work"

- Over 70% of netizens' views were negative. Contrary to other topics which netizens mainly bashed the Government's anti-epidemic measures, a majority of netizens worried about the high possibility of cluster infection when a large number of employees gathering in the office.

- Some netizens also talked about how to maintain workplace hygiene, for example, cleaning keyboards and other items more frequently, placing air purifiers, and more, to reduce the risk of infection.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com

3.5 "Work":
Unemployment Surges Due to Economic Downturn

Word cloud from netizens' comments

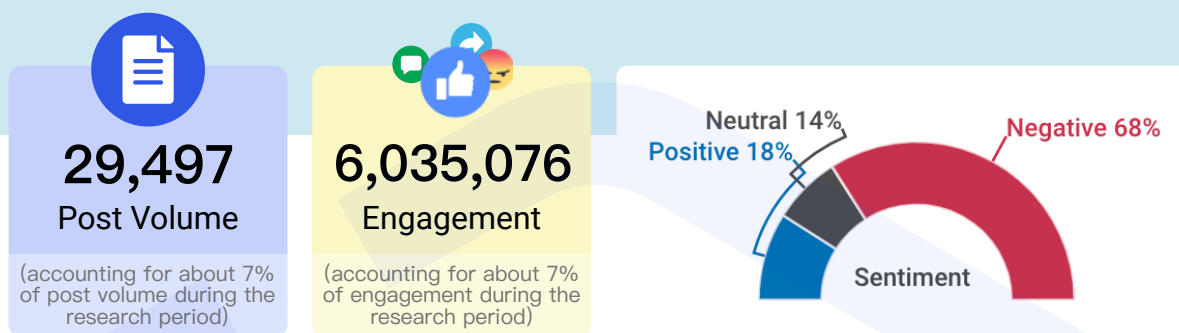Positive   Negative

- The most frequently mentioned positive hot words were "**support(支持)**" (6,488 times), "**thanks(感謝)**" (3,228 times) and "**livelihood(生計)**" (3,107 times), reflecting that most of the netizens welcomed the Government's relief schemes such as ESS to safeguard citizens' livelihoods.

- Negative hot words that topped the list were "**go to work(返工)**" (8,167 times), "**office**" (5,043 times), and "**unemployment(失業)**" (4,769 times). Most of the netizens criticised the employers for not allowing staff to work from home and neglecting their safety. Netizens also worried about their livelihoods once being dismissed.

- It is worth noting that positive hot words that ranked 7th and 14th on the list were "**police(警察)**" (2,356 times) and "**medical workers(醫護)**" (1,029 times) respectively. The research team discovered that netizens left comments to sing praise to the police and medical workers for their commitment to work amid the epidemic.

- "**Police(警察)**" (4,584 times) and "**medical workers(醫護)**" (3,545 times) were also on the list of negative hot words. It is found that netizens mainly criticised the Hospital Authority's (HA) move to follow the Government's decision to freeze civil servants' pay, deeming that it was unfair to the medical staff who worked hard to fight against the epidemic as the police had received pay rise in early this year. Meanwhile, some netizens opined that medical staff should not get the pay rise as they had staged a strike in early this year demanding the Government to close the borders, neglecting patients' interest.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com   61

3.6 "Dining":
Home Cooking & Takeaways Become New Normal

3.6 "Dining":
Home Cooking & Takeaways Become New Normal

29,497
Post Volume

(accounting for about 7% of post volume during the research period)

6,035,076
Engagement

(accounting for about 7% of engagement during the research period)

Neutral 14%
Positive 18%
Negative 68%
Sentiment

Wisers monitored the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on "dining" from two main directions:

- Citizens' daily activities/behaviours related to "work" that had raised netizens' concern, including but not limited to:
  - Due to the group gathering ban, citizens could not meal gatherings such as hotpot dinner and barbecue parties;
  - Cluster outbreak was found in many restaurants, prompting the Government to ban dine-in services at night and whole day. Not only citizens could not dine out, many outdoor workers were also affected;
  - Hong Kong's catering industry was hard hit by the ban on dine-in services, with many restaurants collapsed;
  - Under the dine-in services ban, more citizens cooked the meal themselves or ordered takeaway meals using mobile apps.
- Impact of anti-epidemic measures on "dining", including but not limited to:
  - 14 July: Government announced that it would arrange free virus testing for high-risk groups, such as employees of catering industry;
  - 15 July: Government banned dine-in services at restaurants from 6pm to 5am;
  - 29 July: Government banned dine-in services throughout the day, restaurants could only provide takeaway service;
  - 31 July: Government allowed restaurants to resume daytime dine-in services, operating at 50% venue capacity. No more than two persons may be seated together at one table.
  - 17, 25 August & 2 September: Government extended evening dine-in service hours for three times as the COVID-19 situation became stable, but the limit of two per table would remain unchanged.
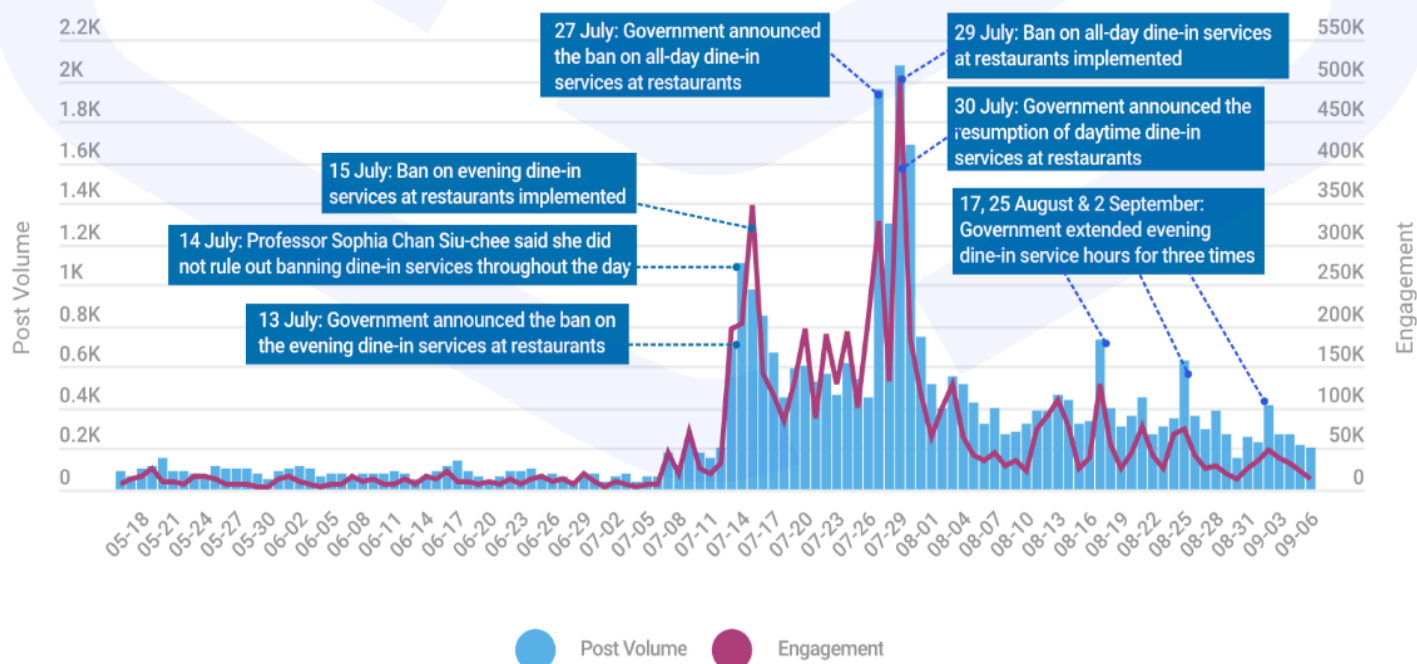
3.6 "Dining":
Home Cooking & Takeaways Become New Normal

The Most Concerned Issues Related to "Dining"
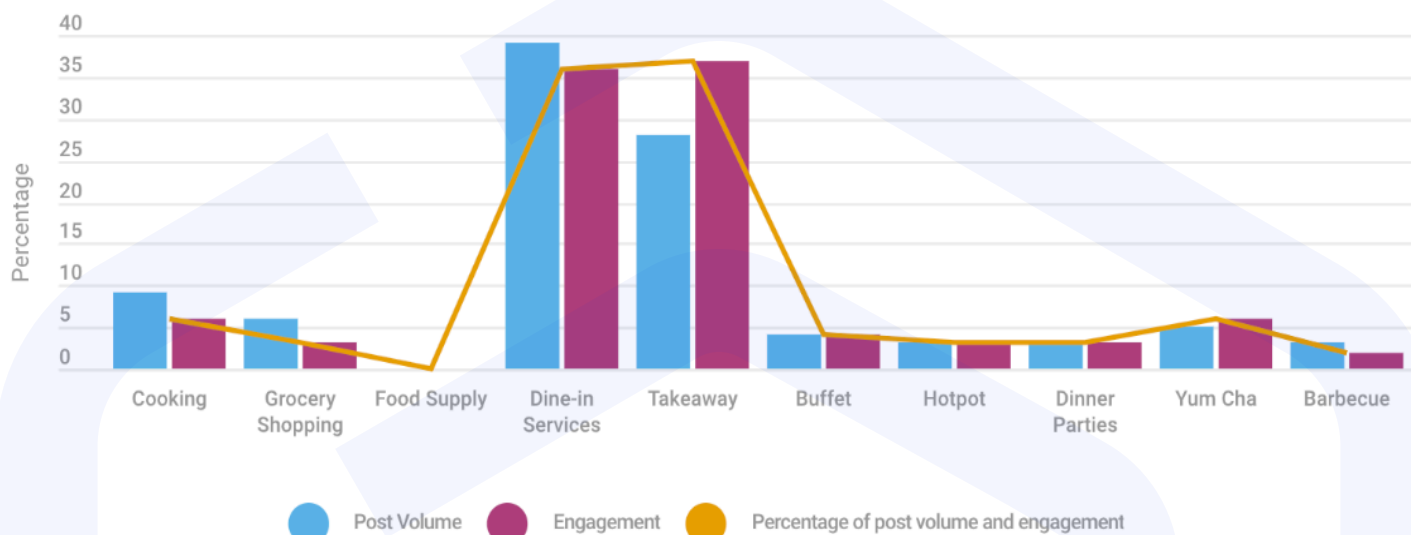
- The majority of online discussions about "dining" was related to takeaway and dine-in services in restaurants. The post volume of the aforesaid two topics accounted for 67% of total post volume and 73% of total engagement in relation to "dining" topics during the research period, as shown on the above chart.

- As for takeaway services, netizens focused on discussing the pros and cons of multiple food delivery apps on the market and whether the delivery staff received fair treatment.

Heated Discussion Trend About "Dining"

27 July: Government announced the ban on all-day dine-in services at restaurants

29 July: Ban on all-day dine-in services at restaurants implemented

15 July: Ban on evening dine-in services at restaurants implemented

30 July: Government announced the resumption of daytime dine-in services at restaurants

14 July: Professor Sophia Chan Siu-chee said she did not rule out banning dine-in services throughout the day

17, 25 August & 2 September: Government extended evening dine-in service hours for three times

13 July: Government announced the ban on the evening dine-in services at restaurants

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com   64

3.6 "Dining":
Home Cooking & Takeaways Become New Normal

- Online public sentiments in relation to "entertainment" remained flat from May to July as the second wave of outbreak has shown signs of easing and the number of COVID-19 cases has been stabilised. The sentiments heated up when the number of confirmed cases rebounded with cluster outbreak being found in many restaurants, as well as the Government announced on 13 July the ban on dine-in services at night.

- Online discussions once heated up after the Government implemented a ban on evening dine-in services at restaurants on 15 July, but the sentiments declined soon on 16 July. The trend rebounded on 27 July when the Government imposed a ban on all-day dine-in services. The hottest online public sentiment in relation to "dining" during the research period was recorded on 29 July, the first day of the all-day dine-in ban. It also recorded the highest "worrisome", "sadness" and "anger" emotions among netizens. (Please refer to Chapter Two for more details)

- Online public sentiments cooled down drastically after the Government announced on 30 July the resumption of daytime dine-in services at restaurants. Government's extension of evening dine-in service hours for three times could not significantly trigger online discussions.

▌ The Most Concerned Posts Related to "Dining"

The most scary post	The saddest post	The angriest post	The happiest post
14 July	29 July	30 July	24 July
食肆禁晚市堂食 超市再現搶購潮	食飯變成苦難⋯⋯ 蘋果攝記 攝	今天開始為疫情實施7天不可堂食，避免人群聚集交叉感	可以留喺屋企同家人食新鮮嘅海鮮餐慶祝生日，最正係隻長腳
thestandnews (Instagram)	香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	馬蹄露 Celine Ma (Facebook)	kakisham (Instagram)

▌ Online Public Sentiments and Opinions Related to "Work"

- The research team found that nearly 70% of netizens usually mentioned issues related to "dining" with negative emotions, mainly about dine-in services at restaurants. Netizens mainly questioned the infection control effectiveness of the dine-in ban, deeming that the relevant measure was too unrealistic, bringing immense inconvenience to citizens. Some netizens expressed their anxiety, sadness and anger after seeing outdoor workers braved the rain while having lunch outdoors.

3.6 "Dining":
Home Cooking & Takeaways Become New Normal

Word cloud from netizens' comments
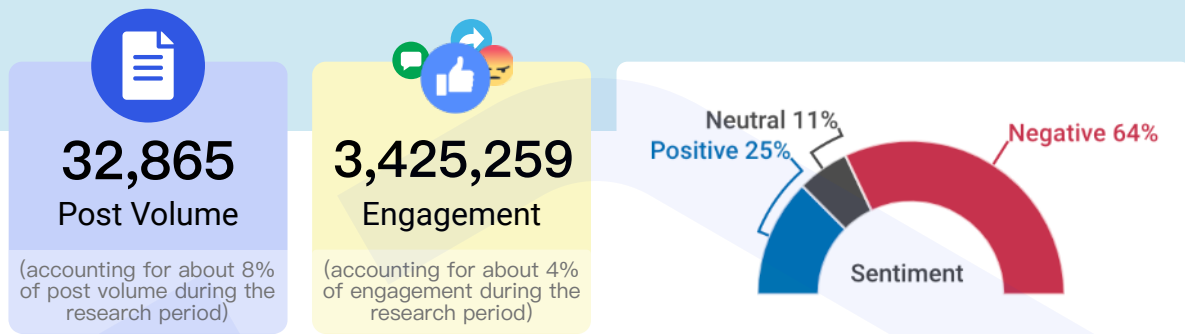
Positive

Negative

- "**Takeaway(外賣)**" appeared in the positive and negative word clouds, most of the netizens who held positive opinions praised the quality service of the food delivery service apps, and thanked the food delivery riders for rushing around to deliver the meals. Those who held negative opinions mainly criticised the food delivery riders for being late and missing the orders, and the company has not processed their refund requests for a long time.

- The most frequently mentioned positive hot words were "**keep it up(加油)**" (3,836 times) and "**fight the virus(抗疫)**" (2,597), netizens left comments mainly to encourage citizens be self-disciplined, they should go out less, cook the meals at home and buy takeaways to reduce the risk of community outbreak.

- It is worth noting that "**air fryer(氣炸鍋)**" (1,171 times) and "**recipe(食譜)**" (703 times) were also the frequently mentioned positive hot words, reflecting that netizens' demand for cooking tools and homemade food has been increasing.

- The most frequently mentioned negative hot words were "**Government(政府)**" (4,216 times), "**dining(食飯)**" (3,137 times), and "**dine-in(堂食)**" (2,787 times). Most of the netizens questioned the infection control of effectiveness, and criticised the Government for being over "**unrealistic(離地)**" (1,339 times).

3.7 "Accommodation": Heated Discussions About Cabin Hospital at AsiaWorld–Expo

3.7 "Accommodation": Heated Discussions About Cabin Hospital at AsiaWorld–Expo

32,865
Post Volume

(accounting for about 8% of post volume during the research period)

3,425,259
Engagement

(accounting for about 4% of engagement during the research period)

Neutral 11%
Positive 25%
Negative 64%
Sentiment

Wisers monitored the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on "accommodation" from two main directions:

- Citizens' daily activities/behaviours related to "accommodation" that had raised netizens' concern, including but not limited to:

  - The Government requisitioned holiday villages and public housing estates in arranging to send COVID-19 patients with mild symptoms and close contacts to community treatment facilities. However, the decision was embroiled in controversy as the facilities were too close to residential area.

  - Many confirmed patients and close contacts were admitted to quarantine facilities for treatment or medical observation. Hongkongers arriving from overseas countries had to undergo 14-day compulsory quarantine at hotels.

  - In response to worsening COVID-19 situation, the Government gradually tightened the quarantine exemption measures for sea and air crews, and restricted their stay in Hong Kong;

  - The COVID-19 epidemic triggered economic downturn, hampering the desire of citizens to purchase properties. Property market became quieter due to decline of transaction volume.

- Impact of anti-epidemic measures on "accommodation", including but not limited to:

  - 8 July: All air crew and sea crew members must undergo virus testing upon arrival;

  - 24 July: Community quarantine facilities at Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village were put into use to receive patients with mild symptoms;

  - 29 July: Sea crew change arrangement for all vessels was temporarily suspended;

  - 1 August: Community quarantine facilities at AsiaWorld Expo (AWE) were put into use;

  - In response to the third wave of COVID-19 outbreak in July, Chief Executive Carrie Lam asked the Central Government for help in fighting against the virus, including enhancing testing capability, sending mainland personnel to Hong kong to help build the treatment and isolation facilities, and more.

3.7 "Accommodation":
Heated Discussions About Cabin Hospital at AsiaWorld-Expo

### ▌ The Most Concerned Issues Related to "Accommodation"
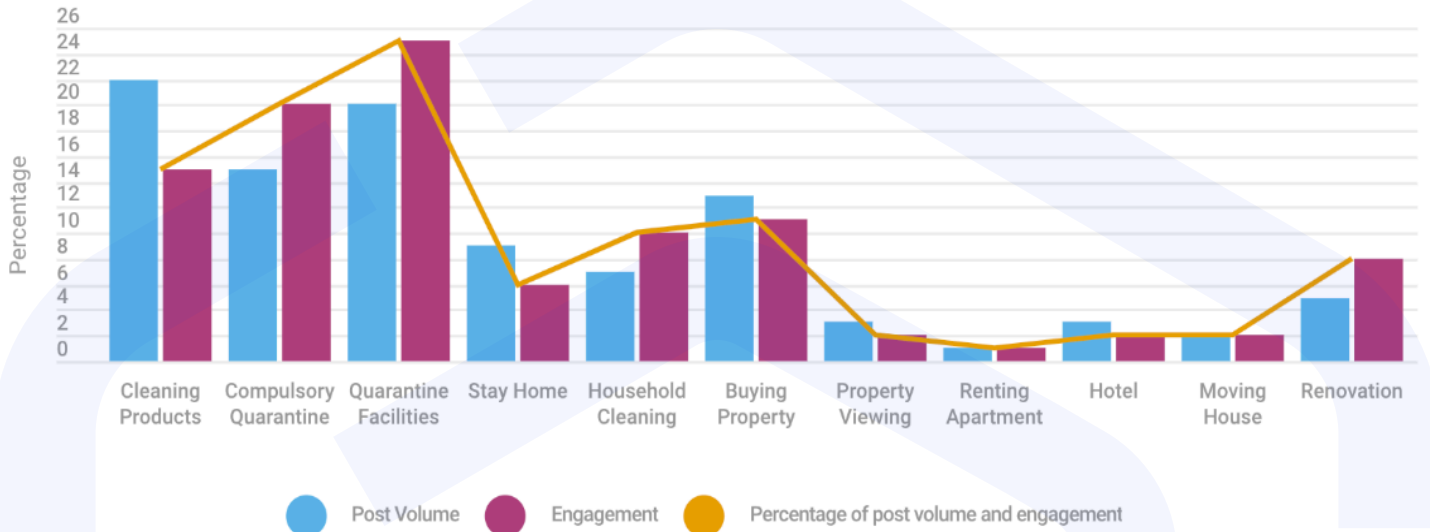
- The post volume and engagement related to "accommodation" accounted for less than 10% of the total during the research period, ranking the last among seven in aspects of life. This indicated that citizens had the least response to the impact of the epidemic on their "accommodation".

- As seen from the above chart, the online discussions about "accommodation" mainly focus on the quarantine facilities, compulsory quarantine arrangement and cleaning products. The post volume and engagement of these three topics accounted for nearly 60% of the total post volume and engagement in relation to "accommodation" during the research period.

- As for the compulsory quarantine regulation, netizens opined that the Government's quarantine exemption arrangements were too lenient, many sea crew members entered the city without undergoing virus tests, thus leading to third wave of outbreak; as for the discussions about cleaning products, netizens mainly compared the price and effectiveness in disinfection between different brands of cleaning products.

3.7 "Accommodation":
Heated Discussions About Cabin Hospital at AsiaWorld-Expo

Heated Discussion Trend About "Accommodation"
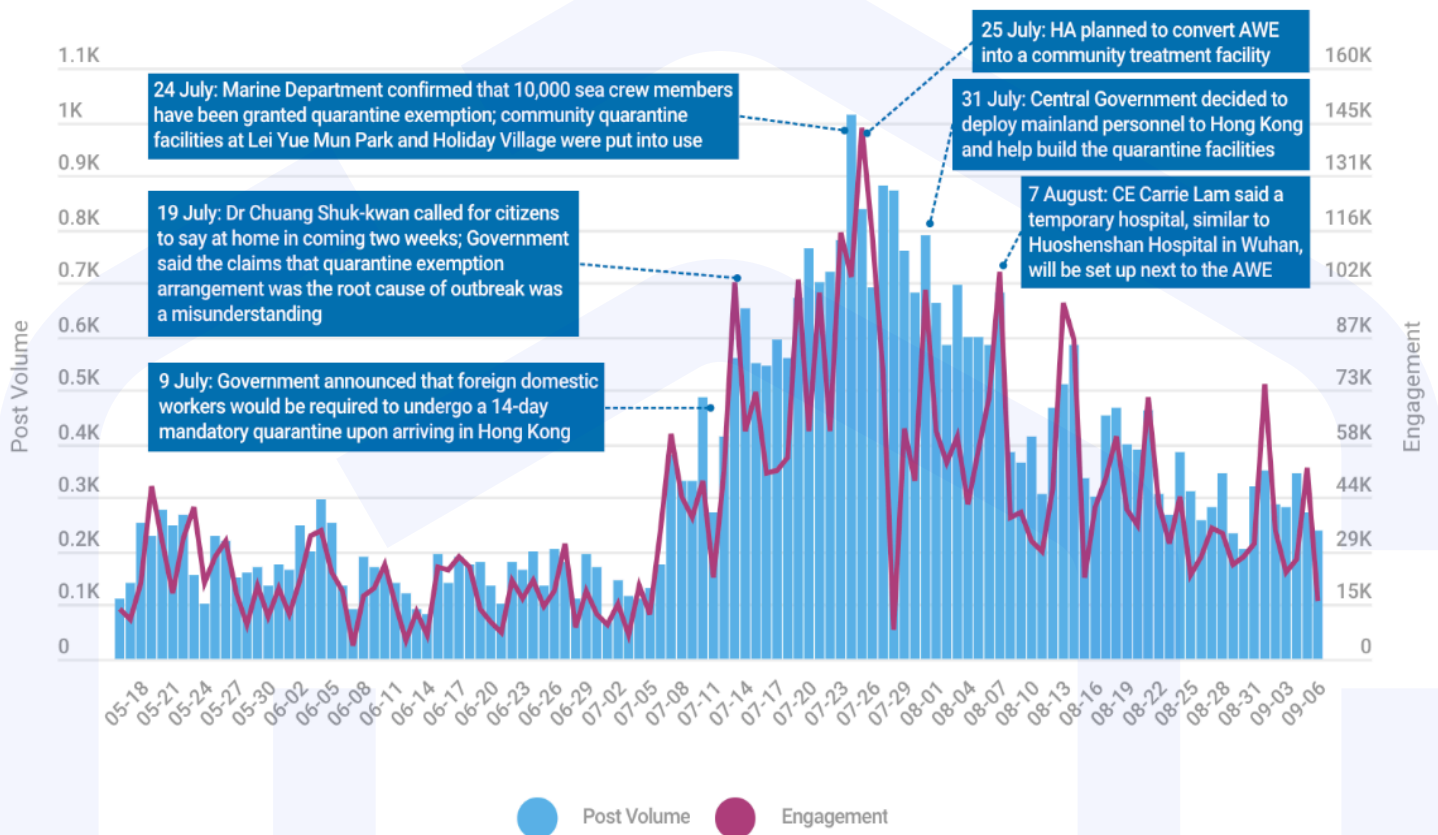
- Online public sentiments in relation to "accommodation" remained at low level as the second wave of outbreak has shown signs of easing in mid-May. More confirmed cases of unknown origins reported in early July, heating up online discussions on topics such as compulsory quarantine arrangement.

- Online discussions related to quarantine exemption arrangement as the root cause of third wave of outbreak were further fuelled up on the day (19 July) the Government said the claim was a "misunderstanding", followed by Dr Chuang's advice to citizens that they should stay at home to battle with the virus. The sentiment reached the peak on 25 July as the HA announced that AWE would be converted to community treatment centre.

- Although there was a slight decline in online public sentiments in relation to "accommodation", it was maintained at a definite level after the Central Government announced on 31 July that it would send personnel to Hong Kong to assist in the construction of quarantine facilities; yet the online discussions on "accommodation" cooled down as the number of confirmed cases has started to fall since August.

3.7 "Accommodation":
Heated Discussions About Cabin Hospital at AsiaWorld-Expo

The Most Concerned Posts Related to "Accommodation"

The most scary post	The saddest post	The angriest post	The happiest post
24 July	14 August	31 July	2 August
亞博「方艙醫院」內櫳首曝光	確診武漢肺炎的張伯（化名）　由進入檢疫中心至離世　親	亞博館「社區治療中心」現美國自由神像照 葛珮帆：我	搬屋game確實真係好好玩Thank You My sweetie，謝謝各
香港蘋果日報 (Facebook)	thestandnews (Instagram)	Stand News 立場新聞 (Facebook)	Natalie Lai 叻叻 (Facebook)

Online Public Sentiments and Opinions Related to "Accommodation"

- The research team found that 64% of netizens usually mentioned issues related to "accommodation" with negative emotions. Netizens mainly criticised the Government for naming the community treatment facilities at AWE as "mobile cabin hospital", and singing praise to the Central Government in a high profile for the deployment of mainland personnel to Hong Kong, neglecting Hong Kong medical workers' hard work.

- Some netizens criticised that the Government's quarantine facilities were primitive, adding that the location of facilities, which were close to the residential area, may increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com

3.7 "Accommodation":
Heated Discussions About Cabin Hospital at AsiaWorld-Expo

Word cloud from netizens' comments

Positive

Negative

- The most frequently mentioned positive hot words were "**support(支持)**" (1,263 times), "**keep it up(加油)**" (978 times) and "**thanks(感謝)**" (708 times). Netizens left comments mainly to praise the Government and medical workers for completing so many planning and preparations with regards to quarantine facilities, and thanked the Central Government for sending the support team to help build the facilities, relieving the pressure of the overburdened health system.

- The most frequently mentioned negative hot words included "**Government(政府)**" (1,367 times) and "**quarantine(檢疫)**" (1,021 times). Most of the netizens opined that the Government's denial of persons exempted from quarantine have become the source of "**virus transmission(播毒)**" (856 times), and the Government had to roll out various epidemic control measures as a result.

- In addition, "**mainland(大陸)**" (925 times) and "**ingratiate(擦鞋)**" (570 times) were also on the list of negative hot words. Netizens suspected the Government was trying to ingratiate Beijing government as it had repeatedly asked for the Central Government's assistance in fighting the epidemic, and kept naming the community treatment facility at "**AWE (亞博)**" (803 times) as the Hong Kong version of the "**Huoshenshan(火神山)**" (390 times) hospital.

- In view of the fact that the Central Government had also sent experts to Hong Kong to assist in the preparation works of Universal Community Testing Programme, thus "**testing(檢測)**" (654 times), "**send to China(送中)**" and "**DNA**" (252 times) became the negative hot words in relation to "accommodation".

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Conclusion

Wisers Fights Against COVID-19 with Hongkongers Along The Way

Since the beginning of this year, Wisers Research Team has been observing the changes in Hong Kong amid the epidemic. We listen to the voices of Hongkongers and try to learn about their thoughts; we hope to understand citizens' feelings and fight the virus with them along the way using our own methods.

The way we listen to public opinions is always broad and objective: During the 250-day research period, Wisers Research Team has generated three Epidemic Index reports after studying a total of 1.236 million posts and 330 million netizens' engagement since January this year. Our advanced and reliable monitoring system detected a total of 29.15 million comments, while we adopted innovative technologies to interpret the sentiments and evaluations of citizens conveyed in their comments. These two advantages allowed us to carry out down-to-earth, precise and in-depth analysis. These three reports consist of various analysis and conclusions. However, as a summary for the entire research period, we believed that the following revelations are worthwhile for future reference and reflection:

1. Compared with the epidemic prevention and control itself, ensuring the abundant supply of medical supplies in the early stage of the epidemic could play a greater role in stabilising public sentiment, as observed from the first report that "masks" and other medical supplies have almost dominated online public sentiments.

2. The epidemic is not solely a public health issue, but also a political topic. In fact, topics and hot words related to the "Police" and "border closure" have appeared throughout the entire research period and were mentioned repeatedly in the discussions of different anti-epidemic measures. They have become a key factor influencing the public acceptance of anti-epidemic measures in addition to "masks". The medical workers' strike was also one of topics that heated up discussions. In addition to professional estimates of the epidemic, we can therefore infer that political sensitivity is pivotal in public communication.

3. The importance of response timing: The ever-changing online public sentiments consist of lingering focus such as police power, border closure, and more, as well as some with a short period of attention. It would be counterproductive if the relevant authorities missed the right timing to respond to public sentiments. For example, the government's decision to distribute free masks took place when the supply of medical supplies gradually resumed and relevant sentiments receded, hence it failed to arouse heated discussions.

Which anti-epidemic measures introduced by the Government were the most popular ones? Why some measures would earn the discontent of Hongkongers? Which measure did not raise the public's attention? Wisers Research Team has analysed them one by one in Wisers Online Epidemic Report 2.0 and in this report.

(852) 2948 3880   www.wisers.com

Conclusion

It has been a long fight against the COVID-19 over the past nine months. The challenges facing the Hongkongers, society and the Government were also the opportunities for better self-understanding. We are grateful to make contributions to provide some public sentiment reference for everyone, so as to gear up for the unknown future.

-End-