Cat 4 Resource Development

Group 04-55

Understanding Communism and Capitalism

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1. Abstract

This project aimed to educate Hwa Chong Institution students about how two economic systems, communism and capitalism worked and their pros and cons and also find and correct common misconceptions students have about communism and capitalism.

2. Introduction

2.1 Rationale for project

Many students are not taught about the different economic systems, mainly communism and capitalism, in school and not many of them will go out of their way to learn more about them, hence many students are unclear on how these economic systems work. Furthermore, many students assume that communism is bad and always fail, while capitalism is good and will always work, due to the influence of pro-capitalist propaganda that is prevalent in every corner of our society.

2.2 Objective

This project was aimed to educate HCI students who are interested in these topics and want to learn more about them, clearing possible misconceptions through the use of a website. A game was then created to supplement their learning by giving them a feel of how both political systems work and affect their countries.

3. Review

Existing products such as the Communist Manifesto and pages on Wikipedia are lengthy, and uses a lot of technical terms that may be hard for students with little knowledge to understand. On the other hand YouTube videos, although easier to understand, are less detailed, and sometimes with biased and incorrect information. Existing games such as Risk and Ideology: The War of Ideas do not focus mainly on communism and capitalism, and the latter has complex gameplay mechanics which are irrelevant to the player's understanding of the two economic systems. Other games do not address the fact that random events, such as revolutions and market crashes, may occur and harm the society.

4. Methodology

4.1 Needs Analysis

Before embarking on this project, we did a quiz to test about 60 HCI students on their knowledge of communism and capitalism for needs analysis. From the quiz, we found out that the most students' understanding of the two economic systems, communism and capitalism, were very shallow. Some of them had even no idea of what communism and capitalism is.

3) Which of the following is true about communism in general? *

- 🟩 Everything is shared equally amongst the people of the state   48
- 🟩 Everything is owned by the state/government   41
- 🟥 Private companies can own means of production   5
- 🟥 There are still class divides in a communist state   30
- 🟥 Everyone has the same things, and lives in the same condition in a communist state   37
- 🟥 There are taxes in communist states   21
- 🟥 People can set their own prices for things in a communist state   7

4) Which of the following is true about capitalism in general? *

- 🟩 Everything is owned by private companies/individuals   27
- 🟩 There are class divides in capitalist states   44
- 🟥 Capitalism is a free market   38
- 🟥 In a capitalist state, when one earns money, another person will lose money   32
- 🟥 Capitalism is unfair as people are controlled by those which has money   34
- 🟥 Capitalism causes people to work together and develop as a whole   19
- 🟥 Capitalism is the direct opposite of communism   35

In the graphs above, we tested students on how much they knew about communism and capitalism with a quiz. In both graphs, more than half of the respondents chose the wrong answers

This showed that there was a need for us to create resources to help them better understand communism and capitalism.

4.2 Construction of Resources

4.2.1 Board Game

Examples of cards in Board Game

Revolution

The people aren't happy.
A revolution occurs.
Give a country to the
Communist side.

Hard Labour

People are chosen and
sent to gulags.
Add 12 to food, and take
away 3 morale from any
of your own countries.

Examples of Counters that can be used in the game

5 Morale   5 Food

The Board

2 months after proposal evaluation, we started planning the mechanics for the game, such as the cards and the board and rules, how each card would affect each society and how the rules prevented the game from being unbalanced and also at the same time demonstrated the pros and cons of communism and capitalism. For the cards and counters, we did not laminate them as it would be too costly so we printed them out on paper and pasted them on drawing block instead to make them more durable. For the board, we were unable to obtain a game board that is customized for our game, and ordering one would be too costly, hence we bought a world map with simplified borders for the board. We drew custom borders on the map so there would be less countries and the game would be more playable.

4.2.2 Website

Link: https://455capcom.wixsite.com/website/communism

Upon the beginning of the project, we did our research on both economic systems, Communism and Capitalism and crafted a survey for needs analysis.We collated the most common misconceptions that the students who did the survey had. We addressed them in the website using knowledge gathered from our research and explained how each economic system works with simpler language that is easily understood by students with little to no background knowledge of the topic.

4.3 Pilot Test

We then conducted pilot tests in Term 3 Week 2 to test the usefulness of our product. We asked a few of our classmates and friends from other classes to read our website and play our board game and give feedback on how the game and website had helped them to understand communism and capitalism better. Many of them said that the website was helpful in deepening their knowledge about communism and capitalism and the game was helpful in giving them hands-on experience on roughly how the economic systems work. Below is a survey that we conducted before and after the participants looked at the website.
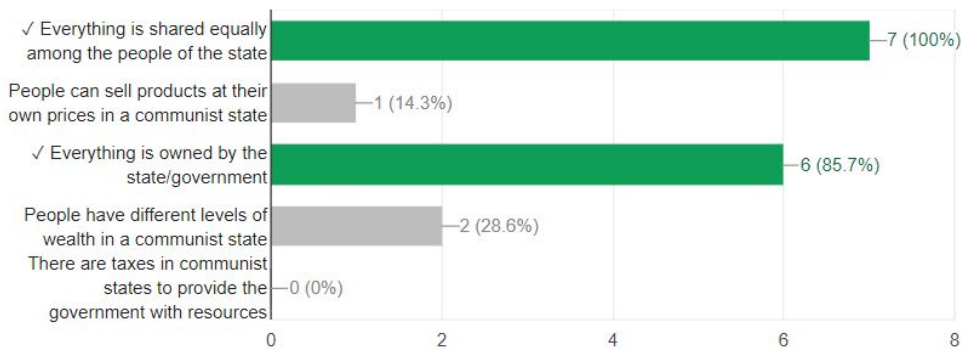
Which of the following is true about communism in general?

0 / 7 correct responses
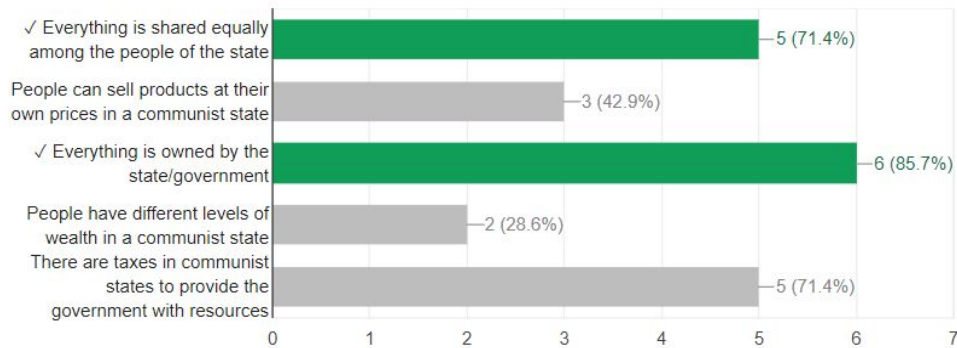
Which of the following is true about communism in general?

5 / 7 correct responses

5. Outcome and Discussion

5.1 Result

In the end, our project consisted of a website that explained the basics of communism and capitalism and debunked major misconceptions and a game which helped students to understand first-hand roughly how a communist or capitalist state works, and the pros and cons of each economic system.

5.2 Limitations

The website could have had addressed more misconceptions and also elaborated more on the variations of both economic systems. Also, the game could have consisted of more counters and more balanced mechanics, which would make it easier to play. With these improvements, we are confident that it would make our project better and simpler for students to understand. The game can also be improved with more game mechanics, as the current one is quite basic. More cards can be made, along with more effects. The game can also be made to give a more in-depth view of communism and capitalism.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Challenges

As we embarked on this project, several challenges and problems were encountered. To overcome them, different tactics were used. One challenge we faced would be time constraints. Although the project lasted throughout the year, half the time was spent studying for exams and hence we had little time to work on the project. Another problem we faced was getting reliable and unbiased information from the Internet for our research. Many websites we used to research on communism and capitalism were pro-capitalist, some even giving false information, and it was difficult to find sources which were neutral in their stand.

6.2 Overcoming challenges

In the end, we overcome this challenge by first reading the Communist Manifesto, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, which provided us with an understanding of communism deep enough to allow us to determine whether a site was giving biased or false information. Through this, we learnt how to fact-check for fake and misleading information. Another challenge we faced was not having enough experience in board game designing. We did not know how to make durable playing cards or even make a

balanced game mechanic. However, we overcame this challenge by playing some of the existing board games and based off some of our mechanics from them.

7. Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all of our project members who have contributed their all to make this project a success, and we would also like to thank our mentor on guiding us through this project and providing us with useful tips and suggestions on how our product could be improved.

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