

# **CATEGORY 4: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Group 4-87**

## **SHADES OF KUEH: PROJECT WRITTEN REPORT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Shades of Kueh was an online package consisting of a variety of resources which aimed to raise awareness for traditional kueh in Singapore among secondary school students, and to educate them on its history and cultural significance in Singapore. It included an all-in-one website, with useful information on the origination of kueh, a comprehensive food guide to the best kueh shops in Singapore, a kueh catalogue containing information of prominent kuehs and a food blog reviewing our visits to these shops. In addition, we had included a documentary showcasing a traditional kueh shop at Everton Park, which includes an insightful sharing with its owner. A downloadable food manual could also be found on the website, which includes information in bite-sized pieces. These resources served to pique an interest in Hwa Chong students to find out more about kueh, and entice them to try out these shops for themselves, in an attempt to preserve kueh culture in Singapore. Furthermore, this project could contribute to Singapore's bid for nomination of hawker culture into UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritages as kueh is a significant part of its culture.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Rationale**

With the increasing influence of western culture, young people are losing touch with their traditional roots and are more attracted to western pastries, like cupcakes and pancakes, rather than traditional pastries such as kueh. Furthermore, kueh is slowly losing its place in the local food scenes as business has decreased due to lower levels of interest displayed by young people. It is important to preserve this culture by raising awareness and support for it among young Singaporeans. Hence, Shades of Kueh aimed to raise awareness for kueh and entice secondary school students to eat kueh.

### **1.2 Objective**

The objectives of Shades of Kueh were to raise awareness for kueh and to entice secondary school students to eat kueh.

### 1.3 Target Audience

The target audience was secondary school students aged 13-16 years old.

### 1.4 Resources

A website including a summary of the history of kueh, a kueh catalogue and food blog, a documentary showcasing the operations of Ji Xiang confectionery and an interview with its owner, and a downloadable kueh booklet were created as resources for this project.



Fig. 1.1. A screenshot of our website

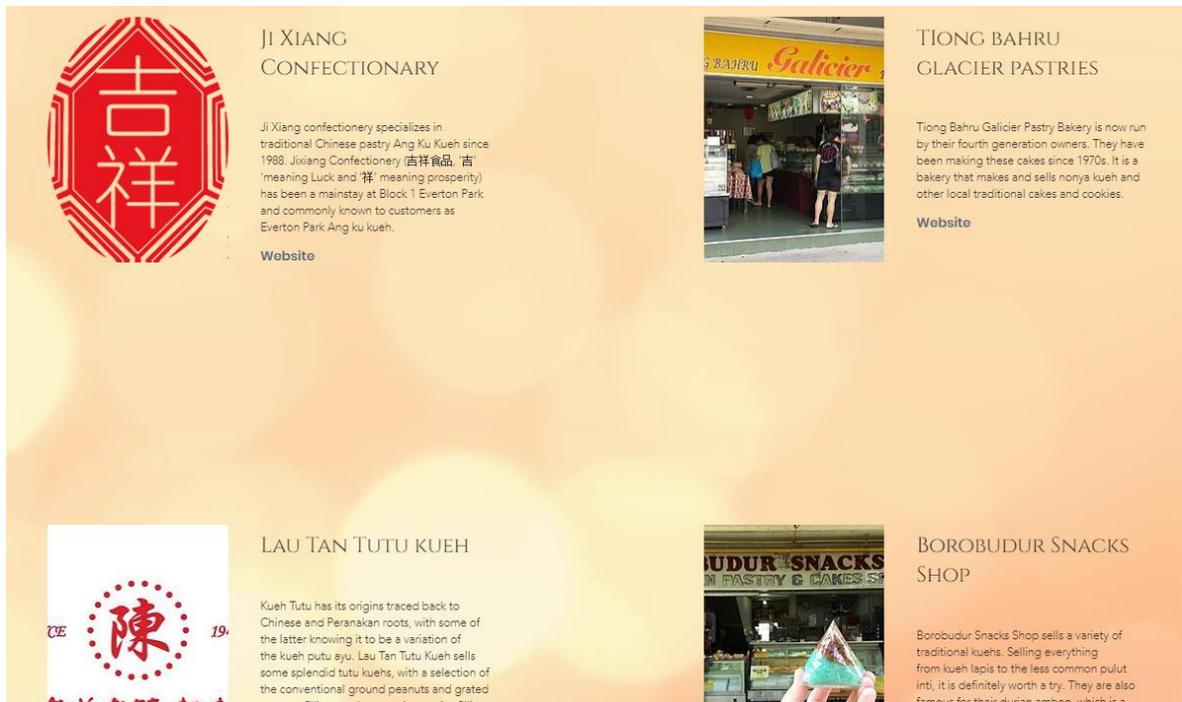


Fig. 1.2. Our food blog



Fig. 1.3. Screenshot of the kueh booklet

## **2 REVIEW**

Other existing websites such as NHB's and Our Singapore Heritage website, meant to include information pertaining to Singapore's local heritage and our nomination of hawker culture into UNESCO's list of intangible cultural, failed to include information about kueh and its origin, which is a core part of our local food scene. Similar websites which specialise in blogging of local food in Singapore, including kueh, such as Lady Iron Chef and Seth Lui's website showed a non-exhaustive list of kueh with lengthy texts, making it difficult for readers to understand the information and decide on a location to visit. More unique, less well-known types of kueh such as Harum Manis are also not included in their websites. According to The Straits Times, there are currently over 40 items inscribed in Unesco's list of intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding, one of them being kueh in Singapore. More can be done to preserve this culture. From our interview with Mr Toh Poh Seek, owner of Ji Xiang Confectionery which has been selling kueh for over 30 years, he says in Mandarin "(Making kueh) is a tradition passed down from our forefathers ... and is definitely worth preserving ... Less young people are willing to take up this dying trade as the income is not good". This further justifies the need for our project to encourage more young people to appreciate and expose themselves to this culture in order to keep these traditional shops running.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Needs Analysis

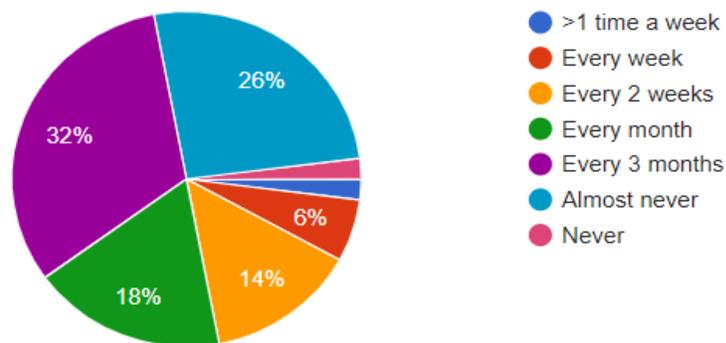
We conducted a survey to gauge how knowledgeable secondary school students were on various kinds of kueh found in Singapore. Our survey results showed that a majority of the students only knew about 1 or 2 types of kueh, and that they rarely ate kueh. A large proportion of those surveyed said that they were very interested to learn more about kueh. This shows the relevance of our project, as a majority of the respondents expressed a great interest in learning about kueh, and our previous review showed that existing resources failed to educate the public about kueh. After conversing with the owner of Ji Xiang Confectionery, it further reinforced the need for this project and confirmed that the number of young people eating kueh has been dwindling over the years.

#### 3.2 Survey Results

Our survey results showed that the popularity of kueh was rapidly declining in youths (Fig. 2.1), as well as their self-perceived lack of knowledge about kueh culture in Singapore (Fig. 2.2).

##### How often do you eat kueh?

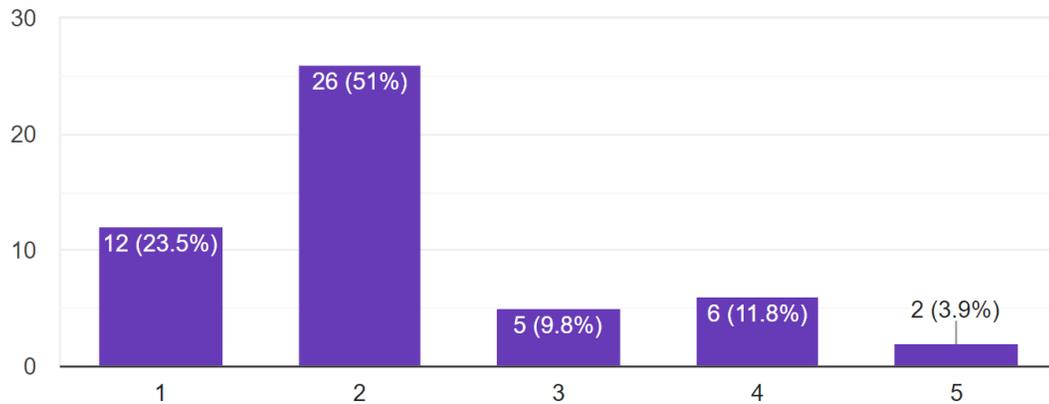
50 responses



**Fig. 2.1.** Pie graph showing frequency of secondary school students eating kueh

## Rate your knowledge on kueh culture in Singapore

51 responses



**Fig. 2.2.** Secondary school students evaluating their knowledge of kueh culture

### 3.3 Development of Resources

Visits were conducted by our group members to various kueh shops such as Tiong Bahru Glacier pastries, Lau Tan Tutu Kueh and Borobudur Snacks Shop to review their food firsthand. Pictures and videos were taken to be included in our website. An interview was conducted with the owner of Ji Xiang Confectionery to gain deeper insight on the issue of dying kueh culture in the younger generation. A kueh tasting session was done in the school library on Racial Harmony Day, where our documentary was played and food manuals were given out, to give students exposure to kueh and allow them to develop a taste for it. Homemade recipes from our groupmates' grandparents were also included into the website for interested students to try making kueh from scratch. We also visited Kueh Appreciation Day and covered the various activities and food offered at the event on our website.

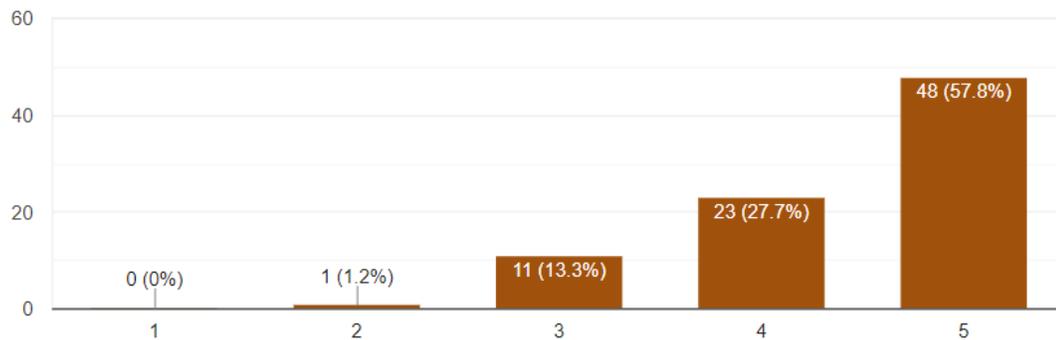
### 3.4 Pilot Test

We conducted 2 pilot test on 2 separate groups of students. The first group comprised of our classmates. During this pilot test, we showed our classmates our website and brochure. We received a lot of positive feedback, as well as some criticisms on what our resources were lacking and parts that could be improved. Thereafter, we made improvements on the various resources. For example, for our website, we added more types of kueh, categorised them and added the famous shops that sell them.

We conducted a second pilot test during the Racial Harmony Kueh Tasting, where we collaborated with Library Council. This time, we showed students our documentary and brochures, and obtained valuable feedback on the impact that our resources had on them. We had an overwhelmingly positive response from those who viewed our documentary and our kueh booklet. Various teachers there also gave us their feedback on our resources, and areas which could be improved such as adding context to our documentary.

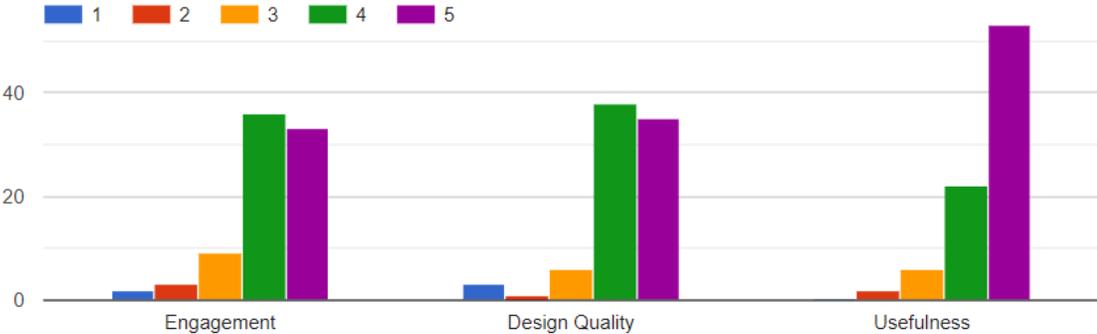
How likely are you to eat kueh after viewing our resources?

83 responses



**Fig. 3.1.** A bar graph showing how our resources entice secondary school students to try out more kueh

How would you rate our website out of 5?



**Fig. 3.2.** Our survey results showing the positive feedback our respondents gave

## **4 OUTCOME & DISCUSSION**

The results and comments obtained from students that tried our resources were encouraging and demonstrate the positive effects that our resources had on their perception and interest for kueh.

To make the website more concise and easily accessible, it could be converted into a smartphone app which would encourage more tech-savvy students to visit it. Our resources could have been further improved in terms of publicising, possibly through social media platforms such as Instagram and through various posters around the school with QR codes of our websites. Similar events to the Racial Harmony Kueh Tasting could also be held in conjunction with other cultural festivals such as the upcoming Hari Raya and the Teachers' Day Carnival to raise more awareness in school about kueh. In addition, we wish to collaborate with the High School Council to conduct more school kueh deliveries for students to sample various kinds of kueh.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Shades of Kueh was a demanding project to undertake. Through this project, we learnt how to liaise with external organisations as we had to schedule our visits to the various kueh shops to confirm that they were open to being interviewed and free to do so. In addition, we had to do thorough research on the various kinds of kueh and their origins in order to accurately sort them into their various categories. It required much creativity to constantly consider how to improve our resources, and more importantly, make them palatable to our target audience: secondary school students whom often had more interest towards western pastries. Additionally, we had to make time to sample kueh and conduct our pilot tests together as our busy schedules often had clashing events. In the end, it was our undying passion for this project that kept us going throughout the gruelling months of our Secondary 4 year.

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