

# Singapore's Hawker Centers: Our Heritage

Project Work Written Report  
Group 4-090

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## **Abstract**

Our project aims to promote hawker culture and hawker centers in Singapore with the creation of a resource package(website) to provide people with information on hawker centers and why they are better compared to restaurants and encourage people to frequently eat at hawker centers for meals and continue to eat there to keep hawker centers alive and to educate the younger generation on the positive aspects of hawker centers. Most of the young people are constantly on their phones so if we create a website, more people would be inclined to use the website in their spare time

## **1. Introduction**

### **Rationale**

As many of the younger generations nowadays gravitate towards fast food restaurants, we hope to help preserve the hawker culture and promote hawker centers among the younger generation.

### **Objectives**

Through our project, we hope to promote hawker centers among the younger generations to encourage them to eat more at hawker centers. We also hope to educate them on the importance of hawker centers and the proper behaviours at hawker centers, such as return your trays after use.

### **Target Audience**

Our target audience are Upper Primary and Lower Secondary students aged 10-14. We chose this group of people because they will be the future customer groups of hawker centers when they grow up, thus it is important to educate them and change their negative mindset about hawker centers from young.

## Resources

We would be creating a website and we would be including information on the importance of hawker centers, a short description of some of the popular hawker food and a short and fun quiz to add on as an interactive element of our website.

## 2. Review

### Why is it necessary to have hawker centers in Singapore?

Hawker centers are a convenient eating location if you are in a rush as they are found almost everywhere in Singapore, and they also serve delectable meals at a cheap cost and the food is produced at an extremely fast pace so you are guaranteed to get a quick, cheap and easy meal at any hawker center found in Singapore.

The following is a quote from the National Heritage Board's website on hawker culture: *"Hawker Culture in Singapore is an integral part of the way of life for Singaporeans, where people from all walks of life gather at hawker centres to dine and bond over their favourite hawker food, which are prepared by hawkers. Over the years, this unique combination of food, space and community has evolved into a microcosm of Singapore's multicultural society, with stalls selling Chinese, Malay, Indian and many other diverse types of dishes."*

This shows that hawker centers are more than just a place for people to have a meal, it is a place where Singaporeans are able to interact with people from different races and have a taste of other culture's delicacies. Therefore, hawker centers are an important part of Singapore's heritage and represents Singapore's multi-racial society and the harmony between Singaporeans of

different backgrounds, thus it should be preserved and continued. Besides, on the NHB website, there has already been 1.4 million pledges to support hawker culture for the UNESCO nomination. This further shows how important hawker centers are to Singaporeans.

### **Consumers view of hawker centers(from our survey)**

- > 'The cleaners are so slow to clear the table!'
- > 'It is so hot in a hawker center!'
- > 'This place is so dirty!'

### **We are here to change these views into:**

- > 'WOW! Hawker centers have such large selection of food to choose from!'
- > 'Hawker centers are so near my house! It is so convenient!'
- > 'Hawker centers are on the first level while the wet market is on the second level! So convenient!'

## **3. Methodology**

### **Needs analysis**

With a growing number of youths picking fast food restaurants over hawker centres, we find an urgent need to convince them to perhaps consider hawker centres as a viable option for their everyday meals a second time. Hawker culture has been carried on since the 20th century, but sadly it's going to come to a close if we do not find enough future customers. Among this pool, the younger generation - specifically secondary school students - are perhaps the best candidates as the future customers of hawker centres as they more or less have the same mindset as us.

## Survey results

In March, we conducted a survey with 125 people in total. Of these 125 people, 63.2% (79 people) were lower secondary students (Secondary 1 and 2).

Brief results of this survey are as follows:

> 59.2% (74 people) preferred hawker centres.

> People prefer hawker centres because of the increased convenience, cheaper food and larger variety.

> People who prefer fast food restaurants like them for their increased cleanliness, better amenities (such as WiFi) and more comfortable dining environment.

Interviews were also conducted with multiple hawkers at Bukit Timah Hawker Centre, with the following questions:

1. Do you think hawker culture is important?
2. Do you enjoy being a hawker?
3. Do you feel hawker centres are still required in Singapore?
4. Do you feel fast food restaurants will replace hawker centres someday?
5. What do you feel needs to be improved on in hawker centres?

## 4.Outcome and Discussion

Previously, we hope to not only allow hawker centers to outwin restaurants and convince more young people to eat at hawker centers, but teach the younger generation the proper etiquette in hawker centers and on the positive aspects of hawker centers. We also hoped to help the younger generations understand the importance of hawker centers to Singapore and how it is still competitive compared to fast food restaurants

However, the outcome of our project was not as good as we wanted it to be, it was mainly due to the different limitations and challenges we faced during the project. Not a lot of people have visited our website thus we were not able to educate a lot of people on the importance of hawker centers.

## **Limitations of our project**

We did not have enough publication for our project. Due to time constraints, many things that we planned to put into the website has to be taken out, including a detailed map of all the hawker centers in Singapore and much more.

A detailed video that has been planned also has to be cut due to lack of time and resources. We were also inexperienced in making videos properly. An extremely detailed description of each food or dessert has been left out due to lack of manpower.

We also had insufficient time to do hands on research, hence most of our sources were paraphrased from the internet so some of our website info may be unreliable. Many people were unwilling to cooperate with us and we had to find some kind people that gave reasonable answers.

## **5. Conclusion**

Developing the website has been a tedious task. It required many hours of paraphrasing and a lot of research on the hawker culture and food. This project has been done under much pressure from both our parents and the ever nearing presentation date.

Perseverance was largely required in finishing this project and needless to say, a lot of sleeping hours were sacrificed ,with some of us staying up till late in the night to finish this. Shyness would not also be tolerated as surveys would need to be carried out as we would need to speak up to the stall owners and ask them questions to use in our project. We had to balance out between project and homework and made some sacrifices in our grades as the final evaluation drew nearer

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