

# **CAT 4 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Group 4 - 011**

## **Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades is an interactive and innovative resource package aimed at educating Hwa Chong Institution High School students on the different old trades in Singapore, such that they could learn more about the Singapore culture and clear misconceptions about old trades. This resource package consists of a website and an Instagram page, which are easily accessible by students. The website mainly focuses on 6 old trades, namely: Popiah Making, Puppet Making and Performance, Rattan Making, Street Barbers, Street Cobblers, as well as Traditional Coffee and Tea Making. The website also houses sections on the history and heritage of old trades, quizzes, games and interviews. We also left our email on the website, so that students could send in any queries that they might have. With Instagram being such a popular platform nowadays, we decided to use it for uploading our infographics to spread awareness about old trades. Our resources were all found online and thus students can easily access them

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Rationale**

Ever since the rapid development of Singapore in the late 20th century, many old trades have lost their popularity due to their lack of competitiveness in the market. Many of these old trades are extremely laborious and may require special skill sets that can only be obtained through multiple years of experience. Hence, many stall owners fail to find successors. As such, many of these old trades are gradually vanishing. Since these trades are part of our rich cultural heritage, we decided to create this project to allow students to appreciate the beauty of these old trades and to safeguard these old trades that represent a part of our Singaporean identity.

## **1.2 Objectives**

The objectives of this project were:

- To allow students to appreciate the history and culture of these old trades.
- To advocate the importance of these old trades and to uphold this unique Singaporean heritage that is engraved in us.
- To provide information for students to explore these old trades on their own.
- To clarify misconceptions they had about old trades.

## **1.3 Target Audience**

The target audience was Hwa Chong Institution High School students.

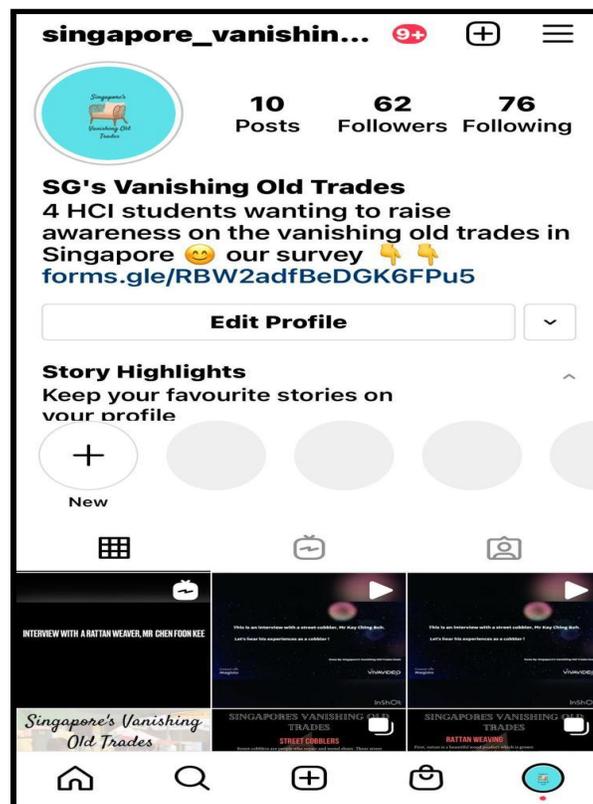
## 1.4 Resources Created

The online resources created consisted of a website and an Instagram page.



Website Home Page (Link:

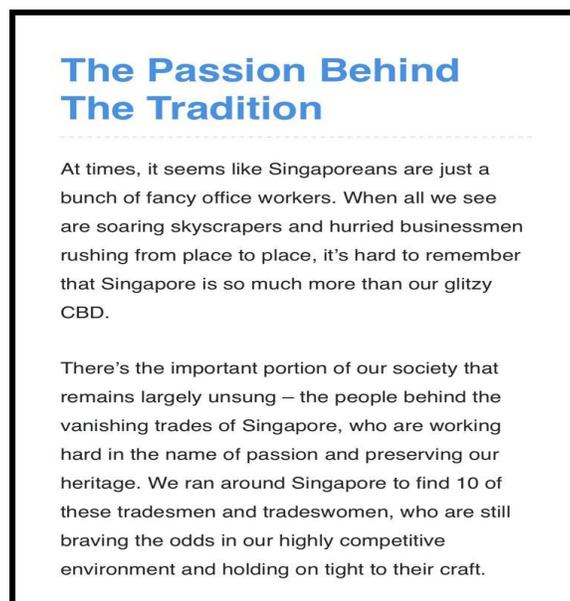
<https://sites.google.com/d/1mWp4STxH4S9VcwhgrT2-7Pc-AJ92IUvK/p/1ZYtb2gfxQwn17OYID54T1Ar3gUfBFY6X/edit>)



Instagram Page (Link: [https://www.instagram.com/singapore\\_vanishing\\_old\\_trades/](https://www.instagram.com/singapore_vanishing_old_trades/))

## 2. REVIEW

Article 1: This article was published by The Smart Local in 2015. The article talks about how many of these old trades are closing down because they cannot keep up with times and cannot compete with other bigger corporations. The article also tells how old trades are part of Singapore's tradition, heritage and history. This shows that the competitive society now has caused many of these old trades to slowly vanish. It is worrying as if these old trades are gone, we are actually losing a very important part of our tradition, heritage and history. Thus, we have to give more voices to these old trades and pass this rich culture of old trades down to the younger generations.



Article 1: The Passion Behind The tradition

Article 2: This is an article by The Fun Social that was published in 2018. The article talks about how old trades in Singapore are vanishing because of the rapid development towards modernity. People are starting to forget about these old trades and it is worrying because we would be losing our heritage and culture with these old trades gradually vanishing into the insignificant part of Singapore. The article reminds us that we should never forget our roots and should thus preserve these old trades.



Article 2: 8 Dying Trades in Singapore Our Future Gen Might Not Experience

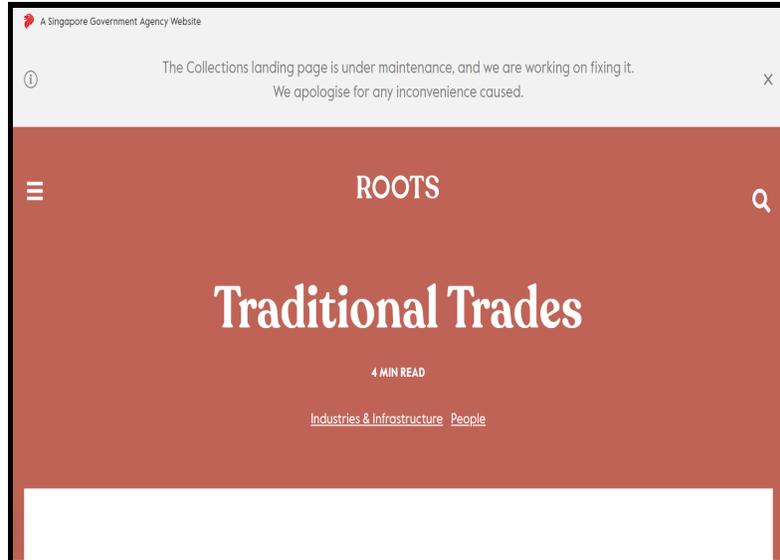
Article 3: This Klook article was published in 2020. The article talks about how Singapore's vanishing old trades will make many feel like a stranger in their backyard, and how many of these old trades have actually downsized ever since the 21st century. The article also talks about the rich heritage these old trades encompass. This shows that many Singaporeans actually are unaware about the existence of these old trades. Old trades have been losing popularity and have been slowly vanishing from society. We need to raise awareness about these old trades so that they would not disappear and we would be able to preserve this rich heritage of ours.



Article 3: Singapore's Disappearing Trades That Will Make You Feel Like A Stranger In Our Backyard

In summary, the articles also talk about how many of these old trades are closing down because they could not keep up with times and cannot compete with other bigger corporations. Thus, be it in 2015, 2020 and even now, they are still vanishing from society. However, this would be a disaster as we would lose a very important part of our tradition, heritage and history. We thus felt that it was important to raise awareness about these old trades so that they would not disappear and we would be able to preserve this rich heritage of ours, propelling us to embark on this project.

Secondly, we reviewed sites such as "Roots" and found out that most websites introducing old trades only gave short descriptions of the various old trades and did not feature games or quizzes.



Many of these traditional trades arose in the early days of Singapore's history as a means of survival. Though some were undoubtedly influenced from skills and cultures adapted from their respective homelands, a majority were developed to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population and changing society.

Traditional trades and the craftsmen that practice it were visible in all sectors of Singapore's socio-economic landscape ranging from food and trade, to lifestyle and entertainment. Though many of these craftsmen and their trades have since vanished, their ability to adapt their skills and businesses to the changing landscape till this day is a testament to their continued ingenuity and perseverance.

This is a picture of a website that only gives a rough overview of what the different old trades are about. There are also no games or quizzes included.

Therefore, we decided to create a more detailed and resourceful website so that the readers could deepen their understanding of old trades and learn in a fun way. We also felt that it would be good to implement more interactive features such as quizzes, games and interviews to pique the interest of students.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Needs Analysis**

A needs analysis was created in order to ascertain the applicability of this project. By sending out a survey to 51 participants, we were able to find out how much students really knew about the various old trades in Singapore and how the new resources would help them expand their knowledge of old trades. The survey showed that 76.5% of the respondents did not know what were some of Singapore's old trades (Fig. 1), while only 3 of the 14 respondents truly knew what were Singapore's old trades (Fig. 2), indicating that many students had misconceptions. Furthermore, we received many inaccurate responses when we tested them on some old trades trivia (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4), indicating that many students had very shallow understanding on old trades.

### 3.2 Survey Results

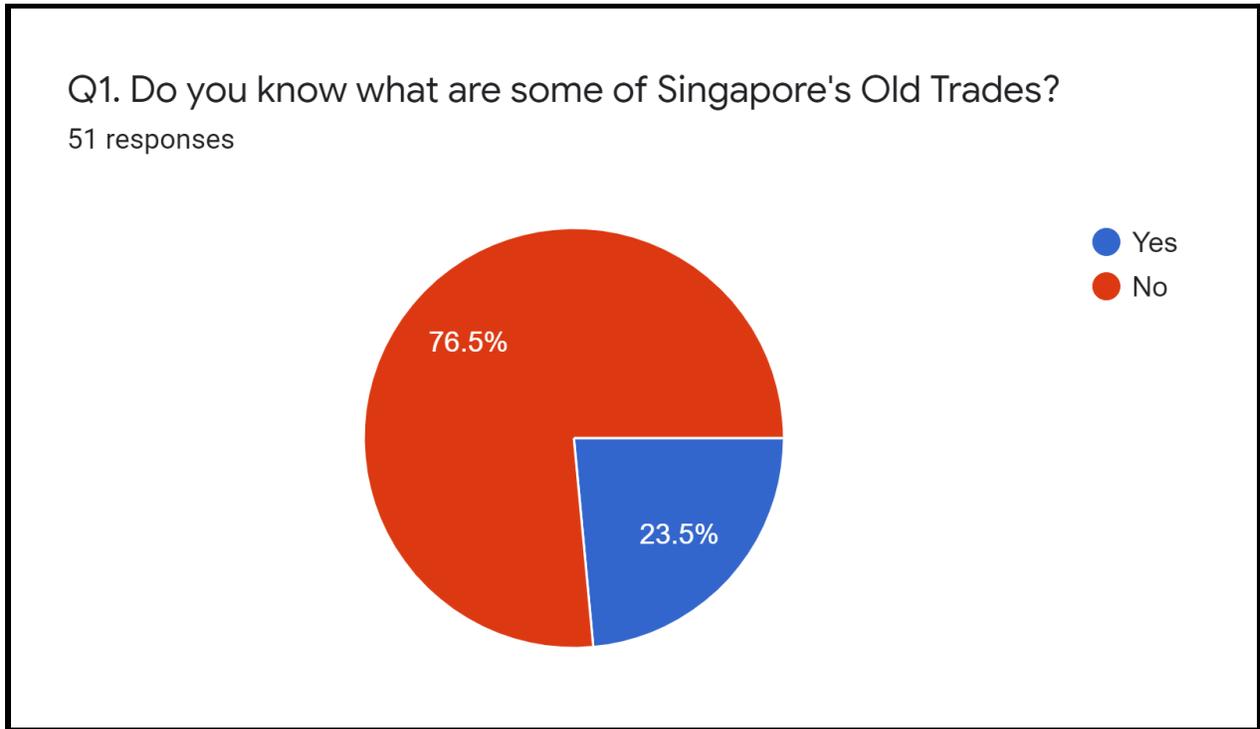


Fig. 1

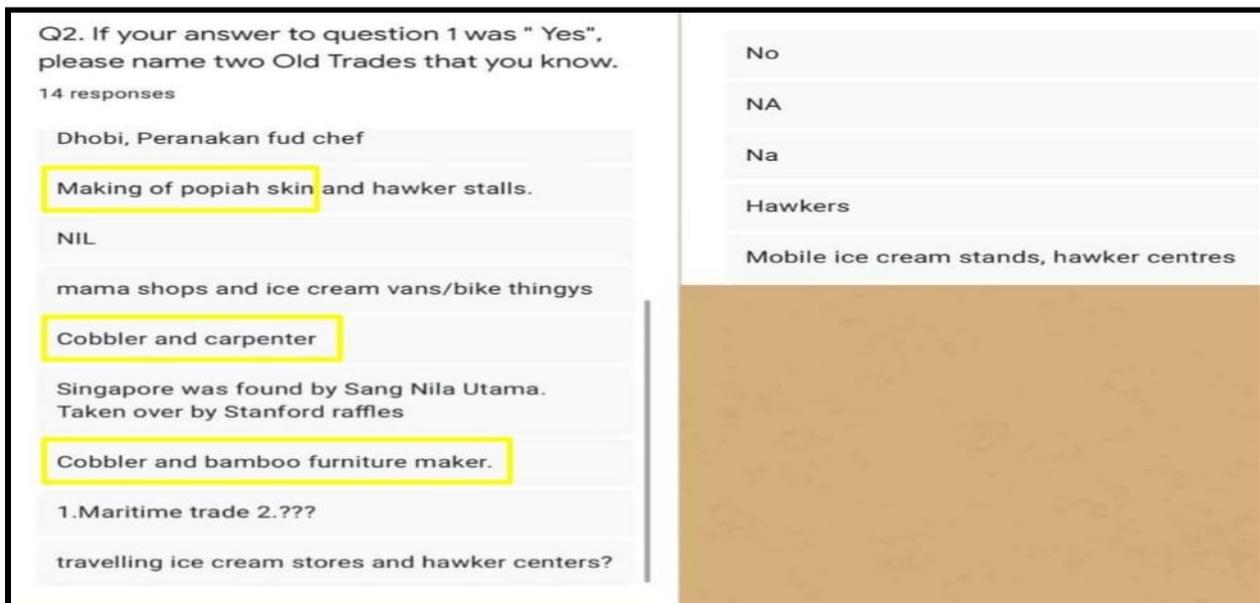


Fig. 2

Q3. When was Singapore's last rattan making shop (Chun Mee Lee Rattan Furniture) founded?

11 / 51 correct responses

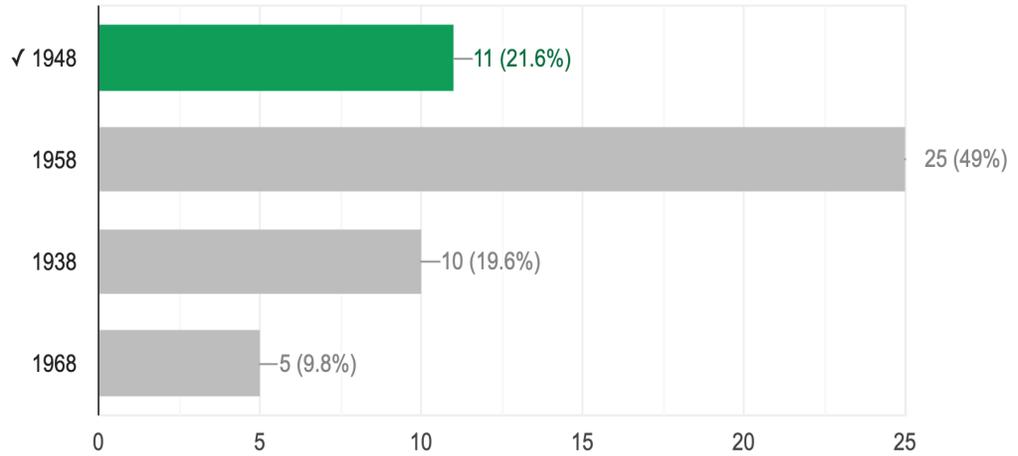


Fig. 3

Q4. What kind of Old Trade does Pek Sin Choon Pte Ltd do?

22 / 51 correct responses

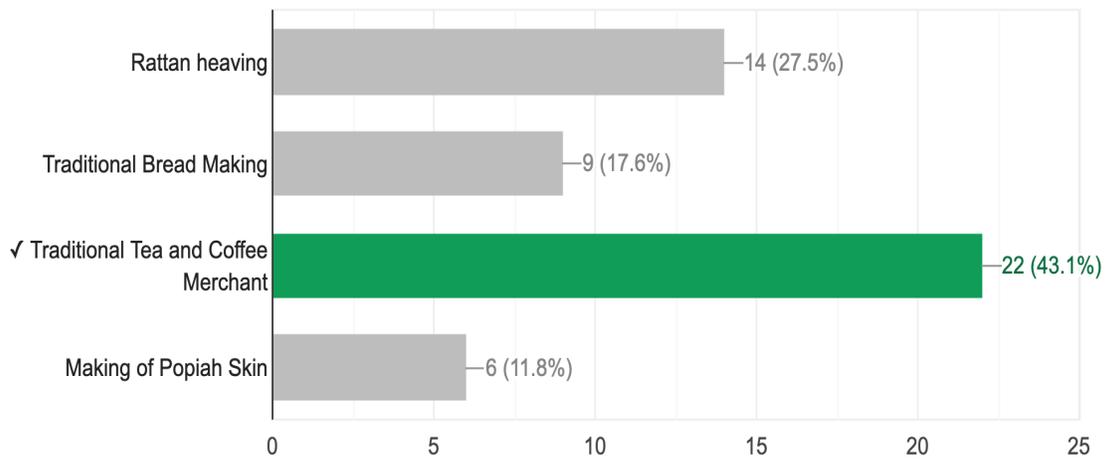
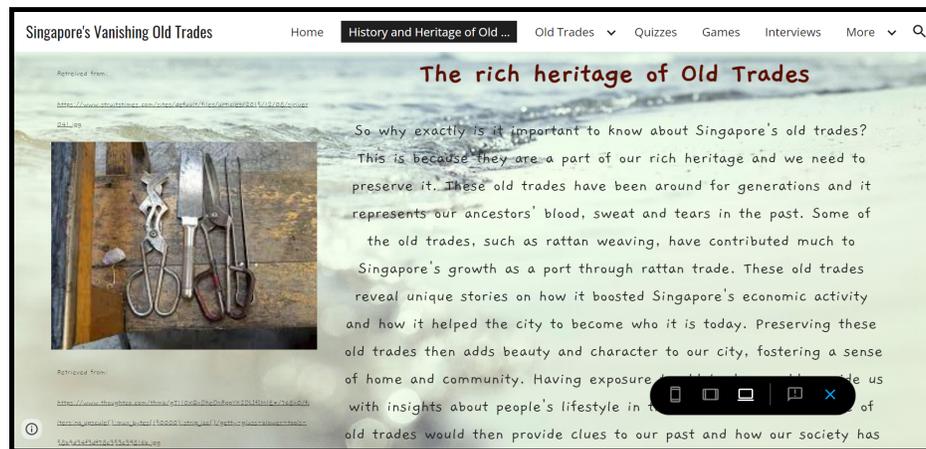


Fig. 4

### 3.3 Development of Resources

After a review was carried out, the resource package was planned to cater to the students' needs. In the end, it included a website and an Instagram page. The website included the history and heritage of old trades, detailed introductions of 6 old trades, 2 quizzes, crossword puzzles and interview videos. We also left our email account [svot2021@gmail.com](mailto:svot2021@gmail.com) on the website so that students could easily voice their opinions or clarify doubts. For our Instagram page, it was a platform we had used to disseminate information about old trades through the uploading of infographics.

#### Website:



Section on the History and Heritage of Old Trades

## STREET COBBLERS



As the name suggests, street cobblers are people who repair and mend shoes. These street cobblers usually lay a mat on the ground and are found sitting at street corners or along walkways. They carry with them many different kinds of knives, hammers, nails, pincers, shoe brushes, shoe lasts, shoe polish, threads of different colours, needles, adhesive and scissors. They store away their tools in boxes or baskets. They also keep with them rolls of leather, synthetic leather, varieties of vinyl soling material and rubber pieces. These tools then come in handy when they have to replace old soles, stitch up torn slippers or replace

An example of the introduction of old trades

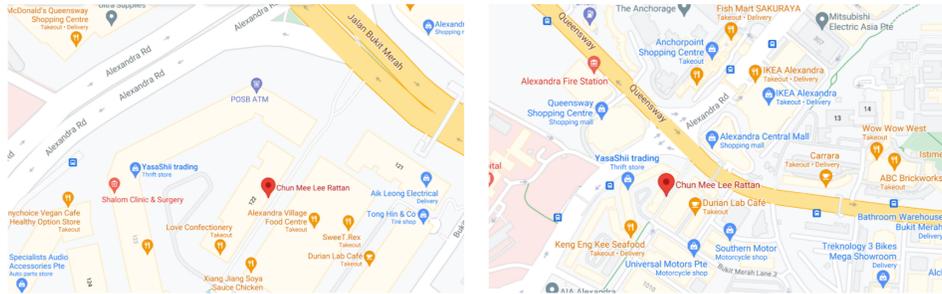
Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades    Home    History and Heritage of Old...    Old Trades    Quizzes    Games    Interviews    More



## CHUN MEE LEE RATTAN FURNITURE

- Founded in 1948, it is one of Singapore's oldest rattan making shops, with a long history of more than 50 years. The owner, Mr Chen Foon Kee says that he has learnt how to make rattan furniture from a very young age!
- Address: 122 Bukit Merah Lane 1, #01-68, Singapore 150122
- Opening hours: Mon-Sat, 10am to 9pm  
Sun, 1pm to 6pm

Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades    Home    History and Heritage of Old...    Old Trades    Quizzes    Games    Interviews    More



- MRT stations nearby: Queenstown
- Restaurants nearby: Alexandra Hawker Centre
- Shopping outlets nearby: IKEA Alexandra, Alexandra Central Mall, Anchorage Shopping Centre, Queensway Shopping Centre

For every old trade featured, we also created a short guide for students to visit some places they were located at



An interview video with a Street Cobbler

Which one of the following is **not** an old trade?

A Rattan Weaving	B Money Changers
C Popiah Making	D Street Barbers

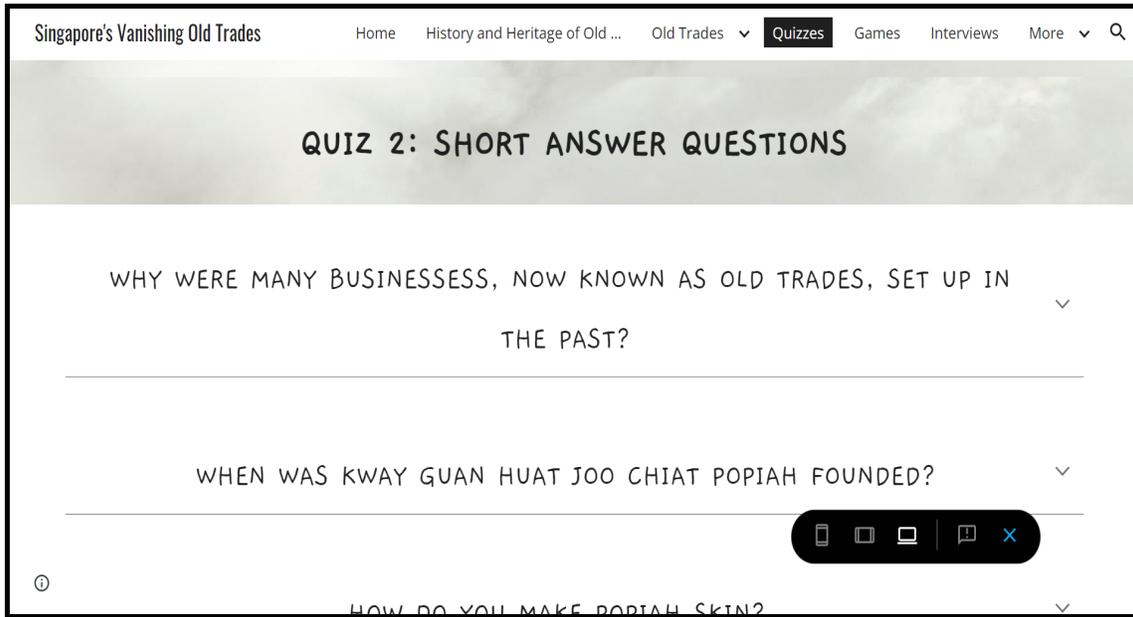
## QUIZ 1: ONLINE QUIZ

This online quiz contains short MCQs. Do try them!

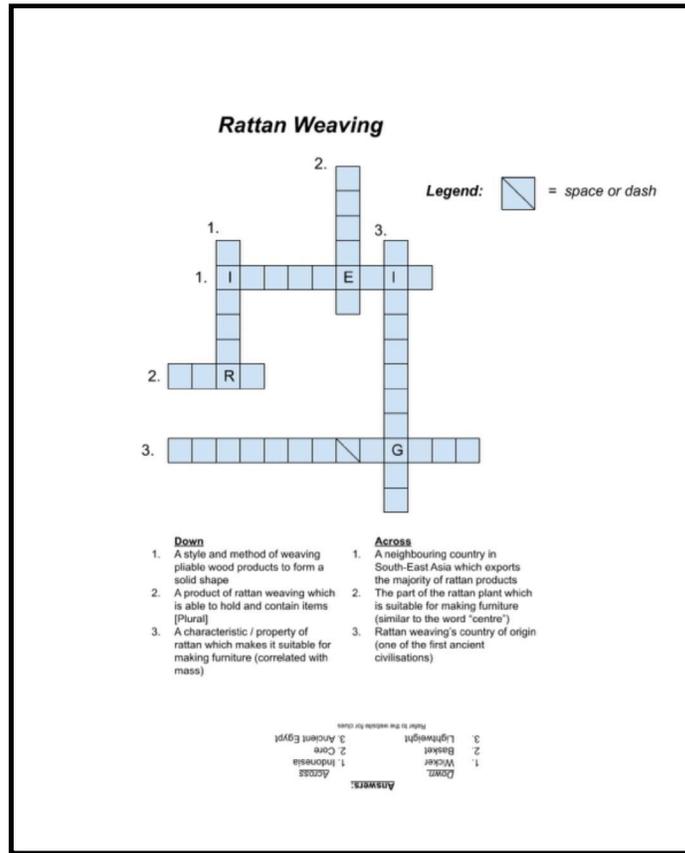
[wordwall.net/resource/18403557](https://wordwall.net/resource/18403557)

Online Quiz done on "Wordwall" (Link:

<https://wordwall.net/resource/18403557/singapores-vanishing-old-trades>)



Short answer questions on the website



An example of a crossword puzzle done

Instagram Page:

SINGAPORE'S VANISHING OLD TRADES

**TRADITIONAL TEA MAKING**

First, the stall owners have to purchase tea dust and place them in a tea sock. Thereafter, pour hot water into the tea sock and strain all the liquid from the tea sock into a tea pouring pot. The "pulling" process After that, the stall owners then takes places, involving the pouring of tea briskly between two pots. After that, condiments would be added in it based on your preference.



**TRADITIONAL COFFEE MAKING**

First, the stall owners would have to import coffee beans from other countries such as Indonesia. They would then roast the coffee beans in a large rotating drum. This roasting process brings out the aroma and flavour locked in the coffee beans, allowing the product to be more fragrant. Thereafter, the coffee beans would be ground into powder to make the drink.



SINGAPORE'S VANISHING OLD TRADES

**STREET COBBLERS**

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*Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades*

SINGAPORE'S VANISHING OLD TRADES

**RATTAN WEAVING**

First, rattan is a beautiful wood product which is grown in the tropical regions of Africa and Asia, with the majority coming from the forests of Indonesia. Once grown, the skin of rattan strands is peeled off and used for weaving while the core of the rattan plant is used for various purposes such as furniture making. Rattan can be used to make cabinets, tables, chair, baskets and many more!



**STREET BARBERS**

Street barbers usually have their stalls set up at back alleys or small streets. They would also have with them mirrors, barber chairs and, of course, their tools. They include hair combs, hair clippers, hair shears, straight blade seissors, towels, cleaning brushes and many more. A street barbers, they also have to master many techniques such as combing, razoring, shaving, ear-picking, cutting, dyeing, joining, patching, relaxing the muscles and stimulating the blood circulation. Such unique techniques are really rarely seen now.



*Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades*

SINGAPORE'S VANISHING OLD TRADES

**POPIAH MAKING**

Popiah, also known as spring rolls, is a traditional dish of Singapore. The white paper-thin skin of the popiah is usually made from wheat flour mixed with water. Salt may also be added in to give the skin some flavour. The slightly elastic dough is then separated into small balls, dropped into a skillet and then quickly lifted off, creating a thin layer on the pan. This skin is then used wrap all the ingredients in it together.



**PUPPET MAKING AND PERFORMANCE**

A puppet troupe would have puppeteers that manipulate an inanimate object, called a puppet, to create the illusion that the puppet is alive. The puppet is often shaped like a human, animal, or legendary creature. The puppeteer may be visible to or hidden from the audience. During the performance they also narrate a story for the audience to hear, mainly in the southern Chinese languages of Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hakka.



*Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades*

A set of infographics made to educate viewers on the different old trades

### 3.4 Pilot Test

The first pilot test was administered to a group of 40 HCI students. From the results, we can see that our project was mostly well-received, with 100% of the students indicating that our website was “Good” and “Excellent” (Fig. 5), while 95% of them gave a review of at least 4 out of 5 for the helpfulness of the website (Fig. 6). Furthermore, we could also see that the respondents benefited from the two features “Information on the different old trades” and “History and heritage of old trades the most (Fig.7), showing that we had achieved our objectives of allowing students to appreciate the history and culture of these old trades and to provide information for students to explore these old trades on their own. The interactive features of our website, quizzes, games and interviews, did not lag far behind too, showing that it managed to capture the interest of our respondents also. From the comments received from participants (Fig. 8), it could be said that many students felt that they benefited from the website which was informative and aesthetically pleasing.

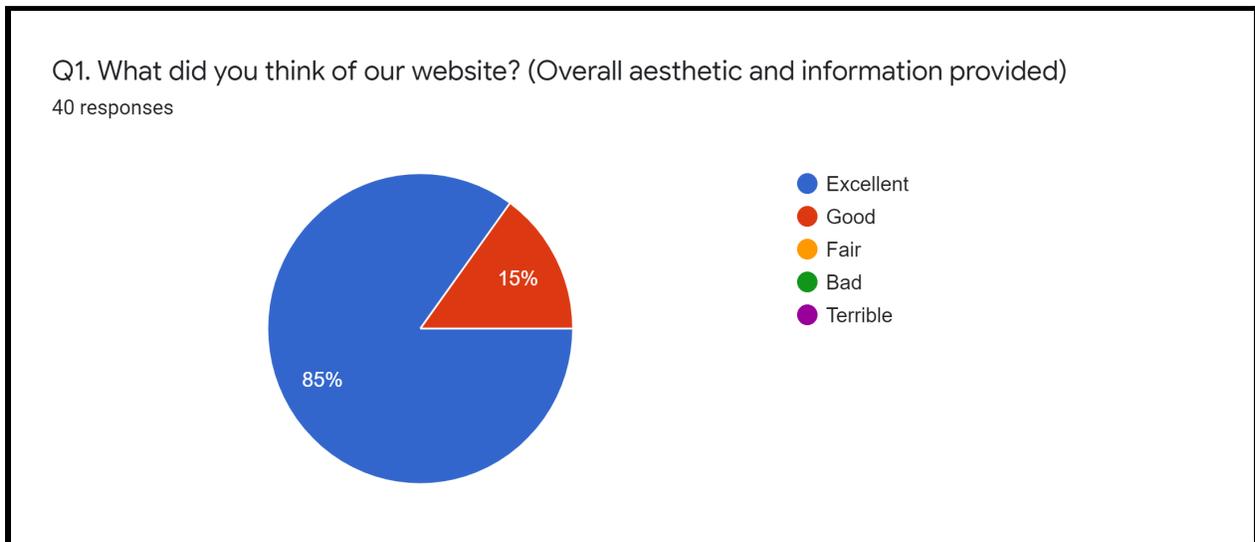


Fig. 5

Q2. On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the website in increasing your knowledge and deepening your understanding on old trades?

40 responses

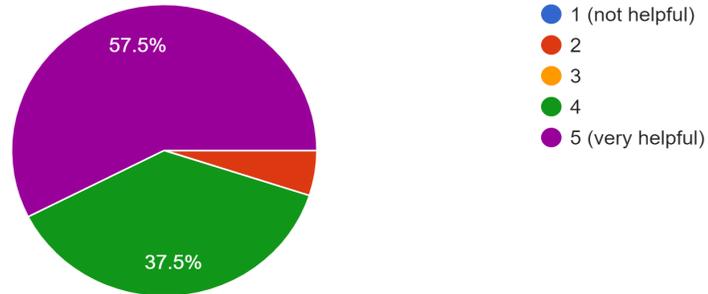


Fig. 6

Q3. What feature of the website benefited you the most?

40 responses

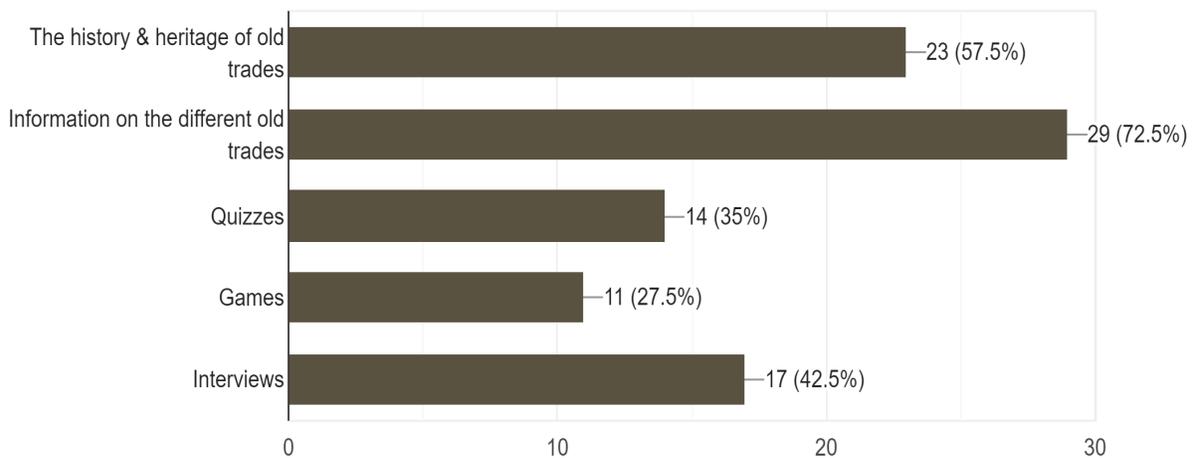


Fig. 7

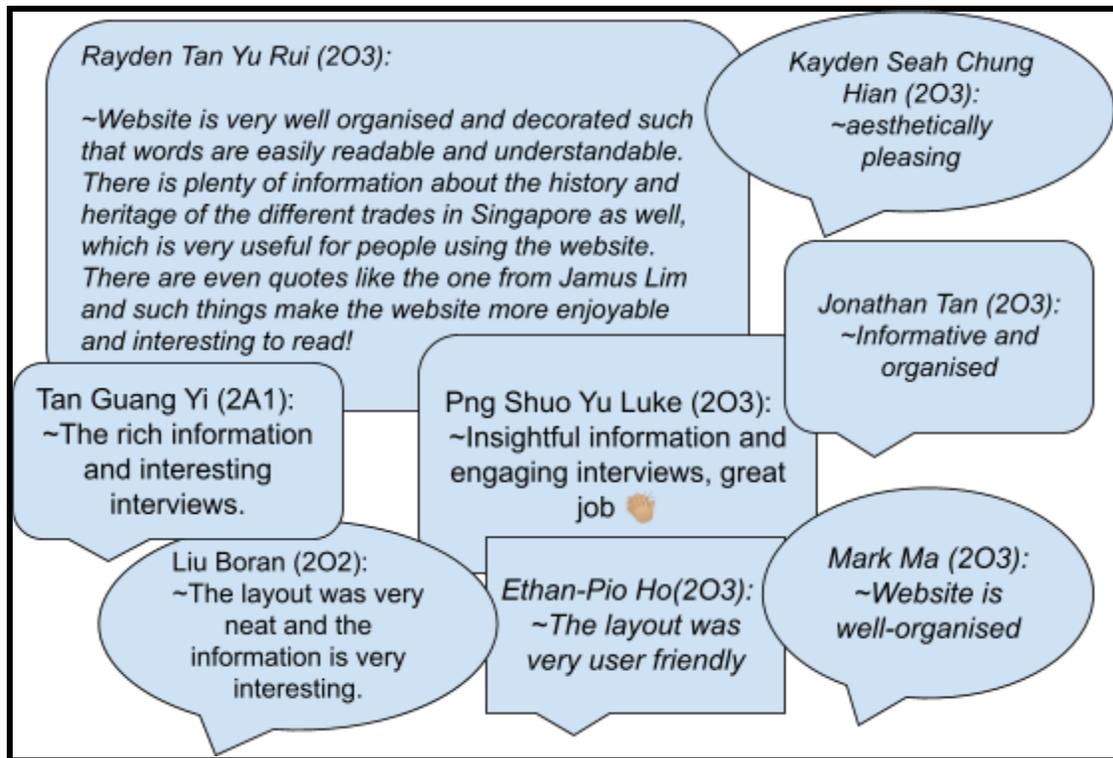


Fig. 8

Lastly, from a poll put up on our Instagram page (Fig. 9), it is evident that most had benefited from the infographics uploaded, with 95% of the 20 users indicating that the Instagram Page had been helpful and interesting.



Fig. 9

#### **4. OUTCOME AND DISCUSSION**

The worldwide pandemic, Covid-19, resulted in many restrictions being put in place in Singapore, which has affected our interviewing process and limited the places that we could visit. Furthermore, some stall owners preferred not to take an interview as they were exhausted after a long day's work. Although we managed to conduct 2 interviews and created videos to showcase them, some respondents felt that it would be better if more had been conducted. Still, they were still engaging and interesting to view.

For our website, we made it more user-friendly by reducing the wall of words in some of the sections, replacing them with more videos. We also added more pictures so that the website would be more eye-capturing and would also help increase students' understanding of the topic on old trades.

For our Instagram page, some feedback said that they could not access the infographics as they did not have an account. Hence, we dedicated a section on our website to showcase our infographics too, catering to the needs of these students.

Although our project has proven to allow students to appreciate the rich heritage and culture of Singapore's old trades, to realise the importance of preserving them, the old trades may still continue to vanish because of rapid modernisation and the lack of successors. Thus, our project may only be able to educate others about Singapore's old trades but cannot actually help safeguard them. Furthermore, we were only able to reach out to HCI students while it takes a nation's effort to preserve these old trades. Hence, there was a limited impact we had on reviving the businesses of these old trades. Nevertheless, as a group, we still did our very best in advocating the importance of safeguarding Singapore's vanishing old trades.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Singapore's Vanishing Old Trades was definitely not an easy undertaking but through this journey, we have learnt more about Singapore's rich history and heritage through our research done on old trades. We have also learnt valuable skill sets such as research skills and critical thinking, which are things that cannot be learnt from textbooks. We also improved on our interviewing and communication skills through our interviews with the stall owners. We were also undeterred by some of their rejections and learnt how to strive amongst adversity. We also learnt how to work as a team better so that we could complete tasks more efficiently and overcome challenges together. In addition, we learnt various poster designing and video editing techniques through the creation of the infographics and interviews. Although we met with various obstacles, we persevered with the vision that we would be able to create resources that could benefit people and let more people know about the unsung heroes and trades of Singapore. All in all, this project provided us with very meaningful experiences such as the interactions with stall owners and learning more about our Singaporean identity.

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