

Category 4 (Resource Development)

Group Name: Project PetCare
(originally named Project Assimilate)

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1. Abstract

Our project aims to help more people in Singapore, especially students from Hwa Chong Institution to understand more about common pets found in Singapore. We also want to raise awareness about pet abuse and pet negligence in order to prevent more cases of it. We also want more people to understand the commitment needed to take care and own pets to avoid impulsive buying of pets.

2. Introduction

Rationale

Recently, the Covid-19 outbreak hit Singapore, which resulted in a Covid-19 Circuit Breaker lockdown being imposed by the government in April last year. People had to stay home for around 2 months and could not go out to do leisure activities. Thus,

people became lonely and bored staying at home, and as a result of that, there was an increase in the number of people interested in adopting or purchasing pets during the pandemic to occupy themselves at home. With the rising number of people adopting or purchasing pets, the number of cases of pet abuse and neglect may also increase. In a Channel NewsAsia report written on 3 November 2017, the authorities in Singapore had received 270 cases of feedback on alleged animal cruelty from January to October in 2017, a slight increase from the 260 during the same period in 2016.

Objectives

Our group has realised the tragic impact of pet abuse in Singapore. For example, in Singapore, there have been incidents of pet abuse where cats were heartlessly abused in Yishun and severely abused just recently (April 2021). Some even died due to serious injuries caused by the abuse.

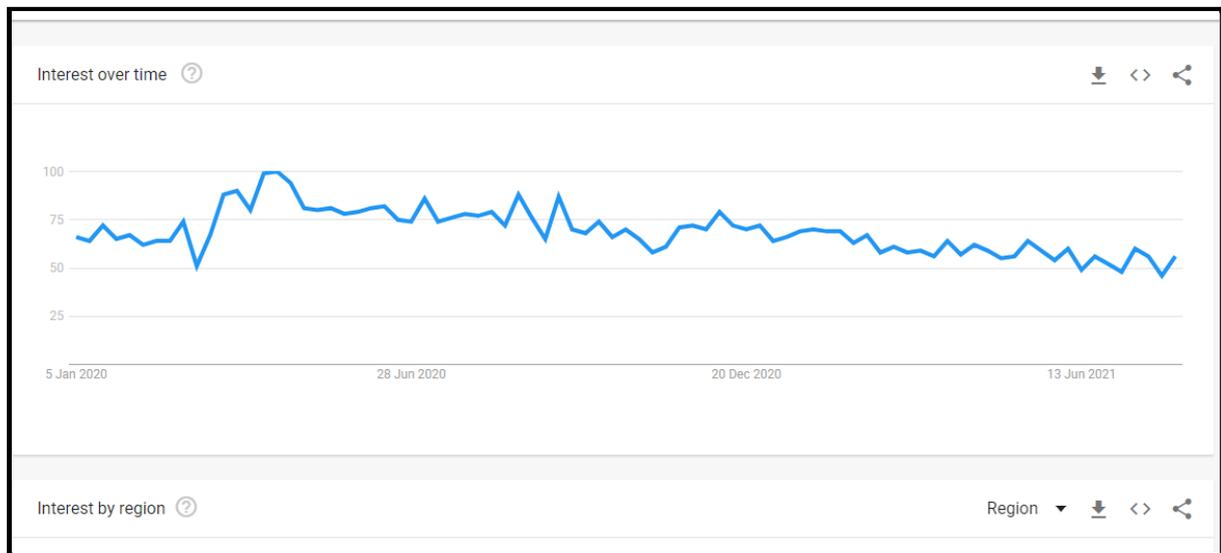
Warning: Explicit Content



Source: Channel News Asia

Because of Covid-19, we understand that many people are bored staying at home as there are restrictions, thus more people worldwide are interested in adopting, fostering or purchasing pets during the pandemic. As seen from the graph from Google Trends below, there was a spike in the number of times “pet adoption” was searched during April when the virus was starting to force countries into lockdowns. However, some of them are getting the pets without second thought or any

experience of taking care of the pets, and it normally happens because of their momentary impulse or desire of wanting a pet.



Number of searches of “pet adoption” on Google (worldwide)

Source: Google Trends

Hence, many people that eventually get a pet without any experience end up not being able to understand their pets' needs or how to take proper care of them, which would result in the loss of interest for their pets. When people lose interest in their pets, cases like giving away their pets and releasing their pets into the wild are common. In a mothership post recently on July 10, 2021, it stated that in a facebook post, 2 cinnamon-coloured ferrets were abandoned and left running around Woodlands Waterfront Park.

Thus, our project will be focused on raising awareness about pet abuse and neglect, how it occurs and how it can affect pets. We will also let others know that owning and taking care of a pet is a commitment. Our project will also provide important information about common pets owned in Singapore and their traits. Our target groups are mainly made up of students from Hwa Chong Institution.

3. Review

For this project, we created a Google Site as our Resource Package with general information on pet abuse, choosing pets and tips for raising different types of pets for people who have little experience raising pets.

Link (Resource Package): <https://tinyurl.com/hcippc>

In addition to the Google Site, we also created an Instagram account to present additional information about pet abuse and guide to raising pets. We also ensured that posts are put up on a regular basis.

Link (Instagram Page): https://www.instagram.com/hci_projectpetcare/

A tip was given to us during our proposal evaluation by the judges to promote our website through social media so that more people would see and could understand what we were promoting. Since many youngsters are using social media each day, promoting our website through social media is a good way to address the issue of pet abuse in Singapore.

Hence, we came up with an idea, which was to promote our website and the issue of pet abuse through Instagram and put up interesting posts to raise awareness of pet abuse and neglect to a wider audience.

4. Methodology

Our project was carried out due to the increasing numbers of people adopting and buying pets in Singapore during the Covid-19 lockdown period. For example, from a Straits Times article back in 29 August 2020, before the Covid-19 circuit breaker lockdown in Singapore, a pet adoption organisation had six to eight dog adoptions and two cat adoptions a month. Since the circuit breaker, the number has jumped to 10 to 12 dogs and five cats a month. This led us to confirm that there has been an increase in the demand for pets during the lockdown period, thus we wanted to raise awareness about pet abuse and neglect so that there will not be a spike in the number of pet abuse and neglect cases.

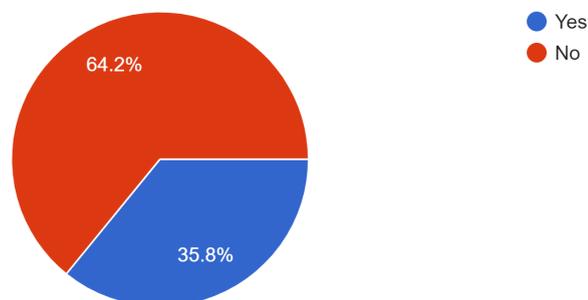
Also, based on the recent incidents of pet abuse in Singapore such as the Yishun cat abuse cases a few years ago that involved several stray cats, we wanted to prevent

such a thing from happening again as the impulse of adopting or purchasing a pet by people may lead to them committing the same mistake again.

Needs analysis:

A survey was conducted to find out more about people's views on pet ownership. Of the 53 people surveyed, 34 respondents do not own a pet, while 19 respondents currently own at least one pet. The most common type of pets, as extracted from the survey respondents, were dogs (Toy Poodles, Maltipoo and Golden Retrievers), cats (Domestic Short Hairs), red-eared terrapins, fishes (Guppies, Gold Fishes and betta fishes), birds (mainly Love Birds) and small furry pets (Hamsters, Guinea Pigs and Rabbits). Also, most of the respondents indicated that quite a few Singaporeans fail to recognise the commitments associated with owning a pet. The results clearly show that much more needs to be done in order to educate the general public about pet ownership and responsibility. This can be done through the creation of suitable resources that provide pet owners with tips and guides on taking care of pets.

Do you have pets?
53 responses



Timeline:

December 2020: We formed our project group, then known as Project Assimilate, and brainstormed ideas for our project.

January 2021: We brainstormed for ideas, and started looking for a project mentor.

February 2021: We found ourselves a mentor to guide us and finalised our idea on designing a pet website. We started by conducting a survey and started working on our website.

March 2021: We started working on our proposal evaluation slides and our written report.

April 2021: We continued working on our website and our written report. We also started promoting our website through Instagram by creating our own instagram account.

May 2021: We sought advice from our mentor about our website and continued working on our written report. We also started to regularly update our instagram account with new posts.

June 2021: We finished up our website and crafted a second survey to gather feedback about our website. We also continued working on our written report.

July 2021: We finished our written report, as well as started working on our final evaluation slides. Looking forward to our final evaluation now!

5. Outcome & Discussion

The desired outcome would be mainly to provide users who visit our website and Instagram page with the basic information on how to care for a pet. This information is easy for users to comprehend. Thus by providing tips for pet owners, we hope that people who visit our information sources would be equipped with basic knowledge about taking care of their pets. This information about pets would also be coupled with news about pet abuse. By raising awareness about abuse, people would be more sensitive about the issue and take steps to prevent it from happening. In the second survey that we posted to users for feedback about our website, we obtained

constructive and positive feedback such as how informative the website is and how the website did indeed raise awareness on pet abuse. We also obtained some suggestions for improvement to our website, and that it should be less wordy, as well as that more photos should be added into the website.

However, the outreach of this project is minimal, and thus the impact on the target audience (pet owners) would be rather negligible. Further works to improve the issue would be to spread our website and Instagram page across various social media networks, for example WhatsApp group chats and Facebook/Instagram communities, where individuals have an interest in pets.

6. Conclusion

Over the course of the project, we acquired many skills such as efficiently researching for information and data needed to design and construct our Google Site resource package, and knowing how to reference and cite sources. We also figure out how to attract more people online to spread awareness of our resource package. A major challenge we faced was that our website was hard to advertise and promote our project to spread awareness of our resource package. This was solved by sending our project's resource package link and instagram profile to class chats and including popular hashtags relating to our project to increase awareness of our project. Another challenge we faced is citing images we found for our resource package. We were unable to find original sources of many images as they have been reposted onto hundreds of websites without being cited. Hence, we had to use other images to avoid plagiarism of images because of inability to cite them.

7. References

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