

# **“No One Icon”**

**Secondary Students’ Judgments of Significant Representations of Singapore**

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## **Overview**

- Objective of Investigation
- Research Methods
- Main Findings
- Afterthoughts

## **Objective of Investigation**

### **✓ Final Assignment**

- MAS 834, *History Education: Teaching for Historical Understanding*, Prof. Keith C. Barton

### **✓ Concept of Significance**

- ‘Youth’ ideas of Singapore

## **Research Methods**

### **✓ Theory**

- Models of Significance

**Robert Phillips (2002)  
‘GREAT’**

Groundbreaking  
Remembered by all  
Events that were far reaching  
Affected the future  
Terrifying

**Christine Counsell (2004)  
Five ‘R’s**

Remarkable  
Remembered  
Resonant  
Resulting in change  
Revealing

## **Research Methods**

### **Research Question**

- “What is an icon of Singapore today?”
- What are the criteria that youth devised?

### **Setting and Participants**

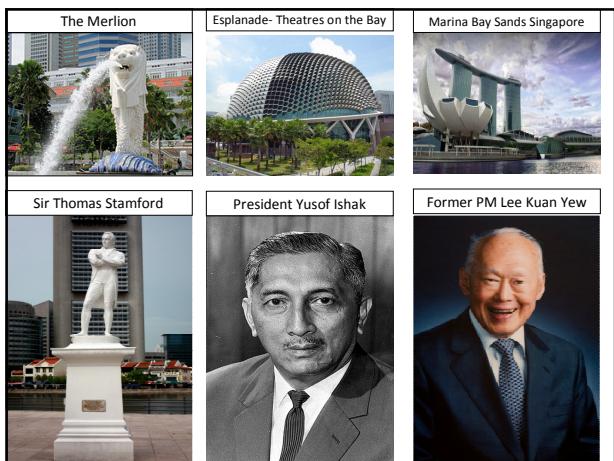
- 12 students from 3 different Year Three classes.
- 7 Chinese 3 Malays 2 Indians
- All the students selected are Singapore citizens whilst two are Singapore Permanent Residents (PR).

## **Research Methods**

### **Procedures**

- Semi-structured interview task

- In teams of 4s, students were asked to choose, 10 cards from a set of 30 captioned images typically used to represent Singapore as icons today.
  - People
  - Historical Landmarks
  - Aspects of living aspects in Singapore
- Students were interviewed after activity



## Main Findings

□ 4 Themes

- 1. Importance to Singapore
- 2. Uniqueness to Singapore
- 3. Reflects Singaporeans' Way of Life
- 4. Popularity amongst people (locals & foreigners)

## Main Findings

### 1. Importance to Singapore



## Main Findings

"Lee Kuan Yew was the first to help develop Singapore as an independent nation"

"Without Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore would have died!"

"Sorry Mr Nathan, yes you are the President but Lee Kuan Yew did so much more for Singapore!"

### 1. Importance to Singapore

"Changi Airport is an icon of Singapore as it is important for Singapore's international standing."

"Although there is the controversy with the 'Who's the Founder of Singapore' issue with Raffles versus Farquhar and Crawfurd, Raffles is the one who started everything."

"Although Mdm Halimah Yacob is the first female Speaker, she is not doing anything so important than the role of the Prime Minister."

## Main Findings

### 2. Uniqueness to Singapore



## Main Findings

Merlion is "like a landmark of Singapore and there is no association with other countries."

### 2. Uniqueness to Singapore

"No other airports in the world is called 'Changi' or has a control tower that looks like this!"

SIA girl is also an icon because "the baju kebaya is unique. No other airline has that design."

Merlion is unique that's why we see so many Merlion key chains, tshirts etc sold at souvenir shops

"Temples, mosques, churches cannot be icons as not only Singapore has them. Malaysia has them too."

## Main Findings

### 2. Uniqueness to Singapore

"What is unique about Singapore's multiracial society is that Singapore is successful in getting the different races cohabit together peacefully, some other countries may have many different races together but they have not gotten them to cohabit peacefully whilst Singapore has managed to successfully achieved that."

## Main Findings

### 3. Reflects Singaporeans' Way of Life



## Main Findings

"Other countries like Malaysia also have hawker centres but hawker centres are where many Singaporeans go to eat and it's like a common place to gather."

"it is like normal practice for parents to have a long speech with their primary 6 child about the dangers if fail or don't do well at PSLE."

"If hawker centres are not icons of Singapore, why was there the recent food challenge between the hawkers and the international chef Gordon Ramsay?"

**3. Reflects Singaporeans' Way of Life**

"HDB is an icon of Singapore as majority of the people live in the flats and even if they do not, the flats dominate Singapore's landscape such that it becomes part of Singaporean's way of life."

"Was told from Day 1 that her life and future is going to be determined by this one exam in Primary 6. (PSLE)"

## Main Findings

**4. Popularity amongst people (locals & foreigners)**



## Main Findings

"Nowadays photos all focus on MBS and the skyline"

"They got all the buildings around MBS to switch on lights every night for the lights show"

**4. Popularity amongst people (locals & foreigners)**

"Taufik Batisah is not a Singapore icon as he is not famous like all the Hollywood singers."

"People know who he is. I do not think current PM Lee Hsien Loong is an icon of Singapore as 'comparing him to his father, his father is definitely more famous!'"

"the National Day Parade and all other concerts like the Countdown Concert featured MBS as the backdrop. This will only make people want to go MBS more."

"it's popular not because of the place people go for the arts, but because of the durians".

## Afterthoughts

- 4 themes parallel with that of earlier models on Significance

**1. Importance to Singapore**

"Affected the future"; "Resonant"

**2. Uniqueness to Singapore**

"Remarkable"

**3. Reflects Singaporeans' Way of Life**

'Resonant' 'Revealing'

**4. Popularity amongst people (locals & foreigners)**

"Remarkable"

## Afterthoughts

### What is an icon of Singapore?

- ♥ Recognised by both locals and foreigners
- ♥ Need not be showy or expensive
- ♥ Shows Singapore's identity and what Singapore stands for
- ♥ Something that Singaporeans can be proud of
- ♥ Special value and meaning to citizens and people around the world

### No One Icon

*Our take on how we see Singapore!*

**Thank You! Questions please? ☺**