



Blog GCE A level 2023 Q8

To what extent are festivals and national holidays effective in promoting unity in your society?

1. Type of question: Extent of Agreement

2. Perspectives

- **Set the proposition**
- Festivals and national holidays are effective in promoting unity in Singapore (ethnic unity / national unity)
- Ethnic unity - traditions - festivals
 - compromised by Valentine's day/ ethnic festivals (has become commercialised, cuisine has been modified, activities are changing)
- **Develop extent of agreement**
- Explain why the above effects may not be able to achieve the stated result to promote cultural, social and political unity.

3. Main arguments:

- Explain how the conceptualised idea can use the festivals and national holidays to create the necessary effects that cultivate the effects to unify the people from this particular aspect.
- Provide the weaknesses of the idea or limitations of the stated ideas for the paragraph that explains the extent of agreement to the conceptualised in the proposition.
- Take note that **the arguments cannot be forged based on** the proposition that the festivals and national holidays mean that the discussion has agreed that festivals and national holidays can promote unity. You can only dispute it based on the extent of agreement in the paragraph for the extent of agreement.

4. Category of discussion

- Social values - a sense of belonging for reference
- Political unification - ideological alignment
- Ideological conformity - nurture a common ideology for
- Psychological unity



5. Introduction

- need to start off with the observation about the subjects in the question and link it to the issue
- Explain the nature of proposition and state that certain areas of agreement is not agreeable
- Set the stand

6. Develop the structure for main body

6.1 Develop the proposition

6.2 state the extent of agreement

(repeat the 6.1 and 6.2 with new points)

7. Conclusion

Restate your stand / give an analysis on what determines the stand / make suggestions on how this conclusion would be helpful.

Introduction

1. General observation, issue, perspective, stand (extent of agreement)

Festivals and national holidays are widely celebrated in the world as it holds a multifaceted role in shaping societal cohesion and promoting unity within communities. These celebrations serve as moments where diverse individuals come together and embrace shared traditions and values. To some, they serve as a platform for individuals to collectively celebrate in union and may be lauded as the unifying influence of festivals and national holidays which is a vital event to forge. On the other hand, some sceptics will question the ability of these festivities to bridge societal divides, claiming that they have lost its relevance in modern society. Exploring these diverse viewpoints will enable us to understand both the celebratory essence of these festivities and national holidays in promoting unity and understand the potential limitations of these events in nurturing social cohesion to examine the extent of its impact on unification.

(provide an approach on how the extent of agreement is viewed but has not started the extent of agreement - stated it in the conclusion)



(an approach on how this issue or question is to be examined. - your conclusion must state the extent of agreement)

- Show your extent of agreement in the last sentence of the introduction)

The following essay will be of the agreement that festivals and national holidays are effective in promoting unity in the modern society of Singapore but it is less applicable in a modernised and globalised society with diverse cultures..

Proposition 1 (PEEL)

Festivals and national holidays undoubtedly have **a profound influence on societal dynamics which serve as important moments that bind individuals together through shared cultural experiences** and have a **psychological bonding that builds unity** in the communities and the country.

Wang Yao:

Festivals and national holidays undoubtedly have **a profound influence on societal dynamics which serve as important moments that bind individuals together through shared cultural experiences** and have a **psychological bonding that builds unity** in the communities and the country. When people are celebrating festivals together, there are interactions between different kind of people from different backgrounds and this promote understanding between the people. People will then have common shared values and experiences which will create psychological bonding and this knit a relationship that cultivate unity. For example, festivals such as Hari Raya and Chinese New Year provide meaningful events that allow people to bond with one another. Therefore, the existence of the festival provides a common platform that develops a sense of belonging and promotes unity.



However, such social and national bonding are too idealistic in reality. In fact, people nowadays are more pragmatic in their lifestyle which makes the psychological bonding objective difficult to achieve. In the modern society, **people have a more busy lifestyle due to their work commitment which has demanded people to dedicate fully to their cause.** People are **less willing to participate in traditional and national events as a result of their need to commit to a more competitive society.** Furthermore, in a culturally and globalised world, modern people have more personal agenda in their lives and this will shape them to prioritise their personal interests over cultural concerns. For example, people are more willing to celebrate the new mordent event such as Valentines Day and participate in 'LGBT' movements as these events are a greater concern to their life. This clearly explain why the traditional festival and national holiday may have limited capacity to promote psychological bonds.

so they have an agenda to achieve their goals. Therefore, the new modern events such as Valentine's Day are celebrated

Dapson :

Festivals and national holidays undoubtedly have **a profound influence on societal dynamics which serve as important moments that bind individuals together through shared cultural experiences** and have a **psychological bonding that builds unity** in the communities and the country. These social interactions through celebration will allow better understanding of the values of society and forge a common sense of thinking which promotes commonality and cultivates a sense of belonging. For example, in Singapore, we celebrate national day with a parade that spreads the core values of our society that forge a common value that create a Singapore identity with common values that we believe in. the theme in 2023 is 'Onward as One ' evidently suggests how our sense of unity is forge as on nation., thus, our national identity is the representation of our sense of cohesion and unity.

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One reason why the festivals are effective in enhancing unity is its influence on social dynamics. It serves as important events that help promote bonding with each other through shared cultural events and also helps with psychological bonding that builds unity in communities in the country. For instance, national day parades and performances reinforce the strong defence of our nation as well as our multicultural society, reminding our nation to preserve it.

Extent of Agreement 1

However, the perceived unifying emotional attachment and bonding of festivals and national holidays often sees itself being **subjected to scepticism when societal realities such as our globalised world and high degree of modernization is decoupling this feeling** and naturally, compromise the emotional bonding that promotes unity in the community.

Proposition 2

Festival and national holidays **are also sources of unification as they provide significant and representative meaning of the values to bring the people together** as they explain the values that are treasured and ingrained in the soul of the people.

Extent of Agreement 2

Unfortunately, the **historical and cultural legacy of these festivals and national holidays are losing their significance in the hearts of the people** which are gradually diluting their understanding and thus, this weakens the capacity of festivals and holidays to unify the people in society.

Dapson

Unfortunately, the **historical and cultural legacy of these festivals and national holidays are losing their significance in the hearts of the people** which are gradually diluting their understanding and thus, this weakens the capacity of festivals and holidays to unify the people in society. This is due to the modern world becoming extremely progressive, with the lack of emphasis on past traditions due to this nature and this devalues festivals and national holidays, reducing their efficacy in unifying people in society. For example, nowadays, instead of flying back to their home during special occasions, they use technology to bridge the long distance gap between different countries to meet their loved ones. This makes the social and emotional experience of **togetherness less impactful, diluting the festival's power to foster a sense of shared identity and weaken its ability to create lasting bonds between people**



Zhitong:

In an unfortunate turn, the significance and weight of these festivals and holidays are degrading in the hearts of people and are diluting and polluting their understanding of our culture and hence weakens the capacity of festivals and holidays to bring about unity.

Jay Men:

Festivals and national holidays are also symbolic and ideological in cultivating a nationally recognised identity as the very distinguishable features of individuals is key in promoting unity in the country. An example of this is the celebration of the Hungry Ghost festival by the Chinese whereby they commemorate filial piety to their parents who have already passed on. This way of commemorating a common belief only found in Singapore by the Chinese amplifies the symbolic and political identity of individuals in Singapore.

However, such a form of distinguishing someone through their symbolic practices is less flexible and does not necessarily always resonate with the majority of the people in the country. Take Christmas for example, youths and even adults of Chinese background also celebrate Christmas despite it being of Christianity background. This is due to the fact that people who celebrate Christmas are usually more educated and meritocratic minded people which is what the people of Singapore have been driven towards in recent years. People who celebrate Hungry Ghost festival are more often than not people of less financially able backgrounds and this is usually accompanied by the lack of education in their youthful days. Thus, it is no wonder that adults and youths would prefer to celebrate Christmas over the Hungry Ghost festival as, at the end of the day, the root causation of which communities these individuals want to follow is based on which community they resonate with more accurately.



Festivals and national holidays are also **symbolic and ideological in cultivating political identity** as these imperative characteristics are vital in filling the acumen of the people in building a national identity that forge unity.

Extent of Agreement 3

However, such form of indoctrination is **more frictional and less effective when we apply this in a more diversified and multi-cultural society** where the influences are not eminence.

In conclusion, festivals and national holidays hold the possibility of uniting societies through shared cultural experiences. While they offer moments of communal celebration and cultural exchange, their ability to foster genuine unity faces challenges. However, these events often do not address deeper societal divides and can sometimes reinforce stereotypes or exclusions. Balancing this celebratory event with a more inclusive approach is crucial in making sure that the purpose of these occasions is unleashed to foster deeper connections and understanding among people within society.

Conclusion

In retrospect, this essay will agree to a small extent that festivals and national holidays are effective in promoting unity in the society because the society is changing very quickly. Traditional culture is still a fundamental part of their life as it is a heritage that they cannot abandon. **However, modern society is so complex and people are adapting to the new way of life that they no longer view this heritage as dogma in their lives and this undermines the culture and national holidays as the way to forge unity.**