

Singaporeans take pride in keeping the city clean – and more than half will tell those around them not to litter, survey finds

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Singaporeans are proud of their clean and green city and most, if not all, take pride in keeping things that way, a survey has found.

Conducted by the Singapore Management University (SMU), 97.2 per cent of respondents in the second Public Cleanliness Satisfaction Survey (PCSS) said they took pride in keeping Singapore clean.

Released on Thursday (May 16), the PCSS collected responses from over 2,000 Singapore residences over a period of six months from August to December 2018.

The study – led by Professor Paulin Tay Straughan, professor of sociology (practice) at SMU, and Dr Mathew Mathews, senior research fellow at the National University of Singapore's Institute of Policy Studies – found that 94.4 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement "Singapore is a clean city".

A significant number of respondents (96.3 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that visitors who come to Singapore admired the city's cleanliness.

Additionally, many respondents felt that they weren't alone in being proud of Singapore's clean identity.

In total, 88.7 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that other Singaporeans, like themselves, also took pride in keeping the city clean.

However, 87.4 per cent of respondents believed that Singapore was clean only because of its efficient cleaning services.

Despite that, the survey also found that more respondents are adopting "pro-social behaviours" related to public cleanliness. This includes reminding a family member not to litter, holding their trash until they find a bin, and returning their utensils at hawker centers.

Slightly more than half of respondents (54.3 per cent) said that they would remind a family member not to litter if they noticed them doing so, up from 45.7 per cent who said the same in 2017.

More people are also cleaning up after themselves at hawker centers, with 48.7 per cent of respondents saying that they clear their utensils after eating, an increase from 35 per cent in 2017.

The findings of the survey also showed that nearly 72 per cent of respondents would hold on to litter until they are able to find a bin most of the time.

Fewer people are also disposing of their rubbish inappropriately.

Compared to 55.3 per cent of respondents in 2017 who said that they had never disposed of rubbish inappropriately, 62 per cent said the same in 2018.

While more people are adopting pro-social behaviours, the study also noted that there remains a “sizeable” portion of residents who have yet to familiarise themselves with pro-social public cleanliness behaviours.

“We suggest greater efforts in public education efforts to encourage such pro-social behaviour especially in reminding others, including those who are visitors to Singapore, about established cleanliness norms here,” SMU said.