

More are clearing their utensils at hawker centres, survey says

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ChannelNewsAsia, 15 May 2019

SINGAPORE: People in Singapore are becoming more "prosocial" in their behaviour when it relates to matters of public cleanliness, said a survey on Wednesday (May 15), with almost half the respondents saying they cleared their utensils at hawker centres most or all the time.

According to findings from the Public Cleanliness Satisfaction Survey (PCSS) which was conducted by the Singapore Management University (SMU), 48.7 per cent of respondents reported doing so most or all of the time, up 13.7 percentage points from the inaugural survey conducted between October 2016 and March 2017.

In contrast, only 6.6 per cent said that they had never cleared their own food utensils at hawker centres, a drop of almost 10 percentage points from the previous survey.

More than 2,000 Singapore citizens and permanent residents aged 21 and above took part in this latest PCSS, which was conducted from August to December last year.

It was led by Professor Paulin Tay Straughan, a sociology professor with SMU and Dr Mathew Mathews, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, with funds from the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources.

INCREASE IN SATISFACTION WITH OVERALL CLEANLINESS

A large majority of the survey's respondents – 84 per cent – were satisfied with the overall cleanliness of public areas. Among public spaces however, satisfaction with the cleanliness of food outlets remained the lowest at 71.4 per cent.

In comparison, respondents were more satisfied with the cleanliness at transport spaces (94.9 per cent) such as roads, bus stops and MRT stations, commuter paths (84.8 per cent) and their neighbourhoods (79.3 per cent).

The survey also found that more respondents (74.3 per cent) were satisfied with the level of cleanliness of public spaces after events such as the National Day Parade.

There was considerable support for enforcement against littering, with 76 per cent of respondents wanting the Government to put more focus on having persistent offenders pick up litter through corrective work orders, and 65 per cent hoping for more enforcement officers on the ground.

The study credited stakeholders ranging from public agencies, cleaning contractors to residents for the increased satisfaction with cleanliness. However, it noted that relying only on cleaning services to achieve higher levels of cleanliness is not sustainable in the long term.

"This calls for more concerted efforts where Singaporeans, public agencies and food outlets co-create a culture of cleanliness in these spaces," it said.