

More people are returning their utensils at food centres, but public satisfaction with hawker cleanliness remains low: Survey

Coconuts Singapore

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According to the Public Cleanliness Satisfaction Survey (PCSS), even though more residents in Singapore are clearing up after themselves at hawker centres, many still remain unsatisfied by the standard of cleanliness at such public food spaces.

The findings of the 2018 poll, released yesterday, showed about 48.7 percent of respondents claiming they returned their own food utensils at hawker centres most or all the time, up from 35 percent the year before. Only 6.6 percent said they never did so, which was a decrease from 16.3 percent in 2017.

Conducted by the Singapore Management University (SMU), the second edition of the survey saw more than 2,000 Singapore citizens and permanent residents over the age of 21 participate in it from August to December last year. It was headed by sociology professor Paulin Tay Straughan and Institute of Policy Studies' senior research fellow Dr Mathew Mathews, funded by the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources.

The results showed most people (84 percent) were satisfied with the general cleanliness of public areas. But food outlets had the lowest satisfaction rate of cleanliness at 71.4 percent, as compared to transport spaces like roads, bus stops or MRT stations (94.9 percent), commuter paths (84.8 percent), and neighborhoods (79.3 percent).

Even the cleanliness of public spaces after massive events like the National Day Parade (74.3 percent) was more acceptable than hawker centres. People found more rubbish such as leftover food and used tissue paper in hawker centres than wet markets or public pavements.

The study gave a nod to public agencies, cleaning contractors, and residents for the rise in satisfaction with cleanliness, but said that the reliance on cleaning services would not be sustainable. It called for greater effort among Singaporeans, public agencies, and food outlets to create a “culture of cleanliness.”