

IPS survey finds younger S'poreans more okay with LGBT, older S'poreans less okay

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Younger people in Singapore are far more accepting of homosexual rights compared to older folks, a survey carried out by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) has found.

The survey, "Religion, Morality and Conservatism in Singapore", asked 4,015 Singaporean residents their views on issues ranging from aspects of their racial and religious identity, to their experiences of living in a multi-racial society, and their attitudes towards social and political issues.

Opposition towards homosexuality has fallen among younger population

The survey found that those aged 18 to 35 in Singapore were less conservative than the older population when it came to the following issues about homosexuality:

- Homosexual sex
- Gay marriage
- Adoption by a gay couple
- A gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproduction

But the number of older Singaporeans aged 35 and above far outstrips the younger Singaporeans aged 18 to 34 by 3:1 (____ vs ____).

Homosexual sex

In this aspect, the survey reported that the proportion of Singaporeans, who saw nothing wrong at all or nothing wrong most of the time, stood at:

- 48.7 percent for Singaporeans aged 18 to 25 and
- 34.3 percent for Singaporeans aged 26 to 35.

The numbers also marked a sharp increase from 2013 (numbers marked in red in the table) in which only:

- 19.1 percent of Singaporeans aged 18 to 25 and
- 15.8 percent of Singaporeans aged 26 to 35

at that time held the same view.

Conversely, opposition towards homosexual sex among these two demographics have also fallen since 2013.

The survey reported that among those who either saw it as wrong or almost always wrong, the figures stood at:

- 34.9 percent for those aged 18 to 25 and
- 47.9 percent for those aged 26 to 35 respectively.

These figures marked a significant fall from 2013, in which

- 66.4 percent of those aged 18 to 25 and
- 72.2 percent of those aged 26 to 35 held such a view.

In contrast, every age group aged 36 and above still registered significant opposition towards homosexual sex from 2013, despite registering a slight drop in the view that it was wrong or almost always wrong.

In particular, less than 15 percent of respondents aged 46 and above saw nothing wrong or nothing wrong most of the time with homosexual sex.

Here is a breakdown of responses as presented by the survey:

Table 10: Respondents' views towards homosexual sex, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	25.4 (47.6)	9.5 (18.8)	16.5 (14.5)	18.5 (7.5)	30.2 (11.6)
26-35	36.6 (54.2)	11.3 (18.0)	17.8 (12.0)	14.0 (6.1)	20.3 (9.7)
36-45	47.3 (63.9)	15.5 (15.8)	16.5 (9.3)	11.0 (5.8)	9.7 (5.2)
46-55	58.2 (65.9)	13.4 (18.5)	15.2 (9.9)	6.6 (3.0)	6.5 (2.8)
56-65	61.2 (65.7)	12.5 (21.3)	13.6 (6.7)	7.2 (3.3)	5.6 (3.0)
Above 65	64.9 (70.8)	15.8 (18.9)	8.9 (6.9)	7.2 (1.8)	3.2 (1.5)

Screenshot from IPS

Gay marriage

On the issue of gay marriage, the survey noted that almost six in 10 of those aged 18 to 25 indicated that gay marriage was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time.

This was more than five times the proportion of respondents aged 56 to 65 (13.7 percent), and aged above 65 (9.6 percent), who held such opinions.

In total,

- 58.4 percent of respondents aged 18 to 25 and
- 41.2 percent of respondents aged 26 to 35

were of the view that gay marriage was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time.

The figures also marked a significant shift from 2013 in which only

– 25.5 percent of those aged 18 to 25 and

– 21.1 percent of those aged 26 to 35

espoused the same view.

In comparison, more than 50 percent of respondents aged 36 and above were of the view that gay marriage was always wrong or almost always wrong.

Even so, the age groups of respondents from 36 to 45 and 46 to 55 still registered drops of over 10 percent each from 2013, at 17.5 percent and 13.8 percent respectively, in which gay marriage was viewed as always wrong or almost always wrong.

Table 11: Respondents' views towards gay marriage, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	23.9 (44.2)	6.5 (15.9)	11.2 (14.4)	16.4 (8.4)	42.0 (17.1)
26-35	33.9 (50.5)	9.3 (15.6)	15.6 (12.8)	15.1 (8.8)	26.1 (12.3)
36-45	43.6 (61.3)	13.1 (12.9)	15.2 (11.8)	12.7 (6.3)	15.4 (7.7)
46-55	54.1 (62.5)	11.9 (17.3)	12.7 (10.3)	9.0 (4.5)	12.3 (5.4)
56-65	60.9 (63.8)	12.8 (16.9)	12.8 (10.0)	6.5 (4.2)	7.2 (5.0)
Above 65	67.1 (70.4)	13.5 (13.1)	9.7 (8.0)	4.8 (4.1)	4.8 (4.4)

Screenshot from IPS

Adoption by a gay couple

In this regard, the survey noted that similarly to gay marriage, 60.9 percent of respondents aged 18 to 25 held the view that nothing was wrong or that it was not wrong most of the time.

As for the age group of 26 to 35, the figure for these views held at 42.5 percent.

And likewise, both figures also showed a significant increase from 2013 in which they registered as 36.3 percent for the former and 31.5 percent for the latter respectively.

And similarly, more than 50 percent of respondents aged 36 and above were also of the view that adoption by a gay couple was always wrong or almost always wrong.

Additionally, in this area, only respondents aged 36 to 45 registered a drop of more than 10 percent, from 2013 — which is of the view that adoption by a gay couple was always wrong or almost always wrong.

Drops in opposition for the remaining age groups aged 46 and above from 2013 were less than 5 percent.

Table 12: Respondents' views towards adoption by a gay couple, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	18.4 (31.3)	6.0 (15.2)	14.7 (17.2)	20.1 (13.6)	40.8 (22.7)
26-35	29.6 (36.6)	9.6 (15.5)	18.3 (16.3)	16.7 (12.0)	25.8 (19.5)
36-45	36.2 (49.9)	14.4 (13.8)	18.2 (14.8)	14.9 (9.8)	16.3 (11.6)
46-55	49.3 (50.6)	12.6 (15.2)	16.3 (14.0)	10.6 (10.3)	11.2 (9.8)
56-65	52.7 (49.2)	13.2 (19.7)	17.5 (14.1)	8.4 (8.3)	8.1 (8.6)
Above 65	53.1 (56.3)	15.0 (16.6)	13.5 (9.7)	11.0 (9.2)	7.4 (8.2)

Screenshot from IPS

Gay couples having children through surrogacy and artificial insemination

On this topic, the survey reported that

- 55.7 percent of those aged 18 to 25 and
- 38.7 percent of those aged 26 to 35

felt this was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time.

As for those aged 36 to 45 and 46 to 55, the figures stood at 29 percent and 21.5 percent respectively, while 15.7 percent of respondents aged between 56 and 65, and 16.6 percent of respondents aged above 65 registered the same view.

Meanwhile, those who saw such an issue as always wrong or almost always wrong registered at more than 50 percent for every respondent aged 36 and above.

Note the lack of red numbers in the table below is because this question was not asked in 2013.

Table 13: Respondents' views towards gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproduction, by age

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	20.9	9.2	14.2	18.4	37.3
26-35	32.1	11.1	18.1	15.8	22.9
36-45	40.4	13.6	17.1	14.0	15.0
46-55	52.1	11.3	15.2	10.6	10.9
56-65	53.9	14.4	16.0	8.3	7.4
Above 65	56.2	15.2	12.0	9.9	6.7

Screenshot from IPS

Views of the younger population form a minority in Singapore

It is important to note that while there is a noticeable trend towards liberal attitudes, especially among younger Singaporeans, such attitudes are ultimately still a minority.

Much of this boils down to numbers — the population of Singaporeans aged 18 to 35 is a minority compared to Singaporeans aged 36 and above.

According to the Department of Statistics, as of 2018, there are

- 226,520 Singaporeans aged 15 to 19,
- 255,516 Singaporeans aged 20 to 24,
- 291,631 aged 25 to 29 and
- 281,397 aged 30-34.

This gives a total of 1,055,544 Singaporeans within this age range of 15-34.

Meanwhile, the figures for Singaporeans aged 35 and above for 2018 are as follows:

35-39: 303,720

40-44: 303,640

45-49: 307, 838

50-54: 308,965

55-59: 304,390

60-64: 271,688

65 and over: 547,854

Which gives a total of 2,348,095 Singaporeans who are 35 years old and above.

What's more, the population of Singaporeans aged 55 and above already outnumbers the population of Singaporeans aged 15 to 34, with a figure of 1,123,932.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this is why IPS has characterised Singaporeans as “fairly conservative in their outlook.”

The survey also noted that in preventing friction between the liberal and conservative camps from erupting into full-fledged conflict:

“... any changes to legislation would have to be managed delicately, and may have to consider not just the majority's opinion on that specific matter, but the possibility that there may be wider ramifications for Singapore and even open the possibilities to changes in other spheres as well, bringing the country closer to a Western democratic society.”