

Survey shows 46.8% of S'poreans having doubts about the existence of a god

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Edit on Mar. 29, 6:00pm: The percentage of Singaporeans having some form of doubt in the existence of a god is 46.8 per cent and not 56.8 per cent as previously stated. The article has been amended to reflect this.

A survey from the Institute of Policy Studies has dug up some fascinating information on Singaporeans and their relationship with religion.

Titled Religion in Singapore: The Private and Public Spheres, the survey analysed the trends of religiosity in Singapore and its impact on perceptions, attitudes and beliefs.

A total of 1,800 Singaporeans were surveyed.

Close to half have some form of doubt about “God”

One of the questions in the survey asks respondents to pick one of six statements which “comes closes (sic) to expressing what you believe in God”.

Around half of the respondents at 53.2 per cent selected the option “I know God really exists and have no doubts about it”.

Here’s the breakdown of responses:

Table 6: Respondents’ beliefs about God

(%)	I don't believe in God	Don't know whether there is a God and no way to find out	Don't believe in a personal God, but in a higher power	Find myself believing in God sometimes, but not at others	While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God	I know God really exists and have no doubts about it
Respondent's beliefs about God	7.6	7.2	10.8	10.9	10.4	53.2

However, this leaves nearly 47 per cent of respondents – 46.8 per cent, to be exact – spread out equally over a spectrum of doubt regarding the existence of “God”, or a divine being.

From this group of participants, 10.4 per cent selected the option “while I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God”.

10.9 per cent of respondents selected the statement “find myself believing in God sometimes, but not at others”.

Another 10.8 per cent selected the statement “don’t believe in a personal God but in a higher power”, and another 7.2 per cent indicated that “don’t know whether there is a God and no way to find out”.

Only 7.6 per cent of all respondents indicated that they don’t believe in it at all.

Interestingly, this is despite 76.5 per cent of respondents professing that they followed a religion.

Most Muslims, Christians and Catholics have no doubt

Of those who took an “absolute stand” i.e. having no doubts as to the existence of “God”, 89.8 per cent of Muslims, 85.3 per cent of Christians and the same percentage of Catholics selected the option.

Table 7: Respondents’ beliefs about God, by religious background

Respondent’s beliefs about God		I don’t believe in God	Don’t know whether there is a God and no way to find out	Don’t believe in a personal God, but in a Higher Power	Find myself believing in God sometimes, but not at others	While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God	I know God really exists and have no doubts about it
Religion (%)	Buddhism	5.5	8.7	12.8	16.9	16.0	40.2
	Taoism	3.4	5.3	13.0	19.7	15.4	43.3
	Islam	1.2	0.8	0.8	3.1	4.3	89.8
	Hinduism	2.9	1.0	9.8	13.7	9.8	62.7
	Catholicism	0.7	0.7	0.7	3.7	8.8	85.3
	Christianity	0.4	0.4	1.8	3.7	8.5	85.3
	No Religion	26.6	19.9	24.7	11.6	8.0	9.1

Hindus, Taoists and Buddhists were less likely to take an absolute stand, with only 62.7 per cent, 43.3 per cent and 40.2 per cent of respondents respectively selecting the option.

Those who were more educated were less likely to say they had no doubt about the existence of “God” as well.

59.6 per cent of respondents with only secondary school education and below took an absolute stand, as compared to 47.3 per cent of respondents with a degree and above.

Table 8: Respondents' beliefs about God, by educational background

		I don't believe in God	Don't know whether there is a God and no way to find out	Don't believe in a personal God, but in a higher power	Find myself believing in God sometimes, but not at others	While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God	I know God really exists and have no doubts about it
Education (%)	Secondary school & below	5.9	6.1	6.7	11.4	10.3	59.6
	Post-Secondary, Diploma & Professional Qualifications	7.1	7.6	10.7	12.6	11.3	50.7
	Degree & above	10.2	8.0	16.1	8.6	9.8	47.3

40 per cent of respondents between the age of 18 to 25 had indicated that they had no doubt about the existence of "God", compared to 60.4 per cent of respondents aged above 65.

However, this could be due to the higher numbers of young respondents identifying themselves as having no religion.

Table 9: Respondents' beliefs about God, by age

		I don't believe in God	Don't know whether there is a God and no way to find out	Don't believe in a personal God, but in a higher power	Find myself believing in God sometimes, but not at others	While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God	I know God really exists and have no doubts about it
Age (%)	18-25	9.3	11.1	15.7	11.6	11.6	40.7
	26-35	10.1	7.4	12.8	11.3	11.6	46.7
	36-45	5.7	6.9	11.4	11.7	10.6	53.7
	46-55	8.9	6.6	11.2	9.2	10.2	53.8
	56-65	6.0	6.7	7.0	11.1	8.3	61.0
	Above 65	5.7	5.4	7.5	10.4	10.7	60.4

Young Muslims and Christians in the survey were also found to be as steadfast as older Muslims and Christians, with around 90 per cent of Muslims aged between 18 and 25 taking the absolute stand in having no doubt "God" exists, compared to 88.2 per cent of Muslims aged above 65.

Around 85 per cent of Christians aged between 18 and 25, compared to 87 per cent of Christians aged above 65, also indicated in their absolute belief in the existence of "God".

Not all those with no religion are atheist

Interestingly, participants with no religion were not made up solely of atheists.

Only 26.6 per cent of those with no religion selected the statement that they firmly believed in “God”.

That makes for 73.4 per cent of those without religion still believing in “God” sometimes or at least some form of higher power.

Out of all the respondents who identified themselves as having no religion, 9.1 per cent were at the other end of the spectrum: they surprisingly took an absolute stand that “God” exists without a doubt.