

## Low public approval for cleanliness at hawker centres and venues for major events: Survey

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SINGAPORE — Nearly half of Singaporeans and Permanent Residents (PRs) are dissatisfied with the thoroughness of cleaning at hawker centres and coffeeshops, a recent survey has found.

Public satisfaction with the general level of cleanliness at food outlets is also relatively low, with only 69 per cent of the 2,000 people polled expressing approval. This compares with 93 per cent of respondents who said they were satisfied with the cleanliness of public transport in Singapore.

Among food outlets, hawker centres fared the worst in terms of public satisfaction with the level of cleanliness - at 60 per cent - while air-conditioned food courts scored far highest at 87 per cent. When asked whether they were satisfied with the thoroughness of cleaning at hawker centres and coffeeshops, only 56 per cent of respondents said "yes".

Overall, the category that drew the lowest level of public approval for cleanliness was that of public venues for major events like the National Day Parade, concerts and marathons. Only 59 per cent of respondents expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness of these areas after the events.

"The results of this survey show that more can be done by all the stakeholders, be it the Government, the private sector or the community and individuals, to keep public spaces clean and liveable for everyone," researchers at the Singapore Management University (SMU) remarked in their summary of the survey's findings.

The survey, completed in March 2017 and funded by the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, is the first on the subject by SMU. The university conducted the survey with polling firm Blackbox Research.

The researchers — Professor Paulin Tay Straughan from SMU and **Dr Matthew Mathews from the Institute of Policy Studies at the National University of Singapore** — said they found a **high level of satisfaction with the cleanliness of public spaces in Singapore.** The "Public Cleanliness Satisfaction Index" they compiled from the survey results showed that 87 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness of public venues which they frequented, such as housing estates, commuter paths, and leisure areas such as parks and playgrounds.

More than half, or 53 per cent, also said they felt Singapore was much cleaner now as compared to five years ago. Only one in 10, or 11 per cent, said Singapore was becoming dirtier.

While nearly all respondents — 98 per cent — reported that they took pride in keeping Singapore clean, 85 per cent of them said that Singapore was a clean city because of the efficiency of its cleaning services.

Littering was the bugbear of most surveyed, though 65 per cent of respondents said they had never reminded a stranger to not litter when they witnessed the act.

And while only 56 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied with the "thoroughness of cleaning" at hawker centres and coffeeshops, only about a third - 35 per cent - said they cleared up their own utensils at these establishments most or all of the time.

"Pro-social behaviours, such as picking up and properly disposing litter at a public area and clearing up of one's own utensils at hawker centres, are not yet entrenched as a culture," the researchers noted.

"More can be done to co-create a culture where every individual plays their part to remind others not to litter, and to help pick up and properly dispose of garbage or litter."