

IPS study shows about 6 in 10 Singapore residents trust that Govt 'has best possible 4G leader' in Lawrence Wong

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SINGAPORE — Around six in 10 Singapore residents trusted that the Government "has the best possible fourth-generation (4G) leader" to navigate divisions within society, foreign relations and post-pandemic economic recovery.

This was from a survey by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) published on Thursday (July 14).

The survey also found that those with higher educational qualifications of at least a university degree had greater trust that Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong was the best possible 4G leader, compared with those without a degree.

The study centred on lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic and future directions for Singapore, and more than 2,000 citizens and permanent residents aged 21 and above were surveyed from the start of the pandemic up to the present.

Between April 22 and June 13, the research team also asked respondents whether they trusted that the Singapore Government has the best possible 4G leader.

This was after Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced in April this year that Mr Wong, who is also Finance Minister, would lead the 4G team of the ruling People's Action Party (PAP).

The study noted that Mr Wong has been "a prominent figure in the 4G team, as the co-chair of the multi-ministry task force, who led Singapore's fight against the pandemic".

What the research team found was that a majority of respondents trust that the Singapore Government has the best possible 4G leader to navigate divisions within society (60 per cent), navigate Singapore's dealing with other countries (59 per cent), and help the country navigate the post-Covid-19 economic recovery (57 per cent).

Respondents were asked whether they had "low trust" or "high trust" in whether "the Singapore Government has the best possible 4G leader".

Of the respondents with an education degree and above, 59 per cent indicated "high trust", while the figure was 44 per cent for those with post-secondary education, and 49 per cent for those with secondary education.

Dr Mike Hou, associate director of IPS Social Lab, one of the authors of this study, said on Thursday during a media briefing on the findings that this result "stood out" for him because more educated groups "tend to question authority more" and "tend to be more skeptical about certain government decisions".

"This led us to think that perhaps (Mr Wong) had, throughout his course in the (Covid-19) task force, been connecting with this particular demographic. This group may be more aligned with

(Singapore's) scientific approach in trying to deal with the pandemic." Dr Hou added that over the last year, Mr Wong also featured in dialogues about several issues concerning "social cohesion", such as racism and minority and women's rights, which could also have helped him better connect with this demographic.

It was also found that:

- Respondents who had high satisfaction in how the Government has handled the pandemic had greater trust that it has the best possible 4G leader (83 per cent), as compared with those who had low government satisfaction (14 per cent) and those who had moderate government satisfaction (54 per cent)
- Those who had low worry over the rise in cost of living as a result of the increase in prices of goods and the Goods and Services Tax had higher trust that the Government has the best possible 4G leader (66 per cent), as compared with those who had higher levels of worry (46 per cent to 47 per cent)
- Those who had a higher receptiveness towards living with Covid-19 as an endemic disease had higher trust that the Singapore Government has the best possible 4G leader (75 per cent), as compared with those with low receptiveness towards endemic living (28 per cent).

Trust in the Singapore Government

Respondents were also asked if they had trust in Singapore's recovery and Government in light of the impact of Covid-19:

- When it came to the jobs, more than half trusted that the Government is serious about developing a strong Singaporean core of highly-skilled talents (63 per cent), will be able to create new jobs and training opportunities (57 per cent), and will ensure that most jobs created here will go to Singapore residents (52 per cent)
- On the other hand, about 49 per cent felt that Singaporeans will become less welcoming of skilled professionals from overseas who work here, "a view that hopefully will not be realised given the importance of global talent to the Singaporean economy", the researchers said

Respondents also had faith in Singapore's governance and economy:

- A majority trusted that the country would remain economically competitive (71 per cent) and that Singapore would emerge out of this crisis stronger and more resilient than before (67 per cent)
- A large proportion also trusted that the Singapore Government knows how to navigate the global economy so that the country will be able to bounce back (64 per cent), that the Government knows how to navigate and lead Singapore in a post-pandemic world (64 per cent), and that the Government knows how to deal with new coronavirus strains that cause Covid-19 (61 per cent)