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Headline: Shoppers have different expectations of physical,online stores : Study

## Shoppers have different expectations of physical, online stores: Study

**SINGAPORE** – For online shoppers, what matters most is the tail end of their shopping experience — how soon purchases are delivered, whether the return and exchange policies are fair, and how easy it is to check out and pay.

In contrast, shoppers at brick and mortar stores regard qualities at the front end more, such as the availability of products and promotions.

This was the finding by the Institute of Service Excellence (ISES) at the Singapore Management University, which released the results of the Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) for the first quarter yesterday. Between e-commerce stores and traditional retailers in the fashion apparel and department stores sub-sectors, customers gave the former group lower scores for perceived overall quality and value.

Nonetheless, shoppers spent more on aggregate at and were more likely to make return visits to e-commerce sites, said ISES.

The e-commerce sub-sector yielded a score of 71.1 points, in line with the score of 71.7 for the retail sector as a whole. This is the first time e-commerce has been included in the index, to account for changing consumption patterns.

ISES executive director Neeta Lachmandas said: “We are seeing greater consumption activities being taken online. By introducing an e-commerce sub-sector within the CSISG, we are hoping to glean insights that could help boost the competitiveness of this fast-growing retail segment.”

Noting that the distinction between brick-and-mortar retailers and online retailers is blurring as more traditional retailers open online stores, Ms Lachmandas said the challenge was for businesses to integrate the physical shopping experience with the convenience of e-commerce.

Ms Candy Chua, Singtel's vice-president of consumer operations, who was a panellist at the ISES Industry Forum yesterday, said the telco's customers can go online to book a physical appointment to visit a shop. Through this, Singtel employees can prepare in advance these customers' details and any items for collection, she said.

“Brick-and-mortar stores will always have those consumers who want that shopping experience (and) ambience,” said Ms Lachmandas.

**REGINA MARIE LEE**