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Headline: More customers satisfied with telcos, but gap widens among 3 players

CONSUMERS' SATISFACTION INCREASED ALONG WITH EXPECTATIONS

# More customers satisfied with telcos, but gap widens among 3 players: SMU

Retail sector scores also up due to better perception of quality, availability of products

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**SINGAPORE**—With competition heating up in the info-communications market, telcos are seeing higher customer satisfaction levels, a study by Singapore Management University's Institute of Service Excellence showed.

In results released yesterday, customer satisfaction in the info-communications sector saw a 1.6-per-cent increase to reach 68.5 out of 100 points in the 2016 first-quarter Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore. This was the sector's highest since the index was computed in 2007.

The study found that customers had higher expectations of telcos but still ended up more satisfied with the perceived overall quality of their products and services. The higher index was driven by big jumps in scores for the Wireless@SG (16.8 per cent) and broadband (3.3 per cent) sub-sectors.

The institute's head of research and consulting, Mr Chen Yongchang, said the leap in satisfaction for Wireless@SG to 69.6 points could be due to the roll-out of free Wi-Fi service at



**72**  
POINTS  
SINGTEL'S  
CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION  
LEVEL



**67.5**  
POINTS  
STARHUB'S  
CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION  
LEVEL



**65**  
POINTS  
M1'S  
CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION  
LEVEL

33 MRT stations in the lead-up to the survey period.

The survey was done between January and April, among more than 8,500 Singapore residents and 900 tourists.

The index is an independent qualitative indicator to assess Singapore's service levels. It was jointly developed by the institute and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency to compute customer satisfaction scores at the national, sector, sub-sector and company levels.

Another finding that came up was the widening gap in customer satisfaction seen in the mobile telecommunications sub-sector. Telco firm Singtel advanced to 72 points, compared with



Jewellery and fashion apparel saw significant increases in customer satisfaction levels. TODAY FILEPHOTO

StarHub's 67.5 and M1's 65, the institute said.

Mr Chen added that telcos need different approaches to keep customers both satisfied and loyal. Survey respondents ranked network reliability and having a range of subscription plans to meet their needs as highly important to satisfaction, while loyalty and rewards programme were key to loyalty.

"This is telling, because in the telco sector we do see more competition coming up, (with) new players, so these become important," he said.

More customers are also using digital channels to interact with their service providers. More than 40 per cent of those in the study use the websites of telcos, while a decreasing percentage are using shops, service and contact centres.

In the retail sector, customer satisfaction levels also rose by 2.4 per cent to 71.7 out of 100 points, driven by an increased perception of overall quality and higher customer expectations. Significant increases were seen in the scores for the jewellery (72.3 points), fashion apparel (71.9) and department stores (70.2) sub-sectors.

Across many of the retail sub-sectors, such as department stores and supermarkets, the availability of products stood out as key to customer satisfaction.

In the fashion apparel sub-sector, the top-three companies with the highest customer satisfaction were Bossini (74.8), Uniqlo (74.5) and Hang Ten (74). For the department-store sub-sector, DFS (73.2), Takashimaya (71.7) and John Little (71.5) took the top spots.