

Commuters happier with public transport: survey

Score for rail services rises 3.7% in Q2 but is expected to take a hit in Q3 following the July 7 disruption

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COMMUTERS seem to be happier with Singapore's public transport system, particularly taxi services and public buses, which recorded marked improvements, said a quarterly survey.

Satisfaction levels for taxi services was up 4.3 per cent from a year ago to 65.9 points, while participants gave public buses a higher score of 60.9 points, up 4.1 per cent.

Conducted between April and June this year, the 2015 second quar-

ter Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) conducted by the Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University (ISES) on Wednesday said it showed that the MRT sub-sector also saw higher scores across both SMRT and SBS trains, notching an overall 62 points – an increase of 3.7 per cent over 2014.

But ISES noted that the survey period was concluded before the massive train network disruption on July 7, which it said "may otherwise have negatively impacted commuter satisfaction since".

"Additional analysis into the land

transport sector, specifically the improved scores for the MRT and public buses sub-sectors, revealed that the more commuters believe that the operator is working in their best interest, and the more commuters are happy with the adequacy of government intervention in land transport, the more likely these same commuters will have high(er) satisfaction with the transport operator".

Marcus Lee, academic director of ISES and assistant professor of marketing, said: "This observation suggests that customer satisfaction with our public transport operators is more multi-faceted and improving satisfaction will take more than reliable trains and frequent buses. Operators will need to have in place a collab-

orative and integrated strategy to improve the commuting experience, one that has the commuting public vested in the improvements and supported by government agencies."

In air transport, the three sub-sectors – airlines, budget airlines and Changi Airport – performed similarly to the previous year. Changi airport dipped 0.4 per cent to 75.1 points, while the airlines sector slid 0.1 per cent to 73.2 points and budget airlines remained unchanged at 68.3 points from 2014.

Over in logistics, both the courier and postal services recorded slight year-on-year movements, with the former scoring 70.2 points (-1.4 per cent) and the latter inching up to 71.5 points (+0.4 per cent).

Those polled were also more satisfied with the country's public education, with the sector scoring 74.1 points, a rise of 1.6 per cent from the previous year, even as satisfaction levels for polytechnics and ITE dipped.

Polytechnics and ITE scored 69.8 points (-1.8 per cent) and 74 points (-0.4 per cent) respectively.

The overall improvement in the sector was led by a record 75.6 points from the universities sub-sector, which rose 2.8 per cent from a year ago.

In contrast, private education institutions (PEIs) posted a 2.5 per cent year-on-year drop to 64.1 points, as part-time PEI student respondents were less satisfied than full-time students.

"Segment analysis also indicated the poorer year-on-year CSISG showing from PEIs can be attributed to vocational programmes, as opposed to non-vocational courses that actually made a small improvement," the survey said.

Further private education sector analysis showed that the top three drivers of students' perceptions of quality were: teaching quality, the PEI's support services, and student's perceived suitability to the enrolled programme.

The CSISG 2015 Q2 survey gathered a total of 13,292 unique responses about customer experiences in the air and land transport, logistics, public education, and private education sectors.