

6 OUT OF 8 SUB-SECTORS HAD DECLINING YEAR-ON-YEAR SCORES

Customers less satisfied with transport, logistics

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SINGAPORE – Despite recent efforts by the authorities to improve the quality of public transport services here, customer satisfaction levels still fell from last year in the transport and logistics sector, the latest Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore survey shows.

Conducted by Singapore Management University's Institute of Service Excellence, the survey, which was released yesterday, found that there was a 0.8 per cent decrease in customer satisfaction levels for the transport and logistics sector. Six out of the eight measured sub-sectors — airlines, Changi Airport, courier services, MRT system, public buses and taxi services — recorded declining year-on-year scores. Changi Airport fell by 11.8 per cent, the MRT by 6.8 per cent and taxis by 6.1 per cent.

Transport experts said they were not surprised by the results, since it will take time before the effects of government actions can be fully felt.

Dr Lee Der Horng, professor at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the National University of Singapore, said: "Many Government actions are still ongoing so it will take time for the outcome to be reflected. It will take time for it to translate into good commuter perspectives and for people to really appreciate its benefits."

Dr Park Byung Joon, head of programme for Urban Transport Management at UniSIM, added: "I feel that the main reason (for dissatisfaction) is the crowd. It still tends to be very crowded on trains. With constant an-

nouncements made by the MRT saying it would be improving its system, Singaporeans may want to see the changes more quickly. When they do not see anything better, they get disappointed. But it does take time."

The survey — conducted between April and June — also found that within the MRT sector, commuters who used more than one mode of transport were significantly less satisfied with the MRT operator than those who used only MRT trains.

Ms Caroline Lim, director of the Institute of Service Excellence, told TODAY that different sectors may influence each other's customers, whether positively or negatively. "If it is raining and there is no shelter from the bus stop to the MRT station, commuters may be unhappy," said Ms Lim.

Within the transport and logistics sector, customer satisfaction levels for tourists fell significantly more than locals. For MRT, it dropped by 12.4 per cent for tourists, compared with 7.7 per cent for locals. For taxis, customer satisfaction levels for tourists plunged by 14.1 per cent and 4.2 per cent for locals.

In the education sector, private education dipped by 8.3 per cent, while public education sector's scores remained unchanged.

Dr Lee said while customer satisfaction levels are a good indicator, one cannot only look at them to determine service standards. "We must also take into account engineering statistics; like how often trains break down or what time the bus arrives. If we combine customer satisfaction levels and engineering statistics, there will be a more objective picture."