

CSISG Q2 RESULTS: TRANSPORT SECTOR

It's not just about reliable trains and buses

Survey reveals positive link between satisfaction levels and government intervention

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SINGAPORE – Customer satisfaction in Singapore's land transport systems has risen this year, and this appeared to be partly connected to commuters' perception of the level of government involvement in the sector.

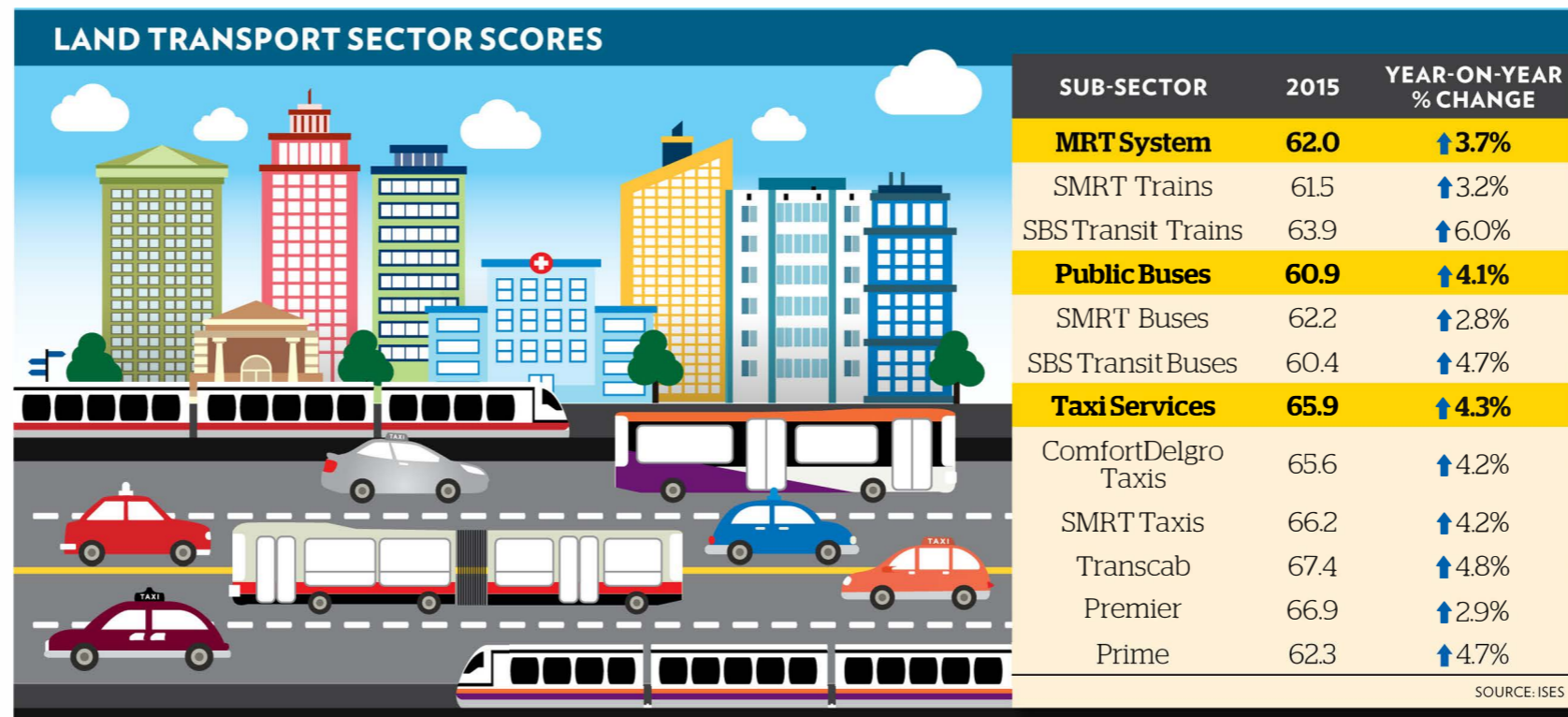
According to the 2015 Q2 Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) conducted by the Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University (ISES), the land transport sub-sectors — MRT System, Public Buses and Taxi Services — posted an improvement in customer satisfaction scores.

The MRT System sub-sector scored 62 points, a 3.7-per-cent increase over the year before. SMRT Trains recorded a score of 61.5 points, up by 3.2 per cent over last year, while SBS Transit Trains leapt 6 per cent to 63.9 points. The Public Buses sub-sector scored 60.9 points, a 4.1-per-cent improvement compared to last year. Scores for SMRT Buses rose by 2.8 per cent to reach 62.2 points, while SBS Transit Buses posted a 4.7 per cent jump to 60.4 points.

The CSISG report indicated that analysis of the two land transport sub-sectors revealed a positive association between commuters' satisfaction and government intervention.

"The more commuters believe the operator is working in their best interest, the happier commuters are with the adequacy of government intervention in public transport, the more likely these same commuters will have higher satisfaction with the transport operator," the report stated.

Dr Marcus Lee, ISES academic director and assistant professor of mar-



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keting at SMU, said: "This observation suggests that customer satisfaction with our public transport operators is multi-faceted and improving satisfaction will take more than reliable trains and frequent buses.

"Operators will need to have in place a collaborative and integrated strategy to improve the commuting experience, one that has the commuting public vested in the improvements and supported by government agencies."

MAINTAINING AND UPGRADING

The CSISG survey period concluded before the massive train network disruption on July 7 this year, which ISES said "may otherwise have negatively impacted commuter satisfaction".

Ms Cindy Chan, a graphics designer in her 30s, was one of the estimated 250,000 passengers affected by the July 7 disruption. She said that though there were many buses plying the roads that day, it was not enough to

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handle the crowds. She ended up waiting two hours before boarding a bus.

"During such situations, the government should ideally step in to ensure there are enough buses," said Ms Chan. "With the right level of government intervention, I am sure train breakdowns will be handled better."

COMMUTERS FIRST

Meeting customer service expectations is a key priority of the transport operators TODAY spoke to.

"We are encouraged to see improvements in the customer satisfaction results for our taxi, bus and train services but we realise there is still more to be done," said Ms Tammy Tan, group corporate communications officer of ComfortDelGro. "We will continue in our efforts to do even more through our continued investments in our taxi booking services, new buses, training, systems and processes."

SMRT "places strong emphasis on commuter experience". Mr Patrick Na-

than, vice-president (Corporate Information & Communications) at SMRT, said: "Our commitment to service excellence is a cornerstone of the multi-year, multi-project effort in renewing our North-South East-West Lines to achieve better levels of safety, reliability, convenience and comfort for our commuters."

Last month, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) awarded a S\$136.8 million contract to a consortium comprising Kawasaki Heavy Industries, CSR Qingdao Sifang and Kawasaki Heavy Industries (Singapore) to supply 12 six-car trains for SMRT's North-South and East-West lines, which will be deployed in 2019.

To enhance the commuting experience, LTA yesterday announced that free WiFi service will be available at all MRT and LRT station platforms as well as 30 bus interchanges and terminals by 2020. The final five of the 33 pilot stations — Buangkok, Kovan, Little India, Paya Lebar and Potong Pasir — began wireless service yesterday.