



News Release

Satisfaction in Singapore's Consumer Services Improves Across Most Industries

Singapore, 25 March 2020 (Wednesday) – The Institute of Service Excellence (ISE) at the Singapore Management University (SMU) (卓越服务研究院) today released the 2019 full-year results for the Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG), alongside the announcement of results for the Finance & Insurance and Healthcare sectors for the 4th quarter (Q4) of 2019.

The 2019 national score rose to 74.3 points (on a 0 to 100 scale). This was a 1.2% improvement over the 2018 score of 73.5 points, marking a record high in the CSISG study's 13-year history.

This improvement in Singapore's national satisfaction level was driven by the Food & Beverage (+3.6% year-on-year improvement), Info-communications (+2.4%), Retail (+1.1%), Finance & Insurance (+1.0%), Healthcare (+1.0%), and Tourism (+0.9%) sectors.

"These positive changes in satisfaction were seen alongside observable improvements in local customers' perceptions of quality and value in several of the measured industries," said Ms Neeta Lachmandas (妮塔.拉切曼达斯), ISE Executive Director (执行总监).

The national score for 2019 included the customer responses from the Finance & Insurance and Healthcare sectors in the last quarter of 2019. Both sectors registered noticeable improvements, with the Finance & Insurance sector improving 1.0% year-on-year to 74.6 points and the Healthcare sector also improving by 1.0% year-on-year, to 72.7 points.

Finance & Insurance

The Finance & Insurance sector's improvement came on the back of year-on-year satisfaction level upticks in each of the five measured constituent sub-sectors, namely, Banks, Credit Cards, Health & Medical Insurance, Life Insurance, and Motor & Other Personal Insurance.

With the digital banking licenses due to be awarded, ISE researchers also looked into the potential profile of the new customers of these digital banks by asking respondents about their willingness to apply for various bank products through the new digital banks.

"Unsurprisingly, this group was mostly made up of customers who were younger, middle income, and already familiar with the current internet and mobile banking offerings," said Ms Lachmandas.

"What is surprising though, was that a sizable proportion of retail banking customers, more than 40%, who showed relatively higher levels of loyalty to the incumbent banks, actually expressed willingness to try out the new digital banks. This bodes well for the new digital banks.

"On the other hand, the incumbent banks should take heed that this same segment of customers, who have significantly higher loyalty levels, are going to be more willing to give the new competition an opportunity," she remarked.

Further analysis of this segment of customers reveal that they were most willing to try out credit cards (99.7% of those customers) and loan (48.2%) products from the new digital banks.

In contrast, Insurance policyholders were much less willing to purchase life or health insurance policies through an online channel, with less than one in eight saying they would consider buying such policies online.

“Unlike the developments in the banking industry, there appears to be some continued resistance with Insurance customers when it comes to purchasing life and health insurance policies online. This suggests that there is an opportunity for insurers to further leverage on digital channels to improve interactions with their customers in this space,” said Mr Chen Yongchang (陈勇畅), ISE Head of Research and Consulting.

Healthcare

The year-on-year improvement in patient satisfaction within the Healthcare sector was similarly spurred by upticks in the satisfaction levels of its three constituent sub-sectors, namely Polyclinics, Private Hospitals, and Restructured Hospitals.

Nonetheless, it was observed that the perennial issue of long perceived wait times still plagued Singapore’s healthcare institutions, particularly the restructured hospitals and polyclinics; in all three measured sub-sectors, the satisfaction with the “Waiting Time” attribute rated last. Impact analysis also show the “Waiting Time” and “Waiting Experience” attributes were key, if not the most important, drivers of patient satisfaction.

“Even as new hospitals and polyclinics are built and existing ones renovated, capacity at our healthcare institutions will continue to be stretched. Short of adding capacity at substantial cost, the CSSIG study shows appointment-making to be an effective solution in reducing perceived wait times,” commented Mr Chen.

“For instance, a polyclinic patient in 2019 without an appointment had an average Waiting Time satisfaction rating of 5.19 points on a scale of 1 to 10. In contrast, a patient with an appointment had an average rating of 7.22 points. Patients with appointments also had markedly higher levels of overall satisfaction with the polyclinic,” he pointed out.

“Thus, apart from improving processes, healthcare administrators can consider increasing the use of appointments as a means of improving perceived waiting time and experience, and ultimately overall patient experience,” Mr Chen surmised.

The CSISG 2019 Q4 study was conducted between October 2019 and January 2020. A total of 9,570 surveys were completed. Prior to this, the Info-Communications and Retail sectors were measured in Q1. This was followed by the Air Transport and Land Transport sectors in Q2. The Food & Beverage and Tourism sectors were measured in Q3. In total, the CSISG 2019 study yielded 29,670 completed questionnaires from Singapore citizens, permanent residents and departing tourists at Changi Airport. A total of 671 distinct entities were measured and 173 entities received published scores.

Please refer to Annex A for a background on the CSISG and Annex B for the detailed scores. Annex C recaps the performance of each industry from the previous three quarters of 2019.

About the Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore

The Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) is a landmark study that computes customer satisfaction scores at the national, sector, sub-sector, and company levels with the intent of producing a rigorous, objective and comprehensive assessment of Singapore's service levels. Given that the CSISG is the only national customer satisfaction measurement tool with cross sector capabilities, ISE is able to provide organisations with exclusive benchmarking insights about customer satisfaction as well as use predictive analytics and regression models to pinpoint drivers that would deliver the most impact.

About the Institute of Service Excellence (ISE) at Singapore Management University

The Institute of Service Excellence was jointly set up by Singapore Management University and Singapore Workforce Development Agency in July 2007 to elevate service levels and promote a culture of service excellence in Singapore. Working in close collaboration with government agencies and business leaders, ISE champions service excellence through an integrated approach that encompasses benchmarking and analysis, research and thought leadership, as well as industry engagement.

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