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Headline: More dining out as F&B sector reopens fully

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MORE people are dining out now than in 2021, but fast-food outlets and restaurants are falling short in terms of customer satisfaction and perceived quality of products and services such as takeaway and food delivery.

The findings were part of a Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore survey, whose results were released on Friday.

The annual survey by the Institute of Service Excellence (ISE) at the Singapore Management University assesses consumer attitudes towards the food and beverage, and tourism sectors.

A total of 2,600 people were surveyed online in 2022 between July and September.

With the easing of pandemic restrictions, such as capacity limits, there was a significant increase in people dining out at restaurants, fast-food outlets, and cafes and coffee houses than in the same period in 2021. Overall, 59.4% of customers surveyed said they had most recently dined out, compared with 34.8% a year ago.

Respondents who chose to dine out for meals went up from 46.4% to 74.2% at restaurants; from 21.5% to 44.7% at fast-food restaurants; and from 35% to 52% at cafes and coffee houses.

But across the board, customer satisfaction – measured on a scale of 0 to 100 – dropped year on year for fast-food restaurants by 2.8% to 71.9 points; and for restaurants by 1.9% to 71.6 points. Cafes and coffee houses, on the other hand, saw a slight increase by 1.5% to 70.6 points.

Respondents were also asked if they dined out, took home or ordered food delivery for their most recent meal.

Compared with 2021, restaurants, in particular, were given the thumbs down in terms of quality of the dine-in, takeaway and food delivery experience. Their perceived quality score took a hit, falling 3.4% year on year to 74.4 points, owing largely to dissatisfaction with takeaway.

Issues raised by respondents included poorer ordering and process experiences such as approachability of staff, than when they dined in, or ordered food via a delivery platform.

Overall, respondents were also less satisfied with food delivery platforms.

Fewer respondents ordered food through delivery platforms in 2022 than in 2021. — The Straits Times/ANN