

'Table manners' have improved, but not graciousness on the go

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SINGAPORE — We are better now when it comes to clearing our plates at hawker centres but Singaporeans are still not showing enough courtesy on the roads.

A survey conducted earlier this year by the Singapore Kindness Movement (SKM) has shown that locals are slightly more gracious than last year, scoring 61 on the "graciousness index", three points than previously.

About 1,000 people were polled in the survey which is into its second year.

The mostly-local respondents were asked if Singaporeans are gracious in six areas including behaviour on public transport, at work and while driving.

There was an improvement in about half of these behavioural traits and a drop in the other half compared to the results last year.

Singaporeans are better now at clearing plates after their meals at food courts, keeping public toilets clean and allowing passengers to alight first from public.

Eighteen per cent of those polled said Singaporeans do clear their trays — more than double the seven per cent who responded positively last year.

Still, most were either indifferent or

feel that much more can be done.

Mr Raymond Ng, the managing director of Added Value Saffron Hill, the firm which conducted the survey, said "the indifference group" tend to be a bit bigger in Singapore as compared to countries like China, Thailand or Malaysia. They tend to be either negative or positive because Singapore is known for "that group of fence sitters".

"We sit in the middle we do not have an opinion, some call it 'bo-chupness'," he added, using the Hokkien phrase for "not caring".

Areas in which Singaporeans did not perform well are being considerate to the elderly and pregnant women, parents showing respect for their children's teachers and behaviour while driving.

The number of those who said parents show respect for teachers, for example, was 60 per cent of polled respondents, a drop from last year's 72 per cent.

SKM's general manager Teh Thien Yew said upcoming plans include the possibility of bringing back the Singa statues that used to be in public places and implementing a "mirror check".

This is where as "as you check yourself in public places, be reminded that it is nice to smile and kinder to other people and it is good for you."