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For more information, please contact:

Ms. Tammy Ho, Sr Manager, Marketing & Communications

+65 9790 6340 / tammy.ho@ipsos.com

Life in the new normal: 71% of Singaporeans are worried about contracting the virus, half don't intend to travel this year even if it is allowed, and majority intend to continue online shopping [Ipsos report]

Singapore, 4th June 2020 – As Singapore was about to come out of the Circuit Breaker period, Ipsos conducted a survey to understand what life in the new normal could look like for the country. The survey was conducted over the period of 19th to 25th May 2020 among a nationally representative sample of 500 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents.

71% of Singaporeans say they are worried about contracting the COVID-19 virus but 58% remain confident that Singapore is well equipped to manage the Coronavirus outbreak.

Two-thirds of Singaporeans say that the Circuit Breaker measures imposed to fight the outbreak have impacted their household incomes. Even as the lift of the Circuit Breaker measures is in sight, 40% of Singaporeans feel that their household income will get worse in the next 6 months. This was however before the announcement of the Fortitude Budget by DPM Heng Swee Keat on the 26 May 2020 which may have affected opinions subsequently.

As the Singapore government eases the country back into normalcy, Singaporeans are remaining cautious. When it comes to visiting restaurants, only 1 in 4 Singaporeans say they would be comfortable to do so in June and July if the option is available. 39% of Singaporeans also say that they will reduce expenditure in restaurants or cafes while 45% will maintain the same level of expenditure as before.

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Singaporeans are taking the same wait-and-see approach with other activities. 30% say they will not join a cultural event or gathering in 2020; 28% say they will not visit a gym or take a sports membership in 2020; and 53% do not intend to travel this year even if it is allowed.

Prasad Shinde, Senior Client Officer at Ipsos in Singapore said, “Many marketers had hoped that once the Circuit Breaker restrictions are eased, life would get back to the way it was. Singaporeans, at present, do not feel that way as seen from their reduced spend intention at dining out or disinclination towards going on holidays or attending large events or gatherings. Sentiment, however, changes rapidly and this may depend on how in control they feel the COVID-19 situation is.”

A distinct change in behaviour as a result of the Circuit Breaker is that in online shopping. 88% of Singaporeans have bought something online during this period, of whom, 2 in 3 say that they had shopped for a new product category for the first time during the Circuit Breaker. While the bulk of online purchases are on groceries and food products (63%), other categories such as personal care items (51%), cleaning products (38%), home appliances (28%), and even furniture (6%) saw some first-time online shoppers.

Nick Hunter, Director of Market Strategy and Understanding at Ipsos in Singapore said, “There are clear shifts in the adoption of e-commerce for the purchase of items that were typically purchased in brick and mortar stores - groceries and fresh produce as an example – as well as an introduction to different omni-channel purchase options. It has become quite common for example for a purchase to be made via WhatsApp and for collection to be made at a curbside pick-up. The awareness and familiarity with such possibilities, as well as the perceived greater convenience to shoppers, may mean that demand for these options remains long after life goes back to normal, so it will be interesting to see whether any retail sectors look to make some of these permanent.”

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As online shopping is expected to grow, it will be hard to stop Singaporeans from visiting the malls. 72% say they will visit a neighbourhood mall within two months after the Circuit Breaker restrictions are lifted; 33% say the same for malls in the Orchard Road area.

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Note to Editors

About the study

- The survey was conducted online between 19th and 25th May 2020, among a nationally representative sample of n=500 Singapore citizens and permanent residents aged 18 and above.
- Quotas on age, gender and ethnicity were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects the overall population distribution, based on Singapore Department of Statistics population estimates.
- The precision of online surveys is measured using a credible interval. In this case, the results reported are accurate to +/- 5 percentage points of the views and perspectives of all Singaporeans aged 18 and above (at 95% confidence interval). Credible intervals are wider among subsets of the population.
- Though not reported here, the survey was concurrently conducted in Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam.

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For further information or to set up further interviews with opinion leaders cited in this article, please contact

Tammy Ho

Sr Manager, Marketing Communications

tammy.ho@ipsos.com

hp: +65 97906340

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