

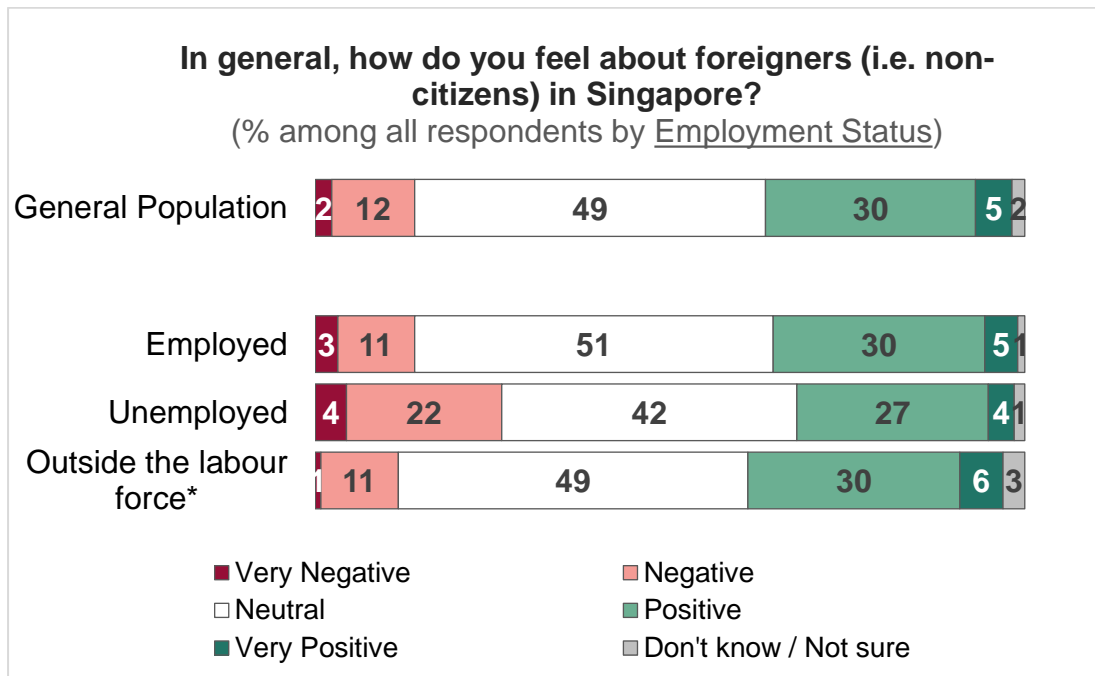


**MEDIA RELEASE**

**MAJORITY OF SINGAPOREANS DO NOT FEEL STRONGLY NEGATIVE ABOUT FOREIGNERS IN SINGAPORE**

REACH’s polls<sup>1</sup> found that the majority of Singaporeans were either neutral or positive about foreigners (i.e. non-citizens) in Singapore. A telephone poll was conducted among 2,100 randomly selected Singapore Citizens aged 15 years and above, from 11 to 21 August 2020<sup>2</sup>; and an online poll was conducted among 1,050 randomly selected Singapore Citizens aged 15 years and above, from 21 to 24 August 2020.

2. Nearly half (49%) of the respondents were neutral about foreigners in Singapore. Negative sentiments were low – 14% were either very negative or negative about foreigners in Singapore; and positive sentiments were double of that – 35% were either very positive or positive about foreigners in Singapore. Respondents who were unemployed were more likely to feel negative towards foreigners; job-related concerns about foreigners were also more pronounced among the unemployed.



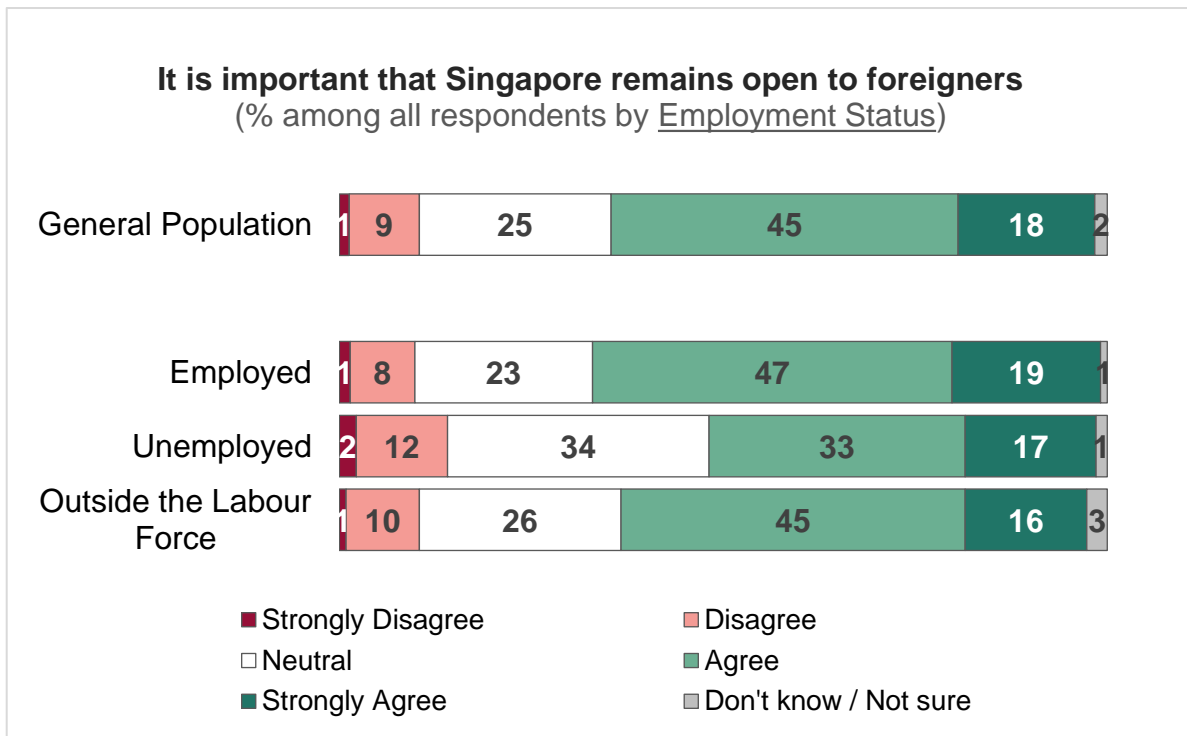
<sup>1</sup> The sample was weighted to be demographically representative of the national population in terms of gender, age, and race.

<sup>2</sup> The estimated margin of error is 2.1% at the 95% confidence level.

\*Persons outside the labour force include retirees, housewives, students and those who were not working nor looking for work.

3. All respondents were asked about the top three things that bothered them most about foreigners<sup>3</sup>. Nearly half (47%) of respondents did not mention any concerns about foreigners, but 23% mentioned job-related concerns and 16% were concerned about the social habits of foreigners (e.g. perceptions of cleanliness, talking loudly).

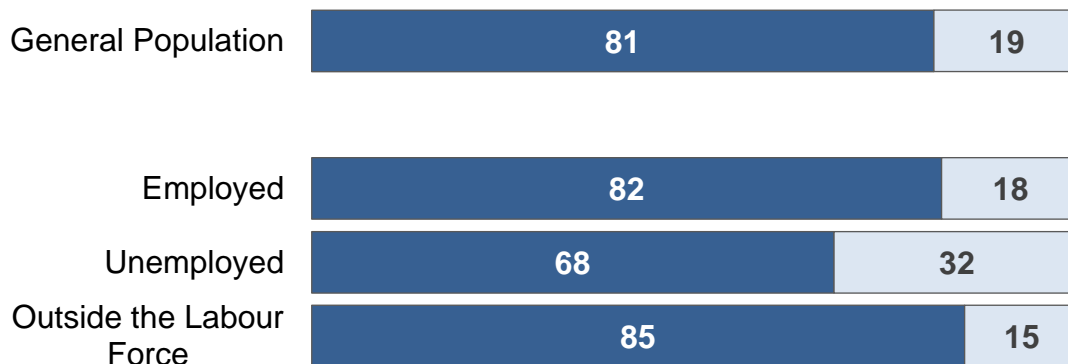
4. Singaporeans generally agreed with the importance of remaining open to foreigners. Majority of the respondents (63%) strongly agreed or agreed that it is important that Singapore remains open to foreigners. 25% were neutral on this question, while only 10% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. Respondents who were unemployed were more likely to be neutral on the importance of Singapore remaining open to foreigners.



5. Majority of Singaporeans also recognised the benefits of Singapore being a regional hub in jobs creation. 81% agreed that it is good that Singapore is a regional hub as it provides good job opportunities for Singaporeans, even if some jobs will go to foreigners. The remaining 19% felt that it is better for Singapore not to be a regional hub, so as to reduce the number of foreigners, even if it meant fewer job opportunities for Singaporeans – respondents who were unemployed were more likely to indicate so.

<sup>3</sup> The question “Can you tell me the top three things that bother you most about foreigners in Singapore?” was an open-ended question where up to 3 responses were allowed.

**Which statement best represents your views?**  
(% among all respondents by Employment Status)



- In general, it is good that Singapore is a regional hub, as it provides good job opportunities for Singaporeans, but also brings in foreigners
- It is better for Singapore not to be a regional hub, so we can reduce the number of foreigners, even if this means fewer job opportunities for Singaporeans

*Comments from REACH Chairman*

6. Reviewing the survey findings, REACH Chairman Mr Tan Kiat How, who is Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministry of National Development said, “During this difficult period, Singaporeans are understandably anxious over job security and career opportunities. The Government remains committed to helping Singaporeans keep their jobs or find new ones. Nevertheless, it is heartening to know that many Singaporeans understand the need for Singapore to remain open to global talent.”

**About REACH**

REACH is the national feedback and engagement unit under the Ministry of Communications and Information. Our mission is to facilitate feedback between citizens and government.

**Issued by  
REACH  
10 October 2020**