COMMUTERS are more satisfied with Singapore’s public transport system than they were a year ago, the latest Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) findings show.

Surveys of commuters conducted between April and June – before the Public Transport Council approved a one per cent hike in bus and train fares last week – showed the biggest jump in customer satisfaction with public transport in the CSISG’s five-year history.

The Institute of Service Excellence at Singapore Management University (ISES) said yesterday that the public buses sector saw its score rise 5.3 points to 66.4 out of a possible 100, while customer satisfaction with the MRT/LRT system rose 3.7 points to 67.8.

ISES’s analysis of local commuters’ responses pinpoints value as a key reason for the jump in the case of public buses, which may mean that the introduction of distance-based fares last July and the addition of more bus trips in recent months has had some positive impact.

But SBS Transit and SMRT should focus on raising the frequency of bus arrivals, which was found to have a strong positive impact on customer satisfaction, ISES said. Regular bus commuters, in particular, were less satisfied than occasional riders over the frequency and punctuality of the buses they take.

Public transport’s improvement fuelled an overall jump in satisfaction levels with the transportation & logistics sector, whose score rose 1.3 points from last year to reach 70 out of 100 respondent views.

Other notable jumps in the sector included budget airlines’ 6.2-point leap to 65.7; Changi Airport Group’s huge 4.9-point jump to 78.6; and Singapore Airlines, which saw a dip to 76.6 this round, after three years of improvement.

The survey period had coincided with glitches with SIA’s revamped website.

Education was the other sector studied by ISES this quarter, and for the first time, its score was broken down to reflect the public and private education sectors.

After the introduction of new legislation which culled from the sector private schools that did not meet minimum standards, commercial schools’ score jumped around six and a half points to 74.5. In all, 753 students of institutions such as UniSIM, Singapore Institute of Management, MDIS, PSB Academy, and Kaplan were polled.

Private education thus overtook the public education sector, which improved its score to a lower 70.3, based on responses from 3,264 students from five polytechnics, three publicly funded autonomous universities and the Institute of Technical Education.