

No Single-Use Plastic Survey Report: Business Operators



Findings and analyses

No Single Use Plastic survey was conducted from 1st August until 15th September 2018 involving 231 respondents. The survey was done using convenient sampling method through online platform and on-site survey.

The objectives of the survey are:

1. To understand the public perception towards the usage of single-use plastic items at food eateries in Penang.
2. To provide the policymakers with a better understanding of the public views prior to the formation of state policy on the banning of single-use plastic items in Penang.

In order to address the objectives above, potential analysis was performed and results obtained were described as follow.

Respondents' business background

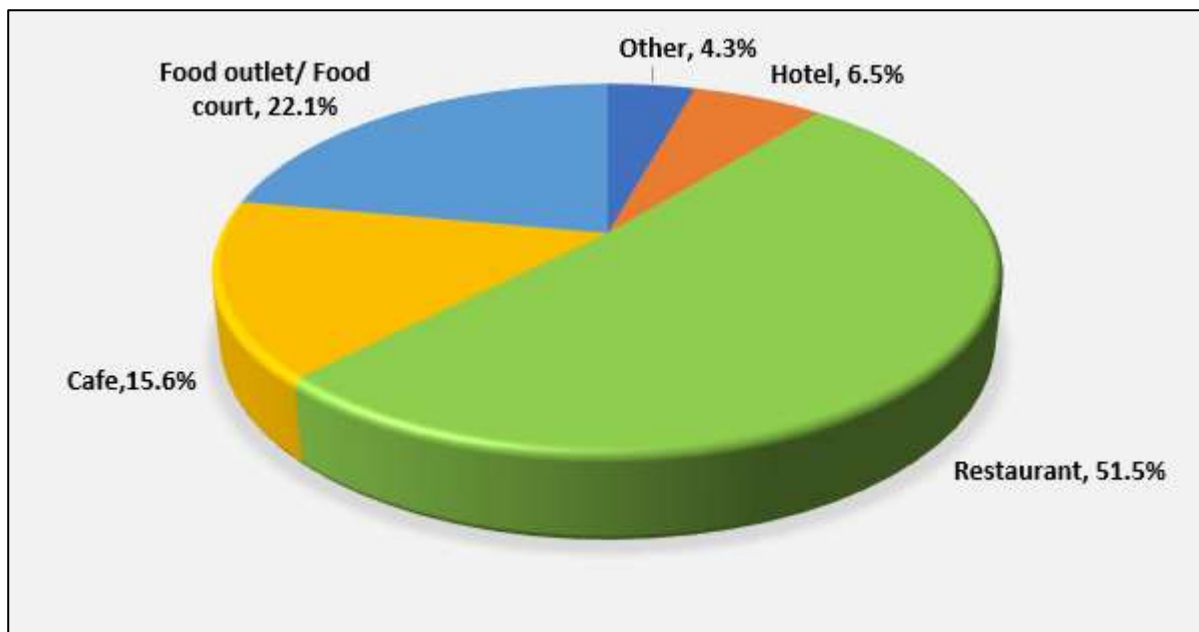


Figure 1: Respondents' business background

Of all the business operators surveyed, 51.5% of respondents were restaurant owners, followed by 22.1% who own business in food outlet or food court. Other than that, business operators at café and hotel were 15.6% and 6.5% respectively.

Q4: What type of single-use plastic items do you provide to your customers at the moment?

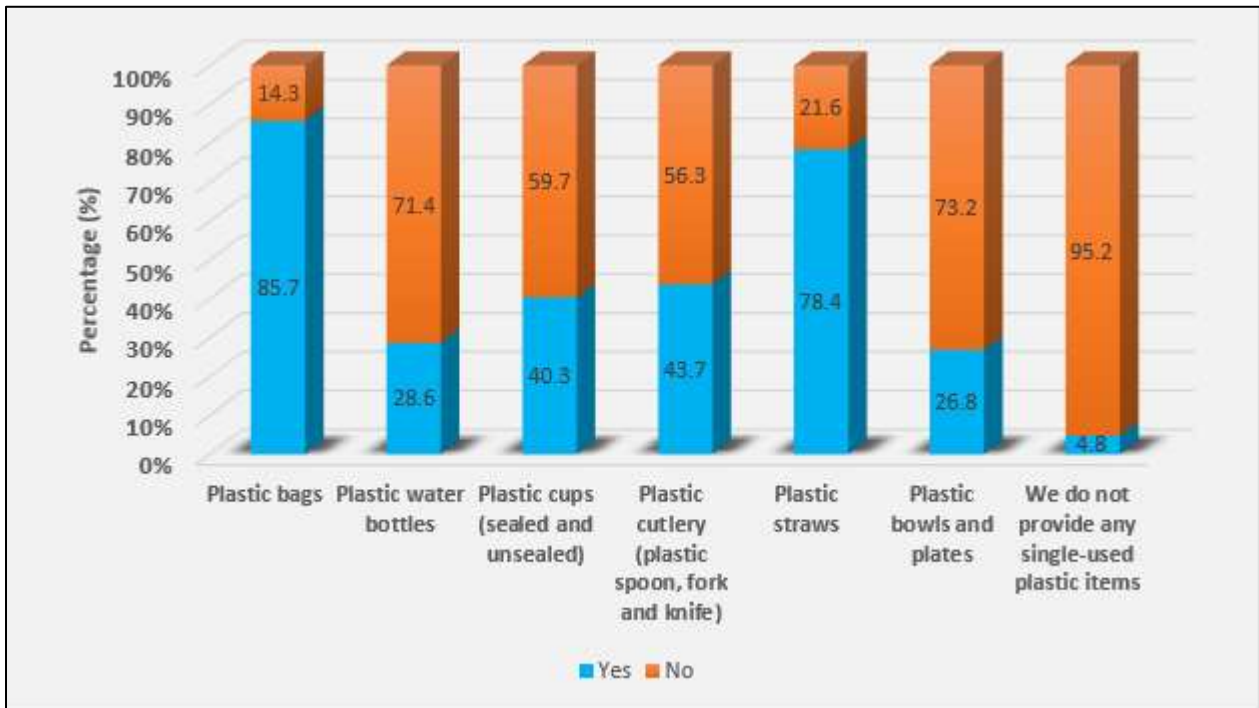


Figure 2: Types of single-use plastic item being provided to the customers

The survey also revealed that the types of single-use plastic items mostly provided by business operators in this study were plastic bags (85.7%) and plastic straws (78.4%). Not more than 50% of respondents provided other types of single-use plastic items, specifically plastic cutlery (43.7%), plastic cups (40.3%), plastic water bottles (28.6%), as well as plastic bowls and plates (26.8%). On the other hand, a very low percentage of respondents (4.8%) stated that they did not provide any single-use plastic item to the customers.

In terms of plastic bags, this study found that hotel owners were 88% less likely to provide this type of plastic item to their customers compared to other types of business owners. However, as for water bottles, the result showed that those who run restaurant business were 73% less likely to provide this item to their customers compared to those who own hotel business. Similarly,

those with cafe business were 84% less likely to provide plastic water bottles to their customers compared to those with hotel business. In terms of plastic cups, this study found that those who run café business were eight times more likely to provide this item to their customers compared to those with other types of businesses.

As for other types of single-use plastic items, including plastic cutlery, straws, bowls and plates, the results revealed that there was no significant association between the types of business and the practice of providing these plastic items to the customers.

Q5: When you use single-use plastic items, it's usually because:

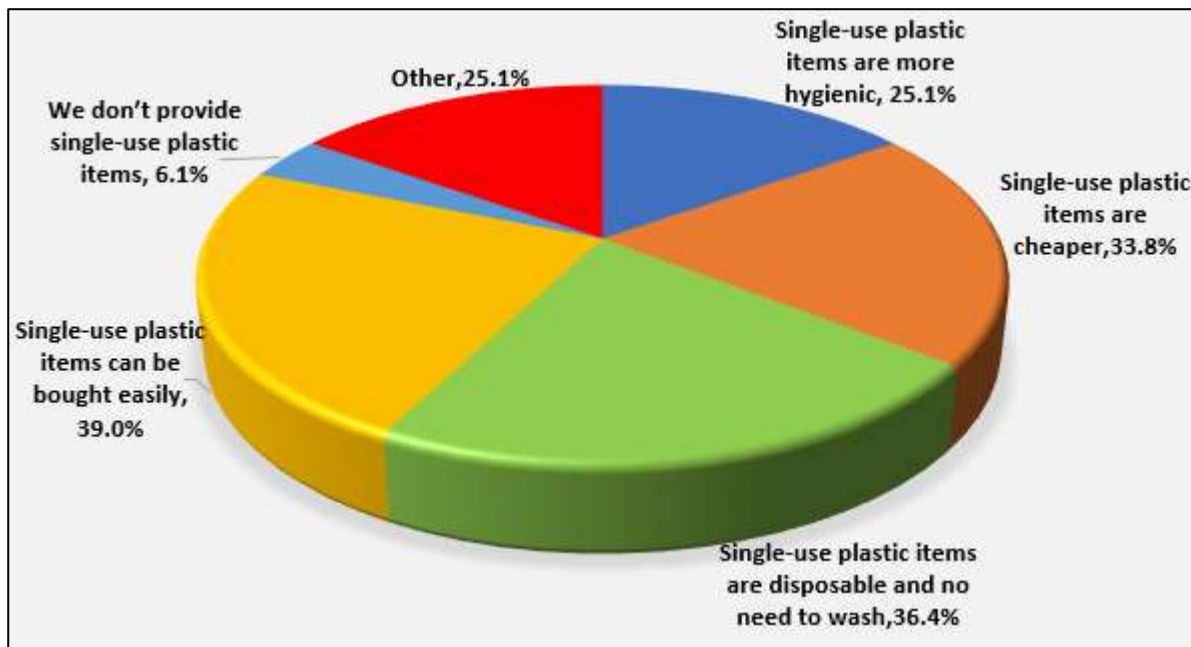


Figure 3: The reasons for using single-use plastic items

	Frequency	Percent
Single-use plastic items are more hygienic	25.1	74.9
Single-use plastic items are cheaper	33.8	66.2
Single-use plastic items are disposable and no need to wash	36.4	63.6
Single-use plastic items can be bought easily	39.0	61.0
We don't provide single-use plastic items	6.1	93.9
Other	25.1	74.9

*Percentage is based on total number of respondents, i.e. 1,948

The reason given by most respondents for using the single-use plastic items was because the items can be bought easily (39%). The other 36.4% said that they choose to use the single-use plastic items because the items are disposable and unwashable, while 33.8% agreed that the single-use plastic items are cheap. 25.% of respondents stated that they use the single-use plastic items because of the hygienic factor. Only 6.1% said that they do not provide such items to the customers.

The other reasons given by other respondents (25.1%) include the cheap price, convenient, easy to handle, and also for take-away purposes.

Further statistical analysis also revealed that there was no significant association between the types of businesses and hygiene as the reason of providing single-use plastic items to the customers.

Similarly, the types of businesses did not affect the respondents' reason that providing single-use plastic items to customers is cheaper.

It was also found that the easily-disposable and easy-to-be-buy factors were not significantly associated to the difference in the types of business. in similar vein, respondents' reason that the items are easy to buy did not have any significant association to the types of business.

Q6. : Do you support single-use plastic (straws, cups, saucer plate, lid cover, fork and spoon, bottles, bowls, plates and stirrer) ban at hotels, restaurants, cafe, and food outlets in Penang?

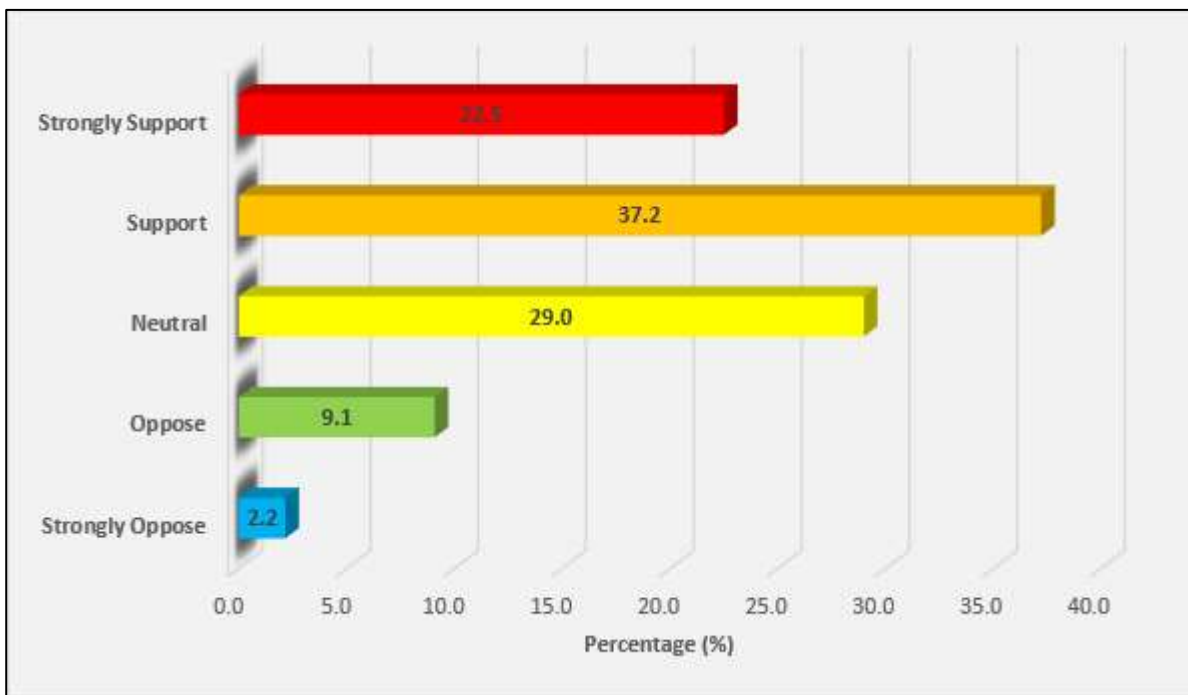


Figure 4: Levels of supports for the banning of single-use plastic items

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Oppose	5	2.2
Oppose	21	9.1
Neutral	67	29.0
Support	86	37.2
Strongly support	52	22.5
Total	231	100

More than 50% of respondents expressed their support on the banning of single-use plastic items at food eateries. Only 11.3% of respondents did not agree about this act on the usage of single-use plastic items, while

the remaining 29% were indecisive about this banning.

Multinomial logistic regression was performed to determine the association between respondents' decision on whether to support or oppose the policy of single-use plastic items ban at food eateries in Penang. The results revealed that those who run cafeteria were nine times more likely to remain neutral towards this policy, rather than opposing it.

Q7 (i): Which method you are likely to adopt to reduce the single-use plastic item at your business premises? - I will charge customers for every single-use plastic item requested and give discounts for using own container/straws/bottles

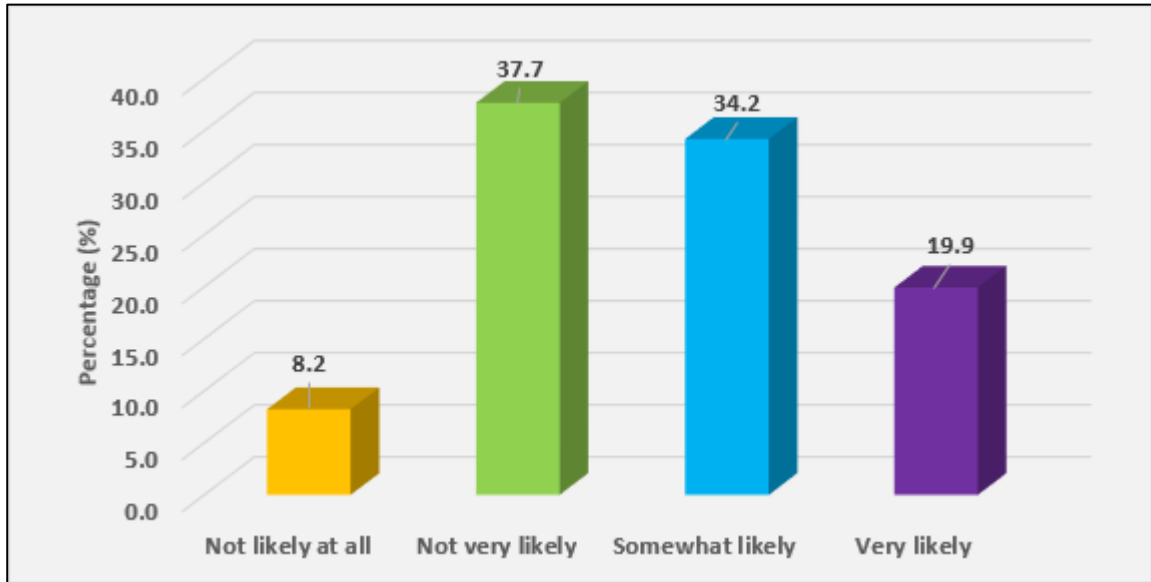


Figure 5: Method likely to adopt in reducing the use of single-use plastic items (charge customers & discounts)

Among the method which can be done by the business operators to reduce the usage of plastic items was by charging the customers for each single-use plastic that they have requested and also by giving discount for customers who use own containers, straws and bottles. Results in Figure 5 showed that more than 50% (54.1%) of respondents agreed that they will charge the customers for using single-use plastic items and they will give discount for each personal plastic items customers brought on their own. However, quite many respondents (45.9%) were reluctant to use this method.

Q7 (ii): Which method you are likely to adopt to reduce the single-use plastic item at your business premises? - I will provide drinking water refilling facilities for those who bring own water bottles

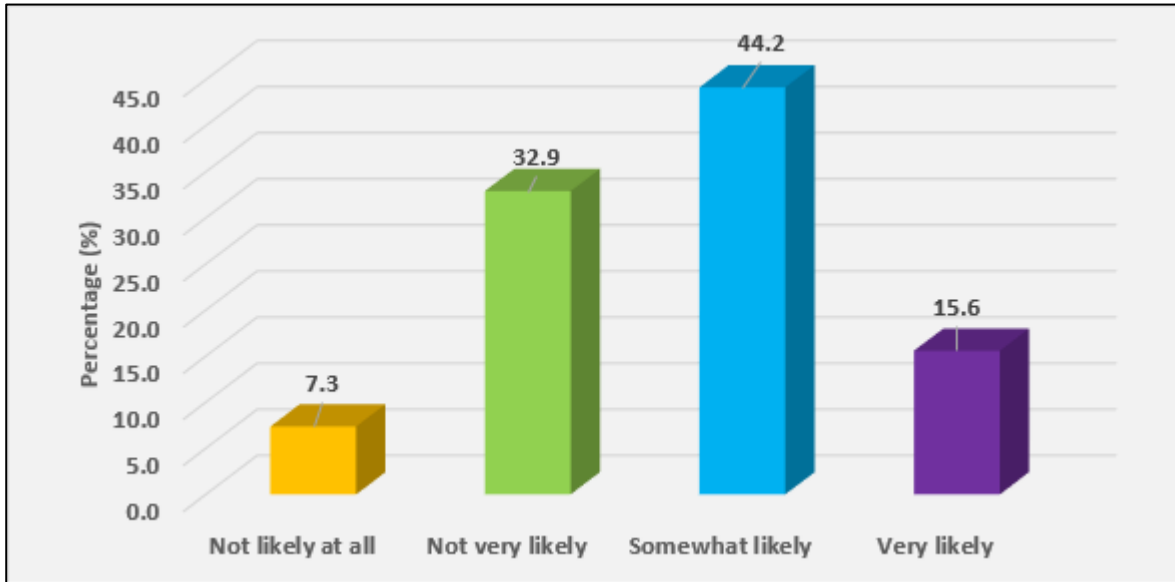


Figure 6: Method likely to adopt in reducing the use of single-use plastic items (provide drinking facilities)

Another method that the food business owners could do to encourage customers to bring their own water bottles is by providing the drinking water refilling facilities at their business premises. Figure 6 indicates that almost 60% of respondents would likely to adopt this method, while the other 40.2% did not agree on this act.

Q7 (iii): Which method you are likely to adopt to reduce the single-use plastic item at your business premises? - I will replace the single-use plastic items with reusable type (e.g. stainless-steel straws and cutleries, reusable dishware)

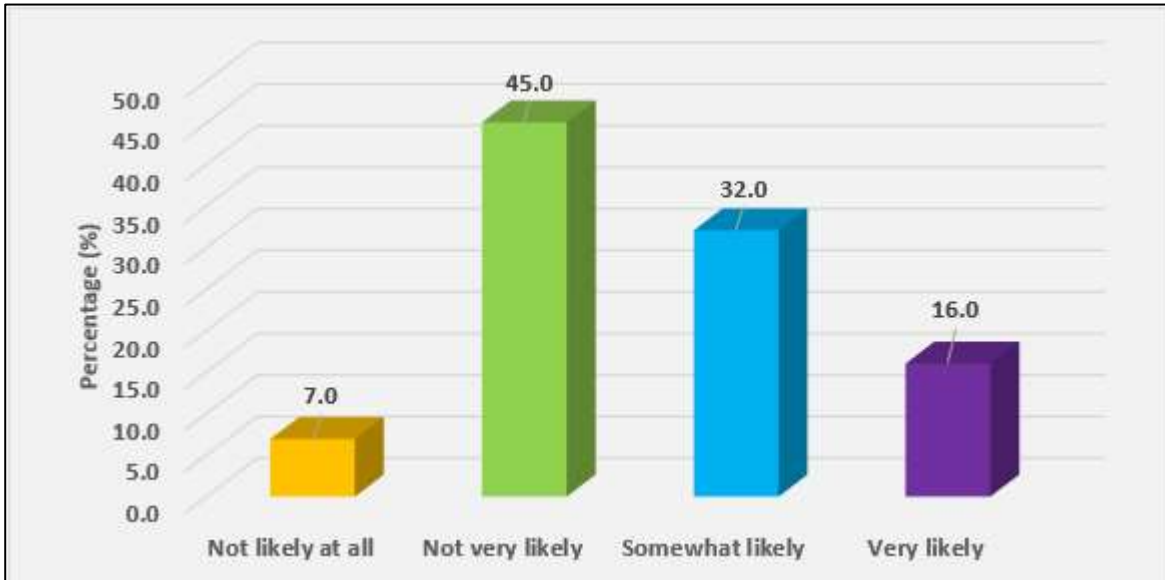


Figure 7: Method likely to adopt in reducing the use of single-use plastic items (replace with reusable type)

The third method which the business operators could apply to reduce the use of single-use plastic items is by replacing them with reusable types, such as stainless steel straws, cutleries, and reusable dishware. However, the survey results indicated that most respondents (more than 50%) did not agree about this method. Only 48% were found to support this method of reducing the use of single-use plastic items.

Q7 (iv): Which method you are likely to adopt to reduce the single-use plastic item at your business premises? - I will provide single-use plastic straws/ cutleries/ containers/ dishware upon customers' request only

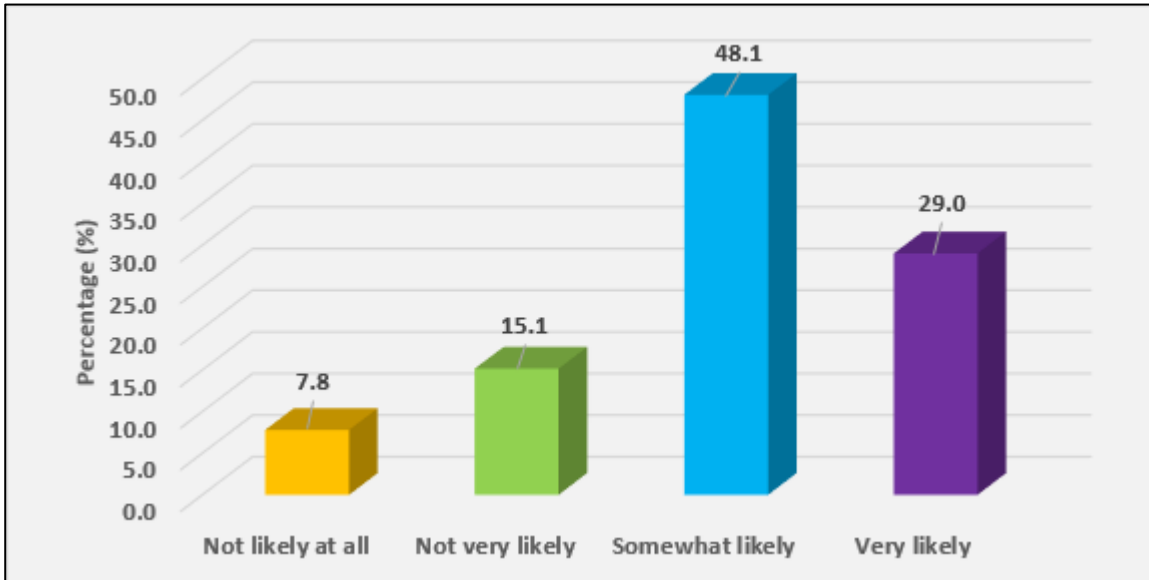


Figure 8: Method likely to adopt in reducing the use of single-use plastic items (provide upon request)

The other method which can be done by the business operators is by providing the single-use plastic items, such as plastic cutleries, straws, containers and dishware only when customers requested. Results in this study showed that majority of respondents (77.1%) agreed about providing the single-use plastic items upon request to the customers. Only 22.9% did not agree about this method.

Q8: How often do your customers refuse single-use plastic items?

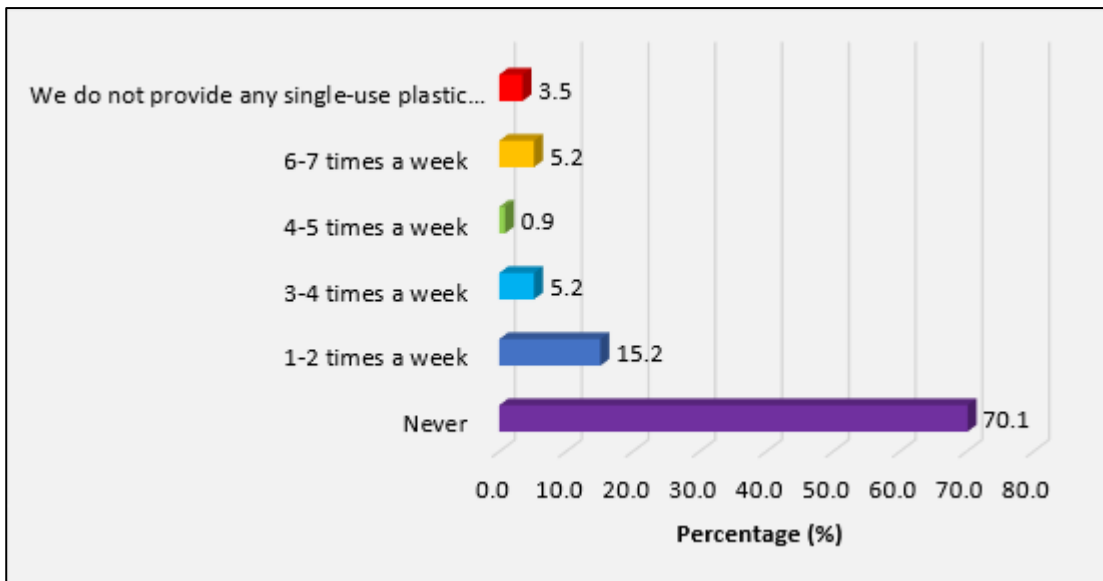


Figure 9: Frequency of customers refusing single-use plastic items

	Frequency	Percent
Never	162	70.1
1-2 times a week	35	15.2
3-4 times a week	12	5.2
4-5 times a week	2	0.9
6-7 times a week	12	5.2
We do not provide any single-use plastic items	8	3.5
Total	231	100.0

Majority of respondents (70.1%) stated that the customers never refuse (or request) when they use single-use plastic items. Meanwhile, some respondents (15.2%) agreed that once or twice a week, there are customers who refuse to use single-use plastic items. Meanwhile, others (5.2% respectively) agreed that it could be more frequent than that, from three to four times a week to almost every day. Yet, only few respondents (3.5%) said that they do not provide single-use plastics items at all.

Q9: Do you agree that by reducing single-use plastic, waste to landfill can be reduced, Penang can be cleaner and greener?

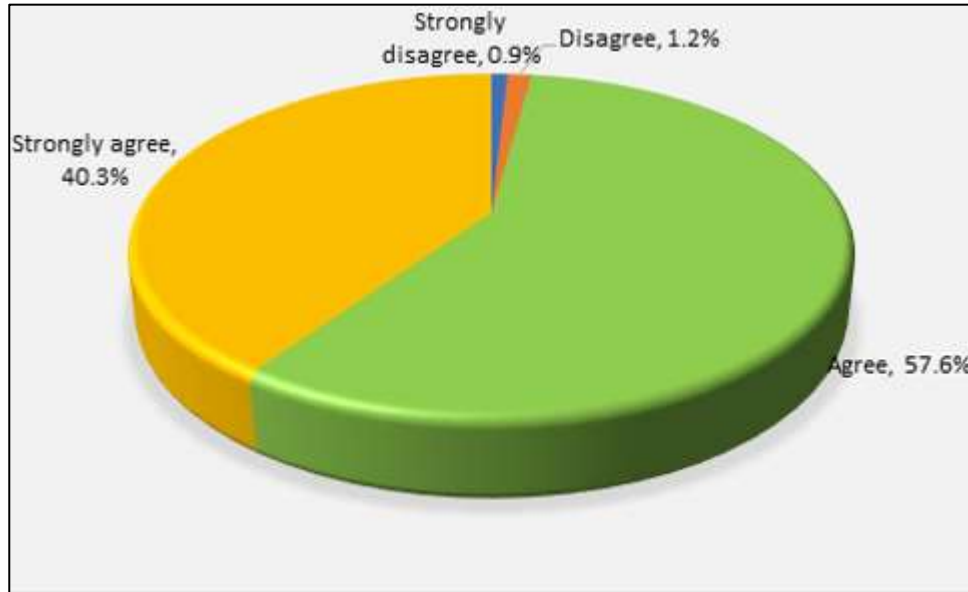


Figure 10: Percentage of agreement that reducing single-use plastic can help to reduce waste to landfill and to make the state cleaner and greener

Almost all respondents (97.9%) fully agreed that by reducing the use of single-use plastic items, waste to landfill can be reduced, and thus Penang can become greener and cleaner in future. Only few (2.1%) did not support this statement.

Summary

As observed from this study, the background business for most of business operators surveyed were restaurants (51.5%), while the lowest group was other businesses, such as bakery. The survey results also showed that plastic bags and straws were two types of single-use plastic items that are mostly provided by respondents to the customers.

The main reasons given by majority of respondents to use the single-use plastic items were due to the factors of cheaper price, disposability, as well as convenience in cleaning tasks and purchasing. Nevertheless, most respondents expressed their support towards the banning of single-use plastic items usage, while only few of them being strongly against the act.

In terms of method to reduce the single-use plastic items usage by charging the customers and giving discount for using own food utensils, the survey results revealed that majority of respondents were likely to adopt this method. Other than that, many of them also agreed that they could reduce the use of single-use plastic items by providing water refilling facilities for customers who brought their own water bottles.

Interestingly, a higher percentage of respondents indicated that they could reduce the use of single-use plastic items by providing such items upon request by the customers.

In terms of frequency of customers' refusal on the usage of single-use plastic items, majority of respondents shared that their customers never refuse or request them to provide such items. Yet, quite many of these business operators also agreed that it could be more frequent than that, from once a week to almost every day, where their customers refuse on the usage of single-use plastic items. A small number of respondents stated that they do not provide single-use plastics item at all.

In terms of benefits, almost all respondents supported the fact that minimizing the use of single-use plastic items can reduce the amount of waste to landfill, and eventually contributing towards making the state greener and cleaner. A few of them were found to be opposed on this aspect.

Looking at the difference by the types of business, the multinomial logistic regression analysis revealed that most hotel business operators were less likely to provide plastic bags to their

customer compared to other types of business. On the other hand, majority of those who run restaurant business were less likely to provide plastic water bottles to their customers than those running hotel business. Similarly, most of cafe business operators were less likely to provide plastic water bottles to their customers than those operating hotel business. However, the café business operators had a greater tendency to use plastic cups than those running other types of food business.

Nevertheless, there were no significant association between the types of business and respondents' practices in providing other types of single-use plastic items, such as plastic cutlery, straws, bowls, and plates.

In terms of reasons for using single-use plastic items, the survey results revealed that the difference in the types of businesses did not significantly affect the the hygiene factor as respondents' reason to use such items. Similarly, the different types of business did not significantly affect respondents' decision to use single-use plastic items due to the low price factor.

Furthermore, no significant associations were observed in this study between the different types of business and respondents' reasons to provide single-use plastic items because of its easily disposable and convenient-to-buy factors. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents' decision to use single-use plastic items in their food businesses could vary by several reasons, regardless of the nature of their business.