



COVID-19: Food and Beverage Post-Pandemic Survey Results and Analysis by



BrandPortunity

EVOLVE & GROW

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Executive Summary

There is no doubt that [Coronavirus](#), otherwise known as [COVID-19](#), rapidly conquered the globe with no prior warning. This 'plague' has worked its way around the world closing businesses, affecting profit margins and cash-flows, en-masse unemployment, home working, empty streets; and front-line professionals and hospitals working under intense pressure to keep us all safe. The virus 'invasion' has disrupted all sectors in the food and beverage industry, primarily dine-in facilities. However, the entrepreneurial spirit has led to a considerable increase in takeaway and delivery services.

The food industry has faced many historical challenges, it is fluid and resilient and will bounce back with more dynamism and strength. The change will be in phases, and some countries will be ahead of others. History has never seen such global desolation; this is a vast learning curve for all of us. The question here is "how will business look post-COVID-19? Will there be any new regulations and guidelines set by world organisations?" The answer to these questions is still mysterious and undefined until now. The only matter that we can identify at this stage is that businesses are going to be different post-pandemic.

Background and objectives

As part of our guardianship for the restaurant sector, we need to be proactive with our thinking about the future of the industry; there will need to be new rules and regulations. [BrandPortunity](#) (*management consultancy for restaurant and catering*) has driven a [qualitative](#) survey using both open-ended and closed questions. The main objective of the survey is to gather opinions and understand how the restaurant business is going to react post-COVID-19; consumer expectations and how restaurateurs can support and deliver.

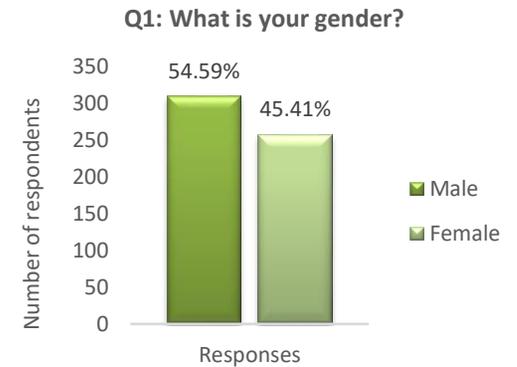
There are many discussions concerning social distancing, mask and glove-wearing and the all-important timing of returning to our favourite restaurants prior to the pandemic. The targeted respondents (*who usually enjoy eating out*) in the survey are businessmen and women working in different industries (banks, retail, developers, human resources and business training field, food and beverage) and [Millennials](#). The survey was randomly conducted using WhatsApp, and within seven days, we received 567 responses.

The survey consisted of 10 questions, including the gender and location of the respondents. The remaining questions were open-ended or had multiple-choice options. Each question enquired about expected new habits post-confinement and asked if people would return to restaurants, shisha bars, delivery services, restaurant staff and food service health and safety opinions.

Results

Question 1: What is your gender?

A simple question to find out the gender participating in the survey. 54.59% of the respondents were male, and 45.41% were female. This shows an approximate balance of gender participation.



Question 2: What is the first thing you will do when COVID-19 ends?

This was an important question, as people have been locked for a considerable period and desperate to go out to enjoy life again. Several predetermined choices were given with an option to specify their own opinion under the 'other' section.

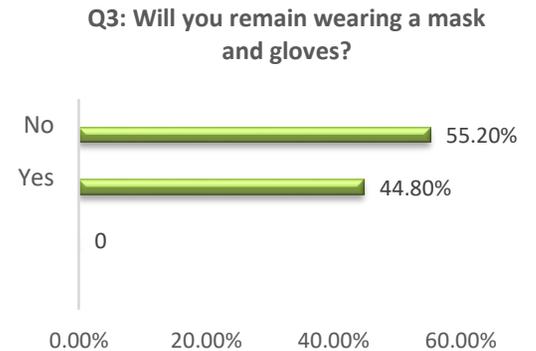
25.97% of respondents (equivalent to 147 persons) reacted by visiting want to visit a family member. This shows that people want to be reunited with their close family. The second top response was having the ability to travel with 24.03% (equivalent to 136 persons). This, in our opinion, may be referred to as business travel, leisure travelling, [lockdown](#) in a country abroad, or travelling to see a family member. The 'go to my favourite restaurant' option ranked third with 15.19% of the answers. This shows the need for socialising again with friends and family and enjoying life at their favourite place. The graph shows that 11.13% of respondents shared 'other' options that represent returning to normal life and being able to return to work, go to a party, a walk on the beach or visit a salon for a treat. It was noticed that 6.89% would prefer to stay home post-COVID-19, therefore, the anxiety of the pandemic is deemed to continue.

Q2: What is the first thing you will once Covid-19 ends?



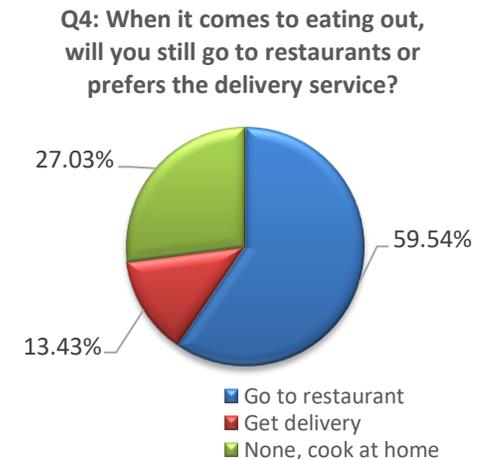
Question 3: Will you remain wearing a mask and gloves?

The majority, 55.20% answered by 'no' compared to 44.80% by 'yes'. To date, health authorities are strict about wearing masks and gloves in most countries to prevent the transfer of the virus. We don't have any information on hand that this will continue or not. Health authorities will issue new guidelines about gloves, masks and hygiene standards. [Chik-Fil A](#) and [McDonald's](#) in the US are operating with high measures of safety, and employees need to wear masks and gloves. Same apply to local brands in the GCC who are still operating for delivery purposes.



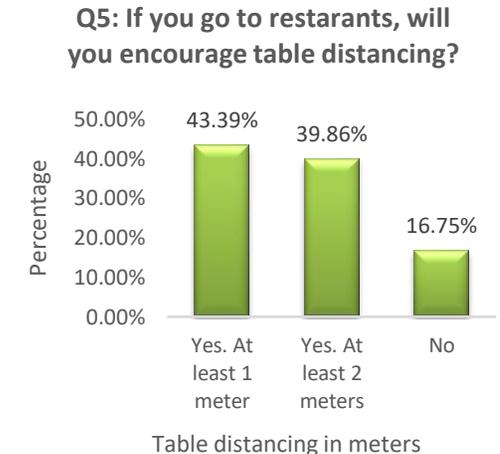
Question 4: When it comes to eating out, will you still go to restaurants or prefer the delivery service?

This is an important question to assess the reaction of respondents towards visiting restaurants. Positive feedback collected. 59.54% replied by 'go to restaurants' compared to 13.43% for 'delivery service', and 27.03% prefers 'none' and will remain at home cooking. Our review is that people are desperate to go out and enjoy eating-out at their preferred restaurant or café, and this is a very encouraging indicator for the restaurant industry. We predict that those wishing to remain at home do so, so that they can practice safety and hygiene, have better cooking options and remaining at home is cost-effective. 'Delivery services', which saw a massive spike during the pandemic is deemed to return to normal post-COVID-19.



Question 5: If you go to restaurants, will you encourage table distancing?

This is a crucial question, and in fact, answers are essential not only to operators but also to landlords. The responses were close, and the subject is debatable. 43.39% choose a distance of one meter between tables whilst 39.86% preferred two meters. However, the remaining, 16.75% is in favour of 'no table' distancing at all. We noticed that during the periods of confinement health authorities restricted social distancing and requested less occupancy in restaurants. We expect there will be new guidelines about distancing tables at least at the beginning of re-opening phase. Some [studies](#) state that social distancing will continue until 2022. This is going to significantly impact profitability as fewer tables will be permitted in each outlet, thus effecting rent. Operators will scrutinise any decision as it should be well studied, to prevent additional losses.



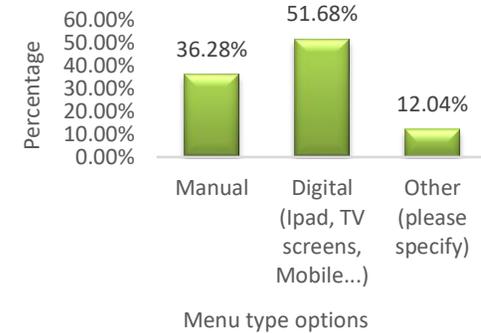
Question 6: If you go to restaurants, will you still use paper menus or prefer digital ones?

An essential question is about the usage of menus in a restaurant. While businesses will be re-designing collaterals post-pandemic, we expect to see [paperless](#) restaurants (*menus, bills, brochures and others*) and technology will play a significant role in offering easily-sanitised digital menus in the form of Ipad, TV screens and robots. 51.68% of respondents were in favour of digital options compared to 36.28% who wished to keep traditional menus. However, 12.04% suggested disposable menus, verbal, online, ceiling board, digital scrolling screen, voice recorder, and code scanned menus. All options will be wipeable and downloadable.

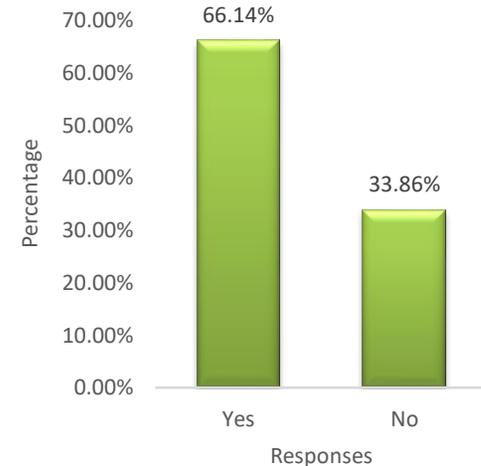
Questions 7: If you go to restaurants, will you encourage all employees to wear masks and gloves?

No doubt taking continuous precautions will remain within the community, especially as some countries will be ahead of others with recovery. We see that communication between restaurant staff and customers is crucial from a hygiene perspective (*as it was always and now with more precautions*). 66.14% of respondents are positive towards staff wearing gloves and masks, and 33.86% are against. This is another critical matter that we raise and will be looking at the decision from world organisations or government municipalities. However, there are more concerns about masks and gloves: will customers enter a restaurant with employees not wearing a mask? Or will there be any specific distancing while taking orders? Or will it be comfortable to wear gloves during the service process, touching surfaces, and will gloves need to be changed frequently? As restaurateurs and concerned consultants, we encourage high standards of hygiene and support all precautionary guidelines to ensure the safety of our clients. However, some specific measures will come at a cost which will increase G&A's on P&L. How will restauranteur's cope and what affects will hit profit margins?

Q6: If you go to restaurants, will you still use paper menus or prefer digital ones?



Q7: If you go to restaurants, will you encourage all employees to wear masks and gloves?



Question 8: If you go to restaurants, would you prefer the food plates to be covered while serving it from the Kitchen to your tables?

64.49% of respondents said 'yes', and 35.51% said 'no'. We expect that there are going to be new rules regarding the serving of food plates in a dine-in restaurant to ensure proper safety measurements. The objective is to create a safe environment for customers to dine-out. The dining restaurant sectors are entertainment and 'human' services where a lot of effort is put into the 'customer's journey and the creation of an exceptional dining experience.

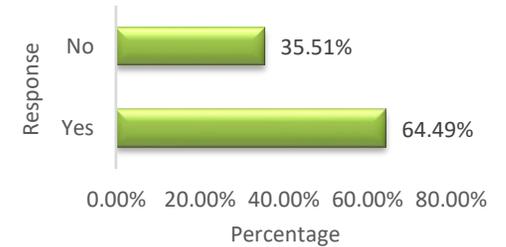
Question 9: Will you still visit places where shisha is served?

At the beginning of the pandemic, the retail food business (*restaurants and cafés*) and in specific the dining sectors were negatively affected, notably shisha places due to the increased risk of virus transfer. Shisha is a significant revenue for some operators due to the high margins gained from shisha sales. However, 70.90% responded 'no' they will not visit a shisha outlet while only said 'yes' (29.10%). We assume the 'yes' respondents are likely to be smokers. We believe that the service of shisha will remain suspended at least in the short term. Until the new rules and guidelines are issued by the concerned authorities and most probably, there may be an increase of permit fee along with a minimal space reserved for smoking section (*unless it is an outdoor venue*).

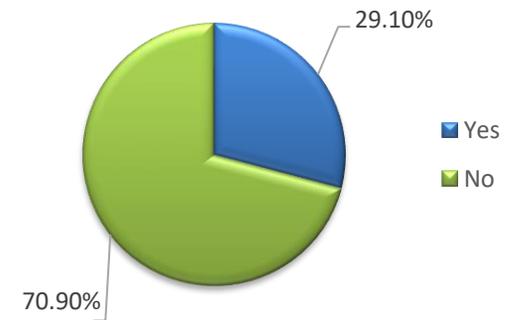
Question 10: Where is your location?

At the end of the survey, we asked the respondents about their location to better understand different opinions given in this questionnaire. As noticed in the graph, the majority of respondents 82.01%, were from the Middle East region, followed by 10.05% from European countries and a small percentages from Canada, Australia and Africa.

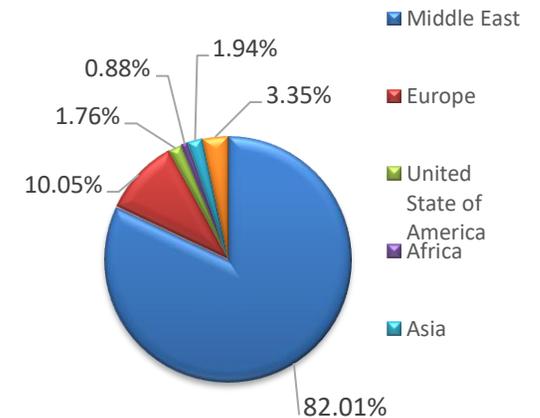
Q8: If you go to restaurants, would you prefer the food plates to be covered while serving it from the Kitchen to your tables?



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Q10: Where is your location?



Conclusion and Recommendation

There is no doubt that we are globally witnessing a real 'economic' crisis and not a 'financial' one as we saw in 2008. People staying at home and not spending will undoubtedly lead to traditional recession effects: operating losses, unemployment, and business failures. From that, we are seeing disrupted supply chains and real damage to the economy in general and in specific in the retail food and beverage sector and notably, restaurant businesses. This will take time to recover, at least until a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available. This report has been carried out to ascertain different behavioural patterns in various locations and fact-find opinions towards the dining sector. From these findings we can initiate strategic and tactical planning during these challenging times. Currently, there is no way of knowing when businesses will re-open fully or with limited [capacities](#) as seen in few cities, Dubai is one of them.

Answers have been taken into consideration, and you can see that there is positivity towards the restaurant sector (*questions 2, 4 and 5*) which encourages a promising comeback. However, unified restaurant and operator planning are essential together with a strong and persuasive campaign to get back-to-business quickly. In the meantime, we recommend those restaurateurs to keep their engagement with the customers through communication on social media channels, continue negotiation with their key 'partner' suppliers to revised contracts and agreements; as well as with the landlords to waive rent fees for at least during the confinement and 3 months post this period.

During various levels of confinement restaurateurs, operators, concerned consultants, and landlords should strategise and plan with their managers, peers-in-business and even competitors. [BrandPortunity](#) is busy advising key-partner and clients about innovative solutions and providing technological support. We believe that during this pandemic, people and communities should unite for a better 'new' future in the restaurant and hospitality industry while we traverse through the transition period with minimal adverse effects.

The restaurant industry has shown historically how resilient it is. It will recover quickly with the correct strategic and tactical planning of entrepreneurs and operators, consultants, advisors world organisations and concerned government ministries (economic, tourist, commerce and finance) and the continuous support of the community and for sure your 'loyal' customers. We, at BrandPortunity are always on hand to support innovative ideas, be your consultant and guide through turbulent times. This is the time that your entrepreneurial spirit will drive you into a bright new future. For now, **Stay Safe and Think Positive!**

About BrandPortunity

BrandPortunity is an **innovative** and **intelligent restaurant** and **catering consultancy** that dynamically takes clients on a journey to success. Considered guidance and planning allow restaurateurs to '**evolve and grow**' their businesses. Brandportunity seamlessly converts challenges into exciting opportunities. With partners with an exceptional team of restaurateurs, creative executive chefs, marketing, media, content experts, web and graphic designers, BrandPortunity delivers results deliciously every time. BrandPortunity is committed to fostering long-term relationships, development and growth and offers intelligent solutions and visions through accurate and strategic planning.

LET'S CHAT:

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