



When asked if the writer's proposal is applicable or relevant to Singapore, one useful strategy is to evaluate this proposal in terms of the immediate impact (on the issue), as well as how it impacts the stakeholders at large.

For instance, the writer proposes that a ban on plastic bags will have an immediate positive outcome: there will be no demand for plastic and we will have much less plastic trash to incinerate.

At the first glance, it is rather convincing as a ban will immediately force everyone in Singapore to stop using plastic bags. Naturally, there will be fewer or hardly any plastic bags discarded, and the environment will look much cleaner.

Yet, when we look at the key industries that will be heavily hit by this ban, namely retail, food and beverage, supermarkets, a much bigger crisis ensues: How will these commercial entities (many which are heavily hit by recession brought about by Covid) respond to this ban? Do they have deep pockets to find different ways of packaging for their customers? More importantly, for the small businesses such as our coffeeshops and provision shops in the HDB heartlands, what other alternatives are available to them?

Some may say that paper bags are viable, but there is concrete research that proves that paper bags are more environmentally harmful than single-use plastic bags. Similarly, cotton tote bags (and the like) use up more resources and water in its production, and are very impractical in the eyes of most Singaporeans for casual, spontaneous and oftentimes, one-off purchases.

While a ban theoretically looks like a good idea, one must consider the wider and deeper implications felt by thousands of retail shops and businesses. As such, a mature and nuanced AQ thesis may look like this: A ban would embody the right ethos but the implementation will bring about more troubles for businesses that are still reeling from the effects of Covid. Thus, it is more prudent for Singapore to work towards more introducing sustainable options before introducing the ban in a knee-jerk manner, so as to ensure that both the spirit and the letter of the law are upheld (when the time comes).