

An In-depth Analysis of Food Waste Management Practices in the Catering Industry: Strategies, Challenges and Sustainability Implications

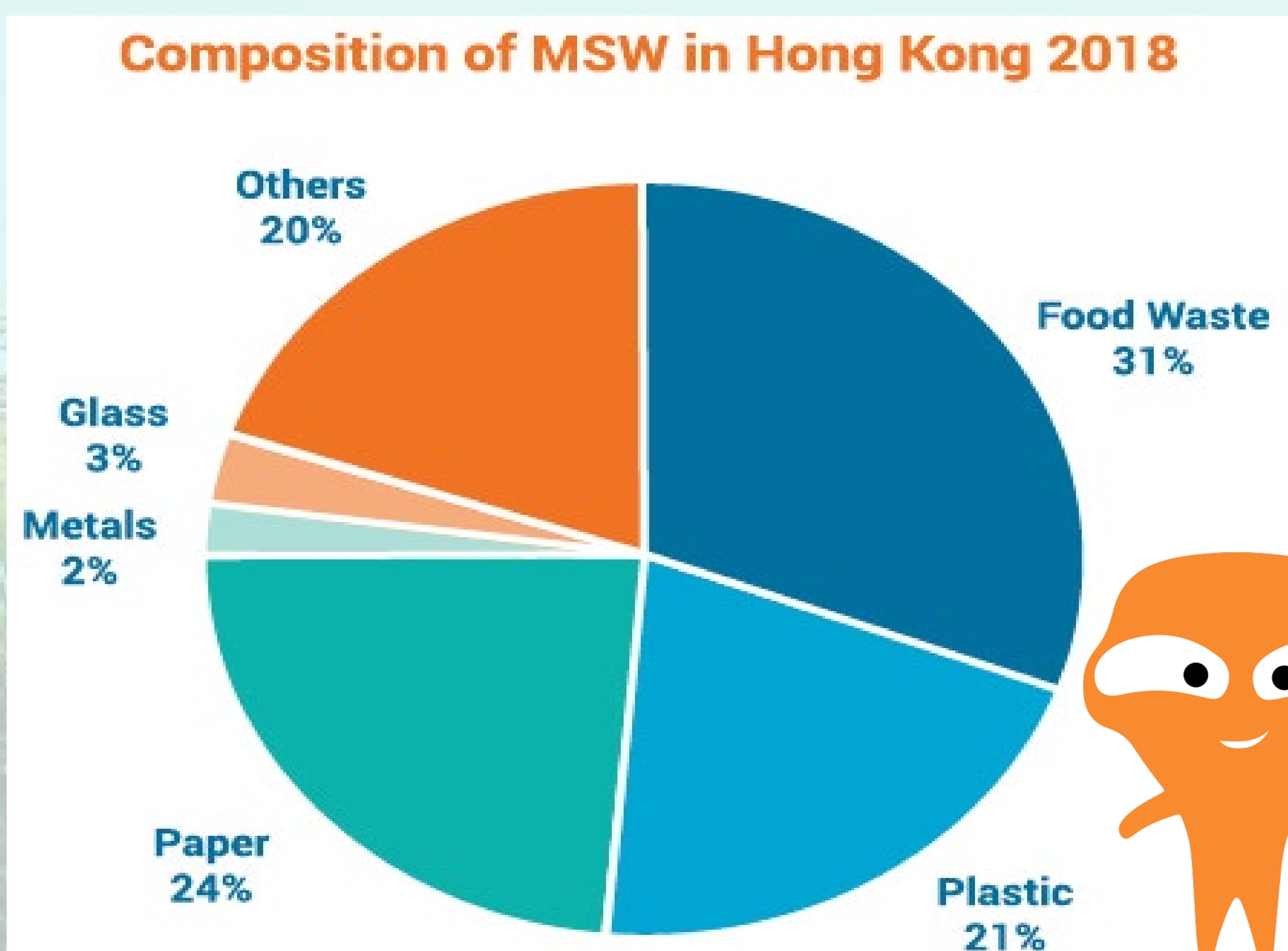
Mr TANG Tsz Hei, BA (Hons) in Culinary Arts and Management,
Department of Hospitality and Business Management

Supervisor: Miss Joyce WONG, Lecturer

Background

Nowadays, one of the most serious worldwide problems is food waste. Given that Hong Kong is a small, prosperous city with a large daily influx of visitors, this issue is critically important.

A significant amount of waste is produced daily. Three main landfills in Hong Kong are anticipated to reach saturation in 2030, according to Plastic Free Seas. Food waste made up the largest percentage of all the categories, accounting for 30% of the approximately 10,809 tons of municipal solid waste that were disposed of in landfills on a daily basis in 2020. About 778 tons of food waste were generated from commercial and industrial sources, such as hotels, restaurants, and the food production industry, that were dumped in landfills. Given the information above, it is critical to minimize and manage food waste right away in order to lessen the load on landfills, increase public awareness of the importance of global warming, and teach people to value food resources.



Research Objectives



Methodology

A total of 62 responses were collected using a snowball sampling approach. Descriptive analysis techniques were then applied to summarize the data and identify key insights regarding customer behaviour, perspectives, challenges and opportunities related to food waste management practices.

Findings

- Food Quantity**
 - More than half of the respondents strongly agree that food quantity is the major factor in food waste; 40% of them agree that food quantity is a big issue.
- Food Quality**
 - About 60% of the respondents agree that food quality is influential; 35.5% of them strongly agree that food quality is a big factor.
- Appearance**
 - 30% of the respondents agree that food appearance is the major factor in food waste; 25.8% of the respondents were neutral; and over 40% of the respondents disagree.
- Food Trends**
 - Half of the respondents were neutral towards the question; more than 20% of respondents agree with the question; and 25.8% of the respondents disagree.
- Food Price**
 - 43.5% of the respondents were neutral; 37.1% of the respondents disagree that food price is the major factor in food waste; a small proportion of respondents agree with the statement.

- Food quantity is the most influential factor that contributes to the food waste issue.
- More than half of the respondents have high awareness regarding the food waste problem.

Conclusion

Although food waste remains a severe issue, there are still sustainable, accessible, and effective methods to minimize the problem. Many parties can participate in reducing food waste. Decreasing food waste is a crucial step in creating a more just and sustainable food system. By making small changes in our daily lives, such as adjusting our purchasing and consumption habits, and advocating for systemic changes in the food industry and policy, we can help ensure that everyone has access to the nutritious food they need while protecting the planet for future generations. It is essential that we avoid becoming "big wasters" and instead take action to protect our Earth.