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Comparative Analysis of Three Solid Waste Management Systems Towards Full Automation

A.D. Omiyale [1], F.O. Ogunwolu [1*], O.O.E .Ajibola [1]

[1] *Department of Systems Engineering, Faculty of Engineering*
University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria
[*]*Corresponding Author: fogunwolu@unilag.edu.ng*

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Abstract

This study uses a four-week simulation to evaluate traditional, semi-automatic, and autonomous waste management systems, employing Principal Component Analysis (PCA), Discrete Event Simulation (DES), and an ANOVA test. PCA was used to visualise and understand the variations in waste collection volumes between the three systems, with the first two principal components accounting for 100% of the variance (PC1: 56.3%, PC2: 43.7%). Each system was classified into distinct clusters: traditional in the lower-left quadrant, semi-automatic in the upper-left and lower-right quadrants, and autonomous in the upper-right quadrant, with ANOVA indicating significant variations. DES simulated everyday waste collection for 120 days. The traditional system collected an average of 50 kg/day with a 10-kilogramme variance, the semi-automatic 48 kg/day with an 8 kg variability, and the autonomous 45 kg/day with a 5 kg variability. The total waste collected was 6012.34 kg (traditional), 5824.29 kg (semi-automatic), and 5482.67 kg (autonomous). Fuel consumption, cost savings, and environmental impacts were analyzed. The autonomous system showed the lowest fuel consumption and highest cost savings, significantly reducing carbon emissions compared to others. The results from PCA and DES, supported by ANOVA, indicate that while the traditional system is most efficient in waste collection, the autonomous system offers consistent performance and significant environmental benefits. This comprehensive analysis provides valuable insights for optimizing waste management strategies and balancing efficiency, cost, and environmental impact.

Keywords: Solid waste management, Autonomous systems, urbanization, environmental impact, and Sustainability.

1 Introduction

Effective solid waste management is crucial for both environmental sustainability and public health [1]. The introduction of technology has resulted in a significant shift toward automation in waste management systems, enhancing efficiency and efficacy.

Advances in technology such as Cloud computing, deep learning algorithms, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are some of the technologies being proposed as approaches to automating waste classification, sorting, and recycling in urban and smart cities [2]. These technological advancements have the potential to improve waste management by improving recycling and lowering environmental impact. The use of machine learning techniques, such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), offers a fresh approach to assessing public opinion towards waste management challenges. This strategy allows for the examination of large data sets to yield relevant insights [3].

Smart Waste Management (SWM) has evolved as an alternative to the inefficiencies and environmental repercussions of traditional waste management practices. SWM uses data-driven solutions to increase operational efficiency while reducing environmental impact [4]. Traditional waste management systems frequently involve waste pickup delays, additional travel, and a reliance on manual labour [5]. The move to SWM is critical because it can address these difficulties by delivering real-time data and optimising waste-collecting systems [6].

The introduction of Autonomous Waste Management Systems (AWMS) represents a paradigm shift in waste management, incorporating advanced automation and artificial intelligence technology such as self-driving pickup trucks and real-time environmental sensors [7]. While smart waste management offers numerous advantages, limitations such as considerable research investments and the societal concern about job displacement must be addressed. Effective data privacy protection is essential in fostering trust among citizens and encouraging their active participation in smart city ecosystems [8]. To create a more sustainable, secure, and clean future, a delicate balance of technological innovation, ethical considerations, and economic feasibility is required. This balance is critical for addressing several aspects of waste management and sustainability [9].

Waste management systems can be improved by integrating modern technologies and ethical concepts. Autonomous Waste Management Systems (AWMS) represent a substantial leap in automation and artificial intelligence technologies. There are various challenges to implementing autonomous waste management systems in cities. Technical concerns include assuring sensor functionality in a variety of weather situations, negotiating complicated urban infrastructures, and preventing system failures.

Additionally, public approval and regulatory frameworks are important issues. Economic issues such as initial investment cost and continuous maintenance provide major obstacles to widespread adoption [10].

Traditional Methods in Different Shades of Means for Disposal, Routing, and General Management.

Due to the growing volume of solid waste generated by human activities as a result of population explosion and rural-urban drift, effective waste management systems are critical. While new technologies emerge, traditional waste management approaches remain critical in the global setting [11]. This study provides a full examination of different waste management systems and their standard procedures, focusing on their use in routing, disposal, and general administration.

Composting, trenching, and incineration are just a few examples of traditional waste disposal processes utilized by various societies throughout history. Composting is the spontaneous decomposition of organic waste into nutrients that benefit the soil [12], [13]. In agricultural settings, trenching is a common practice for burying biodegradable waste to facilitate decomposition. In various societies, incineration of waste has been a typical approach for reducing waste volume, even though it is not always environmentally friendly.

Landfilling remains a popular waste disposal strategy due to its simplicity and economic effectiveness [14]. However, issues with landfill capacity, environmental degradation (such as leachate contamination of groundwater and landfill gas emissions), and resource depletion pose substantial obstacles [14]. In developing nations, uncontrolled waste disposal practices, known as "open dumping," pose health and environmental dangers such as disease transmission, leachate contamination, and air pollution [15]. To alleviate landfill strain, waste can be burned at high temperatures to minimize volume while also producing energy [16]. Nonetheless, incineration can cause concerns like emissions-related air pollution and the formation of bottom ash, which must be disposed of in a landfill [17].

Routing and General Management in Traditional Waste Management System

Traditional waste management practices include two basic routing strategies:

Fixed Routes: Traditional waste collection method often follow established routes with predetermined pickup places and schedules [18]. While this system is noted for its simplicity and predictability, it can be inefficient due to factors such as unpredictable waste generation patterns and excessive travel distances. To overcome these difficulties, researchers are investigating novel techniques for optimizing waste-collecting routes and transportation.

Manual route planning: Manual waste disposal route planning, although based on experience and historical data, may result in suboptimal collection due to its time-consuming and subjective nature. In contrast, modern waste management solutions are rooted in sustainability principles, aiming to harmonize with local ecosystems while minimizing environmental impacts. By exploring these contemporary tools, communities can gain insights into resource conservation and sustainable living practices [18].

Semi-automatic Systems in Different Shades and Means for disposal, routing, and general management.

Semi-automatic waste management systems offer a promising alternative to existing manual systems, focusing on disposal alternatives, routing optimization, and overall management strategies to counteract environmental contamination and resource depletion caused by increased waste generation [19].

Sustainable waste management options, like recycling, composting, and waste-to-energy programs, are becoming increasingly popular as semi-automatic waste management solutions due to their environmental benefits [20]. Adopting semi-automatic waste management systems aligns with sustainable practices, enabling organizations to handle waste efficiently throughout its entire lifecycle, from generation to disposal. Innovations in separation and sorting technologies are critical to semi-automatic waste management systems because they enable the recovery of valuable materials from waste streams, reduce landfill utilisation, and improve recycling efforts.

A conceptual and simulated semi-automatic urban waste management system based on Customer Reliability Indices and Global Systems for Mobile Communication (GSM) technology is presented in [19]. To plan the routes for waste collection vehicles, the system depends on waste generators reporting waste levels via GSM handsets. Customer reporting and reliability indices are computed in a pay-as-you-generate system to penalize false reporting which ultimately affect billing. Simulation results indicate that the system can improve waste collection efficiency and reliability in addressing Municipal Solid Waste Management challenges, with advantages over traditional fixed routing systems in terms of reduced travel distance, collection time, and costs.

Routing and General Management in Semi-Automatic Waste Management System

Optimizing waste collection routes is vital for minimizing operational costs and environmental effects. Semi-automatic systems utilise the following technologies:

Real-time Bin Fill Level Data: Sensors embedded in waste bins give real-time fill level data, allowing routing algorithms to optimize collection schedules by guiding vehicles to bins that require emptying. This strategy saves unnecessary travel while improving operational efficiency [21]. Predictive analytics uses machine learning algorithms to analyse past data, allowing for the forecasting of future waste generation trends. This approach enables proactive route planning, which improves efficiency and optimises resource allocation.

The integration of technology is critical for improving waste management techniques. smart bins with communication capabilities can monitor fill levels in real time and detect potential difficulties, allowing for more proactive waste management. These containers can remind homeowners to properly dispose of rubbish and separate recyclables, encouraging better waste management practices [21]. Furthermore, techniques such as gamification and educational materials are used to involve customers in waste reduction campaigns. Mobile applications linked to waste management systems use gamification and educational features to encourage active engagement in waste reduction and proper waste segregation [22].

Autonomous Systems Implementation in Different Shades of Means for Disposal, Routing, and General Management.

The integration of autonomous waste management systems marks a significant step forward in waste management practices. These systems use artificial intelligence, robots, and sensor-based monitoring to enhance waste collection, sorting, and disposal processes [23]. Organizations that use autonomous systems can increase the accuracy and efficiency of their waste management processes. Recent advances in autonomous waste management systems have demonstrated the application of deep learning algorithms to optimize waste classification, monitoring, and collection activities, to lower costs and improve overall waste management operations. The incorporation of automated sentiment analysis into waste management systems helps improve decision-making. Understanding public opinion helps policymakers build more targeted and effective waste management plans [3].

Challenges of Implementing Autonomous Waste Management Systems

The successful implementation of autonomous waste management systems in metropolitan areas necessitates overcoming myriads of technological, regulatory, economic, social, and environmental challenges.

The technical challenges in implementing advanced waste management systems (AWMS) in urban ecosystems include ensuring system stability, accuracy, and interoperability with existing infrastructure, and ensuring data integration and infrastructural compatibility [24].

Regulatory and legal challenges as highlighted in [25] affect the deployment of AWMS, necessitating clear accountability frameworks, compliance with laws, and navigating complex regulatory landscapes for successful implementation.

Furthermore, economic constraints, such as high initial costs and long-term financial challenges, hinder the adoption of AWMS, necessitating the development of robust cost-benefit evaluations and innovative financing options [26].

Addressing social and ethical issues, ensuring fair access to AWMS services, and addressing employment displacement, privacy, and safety are crucial for public approval and trust [25].

AWMS's sustainable waste management practices require careful consideration of environmental and lifespan concerns, thorough environmental impact studies, effective planning, and collaboration with human workers [27]. Data privacy and security are crucial for general data protection regulation compliance, ensuring protection against data breaches and unauthorised access, preventing system breakdowns, and protecting sensitive information. Addressing technical, regulatory, economic, social, environmental, and ethical concerns is crucial for ensuring the successful deployment of AWMS in urban areas [24].

2 Material and Methods

This paper presents the design of an autonomous waste management system (AWMS) system. The AWMS design consists of three essential sub-systems: the Administrative Center (AC), the Autonomous Car Base (ACB), and the Smart Waste Bins (SWB), each of which plays a unique role in the waste management process. The SWB sub-system, a critical component of the AWMS, consists of Arduino microcontrollers, compactors, solar panels/batteries, DC motors, a variety of sensors (such as level, odor, and human proximity detectors), and an Intelligent Reporting Unit.

The SWB sub-system utilizes ultrasonic sensors to continuously monitor waste levels in the bin and activates the compactor periodically to compress waste. An electronic nose sensor, a metal oxide semiconductor (MOS) evaluates the biodegradability and odour of waste materials. To facilitate efficient data collection and reporting, the Intelligent Reporting Unit (IRU) in the SWB sub-system provides a platform for reporting and monitoring. The IRU communicates with the microcontroller via the GSM/GPRS module to gather information on fill levels, odour strength, and AWMS locations. Waste capacity in the SWB sub-system is measured through four calibration levels, with each level corresponding to a specific percentage of fill capacity. Additionally, waste materials' odour intensity is categorized for biodegradability assessment. Real-time data collection and interpretation are enabled through ThingSpeak, supporting effective waste evacuation procedures based on predefined thresholds.

The autonomous movement and operation of the waste by AWMS is facilitated by the ACB sub-system, which includes navigation devices, obstacle avoidance units, perception modules, decision-making units, and actuation modules. The Intelligent Management Unit (IMU) located within the Administrative Centre is responsible for tasks such as data analysis, vehicle routing, billing, and network coordination. Effective communication between these subsystems is crucial for the smooth operation of the AWMS.

3 Results and Discussions

A four-month simulation was conducted in a residential estate with 180 houses and approximately 2,000 occupants to assess the efficacy of three different waste management systems. The estate also consists of schools and offices. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 shows how much waste each waste management system collects monthly. The traditional, semi-automatic, and autonomous methods collected 60,957 kg, 57,179 kg, and 51,774 kg, respectively. Table 2 indicates considerable differences in waste collection volume between the three waste management systems (traditional, semi-automatic, and autonomous) using a test of ANOVA. The F-statistic of 22.888 ($p < 0.05$) shows significant variability in waste collection volume across systems. The critical F-value of 5.143 validates the statistical significance of the results.

Table 1. Volume of Waste Collected by Waste Management Systems (kg)

	(Traditional)	**(Semi-automatic)**	**(Autonomous)**
1	14304	13927	12706
2	15437	14240	13122
3	16547	15427	12597
4	14669	13585	13349
Total	60957	57179	51774

Table 2. ANOVA Analysis of Volume of Waste Collected

Anova: Single Factor

SUMMARY

Groups	*Count*	*Sum*	*Average*	*Variance*
14304	3	46653	15551	891468

13927	3	42252	14084	195493
10706	3	33768	11256	787143

ANOVA

Source of Variation	*SS*	*Df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	28596698	2	14298349	22.8883	0.001556	5.143253
Within Groups	3748208	6	624701.3			
Total	32344906	8				

Challenges of Implementing Autonomous Waste Management Systems

PCA was used to visualise and comprehend the differences in waste collection quantities across the three systems as shown in Fig. 1. The first two principal components were preserved, accounting for 100% of the variance in the data (PC1: 56.3%, PC2: 43.7%).

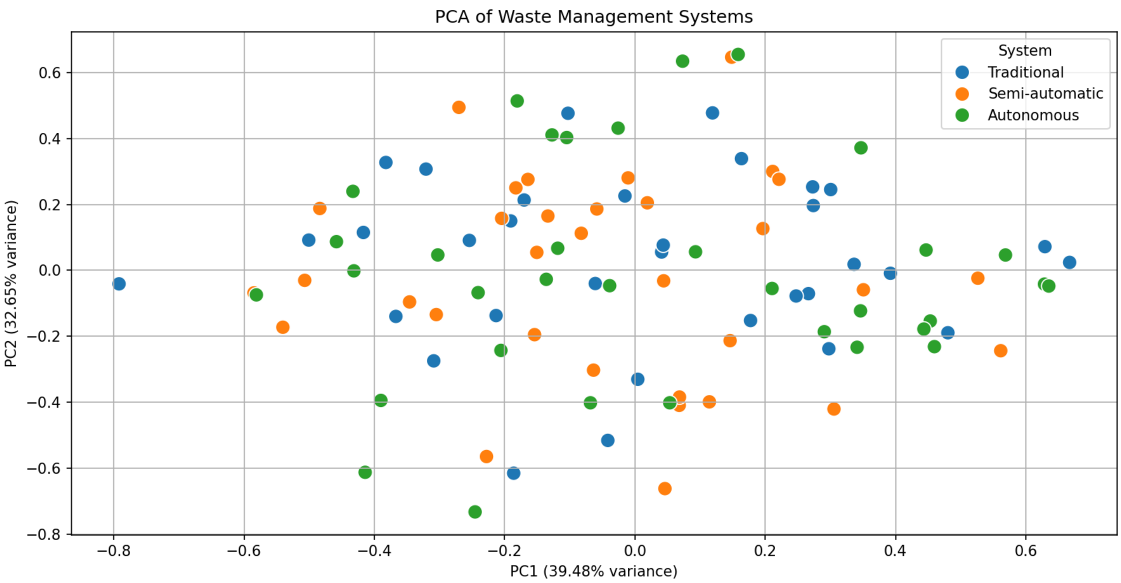

Figure 1. PCA of Waste Management Systems

- **Component Loadings**: The variables' loadings on the principal components were substantial, indicating that they correlated strongly.
- **Principal Component Scores**: A scatter plot of the principal component scores (Figure 1) revealed unique clusters corresponding to each waste management system.
    - Traditional: Lower-left quadrant.
    - Semi-automatic: Upper-left and lower-right quadrants.
    - Autonomous: Upper-right quadrant.

These clusters show distinct separations across the three systems, supporting the results obtained with the test of ANOVA significantly.

Discrete Event Simulation (DES) Analysis

A Discrete Event Simulation (DES) was also run to further investigate the variability among the systems. This method depicts system operation as discrete events, capturing the dynamic behaviour of traditional, semi-automatic, and autonomous waste management systems in the test residential estate. Using SimPy, we replicated the daily waste collection operation for each system :

- **Traditional System**: This has an average daily collection rate of 50 kg, with a 10-kilogramme fluctuation.
- **Semi-automatic System**: This collects an average of 48 kilogramme each day, with an 8 kg variability.
- **Autonomous System**: This collects 45 kilogrammes every day on average, with a variability of 5kg.

The simulation ran for 120 days, tracking the total volume of waste collected by each system as presented in Table 3 below. The DES results reveal that the traditional system gathered the most waste, followed by the semi-automatic and autonomous systems. These results are consistent with the results obtained through ANOVA, and PCA, providing additional support for the Traditional system's efficiency. The autonomous system performed more consistently while gathering less waste. These results are illustrated in a bar chart (Fig. 2).

Table 3. Total waste collected by each waste management system

System	Total Waste Collected (kg)
Traditional	6012.34
Semi-automatic	5824.29
Autonomous	5482.67

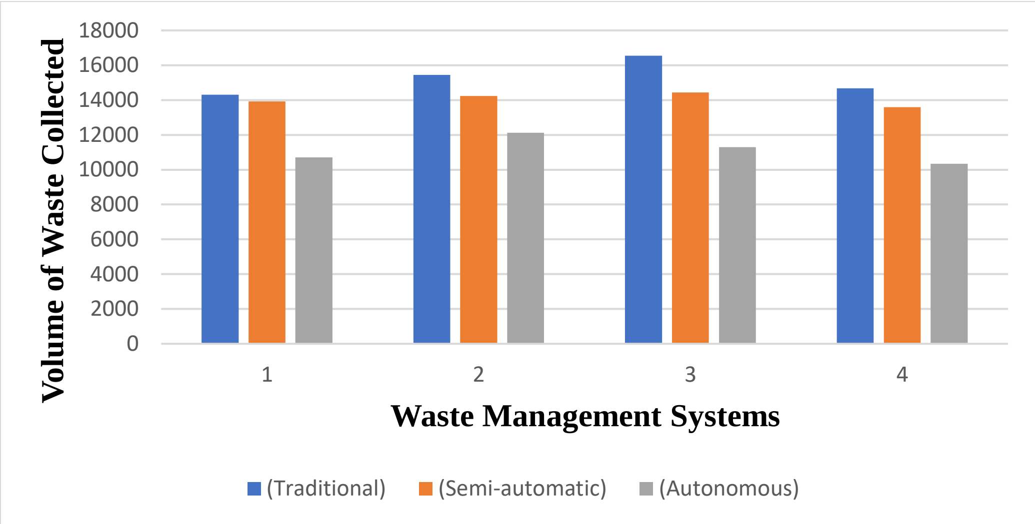

Figure 2. Total Waste Collected by Each System (120 days)

Comparing waste collection efficiency across the three systems, traditional, semi-automatic, and autonomous. It was discovered that the traditional system collected the highest volume of waste, but faced challenges in managing overflowing bins, posing health risks. The semi-automatic system, which uses a GSM mechanism through the user to notify collection authorities when bins are nearing full capacity, prevents overflow to a great extent and maintains cleanliness. The autonomous system, which operates without human intervention, effectively prevented the problem of overflowing bins while preserving environmental aesthetics and preventing potential health risks. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating technological advancements in waste management systems to enhance operational efficiency, mitigate environmental risks, while also promoting public health. The advantages of semi-automatic and autonomous systems over traditional methods emphasize the potential of automation to revolutionize waste collection processes for a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable environment.

Fuel Consumption and Waste Overflow Management

This section compares traditional, semi-automatic, and autonomous waste management systems based on fuel usage and waste overflow management to assess their environmental impact. Fuel consumption plays a crucial role in the environmental impact of waste management systems. Table 4 shows the fuel consumption of each of the systems during the test period.. The average fuel usage rates are shown below:

- **Traditional System**: 15 litres/day
- **Semi-automatic System**: 10 litres/day
- **Autonomous System**: 5 litres/day

Fig. 3 above depicts an examination of fuel consumption by the three waste management methods. Significant differences in fuel efficiency and environmental impact were discovered. Traditional systems consumed 676.10 litres of fuel due to inadequate waste collection procedures. Semi-automatic systems raised fuel consumption to 797.54 litres as a result of fuzzy human perceptions of waste bin level and notifications to the collecting authority. Autonomous systems with full automation reduced fuel consumption by 67% making it the most environmentally friendly option.

Table 4. Fuel Consumption Over Four Months.

System	Fuel Consumption (litres)	Reduction from Traditional System
Traditional	1800	0%
Semi-automatic	1200	33%
Autonomous	600	67%

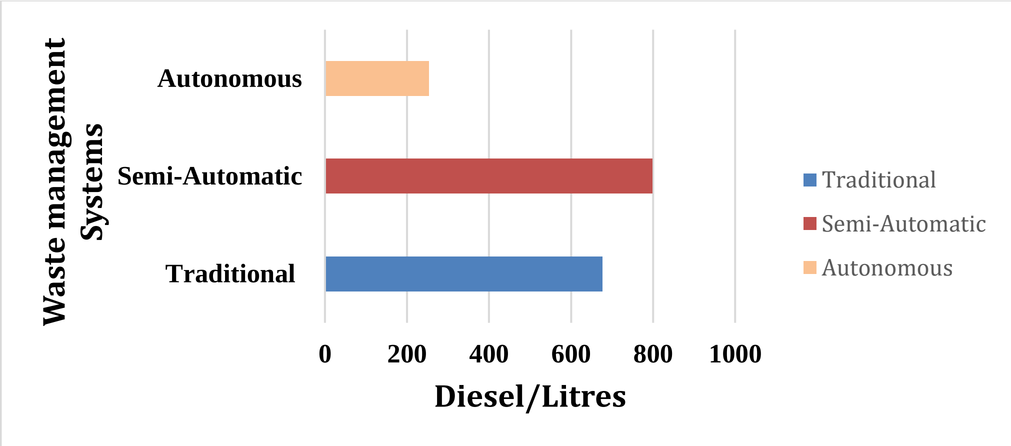

Figure 2. Graph of Fuel Consumption

Waste Overflow Management

Table 5 shows the capacity of each system to manage waste overflow. Waste management is influenced by how frequently and efficiently waste is collected. The three systems - traditional, semi-automatic, and autonomous - were evaluated for performance and effectiveness. Traditional systems experienced frequent overflows of waste due to infrequent waste collection, resulting in inefficient waste management. Semi-automatic systems improved moderately, but there were still occasional overflows caused by collection scheduling mistakes. Autonomous systems demonstrated the most effective strategy, effectively minimising overflow events through continuous monitoring and adaptive scheduling. These solutions not only increased waste collection efficiency, but also highlighted the transformative power of automation in waste management.

The autonomous system outperforms the traditional system by 75%, while semi-automatic methods show a 50% improvement against the traditional method in handling waste overflow incidents This demonstrates the efficiency and efficacy of the autonomous system in waste management through continuous monitoring and adaptive scheduling.

Table 5. Waste Overflow Incidents

System	Overflow Incidents	Relative Performance
Traditional	High	1 (baseline)

Semi-automatic	Moderate	2 (50% improvement)
Autonomous	Low	3 (75% improvement)

Environmental Benefits

There are various environmental advantages to autonomous waste management:

Reduced Fuel Consumption: Autonomous systems consume 67% less fuel compared to the traditional due to well-planned routes and effective waste management thereby reducing emissions into the environment.

Minimized Waste Overflow: Autonomous systems monitor waste levels and adjust collection schedules, thus reducing overflow events and maintaining a cleaner environment, and reducing public health risks.

Improved Efficiency: Real-time data optimization of routes and collection schedules reduces fuel consumption and time waste, and overall reduction environmental impact.

4 Conclusions

The study evaluating three waste management systems in a residential area showed that traditional systems collected the most waste but led to overflowing bins and unsanitary conditions. The semi-automatic system, which alerted authorities when bins were nearing capacity, improved aesthetics but consumed more fuel. The autonomous system, with its automation and advanced technology, achieved the lowest waste volume but effectively managed overflowing bins and eliminated the problem of pungent odours in waste. These findings suggest that semi-automatic and autonomous systems offer significant advantages in waste management, such as improving operational efficiency, mitigating environmental risks, promoting public health, and lowering fuel consumption. The study supports the integration of technology and automation in waste management for a cleaner, more efficient, and sustainable future.

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