

Analysis of Chemical Usage Costs in the Public Area Section

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Submitted: Aug 12, 2026 | Accepted: Oct 06, 2026 | Published: Oct 15, 2026

ABSTRACT

Background: The post-pandemic surge in hotel occupancy demands stricter hygiene protocols, directly inflating housekeeping operational costs. While general housekeeping efficiency is widely researched, chemical cost management specifically within high-traffic public areas remains under-explored. **Objective:** This study evaluates chemical usage costs in the Public Area Section from January to June 2025 and identifies structured cost-efficiency strategies without compromising cleanliness standards. **Methodology:** A descriptive quantitative case study approach was conducted across four major zones (lobbies, corridors, public restrooms, and restaurants). Data were gathered through 48 structured observation sessions, semi-structured interviews with five key informants, and documentation of monthly accounting ledgers. Analysis included mathematical variance testing, dynamic baseline cost comparisons, and data triangulation across operational logbooks. **Results:** The findings reveal a significant chemical expenditure reduction from IDR 3,500,000 to IDR 2,850,000—representing a verified 18.57% efficiency gain relative to the January baseline. Concurrently, cleanliness audit scores rose from 88/100 to 92/100. This inverse relationship proves that the cost savings were driven by the elimination of chemical waste (via concentrated solutions and disciplined dilution controls) rather than a reduction in service quality. Furthermore, the transition to concentrated chemical usage contributed to a 15% reduction in plastic waste. **Conclusion:** Process control and human resource competency development are essential pathways to achieving simultaneously economic efficiency and environmental sustainability in hotel operations.

Keywords: Cost Efficiency; Housekeeping; Hotel Chemicals; Public Area Section; Waste Reduction.

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Lonjakan okupansi hotel pascapandemi menuntut protokol higiene yang lebih ketat, yang secara langsung meningkatkan biaya operasional housekeeping. Meskipun efisiensi housekeeping secara umum telah banyak diteliti, manajemen biaya bahan kimia secara khusus di area publik yang padat lalu lintas masih jarang dieksplorasi. Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi biaya penggunaan bahan kimia di Public Area Section dari Januari hingga Juni 2025 dan mengidentifikasi strategi efisiensi biaya yang terstruktur tanpa menurunkan standar kebersihan. Metodologi: Pendekatan studi kasus kuantitatif deskriptif dilakukan di empat zona utama (lobi, koridor, toilet umum, dan restoran). Data dikumpulkan melalui 48 sesi observasi terstruktur, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan lima informan kunci, dan dokumentasi buku besar akuntansi bulanan. Analisis mencakup pengujian varians matematis, perbandingan biaya dasar dinamis, dan triangulasi data di seluruh logbook operasional. Hasil: Temuan menunjukkan pengurangan pengeluaran bahan kimia yang signifikan dari Rp3.500.000 menjadi Rp2.850.000—mencerminkan peningkatan efisiensi sebesar 18,57% dari baseline bulan Januari. Secara bersamaan, skor audit kebersihan meningkat dari 88/100 menjadi 92/100. Hubungan terbalik ini membuktikan bahwa penghematan biaya didorong oleh penghapusan pemborosan bahan kimia (melalui larutan konsentrat dan kontrol pengenceran yang disiplin) bukan karena penurunan kualitas layanan. Selain itu, transisi ke penggunaan bahan kimia konsentrat berkontribusi pada pengurangan limbah plastik sebesar 15%. Kesimpulan: Pengendalian proses dan pengembangan kompetensi sumber daya manusia merupakan jalur

penting untuk mencapai efisiensi ekonomi sekaligus keberlanjutan lingkungan dalam operasional hotel.

Kata Kunci: Efisiensi Biaya; Housekeeping; Bahan Kimia Hotel; Public Area Section; Pengurangan Pemborosan.

INTRODUCTION

The national hotel industry has shown significant growth in the post-pandemic period. The Central Bureau of Statistics (2024) reported that the average room occupancy rate for starred hotels in Indonesia reached 56.78% in 2024, an increase of 4.2% from the previous year. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2024) also noted that global tourism had recovered to 89% of pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2024. This situation has driven hotel expansion and increased operational intensity, including heightened demands for cleanliness as a key factor in service quality.

Cleanliness is an essential element in the hospitality industry because it directly influences guest perceptions and satisfaction (Kasavana & Brooks, 2019). In the post-pandemic era, hotel hygiene protocols have intensified substantially. Kuo et al. (2022) stated that stricter hygiene protocols can increase housekeeping operational costs by 15–25% if not managed efficiently. This presents a distinct challenge for hotel management in balancing high cleanliness standards with operational cost control.

Although numerous studies have examined housekeeping cost efficiency, most have focused on general technical aspects of chemical usage or the housekeeping department as a whole. Limited research has specifically addressed chemical cost analysis in public areas—the zones with the highest cleaning frequency and guest traffic density under severe time constraints. Santoso and Widodo (2022) emphasized that public areas require different handling than guest rooms due to stricter visual cleanliness requirements. Sugiarto (2018) further asserted that efficiency in the public area section directly impacts hotel quality perception, as it serves as the first showcase for guests. Conversely, earlier studies such as Putra (2021) and Rochman (2021) primarily emphasized chemical selection without comprehensive analysis of simultaneous process control and human resource competencies. Haris (2022) added that non-digitized usage recording hinders early waste identification.

To fill this research gap, this article analyzes chemical usage costs in the Public Area Section of one hotel in Indonesia during the January–June 2025 period. This research comprehensively maps the structure of chemical costs, evaluates monthly consumption trends and efficiency percentages against the baseline, and identifies the synergy between material interventions (migration to concentrated chemicals) and managerial interventions (tightening SOPs and staff competency training). The results of this study are expected to provide concrete managerial implications for hotel managers in formulating economical and sustainable green housekeeping strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive quantitative case study approach was applied to describe the structure of chemical costs in the Public Area Section (lobbies, corridors, public restrooms, and restaurants). Data were collected prospectively from January to June 2025 with the following operational components:

1. Cleanliness Assessment Instrument and Scale

Cleanliness quality was measured using a standardized hotel Cleanliness Checklist Instrument covering 25 visual indicators (dust-free, shiny surfaces, no odors, proper arrangement). Each indicator was rated on a Likert scale of 1–4 (1 = Very Dirty, 2 = Less Clean, 3 = Clean/Standard, 4 = Very Clean/Perfect). Instrument validation was conducted through content validity by three hospitality management experts and inter-rater reliability testing with Cohen's Kappa value of 0.84 (very strong agreement category).

2. Observation Procedures and Score Calculation

Structured observations were conducted 48 times (twice weekly during peak hours 11:00–14:00 WIB) using assessment sheets to monitor cleaning duration, dilution accuracy, and

personal protective equipment (PPE) compliance. The final cleanliness score was calculated using the 100-point conversion formula:

$$\text{Cleanliness Quality Score} = \left(\frac{\text{Total Actual Score}}{\text{Total Maximum Obtainable Score (100)}} \right) \times 100$$

The increase from 88 to 92 was objectively determined through weekly average recapping of the 25 indicators. Score 88 represented repeated minor stains on the macro corridor, while 92 was achieved after strict supervision stabilization minimized human error in buffing and toilet cleaning processes.

3. Cost Efficiency Formula

Monthly cost efficiency was calculated by comparing actual monthly expenditure against the baseline cost in January 2025 (when the old SOP was still in effect). The mathematical formula used is:

$$\text{Cost Efficiency (\%)} = \left(\frac{\text{January Cost} - \text{Cost of Month } X}{\text{January Cost}} \right) \times 100$$

4. Data Analysis and Triangulation Procedure

Analysis validity was ensured through a three-source data triangulation technique by integrating: (a) quantitative financial expenditure data from the Accounting Department's General Ledger, (b) physical inventory logbook records from the housekeeping warehouse, and (c) real staff behavior notes from field observation sheets. Data discrepancies were resolved through direct confirmation in semi-structured interviews with the Executive Housekeeper, Public Area Supervisor, and three attendants.

5. Research Limitations

The study was conducted in only one hotel in Medan and covered a six-month period (January–June 2025). Results are descriptive and cannot be generalized broadly; analysis of cost per square meter and direct correlation with guest satisfaction was not performed.

RESULT AND DISSCUSSIONS

1. Cost Trends and Usage Statistics

Chemical expenditures declined from IDR 3.50 million in January to IDR 2.85 million in May–June.

Table 1. Monthly Chemical Usage Statistics (January–June 2025)

Month	Cost IDR)	(Million	Reduction (%)	Average Cost (Million IDR)
Januari	3,5		-	
Februari	3,2		8,57%	
Maret	3		14,28%	
April	2,9		17,14%	
Mei	2,85		18,57%	
Juni	2,85		18,57%	
Avarage	3,05		15,43%	3,05

Cumulative efficiency reached 18.6%.

2. In-Depth Analysis by Category and Area

Major savings (≈12%) occurred in high-volume floor and multi-purpose cleaners. The shift to concentrates raised purchase prices but lowered cost per solution through disciplined dilution.

Table 2. Breakdown of Chemical Volume, Price, and Usage Area (January vs June 2025)

Chemical Category	Main Distribution Area	Vol. Jan (L)	Vol. Jun (L)	Unit Price Conventional (IDR/L)	Unit Price Concentrate (IDR/L)	Total Cost Jan (IDR)	Total Cost Jun (IDR)	Category Savings Ratio
Floor Cleaner	Lobby & Restaurant	150	30	10	42	1,500,000	1,260,000	16.00%
Multi-Purpose	Corridor & Facilities	100	20	9	38	900	760	15.56%
Toilet Bowl Cleaner	Public Restroom	60	45	15	15	900	675	25.00%
Glass Cleaner	Windows & Mirrors	40	31	5	5	200	155	22.50%
Total		350	126			3,500,000	2,850,000	18.57%

3. Cleanliness Quality Indicators and Audit Evidence

Cleanliness checklist scores improved from 88/100 (January) to 92/100 (May–June), confirming that efficiency gains resulted from reduced waste rather than lowered standards.

4. Green Housekeeping Implementation

The transition reduced plastic waste by 15% and minimized hazardous chemical exposure.

5. Potential Biases and External Variables

Factors included seasonal occupancy, observation effects (Hawthorne), and weather. Overall, results underscore the synergy of concentrated chemicals, SOPs, and human resource competencies.

Table 3. Chemical Cost Recap and Efficiency vs. Baseline (Jan–Jun 2025)

Month	Cost IDR	(Million	Efficiency (%)	Quality (1-	Score	Intervention Notes
January	3.50		-		88	Old SOP baseline
February	3.20		8.57		89	Retraining & supervision
March	3.00		14.28		90	Transition to concentrates
April	2.90		17.14		91	Daily stock monitoring
May	2.85		18.57		92	Procedure stabilization
June	2.85		18.57		92	Periodic cleanliness audits

Interpretation of Results and Comparison with Previous Studies

The research findings demonstrate a unique inverse correlation phenomenon: operational costs were reduced by 18.57%, yet cleanliness quality scores actually increased from 88 to 92. Theoretically, this success is possible because the intervention focused on process control and waste elimination. The high cost in January was not due to the size of the

cleaning area but due to staff behavior of performing unmeasured dosages and over-spraying. When measuring cups were provided and the SOP was strictly enforced, pure raw material waste could be stopped without reducing the volume of ready-to-use liquid applied to hotel surface areas. The increase in quality score from 88 to 92 was driven by increased staff competency and discipline after training, not by the amount of chemical liquid consumed.

These findings are highly consistent with and strengthen the theoretical foundation of several previous studies:

- Yusuf et al. (2024): Stated that standardization of chemical dosing can reduce housekeeping costs by 15–20% while maintaining surface cleanliness consistency.
- Muller et al. (2022): Affirmed that SOP tightening in public area maintenance has been proven to raise visual cleanliness indices by suppressing frontline staff work negligence.
- Choi (2023): Found that migration to the green housekeeping concept with concentrated chemicals not only saves purchase costs but also reduces plastic packaging waste (15% in this study) and improves warehouse storage efficiency.
- Kuo et al. (2022): Although Kuo projected that post-pandemic hygiene tightening could raise operational costs by 15–25%, this research proves that the negative impact can be offset through disciplined internal process control optimization.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of efficiency strategies through SOP dosing standardization, intensive staff training, and the transition to concentrated chemical use in the Public Area Section is associated with a 18.57% operational cost reduction (from IDR 3,500,000 to IDR 2,850,000) and an increase in cleanliness quality scores from 88 to 92. Practically, this study contributes to providing an operational blueprint for green housekeeping that has been proven to reduce plastic packaging waste by up to 15%. Theoretically, the results strengthen the integration between human resource competency management theory and environmental material efficiency concepts in the tourism sector. The main limitation of this study lies in the limited observation focus on one hotel department over a six-month period, so seasonal occupancy fluctuations have not been fully captured comparatively. The implications of these findings suggest to hotel management to implement an integrated digital cleanliness audit system and for future researchers to expand the analysis of cost-per-cleaning per square meter across all hotel operational areas.

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