

Improving Housekeeping Operational Efficiency Through Room Cleaning Time Management at Artotel Yogyakarta Hotel

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Abstract. In the dynamic and competitive hospitality industry, room cleanliness is one of the most important factors that affects the guest satisfaction and its hotel service quality. The purpose of this study is to determine the implementation of time management in the room cleaning process and its impact on operational efficiency in the housekeeping department at Hotel Artotel Yogyakarta. This study was motivated by the challenges often faced by housekeeping staff, especially when high occupancy rates, increasing workloads and time constraints are the main obstacles. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through direct observation, interviews with executive housekeepers, supervisors, and room attendants, and review documentation. This study focuses on time management accounting practices, factors that influence its effectiveness, and its impact on work productivity. Data were analyzed using the Milles and Huberman (1994) approach consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results of the study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for hotel management in optimizing the work time allocation system, increasing staff productivity, and maintaining room cleanliness quality standards. Overall, this study contributes to increasing operational efficiency through effective time management in the housekeeping work environment.

Keywords: Artotel Yogyakarta, hotel management, housekeeping, operational efficiency, room cleaning, time management

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In the ever-evolving hospitality industry, service quality has become a key indicator for attracting and retaining guests. One of the most crucial elements of hotel service is room cleanliness, which not only reflects professionalism but also significantly affects guest satisfaction and comfort. Therefore, the housekeeping department holds a strategic role in maintaining room cleanliness standards efficiently and on time (Sugiman, 2020:8). However, in practice, many hotels face time management challenges, especially during high occupancy periods, where the workload increases and cleaning time becomes limited (Bagyono, 2006:45).

Work efficiency cannot be guaranteed solely by these procedures although the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been implemented. Studies show that operational effectiveness heavily relies on the staff's ability to manage their working time adaptively (Basri & Aarsal, 2022). A lack of supervision over work duration, fatigue due to excessive workload, and varying room conditions are factors that affect cleaning time efficiency (Maulina & Sucipto, 2016; Latif & Permana, 2023). The mismatch between workload and available time may lead to guest complaints, delayed check-ins, and decreased staff productivity (Agustiad et al., 2024). Moreover, a rigid approach to time management can also become a hindrance. Each room has different levels of cleanliness and conditions depending

on the guest's previous activities. Therefore, a flexible time management strategy tailored to real on-site conditions is essential (Widiyanti & Rachmawati, 2022). Previous studies have recommended schedule planning based on estimated duration and cleanliness priority levels as an effort to improve work efficiency, particularly during peak occupancy (Kartika, 2018). In operational management theory, time control is a critical element for maintaining process consistency and output quality (Heizer & Render, 2016).

Based on these issues discussed earlier, this study aims at analyzing how the application of time management practices in room cleaning processes and how they affect the operational efficiency of the housekeeping department. Through a qualitative approach involving direct observation and in-depth interviews, this study is expected to provide practical recommendations for hotel management to develop effective work strategies, enhance staff productivity, and maintain consistent service quality for guests.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Role, Function, and Purpose of a Hotel

The hotel industry has become one of the core sectors in the tourism industry, not only providing accommodations but also supporting various social, economic, and cultural activities. Essentially, the primary function of a hotel is to meet the basic needs of travelers, such as providing a place to rest, eat and drink, and bathe all of which are offered in a professional service package (Bagyono, 2006). However, along with changing times and growing public demand, the function of hotels has expanded. Hotels are now also used as venues for various formal and informal events such as meetings, conferences, seminars, training sessions, workshops, and both national and international state events. As part of the accommodation service business, hotels not only provide lodging services but are also equipped with supporting facilities such as meeting rooms, food and beverage services, and other amenities to ensure guest comfort and satisfaction during their stay (Sulastiyono, 2011).

In this context, hotels serve as service facilities providers focused on guest satisfaction. Services provided encompass not only physical aspects (such as room cleanliness and comfort) but also psychological aspects (such as staff friendliness and responsiveness) as well as safety. The hotel industry plays a strategic role in supporting sustainable tourism development, which includes both service quality and the prudent management of resources. According to a study by Bachri (2024), the hotel sector plays a vital role in creating positive travel experiences for guests. By integrating sustainability principles, hotels can significantly contribute to strengthening the tourism sector while maintaining a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation. Thus, hotels are no longer just places to stay but have become an essential part of the overall tourist experience. This dual function poses both challenges and opportunities for hotel management to continuously improve service standards and operational efficiency in order to remain competitive in the increasingly dynamic hospitality industry.

Housekeeping

According to Nawar (2002:2), housekeeping is the department responsible for organizing, arranging equipment, maintaining cleanliness, and adding decorative touches so that the hotel appears neat, clean, attractive, and provides a pleasant atmosphere for staying guests. Meanwhile, Nyoman S. Pedit (1999:274) states that housekeeping, also known as "tata graha," is a hotel department whose

main tasks include managing cleanliness, tidiness, hygiene, beauty, and harmony across all hotel areas from guest rooms, lobbies, and public toilets to gardens and parking areas. This department also oversees the laundry section. According to Rumeckso (2002:4), the term housekeeping comes from the words "house" and "keeping," which together mean taking care of the "house" in this case, the hotel. Based on these definitions, the housekeeping department plays a crucial role in hotel operations. Due to its wide scope of responsibilities, housekeeping is divided into several sections to effectively cover all work areas and provide maximum service to guests. This work requires the support of skilled and professional personnel. In some cases, the linen and laundry divisions are merged into one department depending on workload and area coverage. Thus, housekeeping functions not only as the physical cleanliness keeper of the hotel but also as a key determinant of the overall guest experience. This strategic role makes housekeeping one of the backbones of hotel operations, responsible for maintaining service standards through cleanliness management, space aesthetics, and a comfortable environment. To carry out this function optimally, a structured work system, clear task distribution among sections (such as floor section, public area, linen, and laundry), and consistent implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) are essential. The support of competent human resources and effective time management are the main keys for housekeeping to fulfill its role efficiently and professionally in creating a positive hotel image in the eyes of guests.

Time management

Time management is an individual's ability to organize and utilize time in a structured manner so that various tasks and responsibilities can be completed effectively and efficiently. Peter F. Drucker (1999) described time management as an essential part of personal discipline that enables a person to focus on what truly matters. In his book *The Effective Executive*, he emphasized that personal and professional efficiency heavily depends on how one allocates their time to high-impact tasks. Similarly, Stephen R. Covey (1989), in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, stated that effective time management is not just about scheduling activities but about managing oneself in relation to time with a focus on important priorities, not just urgent ones. Good time management requires clear goals and planning based on personal values. Brian Tracy (2007), in *Eat That Frog!*, also asserted that one of the main principles of time management is overcoming procrastination and starting with the most important task first. This strategy helps individuals increase productivity and reduce stress from accumulating tasks.

In practice, time management involves several important aspects to ensure its effectiveness. According to Atkinson (1994), the key aspects of time management include:

1. Setting clear and realistic goals as a foundation for structured time organization.
 2. Prioritizing activities based on their urgency and importance.
 3. Creating a structured yet flexible schedule to suit actual needs.
 4. Practicing assertiveness the ability to express needs and opinions firmly without disregarding others.
 5. Being decisive in executing plans and avoiding unnecessary distractions.
 6. Preventing procrastination or the tendency to delay tasks that can be done immediately.
 7. Reducing unproductive activities that lead to wasted time.
 8. Controlling and evaluating time use to ensure the effectiveness of planned time usage.
- Understanding and applying these aspects help individuals or organizations achieve optimal results within limited time.

The Relationship Between Time Management and Operational Efficiency

Effective time management plays a crucial role in creating a structured and efficient workflow. Proper application of time management helps prevent delays, increase productivity, and optimize resource utilization. This directly impacts the improvement of operational efficiency in an organization (Kurnianingsih et al., 2024). According to Griffin (2014), effective time management assists organizations in prioritizing tasks, avoiding waste, and balancing workload. Al-Momani (2021) also emphasized that good time management supports the achievement of organizational goals and improves customer satisfaction. In the context of hotel housekeeping, scheduling room cleaning and monitoring staff work durations significantly influence operational efficiency. Aguilar-Escobar et al. (2021) demonstrated that effective time management in specific housekeeping tasks can reduce working hours and increase staff productivity. Therefore, time management is an important managerial strategy to maximize housekeeping work efficiency.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the application of time management in room cleaning activities and its impact on operational efficiency within the housekeeping department of Hotel Artotel Yogyakarta. The qualitative design enabled an in-depth examination of actual work practices, challenges encountered by housekeeping staff, and time management strategies implemented in daily hotel operations. The research was conducted at Hotel Artotel Yogyakarta, located on Jalan Kaliurang KM. 5.6 No.14, Sleman, Yogyakarta. The site was purposively selected due to the researcher's prior On The Job Training (OJT) at the hotel, which allowed direct access to internal processes and a comprehensive understanding of the organizational structure and operational context. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on specific criteria, including a minimum of one year's work experience in housekeeping, active involvement in room cleaning processes, and willingness to provide reliable information. Key informants included the Executive Housekeeper, Housekeeping Supervisor, and Room Attendants, each representing different levels of responsibility and insight within the department. Data were collected through four techniques: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore work duration, time-related challenges, and scheduling strategies; (2) direct observation of cleaning activities to document workflow and time efficiency; (3) document analysis involving housekeeping SOPs, work schedules, performance reports, and evaluation forms; and (4) literature review to contextualize findings within relevant theoretical frameworks and prior studies. Data analysis was conducted inductively following the model proposed by Sugiyono (2017), encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Relevant data were extracted, categorized, and presented in a structured narrative to identify patterns and relationships. Conclusions were drawn through cross-verification among data sources. To ensure data credibility, triangulation was employed across sources (executive, supervisor, staff), techniques (interview, observation, documentation), and time (morning, afternoon, evening). These strategies aimed to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings and contribute to a broader understanding of efficiency improvement in hotel housekeeping operations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This study was conducted at Artotel Yogyakarta and involved three main informants: the Executive Housekeeper, the Housekeeping Supervisor, and two Room Attendants. Data collection techniques

included direct observation of the room cleaning process and in-depth interviews to understand the actual time management practices and strategies implemented in the field.

Based on interviews with the Executive Housekeeper, it was found that the hotel's management has set standard cleaning times of 30 minutes for check-out rooms and 15 minutes for stay-over rooms. However, in practice, these standards are often not met, particularly when occupancy levels exceed 80%. The Executive Housekeeper stated, *"We already have SOPs and time standards, but unpredictable room conditions and heavy workloads often cause staff to work slower than the target."*

The interview with the Housekeeping Supervisor revealed that task allocation is carried out each morning based on the number of rooms and their anticipated level of dirtiness. However, delayed guest check-outs, unavailability of clean linen, and rooms in excessively dirty conditions are the main challenges in achieving time efficiency. The Supervisor explained, *"We try to distribute the workload evenly, but the reality in the field often doesn't match the initial planning."*

Meanwhile, interviews with the two Room Attendants indicated that they experience time pressure, especially when required to clean more than 15 rooms per shift, particularly when some rooms are in very poor condition. One Room Attendant stated, *"When it's busy, we can clean up to 18 rooms. Sometimes I have to choose between finishing quickly or ensuring maximum cleanliness."*

From direct observation of five check-out rooms and three stay-over rooms, the average cleaning time for check-out rooms ranged between 33–36 minutes, while stay-over rooms took approximately 18–20 minutes. The most time-consuming tasks included retrieving clean linen, cleaning the bathroom, and rechecking the completeness of amenities.

Discussion

The findings indicate a mismatch between the time targets set by management and the actual cleaning times achieved by housekeeping staff. This suggests that although management has established time standards and implemented SOPs, without a flexible and responsive time management strategy, operational efficiency remains difficult to achieve. These findings align with Basri & Arsal (2022), who argue that SOPs alone are insufficient and that work efficiency heavily depends on adaptive time management. Furthermore, the current task allocation process does not fully consider the complexity or difficulty of individual rooms. As a result, there is an imbalance in workload distribution among Room Attendants, which negatively affects their productivity and work quality. This supports the findings of Maulina & Sucipto (2016), who state that poor time management can lead to fatigue and reduced performance.

Observations also showed that inefficiencies were influenced by external factors such as delays in linen delivery and inconsistent availability of amenities. This highlights the need for more effective interdepartmental coordination, particularly with the laundry and storeroom divisions. Field findings suggest that effective time management should include flexible room-specific timing adjustments based on actual conditions, equitable workload rotation, and stronger supervisory control over cleaning duration and outcomes. Moreover, the integration of digital tools such as housekeeping tracking applications could facilitate real-time monitoring to minimize unnecessary deviations and enhance overall efficiency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from direct observation and in-depth interviews with the Executive Housekeeper, Supervisor, and Room Attendants at Artotel Yogyakarta, it can be concluded that time management plays a vital role in supporting the operational efficiency of the housekeeping department, especially in room cleaning activities. Although Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and target cleaning times have been set, there remain discrepancies between the ideal time and actual implementation. These differences are mainly due to increased workloads during peak occupancy, varying room conditions, and limited flexibility in task allocation. Moreover, technical factors such as linen availability, guest check-out delays, and interdepartmental coordination significantly affect time management effectiveness. Current strategies have not fully overcome these challenges, indicating the importance of improving supervision of work time, adjusting cleaning durations based on room conditions, and distributing workloads more fairly among staff. To enhance operational efficiency and maintain consistent room cleanliness, it is essential to adopt more adaptive and structured time management practices supported by effective cross-departmental coordination. Additionally, ongoing training, performance monitoring, and attention to staff welfare can contribute to better time management and overall department performance.

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