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Abstract

The study assessed the effect of cleanliness standards on hotel performance, focusing on Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge in Rwanda. Specifically, the study examined how cleanliness standards influence hotel performance, with particular attention to housekeeping practices, staff competence, supervision, and resource utilization. The study was anchored on the SERVQUAL model, which emphasizes the role of service quality dimensions, particularly tangibles and reliability, in influencing customer satisfaction and organizational performance. A mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, complemented by a comparative case-study dimension, was adopted. The target population comprised hotel guests, employees, supervisors, and managers from the two selected hotels, from which a sample of 100 respondents was drawn. Purposive sampling was used to select employees and management representatives, while convenience sampling was employed to select hotel guests. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to guests and semi-structured interview guides for employees, supervisors, and managers. Questionnaire reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, whereas validity was established through expert review and alignment with the study objectives and relevant SERVQUAL dimensions. Quantitative data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the findings, while inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses and analysis of variance (ANOVA), were employed to examine the relationships and effects among the study variables. Qualitative data were analysed thematically to complement the quantitative findings. The findings revealed a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between cleanliness standards and hotel performance ($r = .58$, $p < .001$), with cleanliness standards explaining 33.6% of the variation in hotel performance. The findings suggest that consistent cleanliness standards, supported by competent housekeeping personnel, effective supervision, and adequate resource utilization, contribute to improved hotel performance. The study concludes that maintaining high cleanliness standards is essential for enhancing service quality, customer satisfaction, and overall hotel performance. The study therefore recommends that Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge strengthen housekeeping procedures, conduct regular cleanliness inspections, enhance staff training, and ensure the adequate provision and effective utilization of cleaning resources to maintain consistent hygiene standards in guest rooms, bathrooms, linen, corridors, and public areas.

Keywords: *Cleanliness standards, hotel performance, hygiene practices, service quality, customer satisfaction.*

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1.0 Introduction

The global hospitality industry operates in an increasingly competitive environment where hotels rely on consistent service quality, operational efficiency, and positive guest experiences to attract and retain customers. Hotel performance is commonly assessed through indicators such as customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, operational efficiency, occupancy rates, revenue generation, and customer loyalty (Kandampully et al., 2018; Rather, 2021). Among the factors that influence these outcomes, cleanliness standards are particularly important since they directly shape guests' perceptions of hygiene, comfort, safety, and the overall quality of accommodation services. In hotel establishments, cleanliness standards encompass the procedures and practices applied to maintain hygienic conditions in guest rooms, bathrooms, bedding, linen, corridors, restaurants, and other public facilities.

Empirical evidence underscores the importance of cleanliness in determining hotel performance from the perspective of customers. For instance, an analysis of 137,268 TripAdvisor ratings from 564 hotels established that cleanliness was the most important contributor to overall customer satisfaction, followed by service quality (Musa et al., 2022). In a similar analysis of 329,849 TripAdvisor reviews, it was revealed that room cleanliness, comfort, and room features were significant considerations in guests' evaluations of hotel experiences (Rahimi et al., 2022). More recently, Singgalen (2024) identified perceived cleanliness as one of the principal factors influencing hotel customer satisfaction, while Dahlan et al. (2025) found that cleanliness significantly influenced customer satisfaction with housekeeping services in four-star hotels. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that cleanliness is not merely a routine housekeeping responsibility but a fundamental component of service quality, customer satisfaction, and hotel competitiveness.

The significance of maintaining high cleanliness standards became more evident during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which substantially transformed hygiene expectations across the global hospitality sector. The pandemic caused unprecedented disruption to international tourism, with travel restrictions affecting more than 90% of the world's population during the early stages of the crisis and international tourism experiencing a substantial decline in 2020 (Gössling et al., 2021). Consequently, hygiene, sanitation, contamination prevention, and confidence in accommodation facilities became increasingly important considerations in the choice of hotels by guests.

Research on hotel reviews during the pandemic established that the factors influencing customer satisfaction changed considerably, with service quality becoming particularly important during the crisis (Song et al., 2022). Yang et al. (2024), using 26,519 TripAdvisor reviews covering 2,024 hotels in the United States, examined the importance guests attached to hotel cleanliness during the pandemic and demonstrated the relevance of local health conditions in shaping cleanliness expectations. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2022), through a field study involving operational data from hundreds of hotel rooms, demonstrated that an alternative housekeeping assembly-line approach had the potential to improve hygiene standards, labour efficiency, and service quality. Similarly, Horasan et al. (2025), analysing 1,738 online reviews of five-star thermal hotels, identified recurring guest complaints concerning cleaning and hygiene, particularly in guest rooms and their facilities. Such findings suggest that maintaining appropriate cleanliness standards requires systematic housekeeping procedures, effective work organization, and consistent implementation of hygiene practices. The findings also demonstrate that cleanliness has

implications beyond the physical appearance of hotel facilities, extending to operational efficiency, guest confidence, and the reputation of accommodation establishments.

However, the effectiveness of cleanliness standards depends on more than the mere availability of cleaning procedures and materials. The successful implementation of such standards requires competent housekeeping personnel, effective supervision, adequate resources, and consistent monitoring of cleaning activities. Evidence drawn from 1,139 hotels across 15 hotel brands indicated that higher expenditure on room cleaning did not automatically translate into better guest cleanliness ratings. The findings revealed differences in the efficiency with which hotels converted housekeeping expenditure into perceived cleanliness, highlighting the importance of effective resource utilization in maintaining satisfactory hygiene standards (Cobanoglu et al., 2018).

In a study examining the productivity of hotel room attendants, Tavitiyaman et al. (2022) established that housekeeping performance was influenced by staff training, room characteristics, customer segments, and the availability of operational resources such as linen. Their findings further demonstrated that delays in accessing the necessary materials could reduce employee productivity and affect the efficiency of room-cleaning operations. Similarly, Were and Maranga (2022), in their study of hotel facilities management practices in Kenya, found that maintenance management made a significant contribution to employee performance ($\beta = 0.572$, $p < 0.001$).

Research conducted among accommodation establishments in South Africa further found that employee expertise and accommodation infrastructure were important predictors of customer satisfaction in lower-rated establishments, while room quality and other service dimensions were important in higher-rated hotels (Nunkoo et al., 2020). Such findings indicate that staff competence, supervisory practices, and the effective allocation of cleaning materials and equipment are important supporting factors in achieving and sustaining the required cleanliness standards. Hotels, therefore, need to establish clear cleaning procedures, provide appropriate staff training, conduct regular inspections, and ensure the availability of adequate housekeeping resources to maintain consistent cleanliness and improve overall performance.

Across African hospitality markets, maintaining appropriate cleanliness standards has become increasingly important as hotels seek to strengthen their competitiveness, improve customer experiences, and respond to changing expectations among domestic and international visitors. The hospitality industry in Africa operates within diverse economic, infrastructural, and institutional environments, which shape the capacity of accommodation establishments to maintain consistent service standards. Research on hotels in West Africa has demonstrated that perceived service quality is an important determinant of visitor satisfaction, hotel growth, and competitiveness, particularly in destinations seeking to attract international visitors (Nadji et al., 2018).

In Kenya, Were and Maranga (2022) established that hotel facilities management and maintenance practices contribute significantly to employee performance, demonstrating the importance of maintaining appropriate operational conditions within accommodation establishments. Evidence from outside the continent is consistent with this observation, as Tavitiyaman et al. (2022) highlighted the influence of staff training and the availability of operational resources on housekeeping productivity. More recent evidence from Dahlan et al. (2025) demonstrated that cleanliness was the most influential factor among the housekeeping service attributes examined in relation to customer satisfaction in four-star hotels. Furthermore, Horasan et al. (2025) showed that cleanliness and hygiene deficiencies remain significant sources

of dissatisfaction among guests in five-star accommodation establishments. Taken as a whole, these studies reinforce the need for African hotels to treat cleanliness as a strategic component of accommodation service delivery rather than merely an operational requirement. Consistent cleanliness standards can contribute to favourable guest perceptions, positive reviews, repeat visits, and the overall competitiveness of hotel establishments.

Recent international evidence further shows that hotel service evaluations vary according to accommodation category, guest expectations, and the quality of physical facilities. Wąsowicz-Zaborek (2025), analysing 11,089 online reviews of hotels in Warsaw representing guests from 32 nationalities, identified room quality, cleanliness, location, breakfast, and staff performance as important factors influencing guest satisfaction. The findings also indicated that the importance attached to these attributes varied across national groups, suggesting that hotels should consider the diverse expectations of their customers when formulating service quality policies. Similarly, Zoghi (2025), analysing negative online reviews from 35 hotels, identified tangible service attributes, including physical facilities, cleanliness, and room conditions, as major sources of customer complaints.

Research on indoor environmental quality in tourist accommodation has also demonstrated that cleanliness is among the basic conditions that significantly influence guest ratings, with poor cleanliness contributing to dissatisfaction across different accommodation categories (The impact of indoor environmental quality on tourist accommodation ratings using guest reviews, 2025). It follows that hotels must maintain consistent cleanliness standards irrespective of their market positioning because deficiencies in hygiene and physical facility maintenance can undermine guest satisfaction, online reputation, and organizational performance.

In Rwanda, the importance of maintaining high cleanliness standards in hotels has grown alongside the expansion of the tourism and hospitality industry. Tourism generated approximately USD 647 million in revenue from 1.36 million visitors in 2024, while the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) segment generated USD 84.8 million and attracted more than 52,000 delegates (Rwanda Development Board [RDB], 2025). In 2025, tourism revenue increased to USD 685 million, supported by approximately 1.49 million visitor arrivals, representing a 9% increase from the previous year. Similarly, MICE revenue increased to USD 94.7 million, with 165 international and regional events attracting more than 61,000 delegates (RDB, 2026). This growth reflects the increasing attractiveness of Rwanda as a tourism and business destination and raises expectations for accommodation establishments to provide reliable, hygienic, and high-quality services.

The relationship between service quality and hotel performance is also relevant to the Rwandan hospitality sector. A study of service delivery in four- and five-star hotels in Kigali, involving establishments including Serena Hotel, Marriott Hotel, and Park Inn by Radisson, examined the relationship between service quality, guest expectations, satisfaction, responsiveness, and service delivery (Quality Performance and Delivery of Services in the Four- and Five-Star Hotel Industry in Rwanda, 2022). Such evidence underscores the importance of examining service delivery within the hotel industry of the country. As Rwanda continues to promote high-value tourism, conference tourism, wildlife experiences, and other specialized tourism products, hotels are expected to uphold standards that meet the expectations of an increasingly diverse base of domestic and international guests. In this context, cleanliness standards are particularly important because they

influence the physical quality of accommodation facilities, guest confidence, customer satisfaction, and the reputation of hotel establishments.

The relevance of cleanliness standards is particularly evident in hotels operating in different tourism and hospitality environments within Rwanda. Kigali Serena Hotel operates in Kigali, a major commercial and conference tourism destination where accommodation establishments serve business travellers, conference delegates, government representatives, and international visitors. Musanze Classic Resort Lodge operates in Musanze, a destination associated with nature-based tourism and with visitors seeking accommodation linked to the tourism attractions of the region. While the two establishments operate in different tourism contexts, both are expected to maintain appropriate cleanliness and hygiene standards to meet guest expectations and sustain service quality.

The importance of maintaining these standards is consistent with the SERVQUAL model, which identifies tangibles and reliability as important dimensions of perceived service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The tangibles dimension relates to the physical appearance and condition of facilities, equipment, and personnel, while reliability concerns the consistent delivery of promised services. In hotel accommodation, these dimensions are reflected in clean guest rooms, hygienic bathrooms, fresh bedding, well-maintained linen, orderly corridors, and properly maintained public facilities. Previous research has established that these physical and operational attributes influence guests' evaluations of hotel experiences (Musa et al., 2022; Rahimi et al., 2022; Wąsowicz-Zaborek, 2025). The maintenance of such standards requires established housekeeping procedures, competent personnel, effective supervision, and adequate cleaning resources. Differences in the implementation and monitoring of these practices may influence guests' perceptions of service quality and their overall evaluation of hotel performance.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Tourism and hospitality have grown in importance in Rwanda; however, the literature reviewed for this study provides comparatively limited context-specific empirical evidence on the relationship between cleanliness standards and hotel performance, particularly through a comparative assessment of hotels operating in different tourism environments. Existing studies have largely examined broader dimensions of hotel service quality, customer satisfaction, employee competence, and housekeeping efficiency (Were & Maranga, 2022; Tavitiyaman et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2024; Dahlan et al., 2025), without sufficiently establishing how the implementation and consistency of cleanliness standards relate to hotel performance in selected Rwandan establishments. Moreover, the supporting roles of staff competence, supervision, and resource utilization in maintaining cleanliness standards require further examination within the local hospitality context. This gap necessitates empirical research that establishes the contribution of cleanliness standards to hotel performance while considering the operational factors that support their effective implementation.

In light of this gap, the present study assesses the effect of cleanliness standards on hotel performance, focusing on Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge in Rwanda. Specifically, the study examines how the implementation of cleanliness standards relates to hotel performance, while considering staff competence, supervision, and resource utilization as important supporting aspects of housekeeping operations. By comparing the two selected establishments, the study seeks to generate context-specific evidence on the contribution of

effective cleanliness practices to service quality, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and overall hotel performance. The findings are expected to provide useful guidance to hotel managers, housekeeping supervisors, and hospitality practitioners in strengthening cleaning procedures, improving staff competencies, enhancing supervisory practices, and ensuring the effective utilization of housekeeping resources to sustain high cleanliness standards and improve hotel performance.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study is anchored on the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which conceptualizes service quality as the gap between customer expectations and perceptions of the service received. The model identifies five dimensions, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, through which customers evaluate service encounters. Within the hotel context, the tangibles dimension captures the physical evidence of service, including the condition of guest rooms, bathrooms, linen, furnishings, and public areas, while reliability reflects the capacity of the hotel to deliver the promised standard of cleanliness accurately and consistently. Since guests observe cleanliness directly and repeatedly during their stay, cleanliness standards offer one of the most visible indicators through which these two dimensions are judged.

The SERVQUAL perspective is complemented by the expectation disconfirmation paradigm advanced by Oliver (1980), which explains satisfaction as the outcome of comparing perceived performance with prior expectations. Guests arrive at hotels with established expectations regarding hygiene and comfort, and the degree to which housekeeping performance confirms or exceeds these expectations shapes their satisfaction and subsequent intentions. The resource-based view further holds that firms attain superior performance when they possess and effectively deploy valuable resources and capabilities (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). From this perspective, competent housekeeping personnel, effective supervisory systems, and well-managed cleaning materials constitute internal resources that enable hotels to sustain consistent cleanliness and, consequently, stronger performance.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical studies have consistently linked cleanliness to guest evaluations of hotel services. Singgalen (2024) examined perceived cleanliness, location, service, and value as determinants of hotel customer satisfaction, while Yousaf and Kim (2023) analysed the textual content of online hotel reviews to establish whether the COVID-19 pandemic changed guest preferences for hygiene-related service attributes as satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Ahmad (2024) similarly examined the factors influencing housekeeping services and practices in relation to customer satisfaction. Collectively, these studies position cleanliness as a central attribute of the accommodation product and indicate that hygiene-related shortcomings are readily reflected in guest evaluations and online reputation.

A related stream of research has examined the procedures and supervisory arrangements through which cleanliness standards are implemented. Husaini and Lubis (2024) investigated the role of supervisors and standard operating procedures for cleaning rooms in improving the performance of housekeeping employees at Hotel Grand Mercure Medan, while Samura and Octavia (2026)

examined the contribution of room attendants and room cleaning standard operating procedures to employee performance in the housekeeping department. Agustiad et al. (2024) further assessed the fulfilment of room cleaning time standards in relation to room attendant performance. Beyond procedures, Chan et al. (2024) demonstrated that supportive and abusive supervision produce distinct effects on hotel employees, which suggests that the quality of supervision shapes how consistently housekeeping staff apply established standards.

Staff competence and training constitute a further determinant of housekeeping quality. Promnila et al. (2024) identified the competency structure of hotel employees in Thailand following the COVID-19 pandemic, and Thanapiboonpong and Nilgumheang (2024) examined the competency of service staff as a determinant of hotel service quality. Hidajat and Mansur (2024) proposed a training approach for enhancing housekeeping workforce competency, while Waqanimaravu and Arasanmi (2020) and Lee and Bae (2023) linked employee training to service quality and job performance in hotel settings. These studies suggest that cleanliness outcomes depend on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of housekeeping personnel as much as on the existence of written standards.

With respect to the outcome variable, Sampaio et al. (2025), through a systematic and bibliometric review, observed that hotel business performance extends beyond financial metrics to encompass customer, operational, and service-related outcomes. Ochansiri et al. (2024) similarly examined the factors affecting hotel operation management and proposed a framework for measuring back-of-house efficiency, an area in which housekeeping operations are central. The reviewed literature therefore establishes cleanliness as an important service attribute, yet much of it relies on online review data or examines establishments outside Africa. Limited evidence exists on how cleanliness standards relate to hotel performance across contrasting tourism contexts in Rwanda, which constitutes the gap addressed by the present study.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, complemented by a comparative multiple-case-study dimension. The quantitative approach enabled the measurement of respondents' perceptions of cleanliness standards and hotel performance, while the qualitative approach provided in-depth explanations from employees, supervisors, and managers regarding housekeeping practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The comparative case-study dimension allowed the two hotels to be examined within their distinct tourism contexts while applying the same instruments and analytical procedures (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Rwanda and focused on Kigali Serena Hotel in Kigali City and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge in Musanze District. Kigali Serena Hotel serves a predominantly business, conference, and international clientele in the capital city, whereas Musanze Classic Resort Lodge serves visitors drawn to the nature-based tourism attractions of the Northern Province. The selection of the two establishments therefore enabled cleanliness practices to be examined across contrasting urban and nature-based hospitality settings.

3.3 Target Population

The target population comprised individuals who were directly involved in, or affected by, housekeeping operations and their outcomes. These included hotel guests, housekeeping employees, supervisors, and managers of Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The study targeted a population of 465 individuals from Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge. A sample of 100 respondents was selected on the basis of feasibility, accessibility, and the need to adequately represent the two hotels and their respective respondent categories. The sample was deliberately balanced to facilitate comparative analysis between the two establishments rather than proportionally allocated according to their population sizes. Purposive sampling was used to select employees, supervisors, and management representatives with direct knowledge of housekeeping operations, while convenience sampling was employed to select hotel guests who were available and willing to participate during the data collection period (Etikan et al., 2016). A total of 95 valid responses were used in the quantitative analysis.

3.5 Research Instruments

The study used two principal research instruments: a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The structured questionnaire was administered to hotel guests and measured cleanliness standards and hotel performance on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The semi-structured interview guide was administered to employees, supervisors, and managers to obtain detailed accounts of housekeeping procedures, supervision, and resource utilization. Questionnaire reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), while validity was established through expert review and alignment of the items with the study objective and the relevant SERVQUAL dimensions.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' perceptions, while Pearson correlation and simple linear regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between cleanliness standards and hotel performance. Qualitative data from the interviews were analysed thematically, and the emerging themes were integrated with the quantitative results to strengthen the interpretation of the findings.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Gender of Respondents

This section presents the gender distribution of the respondents who participated in the study. It indicates the representation of male and female respondents, thereby providing an overview of the gender composition and supporting an assessment of whether the sample adequately captured diverse respondent perspectives. The results are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	52	54.7
Female	43	45.3
Total	**95**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data (2026)

The findings in Table 1 indicate that male respondents constituted 54.7% of the sample, while females accounted for 45.3%. The relatively balanced representation suggests that the findings incorporate the perspectives of both male and female respondents. This balance strengthens the representativeness of views concerning housekeeping operations and hotel performance.

4.2 Findings on Hotel Performance

Hotel performance was assessed using six indicators, each measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' perceptions, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Hotel Performance

Hotel performance indicator	SD n (%)	D n (%)	N n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Services meet guests' expectations	3(3.2)	5(5.3)	10(10.5)	43(45.3)	34(35.8)	4.05	0.94
Guests are generally satisfied with services	2 (2.1)	6 (6.3)	11(11.6)	42 (44.2)	34 (35.8)	4.05	0.93
Hotel provides consistent and reliable services	3 (3.2)	7 (7.4)	12(12.6)	41 (43.2)	32 (33.7)	3.97	0.98
Hotel operations are efficient and well-coordinated	4 (4.2)	8 (8.4)	13(13.7)	40 (42.1)	30 (31.6)	3.89	1.03
Hotel maintains a high standard of service quality	2 (2.1)	5 (5.3)	9 (9.5)	43 (45.3)	36 (37.9)	4.12	0.89
Housekeeping contributes positively to overall hotel experience	2 (2.1)	4 (4.2)	8 (8.4)	42 (44.2)	39 (41.1)	4.18	0.87
Overall	**16(2.8)**	**35(6.1)**	**63(11.1)**	**251(44.0)**	**205(36.0)**	**4.04**	**0.94**

Source: Primary data (2026)

The findings in Table 2 indicate that respondents generally perceived hotel performance positively. The overall mean of 4.04 reflects a high level of agreement with the hotel performance indicators. In particular, 85.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that housekeeping contributes positively to the overall hotel experience, producing the highest mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.87). This finding highlights the importance of housekeeping activities in shaping guests' overall experience of hotel services. Similarly, 83.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the selected hotels maintained a high standard of service quality, with a mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.89). This suggests that respondents generally regarded the hotels as maintaining satisfactory service

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standards. With regard to whether hotel services meet guests' expectations, 81.1% agreed or strongly agreed, resulting in a mean of 4.05 (SD = 0.94). An identical mean of 4.05 was obtained for general guest satisfaction. These results indicate that the selected hotels were perceived to provide services that broadly met guest expectations.

The lowest mean was recorded for operational efficiency and coordination (M = 3.89, SD = 1.03). While the result remains above the neutral point of 3.00, the relatively higher standard deviation indicates greater variation in respondents' perceptions. The interviews further revealed that housekeeping contributes to hotel performance through its relationship with operational efficiency, guest satisfaction, reputation, and repeat business. Managers indicated that housekeeping is not merely a support function but an important operational department that affects the overall service experience. One participant explained: "Housekeeping affects several areas at the same time. It influences room readiness, guest satisfaction, complaints, reputation and ultimately whether guests want to come back." The convergence between quantitative and qualitative findings suggests that housekeeping operations represent an important contributor to hotel performance in the selected hotels.

4.3 Findings on the Effect of Cleanliness Standards on Hotel Performance

Respondents assessed statements relating to room cleanliness, bathroom hygiene, linen quality, cleaning procedures, and adherence to established cleanliness standards. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Cleanliness Standards and Hotel Performance

Cleanliness standards indicator	SD n (%)	D n (%)	N n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Guest rooms are cleaned according to established standards	2(2.1)	5(5.3)	8 (8.4)	43(45.3)	37(38.9)	4.14	0.88
Bathrooms are thoroughly cleaned and hygienically maintained	2 (2.1)	4 (4.2)	9 (9.5)	42 (44.2)	38 (40.0)	4.16	0.87
Bed linen and towels are clean and properly maintained	1 (1.1)	4 (4.2)	7 (7.4)	44 (46.3)	39 (41.1)	4.22	0.82
Housekeeping staff follow established cleaning procedures	2 (2.1)	5 (5.3)	10(10.5)	43 (45.3)	35 (36.8)	4.09	0.91
Cleaning materials and equipment are adequately used	3 (3.2)	6 (6.3)	11(11.6)	42 (44.2)	33 (34.7)	4.01	1.00
Cleanliness is consistently maintained throughout guest areas	2 (2.1)	5 (5.3)	9 (9.5)	44 (46.3)	35 (36.8)	4.10	0.90
Overall	**12(2.1)**	**29(5.1)**	**54 (9.5)**	**258(45.3)**	**217(38.1)**	**4.12**	**0.90**

Source: Primary data (2026)

The findings in Table 3 indicate that respondents generally perceived cleanliness standards in the selected hotels positively, as reflected by the overall mean of 4.12. The highest-rated indicator was

that bed linen and towels are clean and properly maintained, with a mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.82). In total, 87.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that linen and towel hygiene was perceived as one of the strongest aspects of housekeeping operations. Similarly, 84.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that bathrooms were thoroughly cleaned and hygienically maintained, producing a mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.87). This finding demonstrates the importance respondents attached to bathroom hygiene as part of the overall cleanliness experience. The statement that guest rooms are cleaned according to established standards recorded a mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.88), with 84.2% of respondents indicating agreement or strong agreement. This suggests that adherence to cleaning standards was largely perceived as satisfactory.

The lowest-rated indicator concerned the adequate use of cleaning materials and equipment, which recorded a mean of 4.01 (SD = 1.00). Although the mean remains above the neutral point, the comparatively higher standard deviation suggests greater variation in respondents' perceptions. Such variation may reflect differences in the availability or effective utilization of housekeeping resources between departments or hotels. These findings are consistent with Dahlan et al. (2025), who found that cleanliness was an important determinant of customer satisfaction in four-star hotels in Malaysia. It also corresponds with Yang et al. (2024), whose analysis of a large sample of online hotel reviews demonstrated the importance guests attach to hotel cleanliness.

The present study, however, extends this evidence by examining cleanliness as a specific housekeeping dimension within two different hotel contexts in Rwanda. Interview participants indicated that the selected hotels had established procedures for cleaning rooms, bathrooms, linen, and public areas. One housekeeping supervisor stated: "Every room has to pass through a standard cleaning procedure before it is released to the guest. The room attendant checks the room, bathroom, linen and amenities before reporting it as ready." Another manager explained: "Cleanliness is not based on individual preference. We have procedures and standards that employees are expected to follow every day." These findings support the quantitative results, particularly the high rating for room cleanliness and maintenance. The interviews further suggest that standardized procedures contribute to consistency in cleanliness across different areas of the hotels.

One manager observed: "The biggest expectation from guests is consistency. They expect the room to be clean every time, not only when there is an inspection." The qualitative evidence indicates that consistency is supported by routine cleaning procedures and continuous monitoring. The interviews further revealed that supervisors played an important role in monitoring cleanliness standards. A supervisor stated: "Supervisors inspect rooms before they are released, and when a guest reports a cleanliness problem, we respond immediately and check what went wrong." This finding indicates that cleanliness standards were supported not only by cleaning activities but also by supervision and quality-control mechanisms. The relationship between cleanliness standards and hotel performance was examined using Pearson correlation analysis, and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Cleanliness Standards and Hotel Performance

Variables	Cleanliness Standards	Hotel Performance
Cleanliness Standards	1.000	.580**
Hotel Performance	.580**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	<.001
N	95	95

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data (2026)

The results in Table 4 indicate a moderate positive relationship between cleanliness standards and hotel performance ($r = .580$, $p < .001$). This implies that better adherence to cleanliness standards is associated with higher levels of hotel performance. Since the p-value is below the .05 significance level, the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis that cleanliness standards have no significant relationship with hotel performance is rejected. A simple linear regression analysis was further conducted to establish the extent to which cleanliness standards predict hotel performance. The model summary is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Model Summary for Cleanliness Standards and Hotel Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.580	.336	.329	.531

Source: Primary data (2026)

The model produced an R value of .580, indicating a moderate positive relationship between cleanliness standards and hotel performance. The R^2 value of .336 indicates that cleanliness standards explain approximately 33.6% of the variation in hotel performance. The remaining 66.4% may be attributable to other factors not included in this simple regression model. The statistical significance of the regression model was tested using analysis of variance, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: ANOVA for Cleanliness Standards and Hotel Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.31	1	13.31	47.18	<.001
Residual	26.33	93	.283		
Total	**39.64**	**94**			

Source: Primary data (2026)

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 93) = 47.18$, $p < .001$. This result demonstrates that cleanliness standards significantly predict hotel performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that cleanliness standards have a statistically significant effect on hotel performance. The regression coefficients, which indicate the magnitude and direction of the effect of cleanliness standards on hotel performance, are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients for Cleanliness Standards and Hotel Performance

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.72	.34	—	5.06	<.001
Cleanliness Standards	.56	.081	.580	6.87	<.001

Dependent Variable: Hotel Performance

Source: Primary data (2026)

The regression results show that cleanliness standards had a positive and statistically significant effect on hotel performance ($\beta = .580$, $p < .001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = .56$) indicates that a one-unit increase in cleanliness standards is associated with an estimated 0.56-unit increase in hotel performance. The regression equation is: Hotel Performance = 1.72 + 0.56(Cleanliness Standards). The findings, therefore, provide statistical evidence that cleanliness standards significantly influence hotel performance in the selected hotels.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The objective of the study was to assess the effect of cleanliness standards on hotel performance at Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge. The descriptive findings showed that respondents rated cleanliness standards positively, with an overall mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.90). Clean and properly maintained bed linen and towels recorded the highest mean (M = 4.22), followed by bathroom hygiene (M = 4.16), cleaning of guest rooms according to established standards (M = 4.14), and consistency of cleanliness throughout guest areas (M = 4.10). These results indicate that respondents generally perceived the cleanliness standards of the two hotels favorably. The correlation analysis established a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between cleanliness standards and hotel performance ($r = .580$, $p < .001$). The regression results further indicated that cleanliness standards explained 33.6% of the variation in hotel performance, with a positive and statistically significant coefficient ($\beta = .580$, $p < .001$). This implies that higher cleanliness standards were associated with better hotel performance and that cleanliness was a significant predictor within the study context. The qualitative findings revealed that managers and supervisors emphasized the importance of standardized cleaning procedures, consistency in housekeeping activities, and regular quality-control inspections. These practices were considered important for maintaining cleanliness in guest rooms, bathrooms, linen, towels, corridors, and public areas. The findings also highlighted the role of staff training and supervision in ensuring that established cleaning standards are consistently followed.

These findings are consistent with the SERVQUAL model, which identifies tangibles and reliability as central dimensions of perceived service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Clean rooms, hygienic bathrooms, and well-maintained linen represent the tangible evidence through which guests judge accommodation quality, while the consistent application of cleaning procedures reflects the reliability of service delivery. The results also correspond with Singgalen (2024) and Dahlan et al. (2025), who identified cleanliness as an important determinant of hotel customer satisfaction, and with Husaini and Lubis (2024), who examined the role of supervisors and standard operating procedures in housekeeping performance. The present study extends this evidence by demonstrating the relationship within two contrasting Rwandan hotel contexts. Overall, the findings indicate that cleanliness standards are an important operational factor associated with hotel performance at Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge. While cleanliness accounted for 33.6% of the variation in hotel performance, the remaining variation suggests that other operational and service-related factors also contribute to the performance of the two hotels.

5.0 Conclusions of the Study

The study concludes that cleanliness standards are positively and significantly associated with hotel performance at Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge ($r = .580$, $p < .001$). The findings show that maintaining clean bed linen and towels, hygienic bathrooms, and well-maintained guest rooms contributes to improved guest experiences and overall hotel performance. Nevertheless, the relatively lower rating of cleaning materials and equipment highlights the need for better resource management to ensure consistent cleanliness. The study further concludes that effective cleanliness management requires consistent housekeeping procedures, regular inspections, timely identification of cleaning deficiencies, and adequate provision and utilization of cleaning materials and equipment. Strengthening these practices is essential for maintaining hygiene standards, enhancing customer satisfaction, improving service quality, and supporting overall hotel performance in the two establishments.

6.0 Recommendations of the Study

The study recommends that the management of Kigali Serena Hotel and Musanze Classic Resort Lodge ensure the consistent availability of cleaning materials, equipment, linen, and towels to support effective housekeeping operations. Housekeeping departments should maintain regular cleaning schedules, conduct routine inspections, and promptly address any identified hygiene deficiencies in guest rooms, bathrooms, corridors, and public areas. Regular staff training and effective supervision should also be prioritized to ensure that cleanliness standards are consistently maintained. Hotel management should also strengthen housekeeping operations through continuous staff development, proper supervision, and efficient use of available resources to improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and overall hotel performance. Future studies may examine other factors influencing hotel performance, such as maintenance quality, service responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency, using larger samples from additional hotels across Rwanda.

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