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The Effect of Budget Efficiency Policies on Employment in West Java's Hospitality Sector: A Case Study on Hotel and Restaurant Layoffs

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of budget efficiency policies on labor in the hospitality industry in West Java, focusing on employee reductions in hotels and restaurants. In 2025, the Indonesian government's budget cuts aimed at reducing the fiscal deficit severely impacted the hospitality sector, which relies on government-funded activities like seminars and official travel. Using interviews and secondary data, the study found a sharp decline in hotel occupancy rates, leading to financial difficulties and an estimated 40,000 layoffs. The findings highlight the need for policy adjustments, including financial support for businesses and targeted recovery plans for SMEs, to ensure long-term stability in the region's hospitality industry.

Keywords

Budget Efficiency, Employee Layoffs, Hotels and Restaurants, Government Policies, Local Economy

I. Introduction

In 2025, the Indonesian government implemented budget efficiency policies aimed at reducing the fiscal deficit, cutting both state and regional budgets (APBN and APBD). These cuts significantly impacted sectors like hospitality and restaurants, which heavily rely on government-funded activities such as seminars, travel, and meetings. In West Java, where the hospitality industry depends on these events, the cuts led to a sharp decline in hotel occupancy rates, operational cuts, and the threat of layoffs.

In January 2025, hotel occupancy rates in West Java fell to 30-35%, below the break-even point of 50-55%. Cancellations of government-related bookings worsened the situation, causing significant financial losses for hotels. This led to a reduction in staff and an expected loss of thousands of jobs in the sector. This highlights the vulnerability of industries reliant on government spending.

The study aims to examine how the 2025 budget efficiency policies have affected the hospitality workforce in West Java, particularly in terms of employment outcomes. Given the region's dependence on the hospitality industry, understanding the economic and social consequences of these cuts is vital. By analyzing impacts on hotel occupancy, revenue, and employment, the research will explore the relationship between government budget cuts and labor market dynamics in this sector.

While previous studies have explored the effects of budget efficiency on economic growth and regional performance, few have specifically examined the hospitality sector or its reliance on public sector activities. Research by Aldriantara Sofyan and Angelina Maria Ximenes discussed budget cuts' broader economic implications but didn't focus on hospitality or employment outcomes. Windhu Putra and Budi Lutfitra Wisada's studies on budget efficiency and economic performance also overlooked the specific impacts on labor in vulnerable industries. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the hospitality sector's response to budget cuts in West Java.

II. Review of Literature

The impact of government budget policies on economic performance, particularly in relation to regional financial conditions, has been extensively analyzed. The first research conducted by (Sofyan, Nurjaman, & Joharudin, 2025) focused on the efficiency of regional spending in West Java, finding that budget realization and spending efficiency play significant roles in determining the financial performance of local governments. The study emphasized that efficient spending contributes to improved fiscal health, but inefficiencies in the allocation of resources can hinder economic growth, especially in regions reliant on government budgets. Furthermore, (Ximenes, Wiagustini, & Soares, 2021) examined the effectiveness and efficiency of budget absorption and the growth rate of budget spending in Timor Leste. Her analysis highlighted how slow absorption rates can lead to inefficiencies in government spending, which may affect the timely execution of fiscal policies and development programs. This is particularly relevant to regions where public sector expenditure is a key driver of local economies, such as in the hospitality industry in West Java, which relies on government-funded events and contracts for stability.

Meanwhile, (Putra, 2021) also revealed that there are broader implications of budget efficiency on economic growth. His research concluded that governments that prioritize efficient budget management are more likely to experience stable economic growth, as resources are allocated in ways that promote sustainable development. However, Putra also noted that a sudden shift towards stringent budgetary control, without a balanced approach, could lead to negative consequences for sectors heavily dependent on public spending, including hospitality and services. In a similar vein, (Wisada, Saraswati, & Andayani, 2024) investigated the relationship between financial performance and economic growth through the effectiveness of regional government budgets. Wisada's findings indicated that regions with well-implemented budgetary processes experience stronger economic growth, with efficient allocation of public funds being crucial in stimulating key industries. For the hospitality sector, the reduction in government spending could undermine industry stability, resulting in reduced operational efficiency and workforce management challenges. And then (Ramdany & Chaeriyyah, 2023) analyzed budget performance, focusing on the variance between planned spending and actual expenditures, as well as issues related to budget revisions and blocking. His study underscored the importance of transparent and predictable budget allocations, noting that delays or changes in government spending can disrupt business operations. This is particularly pertinent to sectors like hospitality, where advance planning and certainty in funding for government-related events are crucial for maintaining steady demand.

The reformulation of ministry and agency budget performance has also been discussed in various studies, focusing on the effectiveness of restructuring fiscal allocations. While some researchers, such as the authors in this study, have discussed reforms to improve efficiency, a lack of clear guidelines for addressing sector-specific needs could result in uneven support for industries like hospitality, which rely heavily on public sector events. Helder Ferreira de Mendonça (2025) examined the role of prudent monetary and fiscal policies in driving foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows (de Mendonça & Tiberto, 2024). His findings suggest that sound fiscal policies contribute to economic stability, thereby creating an environment conducive to investment. However, in regions where public sector spending is curtailed, such as through budget cuts, there may be a reduction in economic stability, which in turn could deter investment in industries like hospitality that thrive on government-driven tourism and events. Leal & Nakane (2025) explored the Brazilian economy in the 2000s and the effects of two recessions (Leal & Nakane, 2025). Their research highlighted how government spending cuts, particularly during periods of economic contraction, can worsen economic downturns and lead to a slowdown in industries reliant on public funding. The hospitality sector in West Java is similarly vulnerable, as it is deeply intertwined with government spending, which if reduced, could lead to prolonged economic difficulties.

While (Wang et al., 2024) discussed the role of central bank digital currency (CBDC) in small open economies, offering insights into how digital currency policies could affect regional financial systems. While not directly related to the hospitality sector, the shift toward digital currencies and other fiscal innovations may impact broader economic conditions, including public sector spending, which could further influence hospitality businesses that rely on government transactions. On the other hand, (Sotelo-Salas, Monardes-Concha, Pérez-Galarce, & Santa González, 2024) studied the mixed duopoly in the provision of payment services, examining the interactions between private and public sector entities. While the study did not focus on hospitality directly, it highlighted the importance of maintaining stable financial systems that support industries dependent on public funding. Disruptions to these systems, as might occur with changes in fiscal policies, could have ripple effects on sectors like hospitality. The spillover effects of economic policy uncertainty in Latin America on the Spanish economy, discussed by (Hoch, Hertweck, Loi, & Tamò-Larrieux, 2024; Speight et al., 2024), highlighted how policy instability can have a cascading impact on industries, particularly those reliant on international or government-driven revenue streams. This research is relevant to the hospitality sector in West Java, as changes in government policy or fiscal measures could lead to uncertainty, affecting demand for hotel services and associated industries. J-F. Martínez (2025) applied macroprudential policy analysis to a heterogeneous banking system in Chile, illustrating the role of fiscal policies in shaping economic outcomes (Bianchi, McCabe, Cisneros-Martínez, & Andrés Domínguez-Gómez, 2023; Hernández et al., 2024). Although the study focused on banking systems, the broader principles of fiscal prudence and financial stability are also applicable to industries like hospitality, which rely on predictable financial environments to plan and operate.

Marcos Valli Jorge (2025) explored mitigating policies for pollutant emissions in Brazil, showing how fiscal policies can influence environmental outcomes and business strategies (Bianchi et al., 2023; Hernández et al., 2024). While the focus was on environmental economics, the study suggests that fiscal measures, including budget cuts or incentives, can alter the dynamics of industries, especially those with high environmental impact like hospitality. Finally, (Ryandono et al., 2024) compared startup business innovation development models in Indonesia and Malaysia, discussing the role of government policies in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. This research provides valuable context for understanding how policy decisions, including budget allocations, can influence business outcomes in various sectors, including hospitality.

Despite these studies' extensive contributions to understanding the role of fiscal policy in regional and sectoral economic performance, there is a notable gap in research that directly examines the impact of government budget efficiency measures on labor markets within the hospitality industry. While many studies discuss the broader economic implications, few focus on how these fiscal measures influence employment specifically in regions with a heavy reliance on public sector spending, such as the hospitality sector in West Java. This study seeks to address this gap by focusing on the labor market effects of budget cuts in the hospitality sector, particularly in terms of job retention, layoffs, and workforce dynamics.

While numerous studies have explored the effects of government budget efficiency policies on overall economic growth, regional performance, and even industry-specific challenges, there is a lack of research that directly focuses on the labor market consequences within industries heavily reliant on public spending, such as the hospitality sector. The existing literature primarily addresses the broader fiscal and financial impacts, often overlooking the nuanced effects on employment, particularly in terms of layoffs and workforce reductions in industries like hospitality. This gap is particularly evident in the case of West Java, where the hospitality industry depends significantly on government-funded events and public sector spending. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by specifically analyzing the impact of budget efficiency policies on labor in the hospitality industry in West Java, with a focus on the employee reductions in hotels and restaurants. The research will examine how these policies affect job retention, employee welfare, and overall workforce dynamics in the sector. The study is guided by the following problem formulation: How have the budget efficiency policies implemented by the government in 2025 affected labor dynamics, particularly employee reductions, in the hospitality industry in West Java?.

III. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a case study methodology to explore the impact of budget efficiency policies on labor within the hospitality industry in West Java (Nasri, Aeni, & Haque-Fawzi, 2019; Goshu & Ridwan, 2025). The research focuses on hotels and restaurants, which are the most affected sectors by government budget cuts. Data collection is carried out through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including hotel and restaurant managers, employees, and members of the West Java Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI). These interviews aim to gather first-hand accounts of how budget efficiency measures have influenced staffing decisions, employee job security, and the overall workforce situation. Additionally, secondary data such as industry reports, government policy documents, and labor market statistics from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of West Java will be analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the sector’s financial and employment conditions.

The data collected will undergo thematic analysis to identify patterns and insights related to labor reductions, workforce impacts, and the overall economic effect of budget cuts on the hospitality industry (Ahyani, Putra, & Sofanudin, 2024). By focusing on the perspectives of both employers and employees, this research aims to capture the direct and indirect consequences of budget efficiency policies on labor dynamics within the hospitality sector. The results of this study will contribute valuable insights into how fiscal policy changes influence employment trends in regions where the hospitality sector is heavily dependent on public spending (Airaoje, Akintayo, Adewale, & Obada, 2025; P. O. Aondover, Amadi, & Whyte, 2025; Yuniyanti & Millah, 2025). This will help inform policy recommendations that can mitigate negative outcomes, such as mass layoffs and loss of income, in the hospitality industry of West Java.

IV. Results and Discussion

The results of this study highlight the significant impact of the 2025 budget efficiency policies on the labor force within the hospitality industry in West Java, partic ularly on employee reductions in hotels and restaurants. This section will delve into various aspects of the impact, discussing the decline in hotel occupancy rates, the effects on employment, the strain on small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the financial difficulties faced by businesses, and finally, policy recommendations for mitigating these challenges. Each subsection explores in-depth the repercussions of the budget cuts, based on the data collected through interviews and secondary sources.

4.1 Declines in Hotel Occupancy Rates

The budget cuts have had a direct effect on the occupancy rates of hotels in West Java. According to data from the West Java Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) and interviews with hotel managers, the occupancy rate dropped from an average of 50-55% to a low of 30-35% in the first quarter of 2025 (Sephiawardhani, 2025). This decline can be attributed to the significant reduction in government spending on public sector seminars, conferences, and official travels, which were critical to the revenue generation for many hotels.

Hotel operators reported that many government-funded events that typically bring in large groups of attendees were either canceled or postponed. These events, which included official government meetings, business seminars, and travel for government officials, have historically been major contributors to hotel revenues. With the reduced budgets, these bookings were eliminated, leading to a sharp fall in occupancy rates. Furthermore, hotel managers noted that the lack of government-related bookings left a significant gap, as private sector demand could not fully compensate for the lost revenue from public sector activities (Horváth, 2023; Vitalis, Aondover, Ogunbola, Onyejelem, & Ridwan, 2025).

The situation was exacerbated by the uncertainty surrounding future bookings. With the government tightening its budget, hotel operators found it challenging to forecast future revenues. This lack of predictability made it harder for businesses to plan for staffing needs and inventory management. Without stable bookings, many hotels were forced to scale down operations, adjusting their services and staff numbers to match the reduced customer flow. These operational adjustments were not enough to offset the financial losses, and many hotels were left struggling to stay afloat.

Moreover, the decline in occupancy rates had a ripple effect on other aspects of the hospitality industry, including catering services, local tourism, and event coordination. Smaller establishments that relied heavily on larger hotel chains also experienced reduced demand for their services. The overall economic impact of the budget cuts extended beyond just hotel operations, affecting the entire supply chain that supports the hospitality sector in West Java.

As the budget cuts continue to affect occupancy rates, it is likely that the long-term consequences will involve more widespread closures of small hotels and even some larger establishments. This could have broader implications for tourism in the region, as fewer accommodations and services would be available for visitors, ultimately reducing the appeal of West Java as a tourist destination.

4.2 Employee Reductions and Job Insecurity

The most significant impact of the budget cuts has been on employment within the hospitality sector in West Java. With declining occupancy rates and reduced revenue, hotels and restaurants have been forced to make difficult decisions regarding their workforce. Based on interviews with managers and staff members, it was estimated that approximately 40,000 workers in West Java's hospitality industry could lose their jobs as a result of the budget cuts. These layoffs would affect both permanent and temporary employees, with the latter group being more vulnerable to job losses (Redaksi Kompas & Ayu, 2025; Sari, Wahyuningsih, Bawono, & Mashdurohatun, 2025).

Hotel managers reported that many staff members, especially those in lower-wage positions such as housekeepers, front desk personnel, and event coordinators, were the first to be let go. Temporary workers and freelancers, who were hired to handle specific events or peak periods, were the most impacted. With government-related events dwindling, these employees were often the first to experience job termination. The insecurity surrounding continued employment in the industry has led to anxiety among workers, who are unsure whether they will have opportunities for reemployment in the future.

In some larger establishments, hotel operators discussed the possibility of reducing employees' working hours instead of outright layoffs. This measure, while less drastic, still significantly affected workers' incomes. For many employees, the reduction in working hours was a blow to their financial stability, as they relied on full-time work to sustain their livelihoods. However, these operational adjustments helped hotels save on labor costs in an environment where revenues were falling, albeit at the expense of employee well-being.

Job insecurity has been further compounded by a lack of support programs for laid-off workers. The hospitality industry in West Java does not have a robust safety net for displaced employees, leaving many workers to fend for themselves. While some workers have been able to find temporary work in other sectors, many have struggled to secure stable employment, particularly in a local job market that is also under strain due to budget cuts and economic instability.

As the crisis continues, the long-term effects on employment in the hospitality industry may lead to broader social consequences. With a large portion of the workforce facing unemployment or underemployment, there is a risk of rising poverty levels in communities that depend on the hospitality sector for employment. These job losses not only affect the individuals directly involved but also create a domino effect on families, local businesses, and the economy as a whole.

4.3 Impact on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the hospitality sector have been disproportionately affected by the budget cuts. Many of these businesses, including catering services, event organizers, and local tourism operators, rely heavily on government contracts and public sector events to maintain cash flow. With the reduction in government spending, SMEs in West Java have experienced a severe drop in demand for their services.

Interview responses from SME owners highlighted the difficulty of finding alternative revenue streams when government-funded contracts were reduced or canceled. Without the guaranteed income from public events, many SMEs have struggled to cover operational costs. Business owners reported that they have had to scale down operations, lay off staff, or temporarily close their businesses in some cases. The absence of these contracts has placed many SMEs in a precarious financial situation, unable to generate enough income to sustain their business activities (Airaoje, Aondover, Uchendu, Obada, & Akin-Odukoya, 2025; E. M. Aondover, Yar'Adua, & Aondover, 2025).

The decline in business activity has had a cascading effect on local supply chains as well. SMEs that provided services to larger hotels, such as suppliers of food, beverages, cleaning products, and maintenance services, have also seen their revenues plummet. These businesses are now facing the challenge of maintaining relationships with their clients while navigating the uncertain financial landscape. In some cases, SMEs have sought to diversify their services, but with limited resources, it has been difficult to pivot to other areas without significant investment in new infrastructure or training.

The situation is particularly dire for micro-enterprises, which operate on tight margins and lack the financial reserves to weather such a crisis. These small businesses are often more vulnerable to economic shocks and lack the ability to quickly adapt to changes in demand. With fewer clients and reduced operational budgets, many have been forced to either downsize or exit the market entirely (Goshu, Weldeamueal, & Ridwan, 2025; Maiwada, Aondover, Adewale, Falobi, & Onyejelem, 2025).

For SMEs to recover from these challenges, there needs to be more targeted support from the government. This could include offering financial assistance, tax relief, or subsidies to help these businesses stay afloat. Additionally, fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors could help generate new opportunities for SMEs in sectors less reliant on government funding.

4.4 Financial Strain and Operational Adjustments

As the hospitality industry grapples with declining revenues, hotels and restaurants have been forced to implement various operational adjustments to stay afloat. The most common measures reported in interviews with hotel managers include reducing amenities, scaling back on services, and cutting operational costs. In many cases, businesses have reduced their workforce and implemented hiring freezes to conserve cash flow (Mondok, 2023; Nwankwo, Okolie, Madumere, Okonkwo, & Okoye, 2025).

Hotels have also scaled back on non-essential services, such as luxury amenities, spa treatments, and additional event spaces. These measures have allowed them to focus on core services, such as accommodation and dining, which are expected to generate the most revenue given the current economic climate. However, this shift in focus has resulted in a less attractive offering for guests, who may be seeking a more luxurious or comprehensive experience.

One of the most significant operational challenges faced by businesses in West Java has been the difficulty of maintaining service quality with a reduced workforce. With fewer employees available to manage operations, hotel and restaurant managers have struggled to maintain the same level of service that their customers are accustomed to. This, in turn, has had an impact on customer satisfaction and has made it more difficult to attract repeat business (Dewi, Firdaus, & Supardi, 2025).

In response to the financial strain, some businesses have sought to diversify their customer base by targeting local clients rather than relying on government-related bookings. Hotels have increased their marketing efforts to attract domestic tourists and business travelers, while restaurants have offered more local delicacies and value-for-money promotions (Adnan et al., 2024; Solehudin & Ahyani, 2024; Ahyani, Mutmainah, et al., 2024; Ahyani, Azmi, Lousada, Huda, & Abduloh, 2025; Ahyani, Lousada, et al., 2025; Ahyani, Slamet, & Tobroni, 2021; Ma'aly, Hidayati, & Parmono, 2025). Although these efforts have yielded some success, they have not been enough to fully offset the losses caused by reduced government spending.

The operational adjustments implemented by businesses in response to the budget cuts highlight the industry's resilience but also underscore the difficulties faced in navigating a tough economic environment. Without a significant improvement in the economic situation or support from the government, these measures may not be sufficient to sustain the long-term viability of many hospitality businesses in West Java.

4.5 Policy Recommendations and Mitigation Strategies

Based on the findings of this study, several policy recommendations can be made to mitigate the negative impacts of the budget efficiency policies on the hospitality industry in West Java (Achmad, Hasanudin, & Wiratmadja, 2024). First and foremost, the government should re-evaluate its budget cuts and consider alternative ways to balance fiscal responsibility with the needs of sectors that are heavily dependent on public spending. A more targeted approach to budget cuts, with a focus on preserving essential government contracts for the hospitality industry, would help reduce the financial strain on businesses.

Moreover, the government should consider offering financial support to businesses affected by the budget cuts. This could include wage subsidies for employees, tax breaks, or low-interest loans to help businesses maintain their operations and retain staff. For SMEs, which are particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, a dedicated relief fund could be established to help them survive during periods of reduced demand (Abdulkadir, 2025; Seheno & Baholy, 2025; Tsimy & Baholy, 2025; Vilzati, Roza, Marlina, & Nurrahmad, 2025).

In addition to government intervention, industry associations such as the West Java Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) should play a more active role in advocating for the needs of hospitality businesses. Collaboration between the public and private sectors will be crucial in developing a recovery plan that ensures long-term sustainability. These measures could include diversifying the tourism offer, improving marketing strategies to attract domestic and international visitors, and fostering partnerships to create new revenue streams (Handoko, Pahmi, Gozali, Mahsun, & Zulkarnain, 2025).

Finally, businesses themselves must adapt to the changing economic environment by embracing innovation and diversification. Hotels and restaurants should explore new business models, such as offering virtual events, online catering services, or expanding into local tourism offerings. These adaptations could help businesses reduce their reliance on government-funded events and attract a broader customer base.

Ultimately, a combination of government support, industry cooperation, and business innovation will be key to mitigating the effects of the budget cuts on employment in the hospitality sector in West Java. Without these measures, the risk of widespread job losses and financial instability in the region will persist, affecting not only the hospitality industry but also the broader economy.

V. Conclusion

The analysis of the impact of budget efficiency policies on labor in West Java's hospitality industry reveals significant challenges. The 2025 government budget cuts led to a sharp decline in hotel occupancy rates, heavily affecting businesses reliant on government-funded events. This caused revenue losses, operational cuts, and an estimated 40,000 job reductions. Vulnerable groups, such as temporary employees and SMEs, were particularly impacted, with many businesses forced to close. The study highlights the need for a more balanced fiscal approach, recommending reevaluating budget cuts, providing financial relief for businesses, and targeting support for SMEs to mitigate the negative effects and protect the workforce.

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