

Analysis of the Performance of Ship Agencies in Supporting Operational Efficiency at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara

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ABSTRACT

Ship agency plays a strategic role in supporting the smooth and efficient operation of vessels at ports. Agencies handle a range of services, from arranging vessel clearance documents to coordinating with port authorities, terminal operators, and other related parties, so the quality of their performance directly affects vessel turnaround time. This study aims to analyze the performance of ship agency services at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Performance was examined in terms of the timeliness of service, the handling of ship documents, and coordination with port stakeholders, with a focus on the operational human resources who deliver these services. The results show that ship agency services still face obstacles, mainly the limited number and competence of operational staff, which lead to administrative delays in ship services, document management, and clearance in and out, as well as less optimal coordination with terminals and ship crews. Therefore, improving human resource competencies and strengthening the coordination system are necessary to enhance service quality sustainably. These findings are expected to serve as input for the company in formulating strategies to improve its ship agency services in the future.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The shipping and maritime logistics industry plays an important role in supporting Indonesia's economy as an archipelagic country. In this chain, ship agents have a vital function as representatives of ship owners in handling operational activities at the port, such as clearance in and out, document management, coordination with port authorities, loading and unloading, and the logistics needs of the ship (Indah Ayu & Rahayu, 2022; Simanjuntak & Ginting, 2024). The fast, precise, and professional performance of ship agents largely determines the efficiency of the port stay and the smoothness of ship operations (Rahman & Deliani, 2025).

Ship agencies often face obstacles such as delays in documents, lack of coordination, non-integrated systems, and limited human resource competencies, which increase dwelling time and operational costs (Purwantono, 2021; Sihombing et al., 2025). Therefore, improving the

quality of human resources, utilizing technology, and strengthening coordination are strategic steps to improve service efficiency (Pahira & Rinaldy, 2023).

PT Bahari Eka Nusantara (BEN), a ship agency company at the Port of Bontang, is responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of commercial ships. The company's efficiency depends highly on professional human resources who have communication skills (including English), good time management, and the ability to coordinate effectively with port stakeholders to achieve optimal operational performance (Ginting & Geofany, 2021). However, in practice, various obstacles often affect the performance of the ship agency, such as administrative delays and suboptimal coordination with related parties.

The competence and job satisfaction of human resources have a significant effect on organizational performance (Aulia & Ali, 2025; Peryuda & Khoiri, 2023), and the same applies to ship agencies. Improving human resource competencies can improve service quality and the operational efficiency of the company (Riyanto et al., 2026). In addition, service strategies for handling ship arrivals and departures also play an important role. Fast and appropriate service can improve service quality, but challenges remain, such as expired ship documents and system constraints that can affect the smooth running of the process (Tanjung et al., 2024). Through an analysis of the performance of ship agencies, it is hoped that solutions and strategies to improve agency services can be found that support overall operational efficiency, so as to accelerate the flow of goods, reduce logistics costs, and increase the competitiveness of national ports.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the performance of ship agency services at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara, to identify the factors that affect the performance of its operational human resources, and to describe the efforts made by the company to overcome these problems.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Approach

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to examine an actual problem in the field by collecting as much data as possible from the subject studied, which is then compiled and analyzed (Annasthasya et al., 2025).

2.2. Location and Research Subjects

The research was conducted at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara, located in Bontang, East Kalimantan. PT Bahari Eka Nusantara (BEN) is a private shipping company engaged in ship agency, providing services for commercial ships at the Port of Bontang. The research subjects included:

- a) the head of operations, who is responsible for ensuring that no administrative errors hinder the berthing or departure of ships;
- b) operational staff and boarding agents, who handle ship clearance documents, port coordination, and services to ships during their port stay; and
- c) administrative staff, who manage ship documents and service records related to agency activities.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out to obtain accurate, factual, and relevant information using the following methods:

- a. Interviews:** question-and-answer sessions were conducted with informants from the operational staff.
- b. Observation:** during the authors' land-based practice (*praktik darat*), observations were made of the operational aspects of ship agency, including the management of port documents, coordination between parties, management of ship schedules, service quality, and the handling of operational obstacles.
- c. Documentation:** company documents related to ship agency activities, such as ship clearance documents and service records, were examined.
- d. Literature study:** previous research and relevant scientific sources were reviewed as a theoretical basis and comparative material related to the performance of ship agencies in supporting operational efficiency.

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The research data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method, which included processing, organizing, sorting, synthesizing, and searching for data patterns, through the following stages:

- a. Data collection:** information was gathered using instruments such as interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and other supporting tools.
- b. Data reduction:** the data were summarized by selecting the most important topics and focusing on data relevant to the issue being investigated.
- c. Data presentation:** the data were presented completely and systematically in the form of brief descriptions, charts, or flowcharts so that they are easy to understand.
- d. Conclusion drawing:** conclusions were drawn as the final stage of the research and verified against the development of findings and the results of data verification.

2.5. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the study used several techniques:

- a. Source triangulation:** data were collected from interviews, observations, and documentation and involved multiple informants from various positions and backgrounds within the company.
- b. Data verification:** the researcher verified interview transcripts and observation notes to ensure that the information collected was accurate and free from bias in interpretation.
- c. Member check:** initial findings were sent to several informants to verify the accuracy of the data and its consistency with their experience.

2.6. Theoretical Approach

This analysis draws on the concept of maritime operational management, particularly in ship agency activities such as port time management, coordination of port services, and document efficiency (Fendy et al., 2023; Umi Hanik et al., 2025). The results can serve as a basis for preparing a performance evaluation model applicable to shipping companies. In addition, this study examines how agency efficiency has a direct impact on the operational efficiency of companies and clarifies the strategic role of ship agents in the maritime logistics chain.

2.7. Urgency of the Study

The need to ensure that ship services run effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with regulations requires a comprehensive and measurable performance evaluation. Through systematic analysis based on performance indicators, companies such as PT Bahari Eka Nusantara can make continuous improvements to work procedures, improve the quality of services to principals, and strengthen their competitive position in the maritime services industry. Thus, the analysis of the performance of ship agencies has a strategic role in supporting operational efficiency while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the company's business.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis aims to identify the quality of, and the factors that affect, the performance of human resources in supporting the smooth running of agency services at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed to determine technical constraints, service waiting times, human resource capacity, and the company's efforts to optimize performance in accordance with operational needs and work standards. Based on the observations and interviews with informants, the factors that affect the

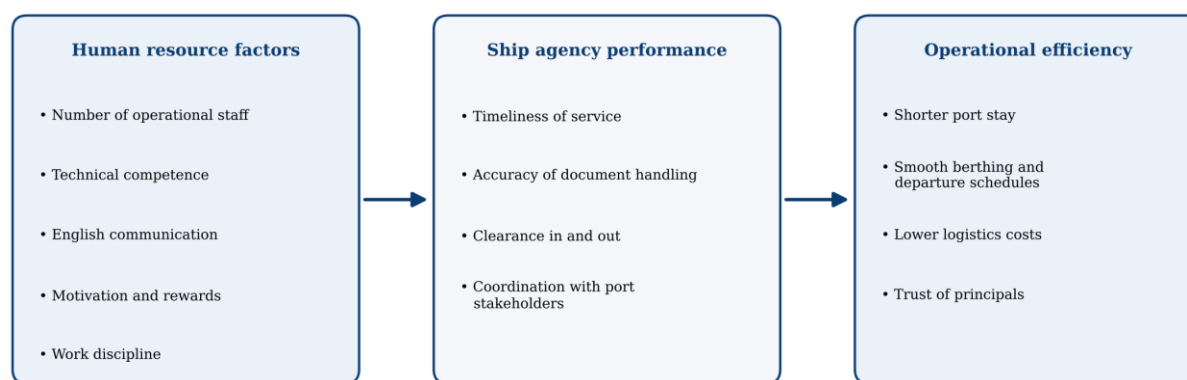
quality of human resource performance in the operations of the ship agency are described below.

3.1. The Influence of Ship Agency Human Resources on the Quality of Service to Ships at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara

Human resources play an important role in improving the quality of ship agency services. Operational effectiveness is greatly influenced by the match between the number and competence of the workforce and the needs of the job, because differences in technical and adaptive capabilities affect the smoothness of services and productivity. This is consistent with studies showing that human resource management is a key determinant of organizational performance (Pahira & Rinaldy, 2023; Riyanto et al., 2026) and of the efficiency of operational costs (Kencana, 2022).

In addition, a lack of coordination and communication between teams can reduce work effectiveness. Previous studies of ship agencies have likewise found that the agent's coordination with the harbor master, customs, and other authorities determines how efficiently ship clearance is processed (Rahman & Deliani, 2025) and that delays in ship documents can disrupt ship schedules (Sihombing et al., 2025). Therefore, improving the quality of ship agency services must be carried out through the development of appropriate human resource competencies, the strengthening of coordination and communication systems, and periodic performance evaluations so that operations run optimally and trust in the work system is maintained (Simanjuntak & Ginting, 2024).

The relationship between the human resource factors, the performance of ship agency services, and the operational efficiency of ships observed in this study is summarized in Figure 1. The number, competence, motivation, and discipline of operational staff determine how quickly and accurately ship documents are processed and how effectively the agency coordinates with the harbor master, terminal operators, and ship crews. These service outcomes, in turn, determine the length of the ship's port stay, the punctuality of berthing and departure, and the trust of principals in the agency.



Company efforts acting on the human resource factors: training, recruitment, rewards, discipline, and stronger coordination systems

Figure 1. Relationship between human resource factors, ship agency performance, and operational efficiency

3.2. Factors Affecting Human Resource Performance at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara

The factors that affect human resource performance at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara are as follows:

- a. The low performance of employees in the operational division requires the company to add professionals who meet the required standards, especially those with a background in shipping education; however, adding employees requires consideration of salary and benefit costs.
- b. The provision of bonuses and rewards for outstanding and long-serving employees aims to increase motivation through benefits such as health benefits, holiday allowances, transportation and meal allowances, awards, and job promotions. This is in line with findings that motivation and human resource quality affect employee performance (Peryuda & Khoiri, 2023; Salsabilla, 2025).
- c. Employees of the operational division lack the skills required to carry out ship agency activities, which is consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of training for employee performance (Harohmani et al., 2024).

3.3. Efforts Made by the Company and Agents to Overcome Human Resource Performance Problems

- a. **Improving the quality of human resources.** The company needs to improve the quality of human resources by developing the existing workforce through ship agency training, seminars for employees without a shipping background, and English courses, especially for operational staff and boarding agents, to support communication with foreign ship crews (Harohmani et al., 2024; Jaya et al., 2025).

b. Increasing the number of operational staff. The company is advised to add human resources to the operational department, because the shortage of personnel is the main cause of the problem; therefore, management needs to recruit additional operational employees (Gusnita, 2024).

c. Improving work discipline. Employee discipline can be improved through coaching programs and broadening employees' insight to foster a sense of responsibility and attachment to the company, accompanied by strict sanctions and consistent supervision, so that employees are more serious in their work, follow the direction of their superiors, and support the achievement of company targets. Such human resource management practices are also needed to help organizations adapt to change (Faizah et al., 2025).

Table 1 summarizes the factors that affect human resource performance at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara, their effects on ship agency services, and the corresponding efforts made or recommended.

Table 1. Human resource factors, their effects on ship agency services, and improvement efforts

Factor	Condition observed	Effect on agency services	Improvement effort
Number of staff	Shortage of operational personnel	Delays in ship services, document management, and clearance in and out	Recruit additional operational employees with a shipping education background
Competence	Limited ship agency skills; some staff without a shipping background; limited English	Miscommunication with terminals and foreign ship crews	Ship agency training, seminars, and English courses
Motivation	Need for incentives for outstanding and long-serving employees	Variable work motivation	Bonuses, allowances, awards, and promotions
Discipline	Inconsistent work discipline	Company targets not fully achieved	Coaching programs, consistent supervision, and sanctions
Coordination	Less optimal coordination with related parties	Slower service process	Stronger coordination and communication systems and periodic performance evaluation

Table 1 shows that the problems faced by the company are interrelated. The shortage of operational staff increases the workload of each employee, while limited competence and communication skills make the work slower and more prone to errors. Measures that address only one factor are therefore unlikely to be sufficient; recruitment, training, incentives, and

discipline need to be implemented together and evaluated periodically against service indicators such as the time required to complete clearance documents and the punctuality of ship services.

This study has limitations. It was conducted in one ship agency company over the period of the authors' land-based practice and relied on qualitative data from interviews, observation, and documentation; service times and document processing durations were not measured quantitatively. The findings should therefore be read as a case-based description of the factors affecting ship agency performance, which future studies could test with quantitative performance indicators across several agencies.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the low performance of human resources in the operational division at PT Bahari Eka Nusantara, Bontang Branch, is caused by a lack of employees and competencies, which results in delays in ship services, document management, and clearance in and out, as well as miscommunication with terminals and ship crews. Therefore, the company needs to optimize and improve human resource capabilities through technical training and soft skills such as negotiation, problem solving, and conflict management, to improve service quality and the trust of service users.

5. DECLARATIONS

Author contributions: B.P.: Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing – review & editing; Y.O.: Methodology, Validation, Writing – review & editing; M.I.M.P.: Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft. All authors agreed with the content of the final manuscript.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

AI usage statement: Generative AI was not involved in designing the study, collecting or analyzing the data, or drafting and revising this manuscript.

Ethical approval: Interviews with the head of operations and agency staff were conducted with their agreement, and member checking was carried out with selected informants. Company documents were examined for research purposes only, and no personal information about employees is reported.

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Data availability: The interview notes and observation records that support the findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request; ship clearance documents belonging to the company are not publicly available.

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