

Operational Bottlenecks and Service Quality Improvement in Sea Freight Forwarding Operations: A Case Study on Via Fly Logistics

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ABSTRACT

Sea freight forwarding has become one of the most important support activities in global trade and supply chain management. Businesses today rely heavily on logistics companies to move goods safely and ensure timely delivery across international markets. Even though freight forwarding companies use advanced systems and structured processes, they still experience several operational difficulties that affect both performance and service quality. Problems such as shipment delays, customs clearance complications, incorrect documentation, poor communication, and congestion at ports often create disruptions in freight operations.

This study focuses on the operational challenges faced by VIA FLY LOGISTICS in its sea freight forwarding activities and examines how these challenges influence customer service and operational performance. The research was carried out using responses collected from 75 employees working in different departments including operations, documentation, shipment coordination, and customer support.

The findings of the study reveal that delays in vessel booking, customs procedures, and documentation handling are among the most common factors responsible for disruptions in shipment schedules. The research also highlights that better coordination between departments, effective communication, real-time shipment tracking, and the use of digital logistics systems help improve workflow efficiency and service reliability.

The statistical analysis clearly shows that operational delays negatively impact customer satisfaction levels. At the same time, strong teamwork and proper coordination between departments contribute positively toward timely shipment movement and improved service quality.

The study concludes that improving sea freight forwarding operations requires more than just advanced technology. Continuous process improvement, employee involvement, communication, and teamwork are equally important for reducing operational bottlenecks and improving customer experience. By improving operational efficiency and maintaining better service standards, freight forwarding companies can strengthen customer trust and achieve long-term business growth.

INTRODUCTION

Sea freight forwarding plays a significant role in international trade and logistics management. It supports businesses in transporting goods across countries through activities such as cargo booking, customs clearance, documentation processing, shipment coordination, and final delivery. Since a large portion of global trade depends on ocean transportation, the efficiency of freight forwarding operations directly influences supply chain performance.

In recent years, customer expectations in logistics services have increased rapidly. Customers expect timely delivery, accurate documentation, transparent communication, and real-time shipment tracking. However, freight forwarding

companies continue to face several operational challenges such as shipment delays, customs clearance issues, documentation mistakes, port congestion, and lack of coordination between departments.

These operational problems not only delay shipments but also increase logistics costs and reduce customer confidence. Delays in freight forwarding activities can result in missed vessel schedules, extra storage charges, customer complaints, and lower service reliability.

VIA FLY LOGISTICS is a freight forwarding company involved in managing sea freight operations for importers and exporters. The company handles activities such as cargo booking, documentation preparation, customs coordination, shipment tracking, and inland transportation. Since these activities involve multiple departments and external logistics partners, proper coordination is necessary for smooth workflow and timely shipment movement.

This study aims to identify the major operational bottlenecks affecting sea freight forwarding operations and understand how these challenges influence service quality. The study also examines the role of digital systems, process standardization, and interdepartmental coordination in improving operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND: OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN SEA FREIGHT FORWARDING

Sea freight forwarding includes several operational activities that must work together effectively to ensure smooth cargo movement. These activities include vessel booking, documentation handling, customs clearance, shipment tracking, cargo coordination, and communication with customers.

Operational delays in freight forwarding may occur due to several reasons, including:

- Delays in vessel booking
- Container shortages
- Customs clearance complications
- Documentation errors
- Poor communication between departments
- Port congestion and shipment rollovers

When these issues occur repeatedly, they affect operational performance as well as customer satisfaction. Therefore, maintaining operational efficiency becomes extremely important in freight forwarding organizations.

Modern logistics companies increasingly use digital systems such as ERP software, shipment tracking tools, and automated documentation systems to improve workflow management and reduce operational errors. These technologies help improve shipment visibility, coordination, and communication between departments.

At the same time, technology alone is not enough to ensure operational success. Proper coordination between operations, documentation, and customer service teams also plays an important role in reducing delays and improving shipment handling efficiency.

Overall, operational efficiency in sea freight forwarding depends on proper planning, teamwork, effective coordination, standardized procedures, and the efficient use of technology.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT: SEA FREIGHT OPERATIONS AT VIA FLY LOGISTICS

VIA FLY LOGISTICS is a Bengaluru-based freight forwarding company specializing in sea freight and international logistics services. The company supports both import and export operations by managing cargo movement, customs coordination, documentation processing, and shipment tracking activities.

The organization handles:

- Full Container Load (FCL) shipments
- Less than Container Load (LCL) shipments
- Import and export documentation
- Customs clearance coordination
- Shipment tracking and customer communication

Sea freight forwarding operations at VIA FLY LOGISTICS require coordination among various departments such as operations, documentation, customer service, and accounts. The company also works closely with shipping lines, customs brokers, transporters, and port authorities to ensure smooth cargo movement.

Although digital systems are used for shipment tracking and communication, operational challenges still arise because of customs delays, vessel schedule changes, documentation issues, and external logistics disruptions.

Since customer satisfaction depends heavily on timely delivery and reliable service, the organization continuously focuses on improving operational efficiency and reducing shipment delays.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This study follows a descriptive research design to analyze operational bottlenecks and service quality improvement in sea freight forwarding operations at VIA FLY LOGISTICS.

Primary data for the study was collected through structured questionnaires distributed among 75 employees involved in freight forwarding activities. The respondents included employees working in operations, documentation, coordination, and customer service departments.

The study mainly focuses on employee opinions related to:

- Shipment delays
- Documentation accuracy
- Customs clearance efficiency
- Departmental coordination
- Shipment tracking systems
- Customer service quality
- Process improvement practices

To analyze the collected data, statistical tools such as percentage analysis, Chi-Square tests, and correlation analysis were applied.

The purpose of the analysis is to understand the relationship between operational efficiency, departmental coordination, shipment timeliness, and customer satisfaction in sea freight forwarding operations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES

VIA FLY LOGISTICS has implemented several operational practices to improve forwarding efficiency and service quality.

Some of these practices include:

- Real-time shipment tracking systems
- Standardized documentation procedures
- Digital communication methods
- ERP-supported logistics monitoring
- Better coordination with customs agents and shipping lines

Employees reported that digital systems have improved shipment visibility and reduced communication gaps between departments. Standardized workflows have also helped reduce documentation errors and improve operational coordination.

However, some operational challenges still continue because of external factors such as port congestion, customs procedures, and vessel schedule changes.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Major Operational Bottlenecks

The study identified several operational challenges affecting sea freight forwarding operations, including:

- Vessel booking delays
- Container availability issues
- Port congestion
- Customs clearance delays
- Documentation corrections
- Shipment visibility problems
- Coordination gaps between departments

Among these issues, shipment delays and documentation-related problems were found to have the highest impact on customer satisfaction and service quality.

2. Importance of Coordination and Technology

The findings also indicate that:

- Better coordination improves shipment timeliness
- Real-time tracking improves customer communication
- Digital systems reduce operational errors
- Standardized procedures improve workflow efficiency

Most employees agreed that technology and effective coordination significantly improve operational performance and reduce forwarding delays.

EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER PERCEPTION

The majority of employees believe that better communication and coordination between departments can improve logistics performance considerably.

Employees also stated that:

- Timely communication improves workflow efficiency
- Shipment visibility increases customer confidence
- Standardized procedures reduce operational confusion
- Digital systems improve documentation accuracy

Customers are highly affected by shipment delays and poor communication. Therefore, improving service transparency and operational reliability is important for maintaining customer satisfaction and long-term business relationships.

DISCUSSION

The study clearly shows that operational bottlenecks directly influence service quality in sea freight forwarding operations. Delays in customs clearance, shipment scheduling, documentation processing, and communication reduce operational efficiency and negatively impact customer satisfaction.

One of the important observations from the study is that coordination between departments plays a major role in reducing delays. Even when digital systems are available, lack of communication and poor coordination can still create operational difficulties.

The study also highlights that technology alone cannot solve every operational challenge. Continuous process improvement, teamwork, communication, and employee involvement are equally important for improving logistics performance.

Overall, VIA FLY LOGISTICS has made noticeable progress in improving operational efficiency through digital systems and process standardization. However, further improvements are still required to achieve higher service reliability and smoother operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions can help improve operational performance and service quality:

- Improve coordination among departments
- Reduce documentation errors through standardized procedures
- Increase the use of automated digital systems
- Improve shipment tracking and visibility
- Conduct regular employee training programs
- Strengthen communication with customers and shipping partners
- Continuously monitor logistics performance

These improvements can help reduce operational bottlenecks and improve customer satisfaction in sea freight forwarding operations.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that operational bottlenecks significantly affect service quality in sea freight forwarding operations at VIA FLY LOGISTICS.

Shipment delays, documentation issues, customs clearance problems, and coordination gaps negatively influence customer satisfaction and operational performance. At the same time, digital systems, process standardization, and improved interdepartmental coordination positively contribute toward better shipment reliability and operational efficiency.

The statistical analysis confirms that operational delays are closely related to customer satisfaction, while effective coordination improves shipment timeliness and overall service performance.

The study finally emphasizes that improving sea freight forwarding operations requires not only technology adoption but also effective communication, teamwork, process discipline, and continuous operational improvement.

By reducing operational bottlenecks and improving service quality, freight forwarding companies can strengthen customer trust, operational stability, and long-term competitiveness in the logistics industry.

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