



The Success and Challenges Facing Gate Operation at Dares Salaam Port in Tanzania

BY

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Abstract

This paper utilizes data from a study that evaluated on the Performance of Gate Operation on Cargo Loading in Tanzania using Dares Salaam Port as a case study. The study employed a descriptive research design to show clearly on how the successes and challenges facing at Dares Salaam port and to suggest the way forward in addressing those challenges which block the port performance. In the first phase, qualitative data were collected based on documentation clearance process versus to vehicle congestion at the port of Dar es Salaam, bureaucratic procedures versus to delay in the cargo handling process, ICT operation on cargo handling in reducing vehicles congestion, quality port equipment on cargo handling in reducing vehicles congestion at the gate terminal, poor port infrastructure against vehicles congestion at the gate terminal and strategies for optimizing gate operations at the port. Second phase of data collection was focused on quantifying some variables on important issues discussed during focus group discussion, observation, and key informant interviews. The paper ends with giving conclusions and recommendations that; ports authority should invest in gate infrastructure modernization, staff training, and capacity building to workers should be taken into consideration by government and the implementation of streamline documentation processes should start immediately in order to increase port efficiency.

Keywords: Gate Operations, Documentation Procedures, Management Efficiency, Technological Skills, Customs and Regulatory Compliance, Port efficiency, and Cargo Loading.

1.0 Introduction

Currently, shipping is a crucial aspect in worldwide commercial and cargo conveyance, however, global business depends on shipping as a means of transporting cargo from one place to another. On the other hand, commercial shipping is influenced by various types of goods and latest vessel designs for quick longer distance cargo transportation, guaranteeing a reduced cost per each long tonnage transported (Haralambides, 2017). Moreover, development of seaports resulting to an increase degree of worldwide business as far as transportation of cargo is concerned for an effective and efficient cargo loading and unloading from the vessels. Thus, port management is required to have sufficient skills which enables them perform their duties in effectively and efficiently, in conjunctions with favorable port infrastructure as well as modern technological transport equipment and ships (Maneno, 2019).

Also, Manaadiar (2020) outlined several factors which hinder vehicle work congestion in the port such as ineffective and outdated port infrastructures, to which they cannot withstand the technological tendencies in globalization, human resource problems to some ports, extreme demand and supply of port services and inconsistent governments' policies, delays due to bad weather resulting to lack of allocated space and keeping the terminal or port exceeding its capability.

Moreover, Usma (2015) noted that most governments worldwide have invested a lot of efforts in controlling ports since most ports increase more revenue to the respective countries, these efforts include increasing port investments specifically in port infrastructures, terminal sites, information technology systems and stowage facilities to which all these boosts cargo handling as well as saving time of cargo loading at the port environment. Riky (2018) argued that poor planning, inefficiency, incapacity, institutional framework, and poor regulatory frameworks are the factors which bring some obstacles to gate operations at the port area.



Ports around the world serve as vital nodes in the global supply chain, facilitating the movement of goods and commodities essential for international trade. The efficient operation of these ports is critical for both economic development and the smooth functioning of the global economy. Gate operations, which encompass the processes involved in cargo entry and exit at ports, play a pivotal role in determining overall port efficiency.

Efficient gate operations are essential for minimizing delays, reducing costs, and ensuring the timely movement of goods. However, ports worldwide have faced various challenges in this regard, which can impact their ability to meet the demands of global trade.

One common challenge faced by many ports is congestion, which can result from the inefficient processing of cargo at gates. Congestion not only causes delays but also increases transportation costs and environmental impacts. Moreover, documentations process has also led to delay of cargo clearances at the port hence results to trucks congestion due to delay of cargo operations as well as deployment of advanced technologies for gate operations, affecting efficiency and competitiveness (UNCTAD, 2020).

Another challenge is security concerns, as ports must strike a delicate balance between facilitating the swift movement of goods and ensuring the safety and security of cargo. This involves rigorous inspection procedures, documentation verification, and compliance with international regulations, all of which can be time-consuming and costly (ITF, 2018).

Additionally, the increasing complexity of global supply chains has led to a higher volume of containerized cargo, further straining gate operations. The adoption of containerization has revolutionized maritime transport but has also posed challenges in terms of handling, tracking, and processing containers efficiently (UNCTAD, 2019).

In response to these challenges, ports worldwide have initiated various efforts to modernize and optimize gate operations. These include the implementation of digital technologies like blockchain, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to streamline processes and improve visibility (UNCTAD, 2021). Additionally, many ports have invested in infrastructure upgrades and policy reforms to enhance their overall performance.

Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of these interventions and their impact on cargo loading efficiency remain subjects of research and evaluation. Understanding the best practices and lessons learned from ports globally can provide valuable insights for optimizing gate operations and improving the overall competitiveness of ports worldwide.

Furthermore, the rapid growth of global trade and shipping business goes on the same time with the strategic growth of ports in the country for effective loading and unloading of

cargo in various ports. However, Ports operations require enough experience and skilled staffs who perform their responsibilities efficiently, well technological implementation, impressive infrastructures, effective control of documentation process and storage facilities (Neagoe et al, 2017). Also, Ifediora(2016) noted that management efficiency is a key element in the port operations for the respective country in order to collect more revenue to the government as well as to have competitive advantages in the business environment by delivering remarkable services that are required by the port customers.

Nevertheless, because it was founded by the Tanzania Ports Authority Act of 2004, Dar es Salaam Port is located in Tanzania. The main port of the United Republic of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam Port, handles shipments to and from landlocked nations and lake regions such as Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Malawi, and Zambia. However, Dar es Salaam port is located in the city of Dar es Salaam situated in a superb geographical environment for receiving ships from European countries, American countries, Middle East, Asian countries, and Far East; the port has an ability of handling approximately 16 million tons of cargo from abroad per each year (TPA, 2020).

Likewise, management inefficiency had also been causing obstacles in cargo handling in port areas and crafting an excess of cargo that leads to vehicle congestions at the terminal gates (Somuyiwa, 2015). On other hand, management efficiency helps to facilitate cargo monitoring and controlling as well as reduce vehicles congestion at terminal gates waiting for cargo. Moreover, Port of Dar es Salaam stands as among sources generating revenue collection to the government of Tanzania due to the fact that it generates high revenue to the government.

African ports are critical nodes in the global trade network, serving as primary gateways for the import and export of goods to and from the continent. However, African ports have faced persistent challenges that hinder their efficiency and competitiveness in the global market (UNCTAD, 2019). These challenges are particularly evident in the context of gate operations, which encompass the processes involved in cargo entry and exit at these ports.

The Port of Dar es Salaam, situated in Tanzania, is a representative case of the issues facing African ports. As one of East Africa's busiest ports, it handles a substantial volume of cargo, making its operational efficiency of paramount importance for the country and the region as a whole (World Bank, 2017). Moreover, the Port of Dar es Salaam serves as a lifeline for landlocked neighboring countries, such as Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, and Uganda, further emphasizing its significance (UNCTAD, 2020).

Gate operations are a pivotal component of port management, acting as the initial point of interaction for cargo entering or leaving the port. However, these operations in African ports

have historically encountered numerous challenges, including outdated manual processes, insufficient infrastructure, limited technological integration, and issues related to corruption and inefficiency (UNCTAD, 2018). These challenges result in delays, increased costs, and reduced overall competitiveness.

Recognizing these challenges, many African nations have embarked on initiatives aimed at modernizing their port facilities and enhancing gate operations. These initiatives involve the adoption of technology-driven solutions, infrastructure upgrades, and policy reforms (UNCTAD, 2021). Nonetheless, the effectiveness of these interventions and their impact on cargo loading efficiency remain subjects of research and debate.

This study aims to address this gap by evaluating the current state of gate operations at the Port of Dar es Salaam and evaluating the outcomes of recent interventions designed to improve cargo loading efficiency. By examining gate operations and their consequences on cargo turnaround times, costs, and trade competitiveness, this study seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing African ports.

The Port of Dar es Salaam plays a role in facilitating trade and commerce in the East African region. It acts as a gateway for importing and exporting goods not for Tanzania but also for neighboring landlocked countries like Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda (TPA Report, 2021). The smooth functioning of the port is essential for growth, regional development, and the overall welfare of the nation. The efficiency of its gate operations lies at the core of ensuring cargo loading and unloading processes.

Over time the Port of Dar es Salaam has seen growth in cargo volumes due to its location and increased regional trade activities. However, this growth has put pressure on the port's capacity. Raised concerns about gate operation efficiency. Gate operations encompass activities such as documentation, security checks, inspection, and cargo clearance at entry and exit points of the port (James, 2018). Delays, congestion, or inefficiencies at these gates can have ranging consequences that impact not port operations but also affect the entire logistics chain increase trade costs while influencing Tanzanian businesses competitiveness, in global markets.

Recently there have been multiple efforts and investments focused on enhancing the gate operations at the Port of Dar es Salaam. These initiatives involve implementing technologies, like cargo tracking systems, improvement of cargo handling process, automated gate systems, and making administrative procedures more efficient (TPA, 2022).

2. 0 Definitions of the Key Concepts

2.1 Gate Operations

Sayi (2018) defined gate operations as that practice dealing with exterior cargo handlers in which two activities are involved; export conveyance involving freight forwarders bringing in export containers ready to be laden on vehicles, and the second activity involves receiving imports at which

the freight forwarders receive containers from the container yard and transport them inward the country.

On this study gate operations at a port typically refer to the activities and processes involved in the movement of cargo, containers, and vehicles through the entrance and exit gates of the port (Tanzania Port Authority, 2019). These operations are crucial for ensuring the efficient flow of goods in and out of the port, as well as for security and logistics management.

2.2 Documentation Procedures

Maneno (2019) noted that vehicle congestion at gate terminal is associated with bureaucratic procedures in documentation process which led to delay of cargo delivery at port. However, skipping of some procedures or forging by providing bribes to responsible officials in container handling system as well as this situation necessitated the review of documentation process that comes up with system like integrated tax system including Tanzania Customs Integrated Systems (TANCIS) and single window system (Ifediora, 2016). Also, designing, organizing and implementation of the integrated revenue inspection and approval administration system has been important in responding to poor service delivery at the ports. Likewise, Hlali and Hammami (2019) noted that the hinterland containers cargo handling operations faces delay in outbound and inbound in containers to railway terminals and long road truck queue due to long and bureaucratic documentation procedures in clearance process and transportation permits.

2.3 Management Efficiency

Ricky (2018) noted that terminal gate operations are significant associated with logistics chain cargo handling in the port as well as port efficiency reflect time management of cargo handling and cargo dwelling time. Despite all the efforts and development made to revamp cargo handling operations at the port of Dar es Salaam but yet the performance is very challenging. However, an increasing freight rate charged to shipping lines, turnaround time of ships, clearance time, poor intermodal transport, vehicles congestion traffic, and cargo dwelling time are factors which inefficiency operation of port (TPA, 2020).

2.4 Technological Skills

Jonker (2021) noted that technological skills and knowledge, berth, quay, and mechanical handling equipment availability and capacity and communication, tax administration increasing que in container cargo handling. However, Mapunda (2016) argued that increase vehicles congestion traffic is linked with poor performing in container cargo handling seriously affecting port role as knob in international trade logistic chains. On other hand, Hart, (2019) study associate the poor performance with resources utilization, intermodal facilities, port structures, dwell or lead time, skilled labor, technology, equipment capacity, and integrated partnership among cargo handling stakeholders.

Moreover, government of Tanzania to devote huge resources in the development of staff knowledge and skills, integrated, infrastructures, documentation communication technologies, and facilities to increase efficiency handling liquid and dry cargo in Dar es Salaam Port (TPA, 2020). However, improvement of 11 deep-water berth of 2600 meters having modern equipment, inland container depots and container freight stations, and privatization of container terminal to Tanzania International Container Terminal Services Ltd service provider (TPA, 2020).

2.5 Port efficiency

Port efficiency is one of the three components of port performance. The Other two being effectiveness and resilience. Efficiency commonly refers to the operational performance of ports and the maximization of the produced output with given resources or the production of a given output with limited possible resources (James, 2018).

3.0 Three Major Types of Port Efficiency

3.1 Consider the boundary conditions

A port planner needs to take into an account many boundary conditions such as space for the pier operator for cargo handling transport facilities, as well as space needed by the vessels for bypassing and turning, and so on. Think about environmental aspects for example by aiming for a calm harbor basin. Think about breakwaters.

3.2 Apply extreme value analyses and numerical modeling

Predictions for wind conditions and all kinds of waves and currents in a port can be made by using long-term measurements and numerical modelling which affect berthing conditions like long-period waves (swell, long fetch lengths, passing vessels)

3.3 Conduct dynamic mooring analyses

The data above should be used in dynamic mooring analyses which provides vessels motions line and fender forces. With such a tool, meteorological and hydrodynamic data in a test matrix can be combined freely.

The Port of Dar es Salaam has been the subject of several studies due to its strategic location in East Africa. In their examination of the port's gate operations (UNCTAD 2020) observed that inefficiencies in gate operations led to significant delays and increased costs for shippers and carriers. Their findings emphasize the need for improvements in gate management practices.

Recent research by Hassan and Kim (2020) explored the impact of technological advancements on gate operations in container terminals. They discussed how the implementation of digital solutions, such as automated gate systems and real-time tracking, can enhance the efficiency of cargo handling at ports. These innovations may offer valuable insights for the Port of Dar es Salaam.

Effective collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, port authorities, and private sector actors, is crucial for optimizing gate operations. As highlighted by Amani et al. (2018), a lack of coordination and communication among these entities can lead to inefficiencies in cargo loading and unloading processes. This underscores the importance of fostering collaboration at the Port of Dar es Salaam.

In recent years, sustainability and environmental concerns have gained prominence in port operations. Nkya and Mbise (2019) investigated the environmental impact of gate operations at the Port of Dar es Salaam. Their study underscores the importance of adopting eco-friendly practices in cargo handling, aligning with global sustainability goals.

Measuring and benchmarking port performance is critical for identifying areas of improvement. Research by Kalisa and Mwanyika (2016) presents a comprehensive framework for evaluating port performance, including gate operations, using key performance indicators (KPIs). Implementing such metrics at the Port of Dar es Salaam could provide valuable insights into its operational efficiency.

Mapunda (2016) conducted research on container import congestion and spatial rivalries in the port of the United States, using network flow intermodal mode to analyze congestion. Thus, Study revealed on the presence of negative significant association between port congestion and cargo handling and increase cost of operation. Likewise, some recommendations from the study were made to enhance port management operations in cargo handling in order to minimize congestion of vehicle at port. Also, recommendations based on expansion of port as well as port terminals which will reduce vehicles congestion costs, and customer time.

Song and Anderson (2018) did study on port congestion mitigation from government as well as analyzing transaction costs was used in the study. Organization theory, sociology, economics, and marketing are among the academic subjects where transaction cost analysis is most frequently utilized. Three problems with the Terminal Controlled Area (TCA), including specificity assets, uncertainty, and frequency, are discovered during the evaluation through theoretical analysis. Thus, research revealed that factors like maritime networks, the delay in routes legs as well as delays of ships. Also, study provided that optimization by appointment was a more effective strategy to increase productivity, container volume, and efficiency.

4.0 The Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted at Dar es Salaam port because it is the largest port with highest cargo throughput as compared to other ports across the region and therefore it reflects the operations and performances of other ports. By choosing the Dar es Salaam port as the study location, the reliable and

accurate data for performance of gate operations on cargo loading at the port were taken into consideration to this paper.

5.0 Methodology

Primary data were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods, where secondary data obtained from literature search and review of relevant official documents. The literature review further highlighted the key concepts used in the study and three major types of port efficiency. The sample of the study comprised of 78 respondents by using purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. used descriptive research design because this technique describes in details the factors which influence the performance of gate operations on cargo loading at the port of Dar es Salaam. Two phases of data collection and analysis were conducted. In the first phase, qualitative data was collected based on factors affecting the gate operation at Dares Salaam port. The second phase of data collection was focused on quantifying some variables on important issues discussed during focus group discussion, observation, and key informant interviews.

6.0 Findings of the Study

The findings of the study were presented under the following sub-sections

6.1 Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study was important to find out the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents that were involved in the study by looking on main variables like age, sex, levels of education, and job categories of the respondents. It was believed that those variables would provide the right indication if at all there some hindering factors at the Dares Salaam port operation and these hindering factors should be revealed out in order to increase Tanzanian national revenue see Table 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and Table 6.4.

Table 6 1: Respondents based on Gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Male	65	83.3
Female	13	16.7
Total	78	100

Source: Field data, 2023

Table 6. 2: Respondents Age Group

Age Group (Years)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
18 - 35	52	66.7
36 – 45	14	17.9
45+	12	15.4
Total	78	100

Source: Field data, 2023

Table 6. 3: Respondents Educational Level

Education Level	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Master Degree	0	0
Bachelor Degree	70	89.7
Diploma	5	6.4
Certificate	3	3.9
Total	78	100

Source: Field data, 2023

Table 6. 4: Job Categories of Respondents

Job category	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
TPA staffs	21	26.9
Truck Drivers	33	42.3
Clearing and Forwarding Agents	12	15.4
Transporters	6	7.7
Port Security	6	7.7
Total	78	100

Source: Field data, 2023

7.0 Documentation Clearance Process Contributing to vehicle congestion at the port of Dar es Salaam

The analysis of the finding regarding the documentation clearance process causing vehicle congestion at the Dar es Salaam port reveals a distribution of responses among participants. majority of 60.3% strongly agreed that the documentation clearance process contributes to congestion, while 23.1% agreed with this notion.

On the other hand, a smaller proportion of respondents disagreed, with 7.7% indicating strong disagreement and 7.7% remaining neutral. This indicated a general consensus among participants that the documentation clearance process had a significant role in causing vehicle congestion at the Dares Salaam port. The strong agreement suggested that a considerable number of respondents hold the view that improvements were needed in the documentation clearance process to alleviate congestion issues. According to this study, there is a need to solve the issue of documentation process in order to allow flexibility of the ship luggage and this will increase port efficiency and raise national revenues. Overall, the findings highlighted a general consensus among the surveyed participants that there is room for improvement in the documentation clearance process at the Dar es Salaam port.

In supporting on simple documentation clearance process against to vehicle congestion Kelvin (2021) suggested that

streamlined gate operations can significantly increase the port's cargo handling capacity, reducing congestion and delays. Again Ronnie (2020) maintained that simple handling and documentation process will managing the flow of vehicles in and out of the port is essential to prevent congestion and delays of ships. Efficient traffic management systems, such as digital scheduling and queuing can help optimize gate operations to avoid delaying of luggage. See table 7.1

Table 7.1: Documentation clearance process causes vehicle congestion at port

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strong Agreed	47	60.3
Agree	18	23.0
Neutral	6	7.7
Disagreed	6	7.7
Strong Disagreed	1	1.3
Total	78	100

Source: Field Data, 2023

8.0 Bureaucratic procedures lead to delay of cargo handling.

The findings from the study revealed that bureaucratic procedures which exist in Dares Salaam port are contributing to a large extent of the vehicle congestion. These bureaucratic procedures are mainly appeared in the form of corruption or bribes. This analysis of the finding concerning bureaucratic procedures leading to delays in the cargo handling process brake port efficiency as Transporters and clearing and forwarding agents who were interviewed went further by pointing out that:

“.....the major causes of vehicle congestion here is corruption. If you do not have anything to give someone then your luggage will stay there for a long time.....”

From the above quote, it is noted that bureaucratic procedures were an obstacles for port operation and therefore efforts should be done from every stakeholder in order to minimize the problem. While the majority of respondents 52.6% followed 26.9 % acknowledged the connection between bureaucracy and delays, there was a minority about 6.4 % who expressed disagreement, and an even smaller minority equals to 1.3% strongly disagreed and 12. 8 % neutral. This indicated that bureaucratic procedures had a substantial impact on cargo handling delays. It would be valuable to further explore the reasons behind their differing perspectives, as they might have insights that can inform potential improvements in cargo handling processes. See Table 8.1 below:

Table 8.1: Bureaucratic procedures lead to delay of cargo handling.

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Agreed	21	26.9
Strong Agreed	41	52.6
Neutral	10	12.8
Disagreed	5	6.4
Strong Disagreed	1	1.3

Source: Field data, 2023

9.0 Skilled Staffs on cargo handling in solving vehicle congestion

The study was interested to see whether there was a connection between skilled staff and vehicle congestion at Dares Salaam port. The analysis of the finding regarding skilled staff on cargo handling and its impact on reducing vehicle congestion at the gate terminal revealed that a significant majority of respondents agree with this notion. Specifically, 56.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 21.8% agreed. This combined percentage of 78.2% indicated a substantial level of support for the idea that skilled staff can help alleviate vehicle congestion.

Conversely, a smaller percentage of respondents had opposing views. Around 6.4% disagreed and 3.8% strongly disagreed with the statement, suggesting that there is a minority who do not believe in the effectiveness of skilled staff in reducing congestion. Furthermore, a relatively neutral perspective was held by 11.5% of respondents. These individuals neither agreed nor disagreed with the assertion.

In summary, the data suggested that the majority of respondents recognized the value of skilled staff in cargo handling as a potential solution to alleviate vehicle congestion at the gate terminal. This finding highlights the importance of having trained personnel to efficiently manage cargo and thereby contribute to smoother operations and reduced congestion.

These findings were supported by Hoy and Miskel ((1991) who stressed out the importance of increasing employees' skills that it makes someone to be more competent to their areas of specialization. They (ibid) go further by saying that a well-trained employee is basically able to apply both theory and practical activities and failing to apply both results to the failure of the organizational goals. See table 9.1

Table9.1 Skilled staffs on cargo handling reduces vehicle congestion

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Agree	17	21.8
Strong Agreed	44	56.4

Neutral	9	11.5
Disagreed	5	6.4
Strong Disagreed	3	3.8
Total	78	100

Source: Field data, 2023

10.0 Conclusion

Looking at the discussion above, a number of conclusions can be drawn from this paper. The paper starts clearly by showing introduction part trying to explain on how shipping activities are the most activities conducted in the worldwide including Tanzania. The paper also goes further by analyzing in details the key concepts in increasing port efficiency. Furthermore, the paper tries to address critically the challenges which are affecting Dares Salaam Port. Finally, it ends up with the ways forward towards solving the challenges of facing Dares Salaam port operations, and recommendations for further studies to be taken in order to improve Dar es Salaam port operations in Tanzania.

11.0 Recommendations

Based on the study findings and ensuing conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Ports authority should invest in gate infrastructure modernization. It is recommended that ports authority should invest in modernizing gate infrastructure, including advanced technology for automated processes such as electronic documentation, tracking, and automated gate clearance.
- Staff training and capacity building to worker should be taken into consideration by government.
- The implementation of streamline documentation processes, Since it simplifies and digitizes documentation procedures can significantly reduce processing times and decrease administrative errors. Electronic submission and verification of documents can enhance accuracy and enable quicker cargo clearance, leading to improved gate effectiveness. By streamlining documentation processes through these measures, ports can significantly improve their effectiveness, reduce processing times, enhance accuracy, and provide a more favorable environment for trade and logistics operations.

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