The Effect of Undelivered Air Traffic Service Inter-Facility Datalink Communication Messages on Air Traffic Controller Workload

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Abstract:

This study discusses the importance of ATS Inter-facility Data Communication (AIDC) in reducing the workload of Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) at the Approach Control Unit (APP) of Airnav Denpasar Branch. The function of AIDC is to exchange flight data between different ATC systems to facilitate coordination. However, several factors can cause AIDC Message Not Sent issues, such as differences in coordination calculations over points, aircraft performance databases, waypoint and route databases, human adaptation, and the use of serial cables. These failures can lead to increased workload for ATC and decreased efficiency. The research aims to evaluate the implementation of AIDC in APP, determine the workload of ATC, analyze the impact of AIDC optimization on workload, and identify factors causing AIDC failures. This study employs a quantitative method including observation, interviews, and document analysis. Data will be analyzed using statistical techniques such as Pearson Product Moment correlation and linear regression analysis. The findings of this research will provide insights into the effectiveness of AIDC optimization in reducing ATC workload and enhancing air traffic management in the Denpasar area. The analysis concludes that there is a very strong and significant relationship between AIDC Message Not Sent and ATC Workload, with a Pearson Product Moment correlation significance value of 0.971, indicating a very strong correlation. The AIDC Message Not Sent variable influences ATC Workload by 94%.

Keyword: AIDC, Air Traffic Controller, Air Traffic Service, Datalink Communication Messages

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Introduction

Aviation is an integrated system encompassing the utilization of airspace, aircraft, airports, air transportation, air navigation, safety and security, environmental considerations, and other public facilities (Kemendephub, 2009). The Bali Approach Control (APP) provides airspace guidance services to ensure the safety, orderliness, and efficiency of flight traffic within its jurisdiction, as outlined by AirNav Indonesia (AirNav Indonesia, 2019):

- 1. Preventing collisions between aircraft operating within its area of responsibility.
- 2. Preventing collisions between departing and arriving aircraft.
- 3. Ensuring the smooth and orderly flow of flight traffic.
- 4. Providing essential information for the safety and efficiency of flight operations.
- 5. Furnishing information to the National Search and Rescue Agency (BNPP) regarding aircraft requiring search and rescue.

The high volume of traffic at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport in Denpasar places significant responsibility on Air Traffic Control (ATC) personnel. These professionals, particularly those in Bali's Approach Control (APP) and Terminal Maneuvering Area (TMA), manage both Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flights. For instance, Bali APP/TMA handles VFR operations such as training flights conducted by the Bali International Flight Academy (BIFA) and tourist flights operated by Fly Bali.

Figure 1. Movement Traffic 2019-2023

The high volume of air traffic directly correlates with increased workload for Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) responsible for guiding aircraft. Maintaining effective coordination is crucial for ATC, particularly during periods of heavy traffic. This heightened workload necessitates greater focus on managing existing traffic, potentially reducing attention to coordination tasks, especially during peak hours. Managing diverse types of traffic further amplifies the workload associated with providing air traffic control services. Key tasks involved in ATC workload include:

- 1. Coordination tasks
- 2. Communication tasks
- 3. Scanning tasks
- 4. Planning tasks
- 5. Flight management tasks

As traffic volume increases, the workload related to coordination also escalates, potentially affecting the quality of control services offered. To mitigate workload and optimize air traffic control services, the Bali Approach Control Unit utilizes ATS Inter-facility Data Communication (AIDC). AIDC facilitates the exchange of flight data between different ATC systems using a datalink method (ICAO, 2017). Implementing AIDC significantly reduces the coordination workload for ATC, thereby enhancing control services. A primary function of AIDC is to coordinate between ATS units without relying solely on voice communication.

Despite its benefits, AIDC can experience failures. In such cases, coordination must revert to manual methods using DS telephones, which increases the ATC workload. For instance, in January 2024, the Denpasar ATS Unit sent 5,492 AIDC messages to MATSC, but 1,798 messages were not delivered (32.74%).

Here are some causes of AIDC failures:

- 1. Differences in Coordination Over Point Calculation Systems: AIDC relies on Coordination Over Point (COP), an estimated coordinate point where aircraft pass FL245. Bali APP/TMA uses the "Tern System," while Ujung Control ACC uses the "Topsky System," resulting in different COP calculations. If the COP calculation from Bali APP/TMA differs significantly from Ujung Control ACC's tolerance area, AIDC fails.
- 2. Differences in Aircraft Performance Database: Variances in aircraft performance databases between ATS Units can lead to AIDC failures.
- 3. Differences in Waypoints and Route Database: Flight plans include routes and waypoints aircraft use to reach destinations. If new route or waypoint names are not registered in the ATC system's Waypoint & Route Database, AIDC may fail.
- 4. Human Adaptation: Deviations from standard operating procedures (SOP) for AIDC increase the risk of failure.
- 5. Use of Serial Cable: AFTN at Bali APP/TMA employs a serial cable, which has slower flight message transmission speeds. High message queues due to heavy traffic can overwhelm the ATC system in Ujung Pandang, exceeding its message reception limit and causing AIDC message failures.

20231130 1639	B/A20	F320	A35K /H / 4142 QTR961	00	1609	1617	1623		D
POB	1623	F240	JAK A7AOA N0503	OTHH 0150	BLI BORGI DCT SBR M766 T/ 1610 OS/				
1733	20231130 B/A21	F360	A333 / H / I 4107 KAL630	oa	1702	1708	1715		D
POB	1715	F240	UPG HLB026 NO478	RKSI 0015	BLI DCT DOBMA M522 ELA T/ 1703 OS/				
1854	20231130 ^B A22	F390	A332 / H / I 4102 CES5030	∞	1823	1830	1837		D
POB 222	1837	F230	UPG 110476 B8226	ZSPD 0043	DOBMA M522 ELANG/NO47 T/ 1825 OS/				
20231130		F320	A320 /M/1 4402 SJV769	WADL 2202	WADL 2202	WIII 2325	WIII 2325		\circ
	2203	F240	JAK PKSJZ N0467		LMB DULOS T20 OKANG FARIZ TI			T/2156	C/2210
20231130 2210		F340	A320 /M / 1 4413 SJV777	WADL 2208	WADL 2208	JOG 2310	WAHI 2330		O
		F240 JAK PKSJV ND467		LMB DULOS T20 OKANG SBR W10				T/2156	C/2217
20231130		F360	A320 / M / I 4110 SJV160	WADL 2237	WADL 2237	SURGA 0011	WMKK 0057		\circ
	2238	F240	UPG NO462 PKSTF	LMB AGUNG W34 ENTAS DCT UC			T/ 2229	C/2245	
2320	20231130 B/B10	F360	A320 /M//1 4406 AWQ600	00	2250	2255	2305		D
POB 88	F280 2306		APP NG452 PKAZF	WAHI 0042	BLI OKANG DCT SBR T2 L T/ 2251 OS				
2340	20211130 8 A44	F340	B739 / M / I 4414 LNI3569	∞	2310	2312			D
POB ²²²	APP F240 NG459		PKLSJ	WAHI 0050	BLI OKANG DCT SBR T2 L T/ 2311 OS/				
2339	20231130 B A19	F360	A320 /M / I 4101 AWQ502	09	2308	2312			D
F240 POB 138			APP N0451 PKAZO	WSSS 0141	BORGI DCT UDONO M635 T/ 2311 OS/				

Figure 2. AIDC Messages Undelivered

AIDC is a system used by ATC to coordinate with adjacent units via datalink, eliminating the need for voice communication and enabling highly effective and efficient coordination. Emphasizing a higher level of automation to support air traffic controllers' workload and alleviate

stress is crucial for a resilient ATM (Air Traffic Management) system (SESAR, 2020). The implementation of AIDC aims to diminish ATC workload associated with coordination tasks, thereby improving overall ATC performance in delivering air traffic control services.

Table 1. State of The Art

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Research has demonstrated that the implementation of Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) systems provides numerous significant benefits in air traffic management. Originally designed to reduce workload and enhance coordination between Air Traffic Control (ATC) units, AIDC messages have been shown to improve flight operation efficiency, reduce fuel consumption, and minimize delays through Trajectory-Based Operations (TBO).

The integration of AIDC systems necessitates adaptive training programs to ensure that ATC personnel achieve adequate proficiency. Data link communications, such as Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) and AIDC, minimize the reliance on voice communication, thereby reducing errors and enhancing coordination efficiency. The application of AIDC in Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) processes enhances real-time information sharing, leading to better decision-making during flight disruptions.

Furthermore, research underscores the importance of intuitive human-machine interface (HMI) design in reducing controllers' cognitive load and improving performance. Advancements in machine learning algorithms for conflict detection and resolution, along with the harmonization of global procedures, further bolster the contributions of AIDC to enhanced safety and efficiency in air traffic management.

Method

The research methodology used in this study is the Quantitative Method, which addresses research problems through numerical data and statistical analysis. In quantitative research, data collection tools are developed based on research variables derived from the theory being tested (Pillers Dobler, 2018). This study examines two primary variables: the Independent Variable and the Dependent Variable. They are defined as follows:

- 1. Independent Variable: This variable influences or causes changes in the dependent variable (Pace, 2021). In this study, the independent variable is Unsent AIDC Messages, represented by the symbol X.
- 2. Dependent Variable: This variable is influenced by or is a result of changes in the independent variable (Hossan et al., 2023). In this study, the dependent variable is the ATC Workload at the Approach Control Unit (APP) AirNav Denpasar Branch, represented by the symbol Y.

Data collection in this study was carried out using several techniques:

1. Observation

According to Lo et al (Lo et al., 2020), observation involves using human senses to gather information about the surrounding world. In this study, structured observation was used to observe and calculate the ATC workload according to the KP 265 formula of 2017.

2. Interview

Chamberlain explains that an interview is a data collection technique involving questions posed by the researcher to respondents to gain an in-depth understanding of a topic (LaMarre & Chamberlain, 2022). In this study, interviews were conducted to explore the factors causing unsent AIDC messages and to identify solutions for optimizing AIDC.

3. Documentation Study

Leavy describes a documentation study as a research method that uses documents as primary, secondary, or tertiary data sources (Blanchflower, 2018). The study included an examination of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Aeronautical Information Publications (AIP), AIDC message logs, and aircraft movement data to obtain information related to the research objectives. Additionally, local documents and previous research papers on the role of AIDC in reducing ATC workload at AirNav Denpasar Branch were reviewed.

ATS Inter-facility Data Communications (AIDC) is a data link application that facilitates the exchange of data between air traffic services units during the notification, coordination, and transfer of aircraft between flight information regions. It is an automated system that enables routine coordination by providing reliable and timely data exchange between ATS units, allowing

for accurate information to be obtained directly from the system. This reduces the controller's workload and minimizes human error (ICAO, 2017).

Document 9806 Annex 1 Chapter 2 point 42 explains that workload relates to the amount of work expected from an individual (ICAO, 2002). Air traffic controller workload is defined as the time spent completing all tasks within a specific time interval (Bauer $\&$ Langr, 2017). According to the AirNav Indonesia Manual on Airspace Capacity Calculation, workload is the time required by an ATC officer to complete all tasks within a certain period, usually measured in minutes. The methods for measuring ATC workload, as outlined in the AirNav Indonesia Manual on Airspace Capacity Calculation (Airnav Indonesia, 2015), include the following: observation. interviews, and documentation study

WL = tC1*Oc1+tF1*OF1+tCnf*Cnf

Explanation: WL: Workload OF1: Occurrence of Routine Task OCnf: Occurrence of Climb/Descent Task OC1: Occurrence of Conflict Task tF1: Duration of Routine Task tCnf: Duration of Climb/Descent Task tC1: Duration of Conflict Task

Routine tasks are regular ATC activities, including communication with aircraft, coordination with adjacent units or assistants/planners, and manual activities such as moving flight progress strips, etc.

Climb/Descent tasks involve ATC activities such as issuing climb or descent instructions.

Conflict tasks consist of ATC activities like providing traffic information and issuing instructions to avoid conflicts.

Results and discussions

Based on the observations, the highest recorded traffic was 31 aircraft, with a corresponding workload of 53.4 minutes. The lowest recorded traffic was 24 aircraft, with a workload of 33.3 minutes. Additionally, the average workload from these observations falls into the Overload category.

N _O	ATC	DATE	TIME	TRAFFIC	WORKLOAD ACTUAL	CATEGORY
	WA	01/01/2024	04.00-05.00	31	53.48	Overload
2	SL.	02/01/2024	04.00-05.00	29	48.43	Overload
3	IF	03/01/2024	04.00-05.00	31	49.03	Overload
$\overline{4}$	NS.	04/01/2024	04.00-05.00	25	35.6	Heavy Load
5	МE	05/01/2024	04.00-05.00	29	46.95	Overload
6	RD	06/01/2024	04.00-05.00	30	48.41	Overload
τ	OV	07/01/2024	04.00-05.00	31	49.45	Overload
8	AS	08/01/2024	04.00-05.00	31	48.61	Overload
9	MF	09/01/2024	$04.00 - 05.00$	28	45.81	Overload
10	SC	10/01/2024	04.00-05.00	31	48.36	Overload
11	AI	11/01/2024	04.00-05.00	33	52.05	Overload
12	NA	12/01/2024	04.00-05.00	28	42.8	Overload
13	RY	13/01/2024	04.00-05.00	27	38.56	Heavy Load

Table 2. Workload Data Recapitulation for January 2024

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The term optimization implies that all AIDC messages were successfully sent during the previous actual workload data collection period. AIDC Optimization data is obtained by subtracting the time associated with unsent AIDC messages from the actual workload data. The data indicates that if all AIDC messages are sent, there is a significant reduction in workload. Specifically, the average actual workload, initially categorized as Overload, decreases to the Heavy Load category. The distribution shifts to 16 instances of Heavy Load, 1 instance of Overload, and 3 instances of Medium Load.

	WORKLOAD ACTUAL	AIDC UNDELIVERED		WORKLOAD	CATEGORY	
N _O		OCCURRENCE	TIME	AIDC OPTIMAL		
1	53.48	$\overline{\mathcal{L}}$	160	50.81	Overload	
$\overline{2}$	48.43	$\overline{2}$	80	47.09	Overload	
$\overline{3}$	49.03	$\overline{8}$	320	43.69	Overload	
$\overline{4}$	35.6	$\overline{4}$	160	32.93	Heavy Load	
5	46.95	7	280	42.28	Overload	
6	48.41	6	240	44.41	Overload	
$\overline{7}$	49.45	$\overline{2}$	80	48.11	Overload	
$\overline{8}$	48.61	$\overline{6}$	240	44.61	Overload	
9	45.81	$\overline{4}$	160	43.14	Overload	
10	48.36	11	440	41.02	Heavy Load	
11	52.05	7	280	47.38	Overload	
12	42.8	5	200	39.46	Heavy Load	
13	38.56	$\overline{4}$	160	35.89	Heavy Load	
14	48.33	5	200	44.99	Overload	
15	46.45	$\overline{8}$	320	41.11	Heavy Load	
16	42.18	8	320	36.83	Heavy Load	
$\overline{17}$	47.11	5	200	43.77	Overload	
18	33.3	5	200	29.96	Medium Load	
19	34.08	$\mathbf{1}$	40	33.41	Heavy Load	
20	36.31	3	120	34.31	Heavy Load	
21	37.2	6	240	33.2	Heavy Load	
$\overline{22}$	33.81	$\overline{4}$	160	31.14	Medium Load	
23	42.38	$\overline{4}$	160	39.71	Heavy Load	
24	43.81	7	280	39.14	Heavy Load	
25	41.8	τ	280	37.13	Heavy Load	
$\overline{26}$	40.98	3	120	38.98	Heavy Load	
$\overline{27}$	32.43	7	280	27.76	Medium Load	

Table 3. AIDC Optimal Workload Data Recapitulation for January 2024

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1. Normality Test

Tests of Normality

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 4. Normality Test Results

Based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, it can be concluded that the data for both the UNSENT AIDC MESSAGE variable (statistic value of 0.972 and significance value of 0.567) and the ATC WORKLOAD variable (statistic value of 0.942 and significance value of 0.091) are normally distributed, as the significance values are greater than 0.05.

2. Correlation Test

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

Figure 5. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test Results

Based on the results of the Pearson Product Moment correlation test, it can be concluded that there is a very strong and significant relationship between the UNSENT AIDC MESSAGE variable and the ATC WORKLOAD variable. The correlation value is 0.971 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating that an increase in one variable tends to be followed by a significant increase in the other variable.

3. Simple Linear Regression Test

a. Predictors: (Constant), PESAN AIDC TIDAK TERKIRIM

Figure 6. Simple Linear Regression Test Results

Based on the results of the simple linear regression test, it can be concluded that the model shows a very strong and significant relationship between the independent variable (UNSENT AIDC MESSAGE) and the dependent variable (ATC WORKLOAD). The R value is 0.971, and the R Square value is 0.942, explaining 94.2% of the variation in the dependent variable. The Adjusted R Square value is 0.940, indicating that this model is reliable for prediction with relatively small deviation.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals a very strong and significant relationship between Unsent AIDC Messages and ATC Workload. The Pearson Product Moment correlation test shows a correlation value of 0.971, indicating a very strong relationship. The simple linear regression analysis further supports this, with Unsent AIDC Messages accounting for 94% of the variation in ATC Workload, as evidenced by an R Square value of 0.942 and an Adjusted R Square value of 0.940.

Based on these findings, it is clear that AIDC optimization is closely linked to ATC workload. An increase in unsent AIDC messages significantly raises ATC workload. Therefore, to effectively manage air traffic controller workload, it is crucial to focus on optimizing AIDC messages.

Recommended Actions:

- 1. Improve AIDC Efficiency: Adopt advanced technologies and methods to enhance AIDC optimization, thereby managing ATC workload more effectively.
- 2. Training and Development: Provide ongoing training for ATC personnel on the latest AIDC technologies to improve their effectiveness and efficiency.
- 3. Continuous Monitoring: Regularly monitor the relationship between AIDC and ATC workload to ensure that improvements in AIDC optimization continue to have a positive impact.
- 4. Policy Development: Develop and implement policies that support AIDC optimization as a key component of ATC workload management strategies.

By implementing these steps, it is possible to achieve better management of ATC workload, leading to enhanced performance and operational efficiency in air traffic management.

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