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Intelligence Strategy Analysis for Security Enhancement at Immigration Checkpoints: A Case Study of Soekarno-Hatta Airport Autogate

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Abstract
The Soekarno-Hatta Airport played a strategic role as the main entry point for foreign nationals into Indonesia amidst increasing global mobility. The Autogate system was introduced to enhance efficiency and security at Immigration Checkpoints. However, challenges such as document misuse, lack of cross-sector data integration, and gaps in validation remain key concerns. This situation highlighted the importance of intelligence strategies in detecting and addressing security threats to support national stability. This research aimed to analyze intelligence strategies to enhance security at the Immigration Checkpoints of Soekarno-Hatta Airport through the implementation of the Autogate system. The study employed a descriptive-analytical qualitative method with a case study approach, using in-depth interviews, direct observation, and analysis of policy documents and scientific publications. The data were analyzed thematically to evaluate system weaknesses and the effectiveness of intelligence strategies. The research findings showed that intelligence strategies combining manual interviews with technology-based analysis proved effective in detecting potential security threats. However, several weaknesses were identified, including a lack of cross-sector data integration, gaps in document validation, and challenges in officer training. The study recommends strengthening inter-agency cooperation, advancing technology development, and restricting Autogate use for foreign nationals from high-risk countries to support national security more effectively.

Keywords: Autogate, Immigration Checkpoint, Intelligence Strategy, National Security

1. Introduction

Soekarno-Hatta Airport as the main international airport in Indonesia has a strategic role as the main entry point for foreign nationals visiting Indonesia. It's strategically positioned at the core of Southeast Asia region and extensive global connectivity. This airport is the main gateway for various international activities, both for

business, tourism, education, and transit purposes (Asari et al., 2024). Related to increasing global mobility, the role of Soekarno-Hatta Airport is very vital not only as a means of transportation, but also as the front line in maintaining national security.

In every year, thousands of foreign nationals enter through Soekarno-Hatta Airport. It is bringing potential economic benefits such as increased investment and tourism. However, the high influx of foreign nationals also brings major challenges, especially in the context of security. Many cases such as the entry of foreign nationals with fake documents, visa abuse, and involvement in illegal activities, such as human trafficking or terrorism threats, show the importance of strict supervision at this point. The Immigration Checkpoint at Soekarno-Hatta Airport must be able to carry out a dual function which is providing fast and efficient services to international travelers, while ensuring that no security threats escape supervision (Hamdi, 2023).

Autogate technology has become a significant innovation in improving the efficiency and security of the immigration process at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. In January 2024, the Directorate General of Immigration inaugurated 78 new Autogate units at this airport, with details of 52 units in Terminal 3 arrivals, 16 units in Terminal 3 departures, and 10 units in Terminal 2. This facility can be used by Indonesian citizens and foreign citizens. The condition for foreign citizens immigration inspection times lasting only 15-25 seconds per passer (IMMIGRATION, 2024).

Autogate utilizes facial recognition technology integrated with Border Control Management, thus supporting immigration supervision at crossings. To use Autogate , foreign nationals are required to have an electronic passport and visa submitted through the official Indonesian Immigration e-visa website. Meanwhile, Indonesian citizens can use Autogate with an electronic passport or a regular passport (Hakim, 2019).

The implementation of Autogate not only speeds up the inspection process but also increases security by minimizing direct contact between passers-by and immigration officers. This is thereby reducing the risk of human error and potential abuse of authority. In addition, this system is able to detect individuals on the watch list through integration with the Interpol database and the national prevention and control system (Ongis Travel, 2024).

The immigration screening process at Soekarno-Hatta Airport faces complex challenges, especially in detecting foreign nationals with unclear or suspicious arrival purposes. Although Autogate technology has been implemented to improve efficiency and security in certain cases show that this system has not been fully able to prevent potential threats. One of the biggest challenges is the existence of WNA who try to enter Indonesia using fake documents or exploiting loopholes in the system. For example, the cases involving foreign citizens who managed to pass through Autogate, but then attracted the attention of officers because they could not provide a clear reason regarding the purpose of their visit.

Based on data from the Directorate General of Immigration, immigration violations have continued to occur in recent years. Specifically at the Soekarno-Hatta Immigration Office in 2022, it was recorded that 1,222 foreign nationals were refused entry to Indonesia, while 3,551 foreign nationals and 568 Indonesian citizens had their departures postponed for immigration reasons (Soekarnohatta Immigration, 2022). In 2023, the number of foreign nationals refused entry decreased slightly to 1,169 people, but departure delays increased significantly with 6,451 Indonesian citizens being postponed (Soekarnohatta Immigration, 2023). In addition, administrative immigration actions, including deportation are carried out against hundreds of violators each year. These cases reflect the major challenges in maintaining border security amid increasing international mobility.

Further data shows that in 2023, the five countries with the most deported citizens were China with 507 people, Nigeria with 420 people, Malaysia with 332 people, Vietnam with 142 people, and India with 93 people. The high number of deportations indicates a significant trend of violations from these countries. This reflects the great challenge of maintaining border security amidst increasing international mobility, especially by utilizing systems such as Autogate which still have loopholes for abuse by some groups of foreign nationals.

Situations like this highlight the weaknesses of the Autogate system, which tends to rely on the validity of biometric documents without considering factors such as face-to-face interviews or behavioral analysis. Additional challenges come from the lack of cross-agency data integration, which makes the identification of individuals on international watch lists less than optimal. In some cases, sectoral egos between immigration authorities and airlines also exacerbate the situation, especially when passenger data is incomplete or not submitted on time.

The implementation of intelligence strategies in screening foreign citizens who will enter Indonesia through Immigration Checkpoints has a very important role in maintaining the stability of national resilience in this modern era. Along with the increasing flow of global mobility and open access between countries, Indonesia has become one of the main destinations for business people, tourists, and foreign workers. Behind the economic and cultural benefits brought by the flow of foreign citizens, there are major challenges related to potential security threats such as drug smuggling, terrorism, human trafficking, and visa abuse. Intelligence strategies are key to mitigating these risks, especially at main entry points such as Soekarno-Hatta Airport, which is the gateway for most foreign citizens coming to Indonesia (Setyawan, 2023).

This study aims to analyze how intelligence strategies are applied in detecting and handling suspicious foreign nationals citizens, especially at the Immigration Checkpoint of Soekarno-Hatta Airport. This strategy is important considering the challenges faced in screening individuals with unclear arrival purposes or potential threats to national security. This study also aims to identify weaknesses in the Autogate system which has provided efficiency in the inspection process, still has loopholes that can be exploited by irresponsible parties.

2. Literature Review

Immigration intelligence strategy is important in overcoming the problem of human smuggling, especially at the Immigration Checkpoint of Soekarno-Hatta Airport. Indonesia as a strategic transit country in international migration movements often faces major challenges in border control, where human smuggling often occurs due to minimal data integration between institutions and weak early detection of suspicious individuals (Asari et al., 2024). Intelligence strategies based on behavioral analysis, monitoring travel patterns, and data-based immigration technology are the main solutions to tightening supervision.

The implementation of Autogate as an automated immigration inspection system at Soekarno-Hatta Airport is an effort to modernize and increase the efficiency of immigration services. This technology allows the passport verification process and biometric identification to be carried out independently by passers-by without direct interaction with immigration officers. However, research by Hakim (2019) shows that this system still has limitations in detecting the use of fake documents and suspicious travel patterns. The lack of integration of the Autogate system with international surveillance databases, such as Interpol or I-24/7, allows individuals with a history of immigration violations to still pass through inspection without adequate detection.

Although technology has brought progress in immigration control, a study by Asari et al. (2024) emphasized that the role of officers in selective interviews and behavioral analysis is still very much needed to improve detection accuracy. Several countries have begun developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) based Autogate, which can analyze travel patterns, detect anomalies in travel documents, and provide early warnings to immigration officers. Integration of this system with global immigration intelligence is expected to increase effectiveness in preventing human smuggling in Indonesia.

Based on various studies that have been conducted, it can be concluded that immigration intelligence strategies have a vital role in maintaining national security. The effectiveness of Autogate in immigration supervision can be improved through a combination of AI-based technology, integration of global intelligence systems, and increasing the capacity of officers in detecting suspicious behavior. With these steps, immigration supervision in Indonesia, especially at Soekarno-Hatta Airport, can be more optimal in facing the challenges of global migration and transnational crime.

3. Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach to analyze the implementation of intelligence strategies in detecting and handling suspicious foreign nationals at the Soekarno-Hatta Airport Immigration Checkpoint. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with immigration officers and direct observation of the use of Autogate while secondary data include case reports, policies, and immigration procedures.

Data analysis was conducted thematically using vulnerability theory to evaluate Autogate weaknesses. Comparative studies were applied to compare cases of foreign nationals who passed through with incomplete administration and those who were detected through manual interviews. The results of the analysis are expected to identify system weaknesses, evaluate the effectiveness of intelligence strategies, and provide recommendations to improve security and efficiency at Immigration Checkpoint.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Foreign Nationals Cases at Autogate

Autogate System at the Soekarno-Hatta Airport Immigration Checkpoint is designed to improve efficiency and simplify the immigration inspection process (Nursanto et al., 2024). However, several cases show that this system is often misused by foreign nationals to avoid in-depth checks and exploit system weaknesses. Here are three cases that illustrate the challenges faced;

4.1.1 Case 1: Initials ZZ

ZZ is a citizen of the People's Republic of China, arrived in Indonesia using a B1 index visa (Visa On Arrival) via CEA Airlines from Shanghai in 2025. After arriving at Immigration Checkpoint Terminal 3, ZZ immediately used Autogate to scan his passport, adjust his biometrics, and validate his visa. Although he passed Autogate, his hasty and panicked behavior caught the attention of immigration officers. A manual check revealed that ZZ did not have a valid return ticket or hotel reservation. When interviewed further, he claimed to have come for a vacation. However, other evidence showed that ZZ actually intended to conduct a business visit and inspect the machine, which violated the B1 visa permit. ZZ used Autogate to avoid in-depth interviews and facilitate entry into Indonesia even though his administration was incomplete.

ZZ's actions are contrary to Article 27 paragraph (1) of the Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 9 of 2024 concerning Procedures for Immigration Examination of Persons Entering or Leaving Indonesian Territory. The article states that every foreigner entering Indonesian territory must undergo an immigration examination, including an examination of the suitability of the purpose and purpose of arrival with the visa held. In ZZ's case, the purpose of his arrival to conduct a business visit with a B1 index visa (Visa On Arrival) was clearly not appropriate, thus violating applicable regulations.

4.1.2 Case 2: Initials LB

LB is a citizen of the People's Republic of China, is a user of a D2 index visa (multiple entry business visa). He arrived via XA airline from Fuzhou in 2025 and used Autogate for passport control. After passing Autogate, LB went to the Polsusim (Special Immigration Police) desk to request an entry stamp in the form of a sticker on his passport, even though an electronic entry stamp had been given to his email when registering for his e-visa. Thus, after LB passed the Autogate machine, the entry stamp was automatically sent to his email or to his company's email. LB argued that the stamp was needed for his company's travel expense reimbursement claim. After an in-depth interview, it was revealed that LB did not have enough hotel reservations until the end of his stay. LB's company even asked officers to ignore requests for additional hotel reservations. This case shows how Autogate is often used to enter with incomplete documents without going through a strict manual interview.

4.1.3 Case 3: Initials CH

CH is a citizen of the People's Republic of China with a B2 index visa (visit visa on arrival for business meeting purposes), arrived at Soekarno-Hatta Airport in 2024 via XA airline from Fuzhou. When his passport failed to be scanned at the Autogate, CH refused to be directed to the manual counter and even jumped over the Autogate to avoid the long queue. After being ambushed by Polsusim (Special Immigration Police) officers, CH was taken to the supervisor's room for further interrogation. During the interview, CH was suspected of being drunk because the supervisor smelled a strong odor of alcohol. After being confirmed with his sponsor in Indonesia, it was discovered that CH had consumed alcohol before entering the immigration area. Based on the violation of Article 127 of Permenkumham Number 9 of 2024 concerning procedures for checking entry and exit of Indonesian territory paragraphs 1 and 2 "Every foreigner who enters Indonesian territory is required to comply with the rules and follow the directions of the examining officer in order to maintain order in the examination process", CH was finally refused entry to Indonesia because he was considered to have disturbed public order. This case indicates that some foreign nationals are using Autogate as a quick and easy way to avoid applicable regulations.

These three cases show that Autogate is useful for speeding up the entry process, the system still has weaknesses that are often exploited by foreign nationals. Behaviors such as entering without complete administration, avoiding manual interviews, and violating regulations show that Autogate cannot completely replace the role of manual inspection by immigration officers. The weaknesses of this system show the importance of implementing a stronger intelligence strategy, including cross-sector data integration and officer training to detect signs of suspicion more effectively.

4.2 Intelligence Strategy Analysis

The implementation of an intelligence strategy in the screening process of foreign nationals at the Soekarno-Hatta Airport Immigration Checkpoint is an important step to overcome various weaknesses in the Autogate system. This strategy involves a combined approach between direct examination by officers and the use of technology for in-depth data analysis.

The manual inspection approach, such as direct interviews and inspections by immigration officers, allows officers to dig deeper into information, especially when foreign nationals show suspicious behavior or have incomplete administration. In the case of ZZ, for example, the manual interview revealed a purpose of arrival that did not match the type of visa used. Officers can use the interview to identify inconsistencies in answers, verify supporting documents, or observe non-verbal behavior that reflects nervousness or panic. Although this method takes longer, manual interviews are a very effective tool in detecting individuals who try to exploit weaknesses in the Autogate system.

Meanwhile, the use of technology is an important element in this strategy. Data-based profiling allows immigration authorities to evaluate travel history, purpose of arrival, and potential risks associated with certain foreign nationals. Biometric technology such as facial recognition applied to Autogate is an important part of this approach, as it can match the identity of the crosser with data stored in international databases such as the Interpol watch list (Nurkumalawati, 2020).

The effectiveness of the intelligence strategy in handling these cases shows significant results, although there is still room for improvement. In the cases of ZZ, LB, and CH, the application of a combination of intelligence successfully identified and handled violations that had the potential to threaten public order. However, it also revealed loopholes that were often exploited by foreign nationals. Many of them became too comfortable with Autogate so that they were reluctant to follow rules such as manual queues, officer directions, or completing travel administration. This shows that even though Autogate is running in real-time, this system has not been able to prevent abuse completely.

One recommended solution is to limit the use of Autogate for certain foreign nationals based on the record of violations committed by foreign nationals in Indonesia. Countries whose citizens have a high history of violations can be excluded from the use of Autogate. With this policy, foreign nationals from these countries are required to

go through a manual inspection route so that more in-depth checks can be carried out, including direct interviews to obtain further information.

In addition, training for immigration officers is still needed to ensure they are able to detect signs of non-technical threats that are not detected by technology. This includes the ability to read suspicious behavior, as well as handling foreign nationals who try to abuse the Autogate facility. With these steps, the use of Autogate can be safer and still support the main objectives of efficiency and security at TPI.

4.3 Identification of System Weaknesses

Autogate system at the Soekarno-Hatta Airport Immigration Checkpoint still has several weaknesses that can be exploited by foreign nationals citizens with suspicious intentions. One of the main problems is that the system only verifies electronic documents such as passports and visas without checking the purpose of arrival in more depth. This system does not have the feature to verify more complex details, such as the suitability of the type of visa to the purpose of arrival or the availability of other supporting documents. As a result, foreign citizens with documents that appear valid on the surface can easily pass the initial check without being detected.

Other weaknesses is the lack of restrictions on Autogate access. Any foreign country, as long as they have an e-visa and an electronic passport, can use Autogate without any additional process. This opens up loopholes for foreign nationals who would otherwise require more in-depth checks to still be able to enter Indonesian territory without hindrance. The Autogate system is also unable to detect more subtle administrative violations such as the misuse of a visitor visa for inappropriate purposes.

Another weakness lies in the management of passenger manifest data provided by airlines. This manifest should be sent through the Passenger Profiling Information System an online application designed to collect passenger data from airlines and send it to immigration before arrival. This system simplifies the profiling process by providing data on the number of passengers, country of origin, and other details relevant to immigration checks.

Unfortunately, some airlines often do not fill in the data in Passenger Profiling Information System completely or even do not send the data at all. For example, national airlines such as Garuda Indonesia are known to rarely fill in passenger data in it. The delay or incompleteness of filling in this data has a direct impact on the profiling process carried out by immigration, because officers do not have access to real-time passenger information to identify citizens who have the potential to pose a security risk. When manifest data is not available or incomplete, the profiling task becomes less than optimal, and this increases the risk of suspicious foreigners slipping through Autogate undetected. The main responsibility for managing Autogate lies entirely with immigration as the core business. However, the success of this system also depends heavily on the accuracy and timeliness of the manifest data provided by the airline.

These weaknesses indicate that Autogate speeds up the inspection process, it is not enough to ensure overall security. The solutions to overcome this problem are developing a more integrated system, intensive training for immigration officers, and formulating policies that support coordination. In addition, a more strategic step is to implement a selection of certain foreign national subjects. Countries with a history of high violations or whose citizens often abuse entry permits can be excluded from the use of Autogate . Citizens from these countries are required to go through a manual inspection route so that a more in-depth interview process and stricter supervision can be carried out. This policy will strengthen the security system and reduce the risk of misuse of Autogate facilities by irresponsible parties.

This is in line with the principle of selective policy stipulated in Law Number 6 of 2011 concerning Immigration, where Indonesia only grants entry permits to foreign nationals who have a positive impact on the interests of the country (Law No. 6 of 2011). Manual inspection has a strategic role in selecting potentially problematic foreign nationals, ensuring that only individuals who meet the administrative requirements and the appropriate purpose of arrival are permitted to enter Indonesian territory. By referring to this policy, the immigration selection and supervision process can be further tightened to maintain national stability and security.

Specifically for the Soekarno-Hatta Immigration Office data shows that Nigerian and Chinese citizens are the groups that most often commit immigration violations during 2024. There were a total of 267 immigration violations, consisting of 251 administrative immigration actions and 16 cases that were subject to pro justitia actions by the Immigration Intelligence and Enforcement Division (Soekarnohatta Immigration, 2025). This fact strengthens the urgency to implement a policy of restricting the use of Autogate for certain citizens and prioritizing manual checks on them to ensure better security at the Soekarno-Hatta Airport immigration checkpoints.

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