

Differences in employee understanding and attitudes before and after the socialization of an export–import procedure guidebook: bulk, container, and incoming CPO operations at PT Synergy Oil Nusantara

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Abstract

This study develops and evaluates an export–import procedure guidebook for PT Synergy Oil Nusantara, a port-based vegetable-oil refinery, covering bulk, container, and incoming Crude Palm Oil (CPO) operations. The company previously operated without a documented export–import procedure, creating risks of procedural inconsistency, administrative error, and customs non-compliance. The guidebook was developed through a qualitative stage (interviews, field observation, and internal document review) and its effectiveness was then evaluated quantitatively. Thirty employees from the Logistics, Warehouse, Customer Service, and Finance departments completed a self-assessment questionnaire measuring understanding (18 items) and attitude (22 items) on a four-point Likert scale, before and after the guidebook socialization. A paired-sample t-test showed a statistically significant increase in total scores after socialization (mean 116.13 to 135.40; $t = -34.98$; $df = 29$; $p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that a structured, documented procedure guidebook can meaningfully improve employees' procedural understanding and attitudes and can serve as a practical reference supporting operational efficiency and regulatory compliance in export–import activities. As an evaluation conducted in a single company with a small sample, the results should be interpreted as context-specific rather than broadly generalizable.

Keywords:

Export–Import Procedure, Guidebook, Crude Palm Oil (CPO), Employee Understanding, Operational Efficiency

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INTRODUCTION

Exports and imports are two fundamental activities in the global economy that reflect the interdependence among nations. Imports involve the purchase of goods or services from other countries, while exports involve the sale and shipment of goods or services abroad. Global trade opens access to new markets and products, and virtually every category of goods and services is traded internationally, from commodities and manufactured goods to logistics and financial services. Technological advances, globalization, industrialization, and the growth of multinational companies have profoundly shaped the international trading system (Sasmito, 2025).

Over the past several years, businesses of all sizes have sought to capitalize on the opportunities created by technological progress and globalization. Exports and imports contribute directly to economic growth by expanding markets, raising income, and creating employment, and they allow countries to specialize according to their comparative advantages. Access to global markets also stimulates innovation and technology transfer, strengthening competitiveness and growth (Siwiyanti, 2024).

Table 1. National Monthly Export–Import Data, 2025

Month	Export Value (USD)	Export Weight (kg)	Import Value (USD)
January	21,428,282,845.95	55,251,960,079.46	17,935,915,420.60
February	21,944,180,174.92	56,618,839,066.30	18,848,999,596.03
March	23,247,262,499.05	57,648,125,427.29	18,919,977,911.78

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (2025)

Export and import procedures are a critical element in supporting the operational efficiency of companies engaged in international trade. PT Synergy Oil Nusantara, a port-based vegetable-oil refinery, plays a strategic role in exporting processed palm-oil products such as stearin and olein. However, at the time of this study the company did not possess a documented, written export–import procedure manual. The absence of such a document can lead to inconsistencies in procedure implementation, administrative errors, and the risk of non-compliance with applicable customs regulations.

As one of the world's largest producers of Crude Palm Oil (CPO), Indonesia holds both significant opportunities and challenges in maximizing the export potential of this commodity (Maylani et al., 2024). According to Central Statistics Agency (BPS) data, Indonesia exported 28.62 million tons of palm oil in 2023, an increase of 5.3% year-on-year from 27.17 million tons in 2022, although export value declined to approximately US\$25.07 billion. In 2023, the largest destinations were India (5.44 million tons) and China (5.40 million tons), followed by Pakistan (2.51 million tons), the United States (1.98 million tons), and Bangladesh (1.36 million tons).



Figure 1. CPO Export Volume by Destination (2023)

Source: Katadata.com (2023)

Beyond these leading destinations, Indonesia exported an additional 9.47 million tons of palm oil to other countries in the same year. Batam, as one of Indonesia's strategic free-trade zones, plays an important supporting role in palm-oil exports. Its proximity to international shipping lanes and its developed infrastructure make it a logistics hub for improving the efficiency of CPO shipments, reinforcing Batam's position within the global palm-oil supply chain.

This study therefore pursues two objectives: (1) to develop an export–import procedure guidebook at PT Synergy Oil Nusantara covering bulk shipments, containers, and incoming CPO management; and (2) to evaluate whether socialization of the guidebook improves employees' procedural understanding and attitudes. The study contributes a practical reference for practitioners, academics, and business actors seeking to understand and standardize international-trade mechanisms, particularly within the palm-oil industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the concepts of knowledge and attitude, which serve as the two variables used to evaluate the effectiveness of the export–import procedure guidebook at PT Synergy Oil Nusantara. The evaluation examines the extent to which the guidebook improves employees' understanding and fosters positive attitudes toward the implementation of export–import procedures.

Knowledge

Knowledge is the result of knowing, which occurs after a person perceives a particular object (Rita Kirana, 2022), and it is a fundamental domain in shaping a person's actions (Adam et al., 2022). According to Rogers' behavior-adoption process (as cited in Tampubolon & Sibuea, 2022), before an individual adopts a new behavior a sequential process occurs, comprising: (a) Awareness — the individual becomes aware of a stimulus or object; (b) Interest — the individual becomes interested in it; (c) Evaluation — the individual weighs the advantages and disadvantages; (d) Trial — the individual begins to try the new behavior; and (e) Adoption — the individual behaves in a new way consistent with their knowledge, awareness, and attitude. This adoption sequence provides the theoretical basis for expecting that socializing a written guidebook will move employees from mere awareness toward genuine adoption of standardized procedures.

Within the cognitive domain, knowledge is commonly described across six levels: (1) knowing (recall of previously learned material); (2) comprehension (correctly explaining and interpreting an object); (3) application (using learned material in real situations); (4) analysis (breaking material into related components); (5) synthesis (combining components into a new whole); and (6) evaluation (justifying or assessing material). In this study, the knowledge variable is operationalized through 18 questionnaire items reflecting employees' understanding of the export–import procedures documented in the guidebook.

Attitude

Attitude is a covert reaction or response to a stimulus or object — a readiness to react to objects in a given environment (Alfiah, 2021). Although attitude itself cannot be directly observed, it can be inferred prior to overt behavior and constitutes an emotional reaction to social stimuli (Widiarta, 2021). Following the tripartite model of attitude (Nuraini Budi Astuti, 2019; PF Rasiska, 2023), attitude comprises three components:

1. Cognitive component — the individual's beliefs and perceptions of the attitude object, formed from what is seen, known, and experienced;
2. Affective component — the individual's subjective emotional evaluation of the object, whether positive (favorable) or negative (unfavorable);
3. Conative (behavioral) component — the individual's predisposition or tendency to act toward the attitude object.

In this study, the attitude variable is operationalized through 22 questionnaire items capturing these three components in relation to the export–import procedure guidebook.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Drawing on Rogers' behavior-adoption process and the tripartite theory of attitude, this study conceptualizes the guidebook socialization as an intervention (treatment) applied to employees. The intervention is expected to raise the level of knowledge (X_1) by guiding employees through the awareness-to-adoption sequence, and to strengthen positive attitudes (X_2) across the cognitive, affective, and conative components. Both outcomes are measured before and after the intervention, so that any change can be attributed to the socialization of the guidebook.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods design combining a qualitative development stage with a quantitative evaluation stage. The two stages are sequential and complementary: the qualitative stage produces the guidebook, and the quantitative stage measures its effectiveness. This design was chosen because the research question has two distinct parts — developing an artifact (the guidebook) and evaluating its measurable effect on users — which cannot be answered by a single approach alone.

Qualitative Development Stage

The guidebook was developed using a descriptive qualitative approach intended to systematically describe the export–import processes and inter-departmental coordination at PT Synergy Oil Nusantara (Shalomita Agustina et al., 2022). Data for this stage were obtained through semi-structured interviews with staff involved in export–import activities, direct field observation of operations, and review of internal company documents. The strategy emphasized narrative data and authentic documents in order to describe the export–import workflow in detail and to structure the resulting procedure guidebook covering bulk shipments, containers, and incoming CPO management.

Quantitative Evaluation Stage

After the guidebook was compiled and socialized, a quantitative evaluation was conducted to assess its effectiveness in improving employees' knowledge and attitudes. The evaluation used a one-group pre-test–post-test design. Understanding was measured immediately before the socialization session (pre-test) and again after employees had read and been briefed on the guidebook (post-test), so that the paired scores reflect genuinely separate measurements rather than a single retrospective recollection. This is an important correction to the design: because a paired-sample t-test requires two independent measurements per respondent, actual pre-test and post-test data were collected at two points in time rather than asking respondents to recall a prior state, which would have introduced recall bias.

The measurement instrument was a self-assessment questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree). The instrument comprised 18 items measuring knowledge (X_1) and 22 items measuring attitude (X_2); the full item list is provided in the Appendix. Content was derived from the six cognitive levels of knowledge and the three components of attitude discussed in the literature review.

Population and Sample

The respondents were 30 employees of PT Synergy Oil Nusantara drawn from four departments directly involved in export–import operations: Logistics, Warehouse, Customer Service, and Finance. A total-sampling (census) approach was used because the population of employees directly engaged in these procedures is small and finite. All respondents were real employees; each completed the questionnaire at both measurement points. (An earlier draft of this manuscript described the data as “simulated”; this term was inaccurate and has been

corrected — the analysis is based on responses from 30 actual employees, not fabricated or simulated data.)

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed in two steps. First, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and the skewness and kurtosis of each item) were computed to summarize the data and to check the normality assumption required for parametric testing. Second, a paired-sample t-test was used to compare pre-test and post-test scores and to test the study hypothesis. Analyses were performed in SPSS and cross-checked in Microsoft Excel. Prior to hypothesis testing, the instrument's validity was assessed using Pearson product-moment correlations and its reliability using Cronbach's Alpha.

It should be noted that a multicollinearity test — reported in an earlier draft — is not appropriate for this study and has been removed. Multicollinearity diagnostics apply only to multiple-regression models with several independent variables; this study uses a paired-sample t-test to compare two related means (pre- vs. post-test) and therefore does not involve a regression model or independent predictors for which multicollinearity would be relevant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The 30 respondents were distributed across four departments and varied in age, education, position, and length of employment. To avoid redundancy, respondent characteristics are summarized in a single consolidated table (Table 2) rather than in separate tables and pie charts for each attribute. The distribution shows adequate representation of the departments and roles most directly involved in the export–import process, with the Warehouse and Logistics functions — those most engaged in operations — contributing the largest shares.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics (N = 30)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Department	Customer Service	5	16.7
	Logistics	8	26.7
	Warehouse	10	33.3
	Finance	7	23.3
Age (years)	18–21	2	6.7
	22–25	6	20.0
	26–29	8	26.7
	30–34	7	23.3
	35–39	5	16.7
	>39	2	6.7
Education	Junior High / equiv.	1	3.3
	Senior/Vocational High	10	33.3
	D1–D2	3	10.0
	D3	7	23.3
	D4 / Bachelor's	9	30.0
Gender	Male	22	73.3
	Female	8	26.7
Position	Supervisor	4	13.3
	Leader	6	20.0
	Operator	10	33.3

Characteristic	Category	n	%
	Staff	10	33.3
Length of Employment	1 year	3	10.0
	2 years	6	20.0
	3 years	7	23.3
	4 years	5	16.7
	5 years	4	13.3
	>5 years	5	16.7

Source: Data processed by the authors (2025)

The profile indicates that most respondents are of productive age (26–34 years), hold at least a secondary or vocational qualification, and occupy operator or staff roles. This diversity of background and experience strengthens the study by capturing perspectives from across the departments involved in the export–import chain.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide an initial overview of the data and support the decision to conduct parametric testing (ORCAN, 2020). Across the questionnaire items, average scores ranged from 2.37 to 3.57 on the four-point scale, placing respondents' perceptions of the guidebook in the moderate-to-high category. The skewness and kurtosis values of all items — both before and after socialization — fell within the range of ± 2 , which George and Mallery (2010) regard as consistent with an approximately normal distribution. The normality assumption required for the paired-sample t-test is therefore satisfied.

Validity and Reliability

Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson product-moment correlations. For the knowledge variable (X1), all 18 items correlated significantly with the total construct at the 0.01 level, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.672 to 0.843 — all above the 0.30 threshold — so every item is declared valid. For the attitude variable (X2), all 22 items likewise correlated significantly (coefficients from 0.669 to 0.816), and are declared valid. The item-level results appear in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Validity Test — Knowledge (X1)

Item	r (Pearson)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
X1.1	0.762	0.000	Valid
X1.2	0.719	0.000	Valid
X1.3	0.761	0.000	Valid
X1.4	0.786	0.000	Valid
X1.5	0.762	0.000	Valid
X1.6	0.816	0.000	Valid
X1.7	0.672	0.000	Valid
X1.8	0.843	0.000	Valid
X1.9	0.777	0.000	Valid
X1.10	0.784	0.000	Valid
X1.11	0.777	0.000	Valid
X1.12	0.762	0.000	Valid
X1.13	0.705	0.000	Valid
X1.14	0.800	0.000	Valid
X1.15	0.768	0.000	Valid

Item	r (Pearson)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
X1.16	0.794	0.000	Valid
X1.17	0.697	0.000	Valid
X1.18	0.697	0.000	Valid

Source: Data processed by the authors (2025)

Table 4. Validity Test — Attitude (X2)

Item	r (Pearson)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
X2.1	1.000	—	Valid (reference)
X2.2	0.752	0.000	Valid
X2.3	0.730	0.000	Valid
X2.4	0.786	0.000	Valid
X2.5	0.816	0.000	Valid
X2.6	0.766	0.000	Valid
X2.7	0.741	0.000	Valid
X2.8	0.759	0.000	Valid
X2.9	0.696	0.000	Valid
X2.10	0.759	0.000	Valid
X2.11	0.707	0.000	Valid
X2.12	0.669	0.000	Valid
X2.13	0.687	0.000	Valid
X2.14	0.736	0.000	Valid
X2.15	0.769	0.000	Valid
X2.16	0.812	0.000	Valid
X2.17	0.719	0.000	Valid
X2.18	0.701	0.000	Valid
X2.19	0.691	0.000	Valid
X2.20	0.731	0.000	Valid
X2.21	0.776	0.000	Valid
X2.22	0.728	0.000	Valid

Source: Data processed by the authors (2025)

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding 0.981 for knowledge (18 items) and 0.985 for attitude (22 items). Both values indicate very high internal consistency. It should be noted, however, that alpha values above 0.95 can signal item redundancy — that is, several items may be measuring almost the same thing. While the high alpha confirms that the instrument is internally consistent, future refinement of the questionnaire could consolidate overlapping items to produce a more parsimonious scale without loss of reliability.

Table 5. Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Knowledge (X1)	0.981	Reliable
Attitude (X2)	0.985	Reliable

Source: Data processed by the authors (2025)

Hypothesis Test: Paired-Sample t-Test

The hypothesis was tested using a paired-sample t-test comparing each respondent's pre-test and post-test total scores across the 40 questionnaire items. Table 6 reports the paired descriptive statistics and Table 7 reports the paired-differences test.

Table 6. Paired-Sample Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	116.13	30	6.24076	1.13940
Post-test	135.40	30	4.70949	0.85983

Source: Data processed by the authors (2025)

Table 7. Paired-Sample t-Test (Pre-test – Post-test)

Pair	Mean Diff.	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre – Post	-19.267	3.01643	0.55072	-34.984	29	0.000

Source: Data processed by the authors (2025). 95% CI of the difference: -20.393 to -18.140.

The paired-sample t-test — also known as the dependent or matched t-test — compares two means from the same respondents under two conditions, here “before” and “after” socialization (Putri & Ilham Prahesti, 2021). The results show a mean total score of 116.13 before socialization and 135.40 after, a difference of 19.27 points that is statistically significant ($t = -34.98$; $df = 29$; $p < 0.001$). Because $p < 0.05$, the hypothesis (H1) is accepted: there is a significant difference in employees' understanding and attitudes before and after the guidebook socialization. The paired correlation between pre- and post-test scores ($r = 0.885$, $p < 0.001$) further indicates consistent measurement across the two time points.

Cross-Check in Microsoft Excel

As a robustness check, the paired comparison was repeated in Microsoft Excel using the mean score per item rather than the total score. On the four-point Likert scale, the average per-item score rose from 2.784 before socialization to 3.507 after — both values within the valid 1–4 range. (An earlier draft reported a post-test mean of 4.507, which is impossible on a four-point scale and resulted from a data-entry error; the corrected value is 3.507.) The Excel test produced results consistent with SPSS, confirming a statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.001$). Although the two analyses use different score scales — total score in SPSS and per-item mean in Excel — they lead to the same conclusion.

Table 8. Excel Paired Two-Sample t-Test for Means

Statistic	Avg_Before	Avg_After
Mean	2.784	3.507
Variance	0.008	0.006
Observations	30	30
Pearson Correlation	0.885	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	29	
t Stat	-34.984	
P(T ≤ t) two-tailed	0.000	
t Critical two-tailed	2.045	

Source: Data processed by the authors (2025)

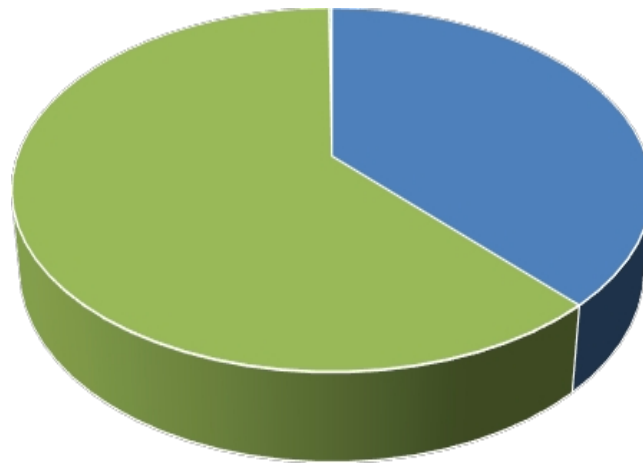


Figure 3. Comparison of Average Scores Before and After Socialization
 Source: Data processed by the authors (2025)

The Guidebook (Deliverable)

The primary artifact produced by this study is the export–import procedure guidebook, together with a summary poster designed for display in operational areas. Figure 4 shows representative pages and the accompanying poster.





Figure 4. Guidebook Pages and Summary Poster
Source: Authors' work (2025)

Discussion

Effect of the Guidebook on Knowledge (X1)

The item-level results for the knowledge variable show post-socialization means ranging from 2.40 to 2.63, with the highest score on item X1.11 (mean = 2.63), which concerns understanding of the most critical stages of the export procedure. Interpreted through Rogers' behavior-adoption process (Tampubolon & Sibuea, 2022), this pattern suggests that the guidebook moved employees beyond the initial "awareness" stage toward comprehension and adoption: a structured, written reference gave employees not only knowledge of the procedures but a basis for applying them consistently. The practical implication is that documenting tacit operational knowledge in an accessible guidebook reduces reliance on informal, person-dependent knowledge transfer — a recurring source of administrative error in the company's previous, undocumented practice.

The accepted hypothesis ($p < 0.001$) indicates a genuine change in understanding rather than random variation. Because the design measures the same employees before and after the intervention, the improvement can be attributed to the socialization itself, holding individual differences constant. This strengthens the internal validity of the finding relative to a purely cross-sectional comparison.

Effect of the Guidebook on Attitude (X2)

For the attitude variable, post-socialization item means ranged from 2.37 to 2.60, with the highest score on item X2.20 (“I feel more prepared to follow procedures after reading the guidebook,” mean = 2.60). Mapped onto the tripartite theory of attitude (Nuraini Budi Astuti, 2019), the guidebook appears to influence all three components: it supplies understanding (cognitive), builds confidence (affective), and increases readiness to act (conative). The practical implication is that a guidebook functions not merely as a knowledge document but as a change-management tool that shapes employees' willingness to comply with standardized procedures — an important precondition for the operational efficiency and customs compliance the company seeks.

The consistency between the knowledge and attitude results is itself informative: gains in understanding were accompanied by more favorable attitudes, which is what the adoption model would predict, since evaluation and trial of a new behavior depend on both knowing the procedure and viewing it positively. This coherence lends further credibility to the conclusion that the guidebook, rather than some incidental factor, drove the observed change.

Earlier drafts compared these results with Romi et al. (2019), a study of stock-trading volume and returns around the 2018 Asian Games. That comparison has been removed here, because the context — capital-market behavior around a sporting event — differs fundamentally from the evaluation of an internal operational guidebook, and the analogy does not support meaningful inference. More appropriate comparisons come from studies that evaluate training or procedure interventions using pre-test/post-test designs; such studies similarly report significant post-intervention gains in participants' understanding, which is consistent with the present findings (Putri & Ilham Prahesti, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study developed and evaluated an export–import procedure guidebook for PT Synergy Oil Nusantara covering bulk shipments, containers, and incoming CPO operations. Using a mixed-methods design — a qualitative development stage followed by a quantitative one-group pre-test/post-test evaluation with 30 employees — the study found that socialization of the guidebook significantly improved employees' procedural understanding and attitudes. Total scores rose from a mean of 116.13 before socialization to 135.40 after, a difference confirmed as statistically significant by the paired-sample t-test ($t = -34.98$; $df = 29$; $p < 0.001$), so the hypothesis was accepted. The instrument was valid and highly reliable, though its very high Cronbach's Alpha suggests scope for consolidating redundant items in future versions.

The study has limitations that bound its conclusions. It was conducted in a single company with a small, purposively defined sample, so the findings are context-specific and not statistically generalizable to other firms. The one-group design also lacks a control group, meaning that external factors coinciding with the intervention cannot be fully ruled out. Future research could employ a control group, a larger multi-company sample, and a follow-up measurement to assess whether the improvements in understanding and attitude persist over time and translate into measurable reductions in administrative and customs errors.

Recommendations

Visual Implementation in the Workplace

Summaries of key procedures — export flow, required documents, and shipping SOPs — should be printed and displayed in strategic areas such as logistics rooms, warehouses, and document-processing stations, helping employees recall operational steps quickly and accurately.

Building Awareness and Responsibility

The company should use the guidebook as an internal-training resource for onboarding new staff and for periodic refresher training, reinforcing a culture of awareness and accountability in export–import activities.

Continuous Socialization and Monitoring

Management should conduct regular socialization sessions and periodic evaluations of guidebook use to ensure procedures are applied to standard and to minimize administrative and operational errors.

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