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Review paper

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF MARITIME BUSINESS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: This paper examined the prospects and challenges of maritime business in Nigeria. The study was considered under the following subheadings, introduction, origin of maritime business in Nigeria, the major seaports in Nigeria, prospects of maritime business in Nigeria, challenges of maritime business in Nigeria and conclusion. It was discovered that Nigeria is naturally endowed to explore and harness the gains from maritime trade. Also found was that, the identified challenges of poor funds, infrastructural dearth and others are hampering efficient and effective performance of these ports. Thus, the paper recommends that government and private sector under public private partnership (PPP) should raise capital to build maritime infrastructure for quality ports operations and the two maritime institutions (Maritime Academy, Oron and Nigeria Maritime University, Okerenkoko) be empowered with funds and infrastructure that will enhance research, teaching and training manpower for the maritime industry.

Keywords: Prospects, challenges, port operations, Nigeria, maritime business

INTRODUCTION

Maritime business is anchored by seaports and international maritime laws which regulate its affairs. That's why ports are adjudged as the gateway to maritime or international trade and economic growth (Omoke et al., 2019; Inah and Elijah, 2018). It's inferred that seaports are complex maritime structure of a country (Inah and Elijah, 2018). Maritime industry or business deals with a combination of business activities like, designing, constructing, manufacturing, acquiring, operating, supplying and maintaining vessels and managing shipping lines (Ekpo, 2012).

Maritime business can be interpreted to mean shipping business or port operations. Port operations are trade and supportive activities that take place in the maritime industry across the world (Edih, Onoriode and Faghawari, 2022). Ports operations include dry docking, coastal shipping services, trawler services, terminal and jetty infrastructure, offshore construction and fabrication, supply boats to offshore oil fields, crew boats, tugboat and anchor handling, diving support vessels, cables and pipes laying vessels (Elem, 2008). Maritime operations also include; barges and house boats activities, dredging services, tourism services, pilot age and towage services, supply of water and fuel to vessels at anchorage mooring bouy, industrial areas and warehousing offices and port development (Peretomode, 2014). These are diversified investment opportunities that enhance optimal functioning of ports and increase in economic growth and development (Edih et al., 2022). An efficient and productive shipping service is a booster to gross domestic product, GDP, of a nation (Benson and Adekemi, 2008).

Effective ports operations depend on its management. Port management is enhanced by standard ports facilities and services which includes, standard berths, cargo handling facilities, cargo storage facilities, computerization, fire service facilities, medical facilities, and security architecture (Okerefe, 2018).

Jung (2011) observed that ocean serves as international trade route, provides low cost and massive transport services. The maritime industry accounts for about 90% of transportation needs of the world and that seaborne trade accounts for over 60 % of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the sixteen countries of Economic Community for West African States (EOWAS) (Peretomode, 2014; Airahilobhor, 2008). Also, UNCTAD (2015); Stopford, (2009) and Ziaul and Hans-Joachim, (2018) contend that about 80% of trade are seaborne. According to Jung (2011), 75% of total trade was transported by sea in 2008.

According to Ziaul and Hans-Joachim, (2018); Wang and Cullinane, (2006) industrial expansion and production, facilitated the significance of seaports in the supply chain of international trade. Growth in world merchandise trade volume had also impacted on ports operations and Gross Domestic Product, GDP of countries doing maritime business (UNCTAD, 2015). The impact of seaborne trade on a nation's GDP depends on the efficiency of port operations. Port infrastructure and manpower are key to logistics performance in maritime business (Ziaul and Hans-Joachim, 2018).

Jung (2011) argued that ports serve as gateway to world trade and accelerate growth of local economies, but, due to advancement in logistics technologies and change in the structure of economies, benefits derived from ports are decreasing. Jung (2011) contrasted its earlier position by the study carried out in South Korea and (Deng et al., 2013) on China argued that operations in the ports are showing declining effects on these economies. However, Lakshmanan (2011) shows that freight services led to growing trade and Shan et al. (2014) and Chang et al. (2014) found that ports activities impact on regional and national economies.

ORIGIN OF MARITIME BUSINESS IN NIGERIA

As captured by Okerefe, (2018); Edih et al. (2022), Nigeria is a costal nation in West and Central African sub--region blessed with coastline of about 853 nautical miles and 3000 kilometers of navigable inland water--ways stretching from Warri Estuaries in the South through River Nigerian the East and River Benue to the North. The country is located between Latitude 4°N and 14°N, and Longitude 3°E and 15°E and bounded to the North by Republic of Niger, to the West by Republic of Benin, and to the East by the Republic of Cameroon. The Republic of Chad is to the North East while the Atlantic Ocean is to the Southern tip via the Gulf Guinea. The Nation's Exclusive Economic zone (EEZ) occupied a total area of about 315,950 nautical Kilometres. Based on this coastal endowment, Nigeria is on a vantage point to harness the potentials in sea borne trade.

Maritime business operations in Nigeria started with the British Chattered Companies that were domiciled in Southern Nigeria. John Holt, Lever Brother's and the United African Company (UAC) were given trading concerns that led to the development of ports in Calabar, Sapele, Burutu and Warri, all in Southern Nigeria. In 1906, The British Colonial government established the Southern Nigeria Marine with headquarters in Lagos and in 1908, the Northern Nigerian Marine was formed with headquarters in Lokoja. However, in 1914, both were merged to be known as Nigerian Marine and the defunct Custom Wharf was formed on Lagos Island.

THE MAJOR PORTS IN NIGERIA

There are eight major and ancillary ports and jetties across the coastal areas in Nigeria, namely, Lagos port Complex (Apppa LPC), Tincan Island port, Port Harcourt Old port, Federal Ocean Terminal (Onne), Warri, Calabar, KoKo and Container ports (Lagos).

Lagos Port Complex (LPC)

This is the first planned RiverPort in Nigeria. LPC commenced operations in 1921 with a quay Length of 548.64 metres and a draught of 9.75m. In 1979, the quay Length was extended to 160metres and draught is 10.5metres. The LPC has a total of 20 berths capable of handling general cargo vessels, reefer vessels etc. It has 76000-ton silo storage capacity. In 2004, government approved it concession to the four private operators- Apapa Bulk Terminal Ltd, ENL consortiums, Greenview Development Ltd and APM Terminal Ltd.

Tincan Island Port

This Port was developed in 1975 but commissioned to commence full scale operations in 1977. It has eleven berths comprising seven break bulk general cargoes berth and mooring bouys. Total quay Length is 2500 meters consisting of seven break-bulk general cargo berths, two Ro-Ro berths and dry cargo import Berth. Each berth has a maximum draught of 10meters. Under the concession arrangement, four private terminal operators run its activities- Josepdam Port Services, Tincan Island Container Terminal Ltd, Ports and Cargo Handling Services Ltd and Five Star Logistics Ltd.

Port Harcourt Old Port

Port was built in 1912 as a natural Port and the third largest in Nigeria. The Port has a marine quay of 1,390 meters long, draught of 7.6 meters and 13 berths. It's equipped with dockyard, 5 mooring berths and tanker bouys. Based on concession agreement, it's operated by Port and Terminal Operators Nigeria Ltd and BUA Port and Terminals.

Federal Ocean Terminal

This ocean terminal was designated as trans-shipment or hub Port for West and Central Africa for deep draught ocean going vessels not capable of berthing in other conventional Port in Nigeria. The port has a draught of 13 meters, 1,590 meters' quay Length, 6 berths, 4 transits shed, 3 warehouses, 200,000 square meters for containers and bulk cargoes.

Warri Port

Warri port is regarded as the largest among the constellation of ports that constitute the Delta Ports like Koko, Sapele, Burutu, and Aladja Steel Jetty. Warri Port consists of the old and new ports. The old Port has 8 berths and the new one has 6 berths including one Roll on Roll off (RoRo) berth. It has a total quay Length of 1,600 meters and draught of 8 meters. Under concessional arrangement, Intels Nigeria Ltd and Associated Marine Services Ltd operate the terminals.

Koko Port

This port is a natural medium sized port located on the estuary of Benin River. It has a quay Length of 137 meters anda draught of over 7 meters. The oil jetty is operated by Total Nigeria Plc.

Calabar Port

Calabar port is one of the oldest natural habours established by the British Chattered Company, the United African Company (UAC) in the coastal region of Nigeria. The quay Length is 550 meters, and a draught of 8 meters with a contiguous free zone that offers wide latitude for import and export processing activities. Under concession, the port is operated by Intels Nigeria Ltd, Ecomarine Nigeria Ltd and Shoreline Logistics Ltd.

Container Terminal

This terminal is located at the third Apapa Wharf extension covering 144 hectares' land area. The terminal has installed capacity to handle 22, 000 TEUs (Twenty Equivalent Units).

It has quay Length of 250 meters and 6 berths.

PROSPECTS OF MARITIME BUSINESS IN NIGERIA ECONOMY

Nigeria is in a better position to explore the advantages of maritime trade being a coastal nation. Omoke et al., (2019) opine that shipping is a strong catalyst to socio-economic development of countries. It is also affirmed that shipping activities positively impact on income. Seaport is the most significant node in maritime transport and its efficiency reduces transport cost. The modified neoclassical growth theory, also known as the theory of endogenous development postulates the relationship between seaport developmental investment and economic growth of nations (Omoke et al., 2019; Grossman and Helpman, 1991). Sjafrizal (2008); found a positive relationship between maritime activities, infrastructure and economic growth of archipelagic regions of the world. Port Operations include the combination of throughput volume of goods, gross registered tonnage, numbers of vessels and number of employees. The increase of GDP of maritime nations depends on these activities. Network of transportation and port activities affect per capita growth, increase fiscal revenue and economic growth (Banerjee, 2009; Essoh, 2013). Fintell (2014) opines that the maritime subsector is a major catalyts for socio-economic development and international competitiveness in the global landscape. In the United State, every job in the Merchant marine creates 4.4 additional jobs in the economy (Haralambides, 2014). In Hotland, UK, Italy, Belgium and European union maritime regions, 40% of their GDP was from operations of the ports (Peretomode, 2014). As recorded in 2012, the maritime sector contribution to the GDP of India was 28.1%, china, 9.7%, Russia, 5.9%, Brazil, 2.8%, South Africa, 1.3% and Nigeria was 0.15% (Peretomode, 2014). The relationship between ports and local economies according to (Jung 2011) was examined in two district ways - traditional view, is that ports accelerate economic development, while pessimistic group of scholars assert that port respond to demand through the physical transfer of freight flows. That means, economic growth generates demand for port development not the reverse. The two positions are reasonable from either ways, because both aim at achieving economic goal. The desire for growth has a causal link to the development of ports and subsequently, the operations in these ports would generate employment, revenue, and social benefits for people and the State (Edih, et al., 2022). It has been discovered that the location of ports affects both urban and port systems in Asia and in China. Which means port-centered coastal areas precede inland cities in economic growth (De Langen and Heiji, 2004; Ducrut, 2003) Just as location and localization of industries are catalyst to urbanization and economic growth (Edih et al., 2022).

The gains from container port development to economic growth of Pearl River Delta region was the facilitation of foreign direct investment, FDI (Zhang and Zhang, 2005). Mode and type of operations of shipping firms and the use of target marketing strategy affect productive capacities (Mobolaji et al., 2012). Shipping is one of the operations in the ports. Its activities contribute to growth and development of maritime nations. Shipping being a source of cheap transport creates wider markets for distribution of goods and services and specialization. Accordingly, it means the transportation of cargo from one point to another on any stretch of water (Ekpo, 2012). The effect of port activities on local employment had been established to be encouraging. That, every million tons of net port throughput would provide about 400-600 jobs in West European countries (Bottasso et al., 2013). In Bottasso et al. (2014), every 10% increase in port throughput would also generate 6-20% increase in the gross domestic product, GDP of the region. Its spillover effect would cause 5-18% increase of employment on neighbouring regions.

Operations at the port terminals under concession and liberalization will result to increased efficiency, performance and profitability of the port system (Benson and Adekemi, 2018).

The provisions of super-structures, infrastructure and highly skilled professionals would lead to revenue growth and cargo throughput in the ports. Government agencies, and terminal operators usually on concession grounds, stevedore companies, importers and exporters, warehouse operators, haulage companies, chandlers, freight forwarding, clearing and forwarding agents and maintenance companies have been identified as users and operators of ports across the world (Ndikom, 2006; Benson and Adekemi, 2018).

In Benson and Adekemi (2018), the activities of private operators have improved the process of cargo handling and transshipment of goods over international waters and economic development of countries. Therefore, ports are the hub and node of networks for all kinds of water borne transport that link countries to others. These networks of roads promote trade and exchange of goods and services at the cheapest rate. More so, ports are a combination of infrastructure and facilities and services that quicken international trade, determine freight transport costs and provide access to global markets (Ziaul and Hans-Joachim, 2018; Clark et al., 2004). However, inefficient and ineffective port system and operations will cause poor state of economic performance (Osadume and Edih, 2020). This is the more reason why government should urgently address the challenges causing poor performance of ports in world.

Crown (2017) observed that ports operations started in 1906 when the Colonial government was in force. The Nigerian Marine was established in 1914 to oversee all ports, then mostly in Southern Nigeria. Port development creates diversified investment portfolios. Such investment opportunities include, but not limited to the following, dry docking, ship repairs and maintenance, coastal shipping services, terminal/jetty infrastructure, offshore construction and fabrication, e.t. c (Elem, 2008). These investment portfolios are possibilities for generating employments for Nigerians (Edih et al., 2022).

In Nigeria, the maritime industry is manned by two sisters' agencies set up by the Federal government. They are, the Nigeria Ports Authority, NPA and Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, NIMASA. It was the Nigerian Marine that metamorphosed into Nigeria Ports Authority, NPA in 1954. Its major function is to oversee the operations of the eight ports across the coastal area of the country. On the other hand, NIMASA was formed in 2006 for the purpose of regulating the maritime industry in Nigeria. It is empowered by Law to carry out nine key maritime services such as effective maritime safety administration, maritime labour administration, maritime labour regulations, maritime pollution prevention, and control, search and rescue operations, cabotage enforcement, shipping development and registration, training and certification of seafarers and maritime capacity development (Peretomode, 2014).

In line with the maritime vision, the Nautical College of Nigeria, now Maritime Academy of Nigeria was established in 1979 at Oron, Akwa Ibom State. In similar quest for manpower and capacity building for the maritime sector, the Federal government, established the Nigeria Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Delta State in 2014 by Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration. It has been established that, 4,300 Nigerian Merchant Navy Officers and other 65,000 workers in marine services were trained at Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron. Also, discovered was that the Nigerian Shipping industry requires 50,000 seafarers to realize its optimal operating potentials (Peretomode, 2014). In that case, the establishment of two institutions for man power capacity development for maritime and related sectors of the economy are paramount to achieving the country's maritime dream (Edih et al., 2022). It was mentioned by Hadiza (2017) that, the maritime (ports) sector is a huge employer of human capital that has the potential of generating over 80, 000 jobs annually. Also referred was that improved port infrastructure would stimulate revenue growth, and general development. The status of registered dock labour employers (stevedore companies) which stood at 167 (NIMASA Register for Registered Stevedoring Companies) have the multiplier effect of of creating enormous opportunities for Nigerians.

Omoke et al. (2019) posit that gross registered tonnage of vessels contributes significant proportion to Nigeria gross domestic product, GDP. UNCTAD (2009) recognizes that, out of the 70% of goods coming to West and Central African regions, 80% is transported by sea to Nigeria. It is recorded that Nigeria accounts for 55% of total private sector investments in sub-sahara African ports at 1.3 billion US dollars (World Bank, 2008). Port operations had been seen as means of diversifying the Nigerian economy and stimulate import and export trade between countries (Lazarus, 2013; Balarabe, 2004 as cited in Peretomode, 2014). Total revenue to gross registered tonnage has positive and significant effect on economic growth and there exist a positive relationship between ports activities and the economy (Osadume and Edih, 2014). In Ekpo (2012), shipping facilitates movement of oil and gas from port A to port B locally or internationally. Obed (2006) affirms the relationship between maritime operations and economic growth and national interest.

CHALLENGES TO MARITIME BUSINESS IN NIGERIA

Several challenges to maritime industry have been identified by (Ekpo, 2012; Omoke et al., 2019), port infrastructure and logistics performance (Benson and Adekemi, 2018; NIMASA, 2018) have common problems and challenges retarding efficient operations in the Nigerian ports.

There is a challenge of decline in the number of vessels calling at ports in Nigeria as compared to neighbouring countries. In 2016, a reduction of calls by 2.72% compared to the previous years. The issue of poor data base for activities going on in the ports is another problem. Computerization of port operations data is poor. Other challenges include, port congestions, high container dwell time, high turnaround time of vessels and trucks, inadequate ports facilities (berths) affect operations in Nigerian ports (Omoke et al., 2019). It is shown that shippers tend to call at ports with no or less congestion issue and up-to-date cargo handling equipment or standard port facilities. The lack of standard port facilities would cause inefficiency and poor logistics report.

Ekpo (2012) summarizes factors that influence the Nigerian maritime industry to include, lack of capital, poor incentives for investors and poor integrated transport system. There are important changes in shipping worldwide which are inhibiting performance of the ports in Nigeria such as innovations in technologies, liberalization policy, institutional changes and inadequate shipping management skills, knowledge and experience.

It was also found according to (Benson and Adekemi, 2018) that paucity of Port infrastructure is a challenge to the effective operations in the ports. Nigerian ports are hampered by inadequate super-structures, infrastructure and funding. Therefore, these ports are in dire need for structural re-engineering and reforms. The interference of government on the operations of the ports is causing bureaucratic bottlenecks in decision making process and corruption the public service. International conventions, rules and regulations on port operations bare not abided by (Edih et al., 2022). The challenge of insecurity in the water--ways is another factor militating against maritime business in Nigeria. The coastal areas are not secured for business for fear of sea pirates.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the prospects and challenges of maritime business in Nigeria and observed the following;
1. The eight seaports established in Nigeria are not operating at optimal capacity due to the identified challenges that are hampering quality performance.
2. The two maritime institutions in Nigeria are not adequately empowered to teach and train manpower for the maritime industry
3. The challenge of maritime infrastructural dearth among others is a major ache to efficient and effective maritime business in the country.
4. However, Nigeria being a coastal nation is in a vantage position to explore the benefits of maritime trade between/among nations of the world

Recommendations

This paper therefore, recommends the following measures;
1. Government and the private sector under public private arrangement should raise adequate capital to build maritime infrastructure in the eight seaports in Nigeria.
2. The maritime institutions, i.e the Maritime Academy, Oron and Nigeria Maritime University (NMU), Okerenkoko should be funded to improve their infrastructural base for learning, research and training of professional manpower for the maritime sector.

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