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Port Concession and the Ease of Doing Business in Nigerian Ports

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Abstract

This research looked at the impact of port concessions on the ease of doing business in Nigerian ports, using Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports as case study. The study's goal was to ascertain if the concessions at these ports had led to an improvement on the level of ease of doing business. The research was explained using the New Public Management Theory, which promotes the notion of developing a performance-oriented culture in a decentralised public sector. The survey research was used for the study, and this guided the use of a standardised questionnaire to gather information from the research participants. Even though they cannot be compared to international best practices, the ease of doing business at Nigerian ports has not been positively impacted as expected by the concession policy. As a result of this discovery, it was suggested, among others, that the government works with the concessionaires to increase infrastructure spending so that it is simple to enter and exit the port facilities. Additionally, steps should be taken to lessen the presence of MDAs and other security personnel at the ports.

Keywords: Concession, Ease of Doing Business, Ports, Public Sector, Management, Reforms

Introduction

Any maritime business in Nigeria will also profit from the marine industry's global nature and high level of dynamicism. West African countries that are landlocked are Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The Apapa, Cotonou, and Abidjan ports are essential for their capacity to import and export commodities, hence their economic performance in the maritime sector is essential. The Nigerian shipping sector is in danger of dying out gradually as a result of the poor operating efficiency of seaports (Ogunsiji & Ogunsiji, 2011). Investment in marine transport, one of the major transportation sectors, requires a range of infrastructure

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investments as well as sizable equipment facilities that enhance its nautical operation. This is because marine transportation (seaport), which supports the growth of the nation's economy, can handle large boats as well as a variety of maritime and international trade (Nwaogbe, Diugwu, Mohammed, Omoke, and Gidado, 2016).

One may argue that marine activity is a need for every expanding economy. This is as a result of shipping being the most effective means of transnational commerce. The most economical method to move large quantities of cargo across long distances is by water. This is further facilitated by the more efficient, reliable, and demand-driven transportation infrastructure that has resulted from technological improvements. Over 90% of global commerce is thought to be carried out by ships (Alfred, 2014). This demonstrates how crucial shipping is to the transfer of goods during global business operations.

Port operations in developing nations have a history of being ineffective due to centralized bureaucratic administration, high workforce costs, antiquated technology for processing big amounts of cargo, and other financial concerns. Due to widespread bottlenecks in public ports and the startlingly superior performance records of privately held terminals, governments have been increasingly compelled to review the structure and management of their national port systems. Finally, governments of developing nations have acknowledged the idea of "port as a company" as having a favourable and considerable influence on the national economy (Owoputi & Owolabi, 2020). This is true for the situation of Nigeria's seaports at the moment.

However, in keeping with a worldwide trend to privatise the operation and often the ownership of airports, roads, water supply, and wastewater treatment facilities, governments in wealthy and developing countries are turning over operational management and port assets to private enterprises. Most of the time, important legislative obligations like contract monitoring and enforcement and fundamental navigational safety regulations are still in the control of the public sector. Port privatisation has increased pricing competitiveness and encouraged independent business ventures and investment. This has reinforced the idea that private engagement is a universal strategy for ensuring that firms run well (Agu, 2017).

Without a doubt, Nigeria's maritime industry needs significant attention in the areas of infrastructure and high port fees. Shipping activities at Nigerian ports have been significantly affected by the marine sector's chronic capacity shortage. Inadequate port operations and management, as well as the lack of the essential infrastructure for secure cargo handling and shipping operations, are some of the causes of this. Poor government policies have caused the Nigerian port operation to suffer large losses in the areas of ship calls and marine operations at the port, which is another important problem. Most port users (shippers and shipping companies) are rerouting their goods as a result.

Privatising terminal operations will increase technical know-how, the proportion of foreign managers participating, the chance for diversification, and reduce operational expenses for ports, according to Oy-len (2012) (Cullinane, *et al*., 2002). Additionally, port privatisation encourages a faster reaction to market changes as well as a quicker adaptation to improvements in intermodal and marine transport technologies, according to Tongzon and Heng (2005). So it may be argued that port privatisation in whatever form increases competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency. To handle the changing market environment, however, one must have the flexibility to adapt to new developments and responsibilities. Prior studies that searched for traits that could influence port choice (Dekker, 2005; Ircha, 2001; Baird, 2002; Maloni and Jackson, 2005; Grossmann, 2008) identified port efficiency as a crucial factor. Therefore, if it is correctly regulated, port efficiency may lead to a high level of port throughput.

The government can boost the ports' productivity and efficiency by revitalising and strengthening its

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operational and functional modalities (Ndikom, 2004). Nigeria adopted port reforms with the intention of enhancing port efficiency by making the nation's ports more user- and investor-friendly. The Nigerian government used port concessions as its reform approach, awarding the public sector a competitive contract to run the facilities while keeping ownership of the infrastructure (Gabriel, 2019).

A "concession" is essentially a grant made for a project. According to Omoke *et al.* (2015), a concession is a public-private partnership (PPP) agreement between the government and a capable private sector for the perseverance of funding, designing, constructing, and maintaining infrastructure that would have otherwise been handled through traditional public procurement channels.

A concession arrangement, according to Bousquet and Fayard (2001), is when the government (or its agency) grants a private sector operator the authority to finance, build, own, upgrade, maintain, or operate a public infrastructure and charge users for the cost of services for a predetermined period of time. The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission Act of 2005, which defines concession as a legal agreement whereby the project proponent or contractor oversees the construction, including financing of any infrastructure or facility, as well as its operation and maintenance, as well as the provision of any services and the supply of any equipment and machinery for any infrastructure (Infrastructure Concession), seems to embody the official position on concession in Nigeria.

According to Oghojafor, *et al*., (2012), concessions in port operations relate to the leasing of port terminals and the reorganisation of stevedoring companies. The contractual agreement specifies the technical requirements, best practices, and service standards for the concessionaire. According to Awam (2014), the government may be driven by the interest it still has in the attempt to ensure that her aims are carried out in both the technical and social elements. This seems to be what port concessions in Nigeria are primarily intended to accomplish; an improvement in port productivity or efficiency. This research was done since it was unclear to what extent this aim would be accomplished.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

I. To what extent has the concession of ports in Nigeria improved the ease of doing business in Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports?

Objective of the Study

I. To determine the extent to which the concession of ports in Nigeria has facilitated the ease of doing business in Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports.

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

I. The concession of ports in Nigeria is likely to facilitate ease of doing business in Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports.

Literature Review

Port Concession

Iheme (1997) identifies port concessions as policies that encourage private sector ownership, management, or administration of public companies while also exposing public firms to competition or reducing the amount of government engagement. However, a port concession strictly speaking refers to the sale of the public company's ownership (together with all of its related rights, including management) to private

investors. It is a change in ownership from the public to the private sectors rather than a change in ownership within industries (Starr, 1988). As a result, neither the transformation of a private, non-profit organisation into a for-profit corporation nor the transformation of a state agency into an autonomous public body or state-owned enterprise (SOE) constitutes a concession.

Ircha (2001) suggests that through improving the commercial positioning of port operations, port concessions relate to actions (processes or even activities) that increase overall efficiency. In 2007, Notteboom. Privatisation is even more suitable in Nigeria due to the high expenses of doing business there, which deter both domestic and international companies from setting up shop there. However, the government seems to have reacted to the challenge of fostering a welcoming business climate in Nigeria's seaports by enacting a number of initiatives targeted at decreasing the malaise in Nigeria's ports. The adoption of port concessions is justified on the grounds that the development of Nigerian ports in accordance with global trends and standards (such as competitiveness, efficiency, and safety) and the attraction of private capital for their development into industrial sites through a targeted development plan would result from the creation of an enabling environment.

Ndikom (2006) asserts that concession agreements are designed to attract investors, which would then result in the supply of cutting-edge cargo handling facilities and machinery, increasing operational effectiveness at the ports. In fact, Anagor (2014) notes that the outsourcing of port operations to private companies in Nigeria resulted in a significant level of improvement, increased spending on terminal infrastructure and cargo handling equipment, a 250% increase in cargo throughput over the previous eight years, and a recovery of importers' confidence. Public firms that need to be turned into private ones must already exist for privatisation to take place. There is a case to be made for private ownership, management, or control over public ownership.

Concessions, according to Mundhe (2008), are preferred when public authorities are unable to maintain facilities bought with taxpayer money. For instance, Kruk (2008) notes that concession was used in Nigerian ports to increase productivity and efficiency. This was done in two ways, according to Razak (2005): first, to encourage greater private sector participation; and second, to enhance the operational and management capabilities of the ports (Abdullahi, 2014). According to Awam (2014), where concession is chosen as a reform strategy (regardless of the available options or models), the goal is to increase efficiency, productivity, and management capability; decrease the financial burden on the public sector; increase revenue generation; improve service delivery for users; and transfer specialised port management tasks to the private sector.

A country's ability to compete internationally is impacted by the efficiency of its ports and terminals. There are several factors that affect how effectively a port or terminal performs, including labour relations, the quantity and kind of cargo handling equipment, the backhaul area's condition, a port access channel, landside access, the effectiveness of customs, and possible incentives to foreign terminal operators (UNCTAD, 2015). Therefore, container throughput is significantly impacted by port efficiency. The quantity of TEUs transported is often used to gauge container port throughput. To reach 406.9 million TEU in 2011, the container throughput for emerging nations increased by an estimated 8%. This rise was less

than the 15.8% seen the year before, when companies replenished inventories that had been reduced as a result of the uncertainty surrounding the global economic crisis. According to Baran and Gorecka (2015), the increase rate for container throughput in underdeveloped countries was just 4.8 percent in 2012.

Tatcchia *et al*. (2008) believe that most ports in underdeveloped nations operate at a painfully sluggish pace. A port's effectiveness has a significant impact on her performance. According to the African

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Development Bank (ADB) (2007), which Ogundele (2014) mentioned, who bemoaned the ills of Nigeria and said that if she could increase her capacity for efficiency at the port, she could significantly accelerate her economic development. Port throughput volumes may also be examined in a variety of ways, such as measuring productivity by dividing by the length of quays or calculating a market share by dividing by the whole throughput of a certain port range or maritime area. However, it is still sometimes difficult to get detailed information on the traffic's modal mix, financial value, and geographic distribution in the hinterland (Itoh, 2013).

The following crucial characteristics of concessions are present (Shaw *et al.*, 1996): The government specifies and assigns certain rights to a firm (or many) under a concession. Concessions also have a set duration and a restricted geographic area. The concession agreement outlines the goals and identifies who will bear the financial risk of running the facilities. According to Notteboom (2007), there are several possible structures for concessions (such as BOT, BROT, BLT, BOST, ROT, BLO, and RLT) and the structure is determined by the agreement's goal. To provide further context for the many features of concessions, the different concessions are enumerated and described in the table below. The allocation of risk between the government and the concessionaire is the primary distinction between the various kinds of concessions (World Bank, 2011).

These concessions may be broadly categorised as either brownfield (like ROT, RLT, or BROT) or greenfield (like BOT, BLT, BOST, or BLO). When used strictly, the word "concessions" refers to brownfield concessions, such as securing the right to expand a terminal or renovating already-in-use port infrastructure. Greenfield concessions, often referred to as greenfield projects, are freshly constructed facilities or port developments in new sites, suggesting that they have radically different features. Greenfield projects are hence often categorised as a different kind of concession (World Bank Private Participation in Infrastructure, PPI).

2.1.2 Objectives of Concessions

For the government, making a concession has various benefits. The government may still have some influence over the organisation and structure of the supply side, the port services, and the port market even after private operators take over the terminal (Notteboom, 2007, p. 438). According to the World Bank, through issuing concessions, the government or port authority may improve operational effectiveness, resource allocation within and between the various port sectors, and the protection and improvement of social equality and the environment. According to UNCTAD, concessions provide the chance to bring in foreign management and technical know-how.

Concessions are often given in order to promote competitiveness via the bidding process. Nowadays, the majority of concessions are awarded via a competitive bidding process to treat all applicants fairly and prevent favouritism. By maintaining pressure on the private company during the concession period, which results in superior performance by the private business, the threat of further competition after the concession has expired. As a result, one of the most crucial instruments used by port authorities to influence the port community is concessions (Notteboom, 2007).

A concession is when the government accords certain rights to businesses. A port concession is a contract in which a government assigns operational rights to a private company, which subsequently participates in an activity subject to contract conditions and subject to government approval, according to the World Bank Port Reform Tool Kit Report (2007), Module 3. While the concessionaires are in charge of running the ports, the government still retains control of the assets, particularly the land. The government not only owns the property but also serves as its regulator, overseeing the concessionaires' operations. A concession

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agreement's major goal is to shift government investment expenses to the private sector in order to lessen their financial participation in ports and use private operators to fund port growth.

Ease of Doing Business

The national policy on ease of doing business is a purposive course of action which the federal government of Nigeria set to help to review and remove all encumbrances to trade. This is equally an attempt to create a conducive environment for business transactions in Nigeria (Kofarbai & Bambale, 2016). Consequently, this policy represents what the government chooses to do to develop and promote the activities of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in order to expand the number of participating agencies in the Nigeria Enterprises Development Programme (World Bank, 2017b).

According to World Bank (2017a), this policy is a deliberate simplification as well as streamlining of export and import documentation as well as procedures leveraging on technology with a view to removing administrative bottlenecks that may affect business milieu in the respective country. The national policy on ease of doing business in Nigeria is a statement for a reduction in the cost of doing business in the country. It focuses on those areas of improving efficiency in business registration, entry process including visa reforms, land reform registrations and contract agreements.

The World Bank Group (World Bank) on Thursday, 24 October 2019, published its 2020 Doing Business Report (the Report). This latest report sees Nigeria ranking 131 out of 190 countries on the ease of doing business index, an upward movement by15 places from the 2019 ranking of 146 (World Bank, 2019). Overall, the ease of doing business in Nigeria improved by 15 positions, with Nigeria now ranked 131st globally and 34th in Africa. This is an improvement on the country's 146th position in the 2019 Doing Business Report. Based on the 2020 Report, in addition to the reasons highlighted above, the improvement in the rankings can be traced to the easier process of registering a business online, as well as the improved registration for land administration as a result of the implementation of the geographic information system (World Bank, 2020).

Empirical Literature

In their research of the Apapa port complex in Lagos, Celik and Umar (2020) looked at the effect of public-private partnerships on the operation of Nigerian seaports. According to the author, marine operations are unquestionably becoming the backbone of industrialised, growing, and developing economies since they are crucial for both domestic and international commerce. In mature and emerging economies alike, ports are often either publicly owned and operated or privately owned and run. Publicly owned and privately run are examples of hybrid ownership and operation regimes. The landlord-port system was the reform strategy chosen by the Nigerian government. Under this system, the government, through the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), retains ownership of the infrastructure while contracting out management and operations to the private sector with investment requirements for a time period ranging from 10 to 25 years. The private terminal operator will have a greater financial commitment the longer the tenor. Under the direction of a governing body, the Nigerian ports are divided into western and eastern ports. The average berth occupancy, average turnaround time, and cargo security at the Apapa Port Complex are the three key indices of port management and operations that are the subject of this empirical research. The efficiency of port services in Nigeria has been enhanced as a result of the reform, it has been noted.

Port deregulation and productivity in Nigeria: Some Implications for Economic Regulators was written by Onwuegbuchunam (2020). In a deregulated port environment, the author looked at the welfare of port

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users after private sector involvement. The application of the Nigerian port terminal concession strategy was examined as a case study. According to the study's results, there were considerable productivity (technological) changes in each of the three reform stages that were investigated, i.e., the pre-reform, reform, and post-reform periods. In the post-concession reform period, which lasted from 2009 to 2013, the changes were more obvious. Efficiency changes and technological efficiency changes are the causes of these changes. Additionally, it was shown that ports in Nigeria's western region had more dramatic productivity development than ports in other regions. However, these portsApapa, Container Terminal, Tin Can Island, and Ro-Ro Port made up more than 60% of all ports evaluated. It is important to highlight that the relative efficiency improvements brought about by the concession changes cannot be seen as broadly spread as only ports with Western origins performed well.

Olufemi, Nkechi, Ejem, and Dike (2021) conducted a study on "Development of Port Infrastructure and Service Quality in Nigerian Ports." Between 2000 and 2019, the authors looked at how port infrastructure and service quality have developed in Nigerian ports. Their goal was to investigate the association between service quality in regard to ship turnaround time and average time at berth and the quality of the port infrastructure index. They achieved this by using the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis method based on secondary data obtained from the Nigerian Ports Authority Abstract Statistics and the World Economic Forum on the quality of port infrastructure index, ship turnaround time, and average time spent at berth.

The variables were submitted to an Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test to stabilize the data before the estimate of the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis, and the result revealed that all the variables were stationary to prevent erroneous regression findings. According to the estimated OLS findings, the service quality at Nigerian ports is negatively and significantly correlated with both ship turnaround time and the average time spent at berth. The government should create and put into effect a port development programme that addresses obstacles like congestion in Nigeria's main ports, notably Apapa port, in order to facilitate free flow of traffic and the discharge of goods, according to empirical findings. In order to provide port consumers effective service, the government should also expand its investments in port infrastructure.

Bello, Oluwagbenga, and Gideon's 2021 research focused on "The Impact of Reforms on Port Performance in the Lagos Port Complex in Nigeria." This research used stratified sampling as its sampling method. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Inferential statistics were employed to examine the impact of port changes on cargo clearance, while descriptive statistics were used to analyse ship traffic, cargo throughput, and infrastructure provision. The end result revealed an increase in ship traffic, dredging equipment, access channel upgrades, and cargo handling equipment. Additionally, cargo clearance is impacted by port reform, with $r = 0.749$. This led to the conclusion that cargo clearance and port reform had a substantial correlation. It was advised that the concessionaires provide cutting-edge handling gear to guarantee 48-hour clearance. Therefore, a railway should exist to relieve congestion on the road system.

Theoretical Framework

The New Public Management (NPM) Theory, advanced by Osborne and Gaebler in 1992, serves as the foundation for this research. According to Osborne and Gaebler's (1992) formulation of this theory, the government should act as a catalyst by emphasising adherence to ethics, transparency, equality, fairness, responsibility, and accountability. It should also emphasise participation, responsiveness to citizens' needs, and efficiency in the management of public resources. Instead of focusing just on providing services, the government should work to mobilise the public sector, commercial sector, volunteer sector, and

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non-governmental sector to address social challenges. Therefore, rather than rowing, the government should be steering. Government owned by the people: The government should support and enable individuals, families, and communities to address their own issues. Therefore, the government should decentralise the administration of a number of services. A government that is competitive should encourage rivalry among service providers. This boosts efficiency while cutting costs.

The government should be motivated by its missions rather than by laws and regulations. It entails changing a government that is focused on rules into one that is focused on goals. Government that seeks results: The government should promote goal attainment and mission-focused initiatives. Customer-Driven Government: The public should be treated like a customer by the government. It ought to prioritise client delight above bureaucracy. It entails giving customers options, asking about their opinions, making services easy, and letting them recommend improvements. Government with initiative: The focus should be on revenue generation rather than expenditure. It should focus its efforts on resource mobilisation by using fees, business funds saved, and other means. A government that anticipates problems is better off identifying them before they arise than trying to fix them after they do. The government should transfer power from higher to lower levels via decentralisation. This promotes proactive planning and collaboration. Government that is focused on the market: Instead of using bureaucratic methods, the government should use market mechanisms. It should restructure markets in addition to using command and control to accomplish its objectives. It should use market forces to accelerate transformation. According to Osborne and Gaebler (1992), the NPM theory aims to promote a performance-oriented culture with the following characteristics in a decentralised public sector:

A. Paying attention to outcomes in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and service quality;
B. The use of decentralised management to replace highly centralised, hierarchical systems, allowing service companies to be located closer to the point of delivery and facilitating faster feedback;
C. Flexibility to look for less expensive alternatives to direct public service and regulation;
D. A commitment to efficiency in directly offered public services and
E. Enhancement of strategic capabilities at the core to efficiently and cost-effectively steer the whole process.

Making governments more effective is a key emphasis of the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy (Kaboolian, 1998). According to Savoie (2003), the theory suggests alterations to make governments more effective and responsive by utilising techniques from the private sector and fostering market conditions for the provision of services. Furthermore, according to Osborne (2006), the NPM theory assumes that the adoption of private sector practices would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public services and asserts that private managerial techniques are superior to those used in public administration.

One project that, if properly managed, has the potential to turn around the nation's economic woes is the Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports Complex, which are landlord ports owned by the government. To this end, the emphasis placed by this theory is that effectiveness and efficiency are possible if the principles advanced by the proponents of this branch of the New Public Management Theory are applied in the operations and management of the port, which has the potential to produce income for the government and contribute to economic development if the services that ought to be provided to the public are current and in line with best global practises. For the aforementioned to be practical, the government is urged to minimise its interest in and concerns about the ports, give the concessionaires full control over the administration, operation, and running of the ports, and make sure that while providing services to the

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public on a competitive basis and in accordance with the highest international standards, the economy of Nigerian society is turned around in a way that benefits all parties involved (the government, concessionaires, and the general public).

Additionally, our port's management and administration throughout the years, particularly before the privatisation of Nigerian ports, had traditionally been seen as an extension of the public sector with subpar performance assessment targets and methodologies. Such managerial practices neither encourage nor push workers to offer their utmost effort. Key performance indicators (KPIs) and acceptance based on global best practices were introduced along with concessionaires. The NPM theorist uses and promotes these elements in order to increase organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Its assumptions and characteristics, which place emphasis on adherence to ethics, transparency, equality, fairness, responsibility, accountability, prudence, participation, responsiveness to the needs of the people, and efficiency in the administration of public resources, serve as a major justification for this theory's superiority to other theories discussed in this study. If the theory is effectively used, the wholesomeness and distinctive qualities put forward by the theorists allow for the accommodation of both managerial and technological skills for any sector to exist.

In the realm of public administration and management, the New Public Management (NPM) theory has attracted a lot of interest. Several important factors support its use in research. For instance, the NPM theory offers a framework for investigating and assessing the efficacy of management practices and changes in the public sector while doing research. It aids scholars in comprehending the guiding ideas and presumptions of NPM and evaluating how it affects many facets of governance and public administration. Researchers may add to the body of knowledge on public management and help guide policy choices by researching the implementation and results of NPM reforms. They may also point out the difficulties and restrictions of NPM and suggest other strategies or tweaks to increase its efficiency. In conclusion, the NPM theory's emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, decentralisation, market orientation, and adaptability makes it a good choice for study. Scholars and practitioners may learn more about NPM's effects on public sector organisations and help the public sector build better management practices by doing research on it.

Methodology

This survey research design that involved the utilization of structured questionnaires for the gathering of data from the research participants was employed for this study. The participants in the study are employees of the Nigerian Ports Authority, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Directorate of State Security (DSS), the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), other port users who conduct business at the port, and concessionaires/terminal operators in Apapa and Tin Can Island. The population of the research is described numerically as follows:

NPA	-	517
NIMASA	-	153
NCS	-	17
NPF	-	18
ABTL	-	82

ENLC	-	71
GDNL	-	76
APMTL	-	72
JPS	-	69
TCIC	-	62
PCHS	-	73
FSL	-	67
DSS	-	11
SON	-	09
NAFDAC	-	05
TOTAL	-	1,302

Sources: Nigerian Ports Authority (2022)

Purposive (expert) sampling methods and stratified random sampling were both employed in this investigation. Researchers often use stratified random sampling when attempting to assess data from several strata or subgroups. It enables them to swiftly acquire a research sample that most accurately mirrors the whole population under investigation. The purposive (expert) sampling technique, on the other hand, is always used when the researcher wants to target respondents who are relevant to the study at hand because of their expertise and capacity to provide information that would help the researcher draw helpful, unbiased conclusions. In either event, the researcher had the flexibility to ask research subjects who had the necessary expertise and knowledge about the study for information using any of the two approaches.

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for calculating sample size was used to calculate the sample size. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size calculation table, the sample size to be employed for this investigation is 297. While the secondary data were gathered from books, government white papers, periodicals, journals, unpublished research works, as well as other documentary and online sources, the primary data were gathered via the survey's administered questionnaire that was modeled on a four-point Likert scale with the choices: strongly agree (SA), agree (AG), disagree (DA), and severely disagree (SD). The research questionnaire was submitted to the supervisor for thorough vetting and his input to guarantee that it had a high degree of accuracy in measuring what it was designed to measure. For the purpose of analysis, the simple linear regression, tabular displays, and frequency counts were used to assess the data that was obtained for this research. All field data were analysed using frequency counts, although basic linear regression analysis was employed to test the null hypotheses at a level of significance of 0.5. The Statistical Package for Social Science (version 25.0) was used to do this. The decision rule that stipulates that the researcher should reject the null hypothesis if t computed is more than (>) t crucial served as the basis for this form of regression's approved or rejected criteria. According to this decision rule, the independent variable has a substantial influence on the dependent variable when the p value is less than (<) 0.05, but not when the p value is larger than (>) 0.05.

Data Presentation and Analysis

It is important to highlight that out of 297 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the study participants, 248 copies that make up 83.5% return rate of those were successfully recovered.

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Analysis of Responses from the Research Participants

Table 1: Research Participant Responses on Concession Policy

S/N	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total
1.	79	81	51	37	248
2.	87	72	47	42	248
3.	77	83	43	45	248
4	84	81	42	41	248
5	79	83	56	30	248

Source: Author's Field Survey Compilation (2023).

Interpretation of Research Participants Responses on Port Concession Policy

According to the data acquired from the field survey, a whopping 31.8% of the research participants supported private sector investment as part of port improvements. According to the replies, 32.7% of the participants in the study agreed, whereas 20.6% and 14.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. Additionally, it was found that while 19.0% and 16.9% also disagreed and strongly disagreed on this matter, 35.1% and 29.0% of the research participants strongly agreed and agreed that investments by private companies could result in increased cargo handling facilities and productivity at the ports. When asked whether they thought that the efficient execution of these port rules would result in good improvements in operations, the study participants responded as follows: 31.1% strongly agreed, 33.5% agreed, 17.3% disagreed, and 18.1% very disagreed. As a result, 33.9% of the study's participants strongly agreed that stakeholder comments are taken into account when port management and the management of cargo handling facilities are being conducted. 32.7% of survey participants agreed, 16.9% disagreed, and 16.5% strongly disagreed with this. Changes in government policies have a substantial influence on the operations of Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports, according to 31.8% of study participants who strongly agreed with this statement, 33.5% who agreed, 22.6% who disagreed, and 12.1% who severely disagreed.

Table 2: Research Participant Responses on Ease of Doing Business

S/N	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total
17.	70	88	45	45	248
18.	72	86	43	47	248
19.	92	81	33	42	248
20.	100	56	49	43	248
21.	49	51	89	59	248
22.	61	37	87	63	248

Source: Author's Field Survey Compilation (2023).

Interpretation of Research Participants Responses on Ease of Doing Business

According to the study participants' comments, 28.4% of them strongly agreed that Apapa Tin Can Island Seaports' regulations of port operations adhere to best practices throughout the world. In accordance with

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this, 35.4% of study participants agreed, 18.1% disapproved, and 18.1% strongly disagreed. The replies also revealed that 29.0% of study participants strongly agreed that Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports operate with too many regulating authorities. Again, 34.7% of those who took part in the study agreed, whereas 17.3% and 19.0% of those who did not strongly disagreed. 38.3% of the study participants highly agreed, 32.7% agreed, 12.1% disagreed, and 16.9% strongly disagreed that there is still too much paper work and that this adds to the bottleneck at Apapa Tin Can Island Seaports. 40.3% of the study participants highly agreed, 22.6% agreed, 19.8% disagreed, and 17.3% very disagreed when asked whether corrupt practises at the ports had decreased since the establishment of the concessionaries. Further, 35.9% of study participants disagreed with this, while 23.7% strongly opposed, 19.8% of respondents strongly agreed, 20.6% agreed, and 20.6% strongly disagreed that exorbitant charges had been lowered at Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports. Finally, 24.6% of the study participants strongly agreed that Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports' payment and clearing procedures are completely automated and compliant with accepted international standards. 14.9% of study participants agreed with this statement, 35.1% disagreed, and 25.4% strongly disagreed.

Test of Hypothesis:

H_O: The concession of ports in Nigeria does not have any significant influence on the improvement of the ease of doing business in Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports in Nigeria.

H_R: The concession of ports in Nigeria has a significant influence on the improvement of the ease of doing business in Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports in Nigeria.

Table 3: Regression analysis for the influence of concession of port on the ease of doing business in Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports

Group	N	β	R Square	Df	t calculated	t critical	P value	Decision
Concession of port				1				
	248	0.339	.115	246	1.809	1.96	.071	H_O: not rejected
Ease of doing business				247				

β = regression coefficient

Source: Author's field survey compilation (2023)

Interpretation: The impact of port concessions on the ease of doing business at Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports is seen in the regression output table for hypothesis three. According to the coefficient of determination (r-square), the concession of ports only accounted for 11.5% of the overall variance in the ease of doing business at Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports. According to the regression analysis's findings, port concessions had no appreciable impact on how simple it was to do business at Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports, ($p > 0.05$, t computed =1.809, t tabulated =1.96, = 0.339). In light of this, the null hypothesis, according to which the concession of ports in Nigeria does not significantly affect an increase in the business-friendliness of Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports in Nigeria, is not ruled out.

This analysis demonstrates that the concession of ports in Nigeria does not have the necessary impact on

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the improvement of the ease of doing business in Apapa and Tin Can Island Seaports in Nigeria, given the regression coefficients (= 0.339, t calculated =1.809, t tabulated =1.96, p> 0.05) obtained for the analysis on the influence of the concession of ports in Nigeria on the ease of doing business. The information acquired from the study participants via a research questionnaire provided the foundation for this finding.

Discussion of Findings

According to the results of the third hypothesis, the ease of doing business at Nigerian ports has not been considerably impacted by the concession of those ports. This is consistent with the findings of Iwuoha and Okafor (2022), who found that the level of port asset management, operational efficiency, quality of port services, compliance capacity of terminal operators, and patronage system in the maritime industry are all impacted by the poorly articulated and implemented regulatory frameworks of the Nigerian Ports Authority. As a result, the terminal operators take advantage of the legislative framework's complexities and weaknesses to significantly undercut government port authority and weaken efficient port asset management in the marine sector. This mindset in the Nigerian maritime sector has a negative overall impact on the country's ease of doing business score.

According to research by Ugboma and Oyesiku (2021) on the productivity and efficiency of Nigerian ports during the pre- and post-concession periods, there were improvements in port efficiency, with the average efficiency rising from about 51% during the pre-concession era to about 60% during the post-concession era as a result of advancements in cargo throughput, turnaround time, and cargo handling technology. Despite these advancements, the authors pointed out that there are still problems, including a lack of trained labour, poor infrastructure, traffic, and operational bottlenecks, among others, which have impacted the ease of doing business in Nigerian ports.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Investigating the effects of port concessions on port management utilising with focus on the ease of doing business in Nigeria was the aim of this study. According to the researcher, before 2006, Nigerian port management was beset by a number of problems, such as a lack of basic and standard port infrastructure, extortion and illegal fees, the proliferation of government agency functions at the ports, lengthy ship delays, and a difficult business environment. It was also highlighted, however, that despite large investments made by the different concessionaires at Nigerian seaports in the years after the concession, there are still issues with the issues that gave birth to the initiative in the first place. These issues were what spurred the researcher to launch this inquiry.

Based on the analysis, results led to the conclusion that the concession of Nigeria's ports had little to no impact on how simple it was to do business there. Based on the data collected in the field, it has been demonstrated that despite the reforms implemented to ensure that operations at the port run smoothly, the sheer number of government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) and security personnel who swarm the ports for charges and clearance purposes is quite alarming. The majority of the time, port users are forced to pay more than the amount that is legally required of them. When compared to other ports in the nation, this results in significantly expensive business costs. As a result, it has also been noted that practically all commerce is directed towards the ports in Lagos, leaving the other ports in the nation with little activity. This has exacerbated the strain on the Apapa and Tin Can Island Port infrastructures, which has led to the congestion in these ports.

On the basis of the study's results, the following recommendations have been made:

I. The government should continue its concession strategy, but with a stronger focus on the

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adoption of automation technologies that will allow the use of information and communication technology to streamline port administration and operations.

II. Even if the infrastructure development at the two ports has improved, there is still much to be done in terms of the road and rail infrastructure there. For instance, compared to the Apapa port, the Tin Can Island port requires greater investment in the building of infrastructure. This will make it simple to enter and exit the facilities.

III. According to the study, even if statistical analysis has indicated that ship waiting times have decreased, it does not necessarily suggest that they can compete with ports in industrialised economies. This suggests that we are unable to compete with international best practices. Therefore, it is advised that the government implement a strategy to purposefully reduce port congestion by diverting some of these enterprises to other ports.

IV. The researcher here suggests that, as is the case in other neighbouring countries of the West African region, such as Benin and Ghana, the number of MDAs and other security agencies that patrol the ports for clearance and charges should be drastically reduced. This is based on careful observation of what is happening in the ports. This will make it simpler to do business at our ports.

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