



Abandoned Boats, Ships, Barges and Wrecks and Safety Issues within Nigerian Territorial Waters, Jetties, and Approaches

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ABSTRACT

Regularly, there are reports about boating mishaps leading to loss in terms of human lives and properties. The causes of these mishaps are common and require intervention to avert and reverse this ugly trend to ensure safety, given the inability of regulatory agencies to enforce safety measures not only in the areas of wrecks, derelicts and abandoned vessels removal, many vessels that are not sea worthy are professionally anchored, beached, or moored at Jetties, positioned at anchorages or channels without any operational lights and at the mercy of weather and threat to Navigation. In many cases owners or owner will go under. This study investigated the impact of abandoned boats, ships, barges, and wrecks on safety within Nigerian territorial waters. It is a descriptive research survey and was carried out around Apapa port in Lagos. 100 respondents were purposively selected among port workers, those who were onshore or waiting to go offshore as at the time of the study. Questionnaires were distributed to them and retrieved immediately. The data collected was descriptively analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The result of this study indicated that abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks in the sea has great negative impacts in the Nigeria territorial waters. Based on the result, conclusion was drawn that abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks has negative impacts on safety and thus recommended that the owners of these abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks in the sea be made to pay a very huge fine to serve as deterrent, among others.

Keywords: Abandoned, boat, ship, barges, wrecks, safety, Nigeria territorial waters.

Introduction

Regularly, there are reports about boating mishaps leading to loss in terms of human lives and properties. The causes of these mishaps are common and require intervention to avert and reverse this ugly trend to ensure safety, given the inability of regulatory agencies to enforce safety measures (Dogarawa, 2012). According to the provisions of Section 428 subsection 1a – 1c of the Nigerian Merchant Shipping Act (MSA), 2007 marine casualty describes abandoned and lost ships which cause damage to other ships and lives by virtue of any accident to or on a ship near the Nigerian coast (Dogarawa, 2012). Wrecks refer to sunk, abandoned, and stranded vessels in harbours or ports, and includes flotsam, jetsam and derelicts submerged in the operational shores of a nation. Wrecks cause havoc as they pose as dangerous to the navigation of boats (Dogarawa, 2012). Nigeria's waters have become a place where shipwrecks are dumped and the individuals living on the coastline say the unseaworthy vessels which have been abandoned by shipping companies both internationally and locally are making their lives hard. These cargo ships and fishing boats that have been abandoned float freely or lay on parts of the coastline in Nigeria's territorial waters. They are strewn on the ocean, some visible only as masses of rusty metal protruding from the water (Olukoya, 2018). The existence of wreckages on Nigerian waters is a huge concern to many coastal states in the country due to fact that their confiscation is capital intensive, and their presence an impediment to the unrestricted movement of ships and boats on the waterways. Their removal would ensure safe shipping and be a relief for people in the coastal states (Anangor, 2021).

Statement of Problem

Lagos ports usually witness a high concentration of shipping traffic to Nigeria. The ports are however obstructed by abandoned boats and cargo ships lying on or around the coastlines. A look out at the Atlantic Ocean for instance reveals the images of abandoned vessels in various spots, all of which pose a challenge to the efficient navigation of vessels in the water due to the presence of large chunks of water. It is usually difficult to establish ownership of most of the abandoned vessels, and they turn out to be left for years causing coastal erosion. Every once in a while, efforts are made by the Lagos state government after public complaints to clear the shipwrecks, however, the problem keeps reoccurring. Apart from the remains of the vessels causing damages, there is also the damage it causes to the environment (Olukoya, 2018). In view of foregoing, this paper investigated how Abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affects safety in Nigerian territorial waters.

Research Objectives

The objective of this paper is to specifically;

1. Examine the extent to which abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affect safety within Nigerian territorial waters
 2. Identify the impact of abandoned wrecks on a ship.
 3. Determine the environmental impact of abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks.
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Research questions

1. To what extent do abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affect safety within Nigerian territorial waters?
 2. What is the impact of abandoned wrecks on a ship?
 3. What is the environmental impact of abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks?
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Literature review

The issue of abandoned vessels is a cause for concern as they have economic and environmental effects on local communities. Ships, boats and barges are termed abandoned after 30 days when no owner can be found. Wrecks are those boats that are no longer whole. They may reside on the sea floor or litter the shoreline. Vessels in impending danger of sinking may also be classified as wrecks. Without refurbishment they are no longer seaworthy (Brokenshire, 2016). They can be harmful to local businesses such as tourism and fisheries, impair infrastructure, hinder with navigation and pose safety risks. They can harm sensitive marine and coastal habitats, disperse oil and toxic chemicals still on board, move or sink during coastal storms or become a cause of marine debris which may threaten marine life.

Problems associated with abandoned ships, boats, barges and wrecks

Abandoned vessels pose some problems as they affect navigation in the water because of most the time some are large chunks of metal or rusty metal that have been moved from other places. The rusty remains are particularly a danger for small boats as they can run into them and cause a lot of damage and threat to human life. Fishermen find it difficult to fish in the waters as the abandoned ships limit the area where fishing can be done and if the fishermen go close to them, some of their metals can damage the fishing nets. When the sea level rises and boat riders ride into them, they can easily damage their engines and the metals they can also tear the fiber and wooden boats generally used by small boats (Olukoya, 2018).

Abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks are solid objects that are where they should not be, causing direct impediment to the natural flow of the current, stopping sedimentation and causing eddy currents that chew up shorelines. They lay on waterways, harming the environment and the ruining the beauty of the coastlines. They also serve as storage facilities for stolen oil as well as lodging for other illegal activities on territorial waters and around ports. Wrecks are most often submerged and barely visible to boat operatives, mostly during high water, posing the greatest threats during rainy season (The Nation, 2020).

Wrecks from vessels can be a cause of pollution and besides these pollution risks such as oil in tankers, the wrecks may contain hazardous cargo and stores, as well as unexploded ammunitions, making salvage operations dangerous.

Empirical studies

A study by Dogarawa (2012) assessed the safety measures set up by operators and other institutional bodies in Northern Nigeria and the level of infrastructure with regards to quantity, quality and accessibility to boat operators, users and staff. Questionnaires were used through individual and group interviews to collect data from boat owners, drivers, users, builders, engine mechanics, local government officials, maritime workers union, marine police, traditional regulators and workforce of the federal government agencies for maritime affairs. It was revealed that marine transportation is neglected in the Northern part of Nigeria with derelict jetties, unequipped marine police, ferries and boats that are non-functional meant to be used by federal officials and wrecks in water channels that are not removed.

Sprovieri et al. (2013) analyzed marine pollution from shipwrecks at the sea bottom the Mediterranean basin as a case study and discovered that indiscriminate and unrestrained leakage of toxic materials and organic/inorganic contaminants from vessels that have wrecked or were abandoned could affect the wellbeing of the deep sea also for long-time as these materials are deposited at the bottom of the sea, causing ecological damage.

Ejezie (2017) discussed the impacts of sea accidents on the economy and observed that damages to natural resources through pollution, loss of lives and formation of wrecks litters are effects of accidents. Besides from oil spills which has the foremost after-effect of marine accidents in Nigeria, formation of wreck litters is also a navigational hazard among others things, and loss of lives result from wrecks left lying in water.

Theoretical framework: The Domino theory

The domino theory was developed and advanced by Heinrich in 1959. The theory states that while most accidents result from people's unsafe behaviours and unsafe conditions, unsafe behaviours and conditions do not always instantly result in accidents and that most accidents can be avoided by avoiding the causal factors. It explains that injury / loss results from series of events, one of which is the accident itself and the accident only results from an unsafe act committed by someone and/or a physical hazard. Basically, removing the unsafe act or condition prevents loss and damage. This

theory involves a sequence of five factors just like dominoes (Zobair& Kazuhiko, 2017). The first is “ancestry and social environment” which clarifies that undesirable traits causing people to commit unsafe actions may be inherited or developed from the environment one socializes. The second factor is “fault of a person” which clarifies that people act in an unsafe manner as a consequence of the undesirable traits they acquired. The third factor is “unsafe act or physical hazard/unsafe condition” which directly ends in an accident. The fourth factor is “accident”, which causes injury, damage and/or loss. The fifth is injury, damage and/or loss which is the effect of accident (Nwokedi et al., 2017). Abandoned vessels and wrecks are hazards which can result in accidents that can be damaging or lead to loss of lives if left unchecked.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research survey in examining the effect of abandoned wrecks on safety with the Nigeria’s water. To achieve the Apapa port in Lagos was purposively chosen as one of the largest ports in Nigeria and home to lots of vessels. Going further, random sampling method was used in selecting 100 port workers, those who were onshore or waiting to go offshore. Questionnaires were distributed to them and retrieved immediately. The data collected was descriptively analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Data presentation, analysis and discussion

RQ1: To what extent do abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affect safety within Nigerian territorial waters?

Table 1: showing the extent to which abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affect safety within Nigerian territorial waters

ITEMS		SA	A	D	SD	% in agreement
Abandoned boats affect navigation in the water	F	70	30	0	0	100.00
	%	70.0	30.0	0	0	
Abandoned vessel left to decay and decompose releases toxic chemical into the sea posing threat to aquatic lives and human lives	F	60	28	10	2	88.0
	%	60.0	28.0	10.0	2.0	
Abandoned vessel serve as hideouts for hoodlums to execute their heinous activities	F	36	64	0	0	100
	%	36.0	64.0	0	0	
Abandoned vessel causes cargo losses emanating from marine accidents such as collision, fire, capsizing	F	40	59	1	0	99.0
	%	40.0	59.0	1.0	0	
Abandoned vessel serves as an obstruction and danger to navigation which can potentially lead to further accidents such as collision	F	35	62	0	3	97.0
	%	35.0	62.0	0	3.0	
The deposits of wrecks causes degradation to the coastline and makes erosion and flooding imminent which can lead to loss of lives and properties by that leading to economic loss	F	80	19	0	1	99.0
	%	80.0	19.0	0.0	1.0	

Field Survey, 2021

Table 1 above presents the respondents’ opinion of the extent to which abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affect safety within Nigerian territorial waters. As indicated in the table, 100% of the respondents are in agreement to the statement that: “Abandoned boats affect navigation in the water”; 88% agreed that “Abandoned vessel left to decay and decompose releases toxic chemical into the sea posing threat to aquatic lives and human lives”; 100% are in support to the statement that “Abandoned vessel serve as hideouts for hoodlums to execute their heinous activities”; 99% supports that “Abandoned vessel causes cargo losses emanating from marine accidents such as collision, fire, capsizing”; 97% of the respondents are in agreement that “Abandoned vessel serves as an obstruction and danger to navigation which can potentially lead to further accidents such as collision”. Finally, 99% of the respondents are of the view that “The deposits of wrecks causes degradation to the coastline and makes erosion and flooding imminent which can lead to loss of lives and properties by that leading to economic loss”. This result confirms the findings of an earlier study by Olukoya(2018)and Dogarawa (2012 respectively who shared similar opinion that abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affect safety within Nigerian territorial waters negatively.

RQ2: What is the impact of abandoned wrecks on a ship?

Table 2: Showing the impact of abandoned wrecks on a ship

S/N	ITEMS		SA	A	D	SD	% in agreement
1	Death of a sea farer	F	60	28	10	2	88.0
		%	60.0	28.0	10.0	2.0	
2	Unplanned expenditure	F	36	64	0	0	100.0
		%	36.0	64.0	0	0	

3	Extra expenses spent on repairs	F	70	30	0	0	100.0
		%	70.0	30.0	0	0	
4	Badly damaged vessel or boat	F	65	30	5	0	95.0
		%	65.5	30.0	5.0	0.0	

Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 above shows the impact of abandoned wrecks on a ship. As indicated in the table, it could lead to the death of a sea farer (88%); unplanned expenditure (100%); extra expenses spent on repairs (100%); as well as badly damaged vessel or boat (95%). This shows that abandoned wrecks on a ship has negative impact on a ship. This result confirms Nwokedi et al., (2017) who also shared that abandoned vessels and wrecks are hazards which can result in accidents that can be damaging or lead to loss of lives if left unchecked.

RQ3: What is the environmental impact of abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks?**Table 3: Showing the environmental impact of abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks**

S/N	ITEMS		SA	A	D	SD	% in agreement
11	Abandoned Vessels Leach Chemicals to create a toxic environment.	F	35	62	0	3	97.0
		%	35.0	62.0	0	3.0	
12	Abandoned Vessels Endanger Waterways drifting on the surface or bobbing beneath it without notice	F	80	19	0	1	99.0
		%	80.0	19.0	0.0	1.0	
13	Abandoned Vessels Spoil Natural Beauty	F	90	10	0	0	100.0
		%	90.0	10.0	0	0	
14	Abandoned Vessels makes fishing difficult for artisans	F	2	98	0	0	100
		%	2.0	98.0	0	0	

Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 above presents the respondents' opinion on the environmental impact of abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks in the sea. As indicated in the table and with above 95% agreement, the result revealed that abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks in the sea will creates a toxic environment (97%); endanger Waterways drifting on the surface or bobbing beneath it without notice (99%); spoils natural beauty of the sea (100%) and makes fishing difficult for artisans (100%). This shows that abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks in the sea has negative impact in the environment. This result confirms the earlier study by Sprovieri et al. (2013) who revealed among other things that abandonedboats, ships, barges and wrecks destroys the general ambience of the sea and makes it unsafe for boats and sea farers.

Conclusion and recommendations

The result of this study indicated that abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks in the sea has great negative impacts in the Nigeria territorial waters. This is so because boats, ships, barges, and wrecks are solid objects and thus can easily constitute a naissance when left where they are not supposed to be. It can impede the free flows of waters, stops sedimentation and causes eddy currents that chew up shorelines. It does not only destroy the overall ambience of the sea, but also obstructs the free operations of fisheries artisans' activities. It makes it difficult for ships to moves freely in the waters leading to accidents that would have otherwise been prevented. Therefore, the existence of wreckages on Nigerian waters is a huge concern to many coastal states in the country due to fact that their confiscation is capital intensive, and they presence an impediment to the unrestricted movement of ships and boats on the waterways. This study therefore recommends that there such be huge fine on the ship owners of abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks in the sea that will motivated all ship owners to always ensure that their ships are not left in the sea, even if the ships/boats are in bad condition since the huge fine will dig a great whole in them. The study recommends that all abandoned boats/ships, if found within the sea, should be sold as scrap mental by the sea authority with or without the direct permission from the owners and the money be put in the state funds.

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APPENDIX

ABANDONED BOATS, SHIPS, BARGES AND WRECKS PARAMOUNT SAFETY ISSUES WITHIN NIGERIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Dear Respondent,

I am carrying out a study on “Abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks paramount safety issues within Nigerian territorial waters”, and you have been chosen to be part of the study. This questionnaire is only for academic purposes. Kindly select the response which applies to you and all information will be kept confidential

Instructions: Please tick (√) as appropriate where

SA = Strongly Agree (SA), A = Agree, D = Disagree (D), SD = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Key: Strongly agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
RQ1	To what extent do abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks affect safety within Nigerian territorial waters?				
1	Abandoned boats affect navigation in the water				
2	Abandoned vessel left to decay and decompose releases toxic chemical into the sea posing threat to aquatic lives and human lives				
3	Abandoned vessel serve as hideouts for hoodlums to execute their heinous activities				
4	Abandoned vessel causes cargo losses emanating from marine accidents such as collision, fire, capsizing				
5	Abandoned vessel serves as an obstruction and danger to navigation. Which can potentially lead to further accidents such as collision				
6	The deposits of wrecks causes degradation to the coastline and makes erosion and flooding imminent which can lead to loss of lives and properties by that leading to economic loss				
RQ2	What is the impact of abandoned wrecks on a ship?				
7	Death of a sea farer				
8	Unplanned expenditure				
9	Extra expenses spent on repairs				
10	Badly damaged vessel or boat				
RQ3	What is the environmental impact of abandoned boats, ships, barges and wrecks?				
11	Abandoned Vessels Leach Chemicals to create a toxic environment.				
12	Abandoned Vessels Endanger Waterways drifting on the surface or bobbing beneath it without notice				
13	Abandoned Vessels Spoil Natural Beauty				
14	Abandoned Vessels makes fishing difficult for artisans				