

The Implementation of the Notion of Seaport Tourism for Seaport Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

The poor management of shipping liners and shippers in the work schedule of seafarers has negatively impacted their mental health. The mental health constraints that seafarers face on board lead to many operational challenges and accidents. To overcome these issues, this research note introduces the concept of developing a seaport leisure city on the bridge in the port limit. This research suggests that seaport tourism could improve the mental health of seafarers during voyages. The introduction of the leisure city in the seaport will not interrupt any port operations, and it will function as a mini leisure town within the port limit. The development of seaport tourism will have a great impact on the seaport's competitiveness and boost the GDP. Thus, this evidence shows that seaport tourism should be further investigated. Future studies will be conducted to identify the significant factors that contribute to seaport tourism.

Keywords: Seaport Tourism, Maritime Tourism, Seaport Museum, Geologistics

Introduction

Seaports are major gateways for the functioning of international trade and play an essential role in the growth of both developed and developing countries. Seaports are multifaceted, dynamic systems with numerous interacting elements.¹ The primary goal of a seaport business is to increase port throughput and maximize resource utilization, including the usage of berthing, quay crane operation, loading and unloading operations, warehousing, as well as the dry port role in the hinterland. The second goal is to reduce handling time, minimize port congestion, disruption, demurrage, and operational costs.² Shipping lines and shippers are the main customers for a seaport, and the role of a port operator is to sustain the customers by providing the services they require.³ However, within the shipping industry, seafaring labour is a critical element determining the functioning of shipping operations and indirectly impacting port operations in terms of arrival, preparation for berthing, getting cargo ready for loading and unloading, and handling ancillary conservancy services from ports.

A study that 323 seafarers employed on 22 container ships were experiencing high stress levels while contemplating their jobs onboard. The underlying causes being identified are sailing route, trip duration at sea, physical stressors (e.g., noise and seasickness), psychosocial stressors (e.g., shift to a new ship). Furthermore, a study by showing that depression, anxiety, general psychiatric disorders, and poor health status were major causes

for stress in 439 multinational seafarers out of 470 seafarers⁵. It found that watchkeepers had significantly shorter sleeping periods than daytime workers in ships.⁶ People with inadequate engagement in outdoor social activities were more likely to develop mental illnesses and have a negative impact on their health.⁷ The operational constraints that seafarers face on board of ships have caused unanticipated consequences on their health.⁸ This highlights the need to address the mental health issues of seafarers in the shipping industry.

In addition, Maritime Labour Convention in 2006 has developed a guideline on minimum working hours and living standards for all seafarers working on onboard to significantly improve the living and working conditions of seafarers. Nevertheless, the implementation was not maintained. This is due to the fact that the welfare of seafarers is still compromised in numerous ways, including social isolation, fatigue, stress, and the feeling that their occupation may be criminalised and targeted in many parts of the globe.⁹ Apart from that, the noise and vibration during the voyage, environmental conditions, voyage cycle, not estimated in number of port calls, poor cargo handling hinders the seafarer's ability to obtain restful sleep.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Seafarers are also harmed by unethical crewing practises, including the use of unfair contracts, the abandonment of ship-owners, the delay or non-payment of their wages, the denial of shore leave, the inability to communicate with their families while onboard, and the refusal to repatriate them when their contracts expire.¹¹

Inadequate maritime legislation pertaining to the welfare of seafarers indicates that a significant number of seafarers are owed enormous sums of money. In many instances, months pass with no sign of payment. Without pay, seafarers "cannot even afford to escape and return home on their own." The reduction of crew size has a significant impact on the living and working conditions of seafarers in the twenty-first century. Additionally, the crew reduction in the modern shipping industry is driven by technological advancement and the increased efficiency of larger vessels, as well as the desire of permanent shipowners to reduce labour costs. Nonetheless, in the name of business efficiency, ships typically operate with minimal crews, requiring seafarers to work long hours and for extended periods.¹² Since shipping is the only industry that operates nonstop, seafarers frequently work long and irregular hours. As a result, seafarer fatigue may be caused by the small number of crew members aboard commercial ships, as well as the extensive quantity and duration of work. Furthermore, shore leave or a short-term break is frequently rendered nearly impossible due to the isolation of modern ports. Historically, old ports like Liverpool, San Francisco, and Yokohama were situated close to city centres. However, new ports or known as modern ports are constructed 15–20 miles away from cities resulting in an absence of people, public transportation and welfare centres.¹³

The Concept of Seaport Tourism

The concept of maritime tourism has been initiated where port activities is not only limited to the port operation.¹⁴ Maritime tourism has been segregated into three main

areas, which are foreland, seaports and hinterland.¹⁵ This is because, the port activities not only benefits to the seaport itself but to the city and regional development. To overcome the issues on seafarers' mental health, this short research note was design to introduce a seaport leisure city on the bridge in the port limit. Figure 1 below depicts the idea of an illustration of the proposed concept of seaport leisure city on the bridge in the port limit. Providing tourism activities during the lay hours will make the seafarers more relax and bringing energy to the next port of call. This is because, there is a strong relationship between travel, tourism, and mental health. Tourism activities could foster mental health and well-being among seafarers. Developing a tourism spot could improve the health and wellbeing of the seafarers.¹⁶ The concept of developing a leisure city on the bridge in the port limit is still new. In light of the growing concern on seafarers' mental health during sea voyages, this research proposes that bringing in seaport tourism would be an effective solution. The leisure city should comprise many facilities, for an example of hospitality facilities package - should include lodging, food services, event planning, theme parks, transportation, seaport museum and other tourism-oriented products and services to help the seafarers improve their mental health. The bridge concept is shown in Figure 1. Bridge will not interrupt any port operations, and it will function as a mini leisure-town within

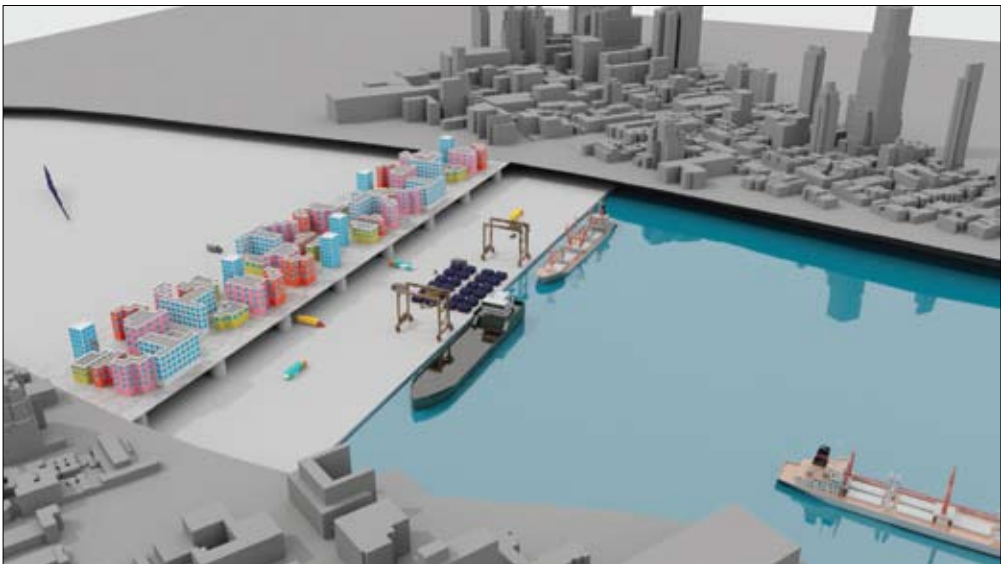


Figure 1: Depicts an illustration of the proposed concept of a leisure city on the bridge in the port limit.

the port limit. While waiting for cargo to be discharged, seafarers could enjoy themselves in the leisure city. This will benefit both the port and the seafarers in addition to the local economy This will also promote the port as a cruise port as the factors for port selection by cruise ships also in line with the elements of the proposed leisure park on the bridge. The port can generate additional income, and the seafarers improve their mental health and wellbeing. The concept proposed will assist in safeguarding the seafarer community

as frontline workers in global trade from both short term and long-term in terms of their wellbeing and the current high turnover. Vessel crews could be motivated by making their next port of call more pleasant while increasing their deal for work.

The Notion of Sustainable Seaports Through Utilisation of Inland Facilities

In the current trade system, the integration of seaports and inland components has become essential to ensure the competitiveness of seaports especially in the agenda of international trade. However, this cooperation is not effective in some seaports system due to the complexity and rigidness of seaport operations.¹⁷ Consequently, limitation in strategies implementation, challenges in energy transformation, poor monitoring and evaluation systems, innovation barriers, low stage of development, cross-sectoral issues as well as lack of resources utilisation plan have been detected. Underpinned by these critical consequences, the inland ports are proposed to rebrand the seaports towards sustainable trade nodes. Besides enforcing these entities to cooperate, this paper has proposed a new dimension to ease the cooperation between them. The application of geologistics notion has been proposed to improve the sustainability of seaports in the complex business ambience. This concept is focusing on the role of inland ports by identifying the resources, classifying the resources and coordinating the distribution of the resources for the benefits of mankind. In this situation, the assistance of inland ports is substantial to push the role of seaports in various location in the specific country (regardless coastal or landlocked countries).¹⁸ The enforcement of this new dimension through inland ports may improving the strategies implementation, minimising energy transformation, monitoring and evaluation systems through information sharing, innovating in freight logistics, optimising stage of development in seaports, inspiring the horizontal and vertical integration as well as improving the resources utilisation. Owing to these outcomes, the sustainability of seaports is anticipated to improve especially on natural resources, capital resources, human resources as well as man-made or cultural resources.

This paradigm shift may diverse the seaport operations in the future. For example, the introduction of geologistics application between seaports and inland ports, new seaport business is expected to grow and nourishing the+ volume of gross domestic product (GDP) in the particular nation.¹⁹ In addition, the introduction of leisure city, port city, seaport based economic activities may providing significant impact on inland economy of the country. The introduction of leisure city can be directed to the ship crews as well as professional and non-professional labour forces in the seaports. This is crucial for the to regain their motivation and energy in the leisure city which located adjacent to the seaports.²⁰ The new role of inland ports through geologistics application may reduce the rigidness of seaports in the maritime business and they may diverse the nature of the business towards inland. In that case, the cooperation between inland ports and seaport will be prolific and nourishing the interaction of seaport-city especially through the new dimension of inland ports.²¹

Conclusion

The introduction of seaport tourism will not only reduce the mental stress of seafarers but also increase port competitiveness. A developed or developing seaport should not only focus on port operations but also prioritize the mental health of its workers. A seaport should provide a happy and harmonious working environment, not a “Stress Seaport.” By introducing seaport tourism, it will attract more ports of call around the globe. This is because the new concept of seaport tourism will add value for maritime consumers, eventually impacting the seaport’s competitiveness and the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Future studies will be conducted to identify significant factors that contribute to seaport tourism.

Notes

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