



The Effectiveness of Public Administration in Maritime Management – The Case Study of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Modern practices of public administration provide a broad understanding of governing actors, mechanisms, and tools. The domain of maritime activities has many levels: international, regional, and national levels. The institutions of any states and non-governmental entities (both commercial and non-commercial) act together at these levels. All of these entities have a specific impact on maritime activities. This paper will discuss the situated importance of public administration (PA) in being the manager of the Pakistan maritime sector which is strategically critical to the nation, as marine trade is its primary method of importation and exportation. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology based on review of policy documents, scholarly literature, and institutional reports to analyze the role of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs (MoMA) and other agencies in the construct of the maritime governance. Particular focus is paid to Karachi Port, Port Qasim and Gwadar Port. The paper also finds its way into the most notable issues brought about by poor governance including over bureaucratic obstructions, institutional coordination, poor infrastructure, security threats and workforce shortages and whether the National Shipping Policy has been achieved. The review shows a weak or no inter-agency cooperation and judicious application of policy which affects competency and performance of the port. The analysis suggests greater institutional integration, investment in modern infrastructure, training of the workforce and good partnership with the hybrid public and private partnership (PPP) like CPEC. Pakistan is in a position to pursue the international practice of using these reforms to develop its maritime environment and can enhance its global trade capability by embracing the economically supportive services present in international maritime environments.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of Maritime Sector in Pakistan

The maritime transport industry is one of the most important sectors of Pakistan economy because of the country's dependence on ocean borne freight for trade. The country's location along some of the most important international waterways puts the importance of this sector into even starker perspective. Pakistan enjoys a strategic and centralized location in the South Asian region and possesses well-developed seaports, shipping facilities that support transportation and communication activities linking up the free flow of products and services internationally (December 4). Egypt, Greece sign maritime deal to counter Libya-Turkey one. Retrieved from <https://apnews.com/article/turkey-libya-egypt-cairo-middle-east-fc1754eb8429afd79a4750d6adaa40> (2019).

The geographical map of Pakistan consist of following major ports where Karachi Port, Port Qasim as well as Gwadar Port are the channel of international trade. The functionality therefore of the so many ports together with sound shipping policies has a bearing on the

performance of the economy. The sector also generates employment, revenue, and has a diversification impact on the larger economy hence is an important sector in the development of the country (Altıntaş, 2020). The maritime is a major and significant sector in the growth of the Pakistani economy since more than 90 percent of international trade is transacted through shipping routes. It is geographically well positioned along important maritime transport routes across the globe. There are major ports like Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar that are gates to trade and link South Asia to Central Asia and Middle East. The development of the Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) increase the importance of Pakistan in the region with respect to the maritime activities (Attard, Fitzmaurice, & Gutiérrez, 2014).

Maritime governance in Pakistan shall mean the management, administration and strategic development of the maritime domain of Pakistan, including ports, shipping, marine infrastructure, marine resources and coastal areas. It involves a multiplicity of public authorities and regulatory frameworks to ensure economic growth, national security and environmental sustainability. Moreover, Pakistan has untapped potential in fisheries, marine tourism, coastal tourism and biotechnology, and efforts are ongoing to develop a national blue economy policy for sustainable management of marine resources.

1.2. Significance of Public Administration in Maritime Management

Public administration in the maritime and logistics sector refers to the role of public authorities and public-sector bodies in regulating, facilitating and supervising maritime trade, port operations, transport infrastructure, customs and logistics services. Public administration in the shipping and logistics sectors plays a key role in ensuring the smooth, safe and efficient movement of goods and services across national and international borders. Although a number of studies have addressed maritime policy in South Asia, the present paper has some unique focus as it looks into the administrative structure of Pakistan and its consequences to the efficiency in maritime sphere. Historically, regulatory provisions have been the main way of managing the maritime sector, influencing maritime trade processes, correcting maritime policy orientations and defining the maritime sector's governance structures and their coordination with transnational mechanisms and non-state actors. Modern approaches to public administration provide a comprehensive understanding of the players, tools and instruments in the regulatory (Dmytro Luchenko, 2023). Compared with the maritime nations that are more mature, Pakistan must also deal with peculiarities of governance such as the overlaps across ministries, along with the lack of infrastructure and governance complexities. The research therefore completes a contextual literature gap by providing a critical analysis of how well public administration is executed to manage the maritime geographical context providing lessons to countries that share similar positioning as the developing countries.

1.3. Research Objectives

The study aims to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of public administration in Pakistan's maritime sector;
- Assess how policy frameworks and institutional coordination affect maritime governance;
- Identify implementation challenges in major port operations;
- Recommend actionable reforms to improve maritime administration and competitiveness.

2. Methodology

The study is a qualitative research that uses a review of secondary data using writers table to research government policy documents, academic journals, official MoMA publications, and reports by international maritime organizations. The content analysis was used to determine some common themes: efficiency of governance, coordination across different agencies, investment in infrastructure and gaps in regulations. Comparative analysis between Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar Ports will also be included in the methodology to contextualize the findings within the institutional framework of Pakistan.

2.1. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs (MoMA)

2.1.1. Overview of MoMA's Role

The relevant government ministry that oversees the formation and growth of the maritime subject matter in Pakistan is the Ministry of Maritime Affairs. It controls shipping policies, port operation and managing the operation of coastal states. MoMA also work effectively with other international organization to improve the status of Pakistan's maritime sector *Maritime Dispute Settlement in the South China Sea: The Case of the Philippines–China Arbitral Awards and Implications*. Retrieved from *Global Politics Review* (2024).

2.1.2. Key Functions of MoMA

- Formulating national policies for shipping, ports, and maritime transportation.
- Regulating and controlling maritime activities, ensuring compliance with international maritime laws.
- Enhancing port facilities and infrastructure to boost trade efficiency.
- Managing maritime security and environmental concerns in coastal areas.

Although MoMA has a wide mandate, there are issues of coordination especially at the implementation of projects, both in KPT and in PQA, there is duplication of functions, and poor distinction in lines of authority that hamper development of infrastructure and service delivery.

2.2. Government Policies on Shipping Sector

2.2.1. National Maritime/Shipping Policy of Pakistan

National Shipping Policy (NSP) is one of the primary policy instruments in the shipping sector for development of Pakistan's maritime trade *Territorial and Maritime Dispute (Nicaragua v. Colombia)*. Retrieved from <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/124> (2012). Its purpose involves the encouragement of the operation of vessels flying the Pakistan flag and the reason supports the development of shipping services within the country to minimize importation of services from other countries. *The East China Sea: A case of ocean geopolitics and maritime conflict. East Asia*, 41(2), 223–254. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-024-09426-y> (2024). In addition, the recently launched National Maritime Policy (NMP) 2025 and its role in steering the maritime industry in Pakistan through government officials, industry, maritime experts and international stakeholders, to highlight that the NMP 2025 is in line with international maritime frameworks, including IMO Conventions, and that Pakistan is meeting global maritime safety and environmental standards (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2025).

2.2.2. Port Development Policies

Shipping policies of Pakistan lay importance on port development. The government emphasizes on upgrading of terminals, increasing the throughput, and the introduction of efficiency enhancing technologies in the management of the terminals (*The Greek-Turkish Maritime Disputes: An International Law Perspective*. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). 2020).

2.2.3. Regulations and Incentives for Shipping Companies

The incentives for involved shipping companies are offered by the Government of Pakistan that offer incentives to both national as well as the international shipping industries functioning within the country. Such incentives are in the form of tax credit, free trade zone, subsidies, and grant schemes meant to support development of the shipping industry. All these measures are aimed at lowering cost and promoting investment in an effort to attract more stakeholders to the sector that will eventually improve the competitiveness of Pakistan's maritime trade and later on its economic growth. Although the National Shipping Policy has a sufficiently good framework but it cannot be properly utilized due to an ineffective monitoring system, lack of key performance indicators (KPIs), and inhomogeneous execution in different ports, which reduces its potential influence *Regional maritime security in the eastern Mediterranean: Expectations and reality. International Affairs*, 95(5), 979–997. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz146> (2019).

2.3. Maritime Governance in Pakistan

2.3.1. Legal and Institutional Framework

Pakistani Maritime administration is facilitated by several bodies which are the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Port Qasim Authority

(PQA). Together with MoMA they regulate numerous facets of operations such as handling cargoes, registration of vessels, and the ports *Norway-United Kingdom Maritime Boundary Dispute*. Retrieved from <https://sovereignlimits.com/boundaries/norway-united-kingdom-maritime> (2024). Although MoMA has a higher ranking, jurisdictional inconsistency is common among the agencies such as the KPT and PQA side by side. As an example, there is always confusion in the port security and in the environmental compliance and this always results in delays. A good example was the delay in the implementation of the safety procedures in Gwadar because of the conflict between the federal environmental authority and the provincial government.

2.3.2. Coordination between Public and Private Sectors

Public partnership is usually an important determinant of the efficiency of maritime governance system. Policy and regulations are enforced within the public sector institutions while logistic and shipping affairs and operations and port terminal activities are dealt with by private sector enterprises *Small Islands in Maritime Disputes: Greek Turkish Energy Geo-politics. Chapter 9: Energy Hubs: Models and Options* (pp. 147–167). Springer. (2022).

2.3.3. Challenges in Governance

However, due to existing and complicated system, the maritime industry still has problems like excessive bureaucracy, duplicity of regulations, corruption, and dearth of advanced technologies. These challenges affect the governance and management of maritime operations as an example, the late operation of Gwadar Port is partly attributed to weak regulatory bodies and lack of coordination between the federal and provincial authorities that shows the problems of governance in the maritime domain (Yorucu, 2022).

2.4. Role of Pakistan's Ports in Maritime Management

2.4.1. Karachi Port

Karachi Port is the biggest and most active seaport in Pakistan, which contributes by a large measure to the export and import of the overall commodity in the country. As it forms the hub for imported cargoes in Pakistan it remains a vital part of the country's maritime industry *Maritime boundaries and cooperation over straddling seabed resources in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea*. In T. S. Hunter & M. Taylor (Eds.), *Research Handbook on Oil and Gas Law* (pp. 388-405). Edward Elgar Publishing. (2022).

2.4.2. Port Qasim

The other important port is port Qasim which is used for industrial and commercial products import/export. In the case of the port, it serves as an essential link in the energy and industrial business shipping out huge consignment of oil, coal amongst other items (Xiong, 2020).

2.4.3. Gwadar Port

Gwadar port is a under developed port in Baluchistan province and it is an important factor in Pakistan's long term maritime planning due to law and order situation and weak political stability. It has been under development for streamlining trade with Central Asian countries and China besides upgrading Pakistan's stakes in sea business. The potential for the port is very significant provided that at the moment it has not fully developed its capacity and efficiency *Regional maritime security in the eastern Mediterranean: Expectations and reality*. *International Affairs*, 95(5), 979–997. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz146> (2019).

2.4.4. Role of Ports in Economic Development

This paper notes that ports in Pakistan are the important facilitators to trade and economic development. Sustainable ports management is therefore essential in increasing efficiency of shipping so as to effectively cut shipment costs, reduce freight charges and balance between import and export. Stringent attention to develop of gwadar ports to boost the competitiveness of Pakistan in sea transportation is another aim of the government's strategy in 2023, Karachi Port processed more than 65 million tons of cargo and this fact demonstrates the high operational potential through one belt road. Meanwhile, Gwadar is not only underutilized, but it is functioning at less than 10 percent of its capacity because of the poor road connectivity and the absence of commercial encouragement *The Greek-Turkish Maritime Disputes: An International Law Perspective*. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). (2020).

2.5. Maritime Transportation Policies

2.5.1. Shipping Industry Regulation

Measures in regulating the shipping sector are important to guarantee the safety of the operations and increase maritime security. The Pakistan being member of IMO has framed its policies in accordance with the international conventions in order to achieve safe and efficient operation. By following these standards, opportunities in ship safety & security, ship and port management & operations, and the welfare and security of seafarers are met and play a role in the harmony of the Pakistan's economy's maritime system. Those regulations are implemented, and compliance with the international standards is enforced by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs (MoMA) Transboundary resource management in maritime zones. *Frontiers*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2021.656023> (2021).

2.5.2. Environmental Policies

Environmental management is one of the core agendas of Pakistan's maritime policies. Measures target reduction of emissions from ships; energy conservation; and better waste management at the terminals. Measures range from anti-Marine and -Pollution policies essential in avoiding and controlling marine mishaps to proactive usage of coastal natural resources and suppression of emissions. These strategies are in compliance with international environmental standards and have been developed to enhance the environmental sciences review of ports & shipping sector of Pakistan. As an example, Karachi Port Trust has already tried to launch a waste oil treatment plant and started to shift toward shore-side electric supply to vessels to minimize the emissions, which is an early demonstration of environmental compliance. *Maritime Dispute Settlement in the South China Sea: The Case of the Philippines-China Arbitral Awards and Implications*. Retrieved from *Global Politics Review* (2024).

2.5.3. Transport Connectivity and Infrastructure Development

The government plans to improve transport access and build sound port facilities. This includes sensitisation of current ports, enhancement of road and rail network infrastructure for efficient cargo handling and adopting of technologies. The essence of these efforts is to increase the capacity of Pakistan to compete for regional and global business in ports that are efficient and sustainable (December 4). Egypt, Greece sign maritime deal to counter Libya-Turkey one. Retrieved from <https://apnews.com/article/turkey-libya-egypt-cairo-middle-east-fc1754eb8429afd79a4750d6adaa40> (2019).

2.6. Challenges in Maritime Management in Pakistan

2.6.1. Bureaucratic Challenges

One of the main issues in current maritime management is the excessive bureaucratization of the public administration system. Bureaucracy, ineffective working of the system, and insufficient training attached to the employees also hold back the pace of execution of policies and weakens the entire framework of maritime management. *Territorial and Maritime Dispute (Nicaragua v. Colombia)*. Retrieved from <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/124> (2012).

2.6.2. Inadequate Infrastructure

Although Pakistan has established good amounts in reforms for port facility most of the ports are still constrained by inadequate infrastructure, limited storage space and inadequately equipped cargo handling equipment. All these problems have an impact on the general productivity and viability of Pakistan's maritime industry. A report published by the Pakistan Business Council in 2022 observed that 2 to 3 days wait-time of vessels in Karachi Port is associated with congestion at berths and old-fashioned handling equipment. *Regional maritime security in the eastern Mediterranean: Expectations and reality*. *International Affairs*, 95(5), 979–997. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz146> (2019).

2.6.3. Security Concerns

Currently, Pakistan's maritime sector is still threatened by some factors such as cyber security attacks, smuggling and some regional instabilities. Proper security measures on sea borne products is crucial in order to meet the safety needs of vessels and cargoes. Government has tried to develop better security though there is still much to be done (Xiong, 2020). Pakistan's maritime security concerns are essential for maintaining peace in the Indian Ocean region. In addition to its strategic importance in the great power competition between the US,

India, and China, the Indian Ocean is also a vital trade route. Because 95 percent of Pakistan's trade depends on this sea route, any event in the Indian Ocean immediately affects Pakistan. We must maintain reliable maritime security, because a strong navy is essential for trade. It is also a vital channel of communication for the entire world. Pakistan's maritime security concerns are essential for maintaining peace in the Indian Ocean region. In addition to its strategic importance in the great power competition between the US, India, and China, the Indian Ocean is also a vital trade route for international commerce (Sahibzada Adil Munir, 2023).

2.6.4. Lack of Skilled Workforce

The manpower for the maritime sector in its nascent stage in Pakistan does not boast of adequate trained professionals in fields of port management and related shipping logistics, and maritime law enforcement as well. This lack of skills hampers the sectors capacity to meet the growing demand for maritime services. Pakistan has just a single, big sea training institute (Pakistan Marine Academy) today, also turning out less than 300 cadets general editor. The IMLI Manual on International Maritime Law. Volume I: The Law of the Sea. Edited by Malgosia Fitzmaurice and Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [2014]. (2014).

3. Recommendations for Improving Public Administration in Maritime Management

3.1. Strengthening Institutional Coordination

Efficient decision making and overall more efficient implementation of maritime policies and strategies requires improved cooperation between Pakistan's important marine organizations and departments for instance the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, Karachi Port Trust, as well as Port Qasim Authority. Many of these bodies work independently and some of them are usually under different ministries and hence, complications arise in the executions of Maritime projects. The approach which involves more coordination between these two types of decision can help to avoid confusion and to establish clearer chain of command what exactly will be done in certain conditions. Of equal importance is the creation of a central maritime entity that will be responsible for the coordination of the entities involved in the maritime business, thereby ensuring that their actions are in harmony with the existing agenda, as this would increase efficiency of ports and of other shipping related activities. One of the major steps would be to digitalize the process of clearance in the ports and implement a National Maritime Single Window so as to minimize paperwork, delays and human error.

3.2. Investing in Modern Infrastructure

However, in order to improve Pakistan's position in the global shipping industry more effort and investment enjoys PORT industry to compete with state of the art international service providers. As discussed above, this involves; technological innovation ranging from port automation, tracking of cargoes and adopting sustainable measures in port functioning including green ports. Automation is capable minimizing human interferences, enhancing the general rate of operations and the overall cargo turnover. Third, a number of digital technologies can give shipping companies real-time information for better and more efficient supply chain processes. Modern energy efficient systems as well as efficient resource disposal would ensure that Pakistan compliant with global environmental policies hence making its ports the best choices for business.

3.3. Enhancing Workforce Training

The enhancement of the qualitative characteristics of Mar Adroit is impossible without investing in the development of new personnel for the Pakistani maritime sector, in other words, to provide work-oriented training programs. The training that can be imparted in the sectors like digital systems, port management, maritime safety, and logistics also prepare the force to meet with newer challenges. Affiliation with these organizations is helpful in offering competent training and insights to new practice in the international maritime sector. An upgraded skill level of the employees will not only bring more productivity but also produce the maritime industry of Pakistan safer and more competitive.

3.4. Fostering Public-Private Partnerships

The government can support development of partnership with the private sector so as to increase the pace at which infrastructure is developed and management of the port facilitated. Operation with overseas-shipping enterprises and investors can introduce additional knowledge and money with regards to further improvements. The mention below graph is showing the significant matrix in long term and short term for PPP.

Table 1

Recommendation	Priority	Feasibility	Implementation Timeframe
Strengthening Institutional Coordination	High	Medium	Short-term (1–2 years)
Investing in Modern Infrastructure	High	Low	Long-term (5+ years)
Enhancing Workforce Training	Medium	High	Medium-term (2–4 years)
Fostering Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	High	Medium	Medium-term (2–4 years)

4. Conclusion

Maritime is an important industry to these economies and the efficiency of public administration plays a key role in the economy of Pakistan. The areas of corporate governance, infrastructural and intellectual workforce are still a long way to go despite the slight progress in the sector. These problems should also be mitigated by strategic reforms to enhance the position of Pakistan in international maritime sector. Pakistan shall have to formulate one single National Maritime Strategy, in which upgrading of port infrastructure, environmental sustainability and workforce policy are brought in under one administrative umbrella, so as to ensure competitiveness and growth in the shipping and maritime industry in the long term.

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