

The Dos and Don'ts of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement Pose the Ghana's Maritime Industry Vis-A-Vis Its National Industrialization Drive

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Abstract

The direct and indirect immensely contributions of free trade blocs/single market integration to the steadily growth of developed emergence and least developed economies are unmeasurable. The increasing insatiable demand and approval of the free trade model by almost all of the six continents to enhance their economic development has proved that its benefits have indeed outweighed the challenges. Therefore, this research just like the other internationally recognised literatures on this market system, intends to analysis the impacts of the important/dos, don'ts, opportunities, prospects and other important factors of the recent AU member States unanimously endorsement of AfCFTA's implementation, will have on Ghana's maritime industry. The possible quantitative findings in this study do uphold its immensely potential benefits impact on the African and Ghana's maritime industry development and at the same time, indicate an irresistible gap pertaining to the downward progress of its implementation within the sector. These findings have apparently revealed that loss of revenue from scrapping off customs tariffs carries the highest percentage of all the challenges facing AfCFTA's implementation and recommend that there must be an effective investment-oriented measures-FDI in harnessing the opportunities and prospects embedded in AfCFTA so as to accelerate Ghana's maritime industry development in its implementation process.

Keywords

Trade Integration, African Continental Free Trade Agreement, Impacts on Ghana's Maritime Industry, Single African Government

1. Background

Historically, the formation of trade blocs in relation to a collective agreement or consensus among sovereign nations is a nucleus of their economic survival. Free trade bloc serves as guidelines or umbilical cord which must bind on parties to provide policies and directions so as to identify solutions to the inevitable challenges inherited in accelerating economic growth and development among membership nations. It's understandable, that member States using free trade blocs to facilitate their economic growth and development has been in existence for the past centuries but now appears to be given major attention by the developed, emergence and least developed countries in this increasingly growing technological and globalisation era

The concept of free trade agreement is first believed to have originated in Roman's Empire. In 30BC, Rome annexed the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt and integrated it in Rome's economy through laid down procedures (Keil, 2016, P. 4) [1]. Since then, the concept has been evolved to today's globalisation and digitalisation driven-era where freedom and coercing diplomatic relationship/ involuntary states' alliance appears to dominate the military supremacy so as to achieve free trade blocs' objectives and visions. Although its implementation may bring about some changes with uncertainties, whereby some Member States are required to fulfil some terms and conditions in the form of allowing maximum access to resources or abrogating sovereignty for the interest of the entire bloc.

However, it must be stated that the concept of free trade, coupled with its numerous benefits, namely economic, social, financial just to mention a few ought to be embraced by all and sundry if properly implemented

Arguably, the developed emergence and least developed economies have realised that adopting free trade blocs is the way forward to the future. Trade bloc's implementation seems to have positive and negative correlation with a sovereign State's ability to effectively and efficiently explore full utilisation of its natural resources to promote economic development and competitiveness in the industrialization agenda. Many recognised literatures have also attested to this and one expressed reason of the European Union's single market is to create a single platform for free movement of people, goods, services and other essential transactions within the bloc to influence sustainable development of the entire bloc.

As Jan in' t Veld puts it, the "*aim was to make the European Union one territory without any internal borders or other regulatory obstacles to the free movement of goods and services, which would stimulate competition and trade, improve efficiency, raise quality, and cut prices*" (Veld, 2019, P. 5) [2].

Some statistics have confirmed that the membership of the E.U's single market continues to expand astronomically due to the increasing benefits accruing to it and in a way triggered-off a new phenomenal force in the world. Since 1957 till-today, the number of member States has grown steadily, from 6 to 28 and has succeeded in making the EU the world's most economically potent internal

market after being metaphoric from European Economic Community (Deutsche Bank DB Research, 2013, P. 2) [3].

These multiple effects have heralded unprecedented formation and implementation of free trade bloc across South Asia and African continent, perceived to counter such force by creating opportunities to sustain its economic development. For AfCFTA to attain a balance economics development, its implementation must be tied to the overall dos, don'ts, opportunities and prospects of African and Ghana's maritime industry.

2. Introduction

Effective implementation of free trade blocs plays diverse significant roles to the development of the world economy, especially the maritime industry. The vigorous insatiable desire of most developed economies to implement free trade bloc for maximisation of revenue to accelerate sustainable development has necessitated a continuous research in to how these developments could have a balance effects on their economic sectors.

Having realised these enormous importance of trade blocs to the developed economies, both emergence and least developed economies have now given a tacit acceptance to the term free trade bloc to optimise competitive advantage in their economic development. For instance, the concept of the E.U's single market also aims to develop specific economic sectors of member States to bridge the imbalance development gaps among them (Sanchez.A, 2018, P. 8, 9 & 12) [4]. Many recognised literatures have also made mention of numerous benefits of free trade blocs, including economic theories, illustrated by this link https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2019/march/tradoc_157716.pdf [5] to quantify their successes.

The massive spontaneous ratification meted out to AfCFTA by majority of AU member States has revived the deep political commitments, one of the key determinants of Africans' policy direction when almost all heads of States seemingly decided to bring it to the table to ensure the success of Africans' development through genuine unity. It's generally understandable that AfCFTA's implementation has unquantifiable economic implications on the Ghana's maritime industry-upgrading/expanding the Tema Port to a hub port status in the long run, as well as improves Ghana's industrialisation agenda.

But the biggest challenge facing Ghana's maritime industry now is how to harness AfCFTA's benefits to its maritime development. This research aims at the quantitative and qualitative presentation/analysis of the dose, don'ts, opportunities, prospects and other equally important factors of AfCFTA on how these may be translated to the transformation of African and Ghana's maritime industry through its implementation. The paper examines these benefits, other compelling factors and certain recommendations of AfCFTA, particularly in relation to Ghana's maritime industry to effectively achieving them during its implementation processes.

Structure of Paper

The structure of this research paper is consisted of four major sections: introduction, methodology, results & discussion and conclusion & recommendations. These major section and subsections have been painstakingly elaborated in this article for the reader to grasp all the issues pertaining to the study.

Literature Review

The long quest and struggle for the establishment and implementation of Free trade blocs among the continents to promote free movement of goods, services, people and capital for development dated back in the past centuries. The pace at which it recently started gaining a momentum in this present and future's centuries is an unprecedented dimension. It is an undeniable reason that, free trade blocs indeed have played a pivot roles in most of the continents economic, social and maritime infrastructural development, including poverty reduction. This is aided by the upheld of a single regulation which expressly and impliedly lays emphasis on free movement of people, capital, goods and services coupled with the challenges within the member states. One classic challenge is services hampered by relatively severe regulatory barriers and EU services productivity problem (Bruijin *et al.*, 2007 and *REGULATION (EU) 2019/1896 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL*, 2019) [6] and [7]. So, African and Ghana's maritime industry is also bound to face many challenges with the implementation of AfCFTA. It's one of the reasons why developed economies have applied research and other methodologies to implement effective free trade blocs to boost competitiveness within their individual countries and companies so as to forester a balance sustainable development.

Jan in't Veld simply states that "*the four freedoms—the free movement of goods, services, people and capital—were enshrined in the Treaty of Rome signed in 1953, but proved more difficult to implement in practice* (Veld, 2019, P. 805)" [8]. Obviously, the Article 3 in the African Union's (AU's) Constitutive Act, "establishes—were that the third objective of the AU is to accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent (MBENGUE, 2016, P. 29)" [9].

Admittedly, many recognised literatures and scholars have acknowledged AfCFTA as the world's largest trade bloc which has the potential of propelling the continent's economic advancement through the realization of maximum revenue from its naturally endowed resources.

According to the IMF's estimates, AfCFTA is expected to "*cover all 55 African countries, with an estimated combined current GDP of USD \$ 2.5 trillion, and a population of over one billion, 60 percent of whom are below the age of 25 years* (Abrego *et al.*, 2020, P. 3)" [10].

Although, the Economic Commission for Africa has impliedly approved of Africa continued pursuing fragmented developments within its maritime, rail and road sector (Vera Songwe and Stephen Karingi, 2019, P. 15, 19, 2021 & 22) [11] it was unable to boldly and mandatorily declare a developmental policy for

a single hub port development and operations on the African continent, especially in the Ghana's maritime industry.

It has also expressly admitted the insufficient availability of infrastructure (Vera Songwe and Stephen Karingi, 2019, P. 18) [11] as one of the key factors to drive economic growth and sustainable development across Africa, in relation to Ghana's maritime industry during AfCFTA's implementation.

No doubt, that the implementation of AfCFTA with particular reference to Ghana's maritime industry will automatically enhance economies of scale since there is going to be an occasioned of a high probability of merger and alliance between the various African governments' institutions and private organisations to reduce operational costs thereby making Africa and Ghana's maritime sector competitive in the global maritime industry if AfCFTA is effectively implemented.

As such, Ghana seems to be playing a role of gravitational force with alacrity of AfCFTA'S implementation. It has obligely hosted the AfCFTA's Secretariat in the capital city of Accra, Ghana and financially committed to its operational costs. It has been spending about ten million Ghana Cedis (GHC. 10M) in the management and operations (*i.e.* employees' salaries and other overhead expenses) of the AfCFTA's implementation as being cited by a respondent who had privy to the Ghana's allocated income and expenditure of the AfCFTA's Secretariat during a recorded face-to-face interview.

Since its (AfCFTA's) inception the Secretariat has been in the frontline of awareness creation of the benefits, opportunities and prospects of implementation. It has been engaging with the key stakeholders in the Ghana's maritime industry of how to harness the benefits embedding in AfCFTA's implementation

Despite all these, AfCFTA appears to be entangled with a mired of challenges. It has been saddled with overwhelming uncertainties concerning the already existing piece-meals internal trade blocs/regimes between some member countries. Some African member States have had even ratified some external and internal multi-lateral or bilateral trade agreement regimes aim to improve their economic developmental agenda and the living standards of the people. Unfortunately, these trade regimes are still in force and remain valid till-date.

The Economic Commission for Africa states that "*Overlapping and contradictory requirements as African countries join multiple RECs* (Vera Songwe and Stephen Karingi, 2019, P. 17)" [11]. Ideally, one would have thought that the ratification of AfCFTA could had superseded or nullified these fragmented internal trade agreements for AfCFTA to achieve its intended purpose or objectives according to the plan

These issues, among others have the potential of making the effective implementation of AfCFTA a complex and murky situations. It's now like, found itself sailing in one of the lowest visibility and highest current oceans in the world and ought to know or be oblivious of the imminent unpredictable consequences lay ahead—risks of grounding and sinking. The possibility of achieving its short, me-

dium, long-term and maritime infrastructural development plans through effective implementation in Ghana's maritime industry may be far off in realization. Given that in the midst of these impediments, surrounding AfCFTA's implementation in the realisation of the Tema Port's hub status may be strangulated.

Thus, this research aims to advocate the turning/developing of the Tema Port into a single hub port status, as well as harnessing the benefits, opportunities and prospects of AfCFTA to the overall sustainable development of the Ghana's industrialisation and maritime sector as a whole through its effective implementation.

AfCFTA is abound with so many opportunities and prospects which may uncode/unlock the expansion of African's industrialization drive, specifically the Ghana's maritime industry due to its endowed natural resources comparative advantage over the other economies. But one may ask this question, does the implementation of AfCFTA a curse or blessings to the Ghana's maritime industry development?

This research aims to provide an insight into this based on the continued discussion of the objectives

Just as many studies had been done and currently continuing on The EU's single market establishment and implementation had helped them examine some benefits, challenges and solutions so as to deepening its integration efforts to realise an overall balance of sustainable growth and development within its economic, social, policy and law elements

(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0161893807000294>) [12].

This is one of the key motivational factors which inspires or causes this research project to charter a cause to unearth the huge potential benefits inherited in AfCFTA in relation to Ghana's maritime industry development.

Problem Statement

Generally, the contributions of free trade blocs to accelerate growth and development of the world's economy are unquantifiable and have significant impact on sustainable development. Free trade blocs mostly sought to generate maximum revenue through free movement of people, goods and services to facilitate development of other sectors of the economy.

It may be very important to note that, since the inception of the term, free trade agreements by the developed economies, many scholars and experts have had propounded various definitions or descriptions to differentiate it between other forms of trade and simplify its understanding. One outstanding definition or description that suits the term free trade blocs is to "*make the European Union one territory without any internal borders or other regulatory obstacles to the free movement of goods and services, which would stimulate competition and trade, improve efficiency, raise quality, and cut prices* (Veld, 2019, P. 5)" [2].

By this, the main fundamental concept is for sovereign nations to pool resources together irrespective of their resources endowed comparative advantage, jurisdictional power and authority so as to create level field ground or equal op-

portunities to stimulate a balanced economic development between member states.

For example, the expenditure structure of the EU's Budget is made up of six headings to promote balanced/even developments among member States (Kenyel, 2016, P.103, 104 & 105) [13]. The monumental benefits inherited in the successful implementation of the EU single market have indeed set the stage for many continents to begin racing for the concept without considering what efficient mechanism or factors are to be in place for its productive implementation.

Thus, it is not surprised that the concept, free trade agreement has received a major attention and approval, particularly from the emerging (Asia) and least developed economies (Africa) which previously lacked it. Perhaps, there are calculated attempts to counter the European's incessant rising force through the implementation of E.U's single market initiative and promote their economic growth and development in the world trade enterprise. About three (3) years ago, these Asia transition economies formed a free trade agreement to consolidate and accelerate sustainable development in their socio-economic domain. The example of such continents' free trade blocs: is the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), signed in 2018 ((The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2021) [14].

And on March, 2018 representatives of over forty 40 (out of 55) member countries of the African Union (AU) signed the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement (Abrego *et al.*, 2020, P. 3)" [10].

It is believed the African continent is expected to drive tremendous benefits from the AfCFTA which could influence economic, social, environmental and other relevant sectors growth and development within a reasonable timeframe if it is well implemented

The IMF just puts it "*once fully implemented, the AfCFTA is expected to cover all 55 African countries, with an estimated combined current GDP of US \$2.5 trillion, and a population of over one billion, 60 percent of whom are below the age of 25 years* (Abrego *et al.*, 2020, P. 3)" [10]. Although there have been a number of recent research works on the potential impacts of AfCFTA, namely the(Revised African Maritime Transport Charter, 2010, African Union Commission, Agenda 2063, September, 2015, Vera Songwe and Stephen Karingi, 2019), (Abrego *et al.*, 2020) none have considered the absence of a hub port particularly in Ghana, analysed some merits and demerits, opportunities, prospects and designing recommendations in relation to Ghana's maritime industry to facilitate the decentralization processes of AfCFTA.

Research Objectives

- 1) To find out if AfCFTA has a single hub seaport and logistics development initiatives in any of the African maritime communities.
- 2) To discuss the dos and don'ts of AfCFTA's implementation in relation to Ghana's maritime industry.
- 3) To analyse the opportunities and prospects of ACfTA in relation to Ghana's

maritime industry.

4) To Design a proposed framework to facilitate the free trade decentralisation structure within Africa and Ghana's maritime industry.

3. Research Methodology

Primarily, this research consists of a mixed method of two main tools, namely, qualitative and quantitative techniques, widely used in almost all research projects to unravel acceptable result or cause further investigations by other researchers. As in the case of quantitative data which most often centres on statistics/numbers to determining the weight of issue, distinguishingly, the qualitative data is also based on in-depth descriptive to convey concise understanding of the given issue (Kambase, 2020, P. 301) [15].

In addition, the data for the paper came from two sources, primary and secondary sources. The primary source data, generated from questionnaires and interviews conducted with the external and internal key experts and stakeholders of AfCFTA and Ghana's maritime industry. But the secondary data came from research articles, reports, goggle scholar, e-books, companies' websites, all aimed to achieve the objectives of this research.

It intends to thoroughly analyse as governments, business and industry groups, policy makers, researchers, experts, think-tanks and academics who have already highlighted the benefits of implementing free trade agreements as well as discover some pertinent gaps which might have been overlooked in the above mentioned subject matter—the research objectives.

This is a case study because the approach is to grant ample time for the researchers to access relevant documented data and conduct an in-depth analyse of the issues so as to find productive solutions and prepare the grounds for further research. As Bell indicates, case study provides an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in-depth and also lasts for about three or more years to complete depending on the scale of the project (Bell, 2010, P. 9) [16].

4. Limitations

One of the inevitable major challenges facing this research project is the limited sampling size. Though many samplings were distributed to a larger audience, only very few targeted groups, merely from the key maritime industry in Ghana have responded, perhaps due to their wealth of knowledge, experience and skills pertaining to the maritime industry. Thus, making the findings somewhat unable to represent a 100% true reflection of the responses of a large scale sampling which may also have some minimal negative impact on the results of data analysis of the research project.

5. Data Analysis

Data Presentation

As usual, this section is the continuation of the preceding sections of this pa-

per. It consists of two sub sections: the data presentation and data analysis of the conducted interviews which aim to further highlight the objectives or purposes of this research project.

Impliedly, the data presentation is primarily focussed on the fulfilment of some of the most essential requirements of any recognised research—using the questionnaires, interviews and other relevant tools to obtain valuable expertise, knowledge, experience and skills of the selected targeted groups about the subject matter under continued discussion.

Analysis of the Interviews

On the other hand, the data analysis of the interviews was presented via interpretative approach so as to discuss the present conditions of the importance/dos, don'ts, opportunities, prospects and ideal recommendations of the effective implementation of AfCFTA's effects on the Africa and Ghana's maritime industry (Kambase, 2021, P. 303) [15]. All findings were presented in summary of tabular and graphical figures in the section below to throw more clarity to the understanding of this concept to the reader for the enhancement of the knowledge industry.

Meanwhile, it is a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) that has been used to computerise the tables and graphs/figures because of its suitability for in-depth data analysis.

Below are seven (7) tables, starting from **Table 1** to **Table 7** and attached with their in-depth analyse respectively.

These targeted groups (stakeholders) as stated in **Table 1**: below can be referred to as the main key maritime organisations, seek to provide a kind of significant findings insight, pertaining to the already stated main objectives of

Table 1. Ghana's key maritime organisations/selected maritime organisations.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	SIC	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
	MSC	1	9.1	9.1	18.2
	GRA_CUSTOMS	1	9.1	9.1	27.3
	AfCTA	1	9.1	9.1	36.4
	Ministry of Trade and Industry	1	9.1	9.1	45.5
Valid	GPHA	2	18.2	18.2	63.6
	GMA	1	9.1	9.1	72.7
	Tema Ship Yard	1	9.1	9.1	81.8
	GSA	1	9.1	9.1	90.9
	GIFF	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	11	100.0	100.0	

this study in relation to their understanding, credibility and structure of management systems on how effective implementation of AfCFTA could yield a tremendous benefit to the member States and Ghana’s maritime sector.

Besides, the selection of these key stakeholders is also based on their large scale data set and an unconditional willingness to support this research with such important data (Kambase, 2021, P. 303) [15] in accordance with the fourth months duration interviews, spanning from October, 2021 to January, 2022 due to the Cov.19 pandemic lockdown and restrictions in Ghana. From **Table 1** the GPHA has the highest frequency of participants due to its centrality role in the country’s ports ownership, management, and operations

Table 2 shows the Gender of all the participants who responded to the questionnaires and the interviews.

Table 2 contains the valid male & female, their frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percent of the respondents involved in the research project. It indicates the statistics of both male and female gender who at that time were working in Ghana’s key maritime organisations. Additionally, From **Table 2**, it’s only one (1) female participant who responded to the questionnaire and interview, meaning more females working in the Ghana maritime industry may not have attained certain key positions in the Ghana’s maritime sector with the confidence, capability or simply feeling shy to respond to the subject matter.

Table 3 consists of the various age categories of all participants who participated in the study. It has the similar features/characteristics of **Table 2** in terms of frequency, percent, valid percent, etc. It demonstrates that 31 - 40 Age Group, including 51 and above Group have the highest frequencies/percentages currently working in the Ghana’s maritime industry. This trend of the 31 - 40 Age Group indicates that there is an increased number of qualified young people working in the sector. Impliedly, the supply of human resource in the sector may continue to increase steadily thereby ensuring sustainability in the Ghana’s maritime sector.

Table 2. Gender distribution of respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
	Female	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Age distribution of respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	31 - 40	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
	41 - 50	3	27.3	27.3	63.6
	51 and Above	4	36.4	36.4	100.0
	Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: represents the educational profile of the respondents who took part in the study. In research methods, the educational profile of the respondents and responses is a key indicator which determines the standards of the research since it has some significant implications of the findings on the study, including its justifiability and authentication in the knowledge industry. It simply focuses on employment of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to advance strategic development of said research

(<https://www.daneshnamehicsa.ir/userfiles/files/1/9-%20Research%20Methods%20in%20Education%20by%20Louis%20Cohen,%20Lawrence%20Manion,%20Keith%20Morrison.pdf>) [17].

By the table laying below, it evidently shows that the participants with the tertiary education level have 90.9 % making it the highest percentage of the 100% total thereby meeting the standards of the research methods.

Table 5: laying below also illustrates the length/duration of the working experience of the respondents involved in this research project. It is a widely acceptable principle that the longer you work, the higher wealth of experience and skills you might have gained/acquired on the job due to routine performance of duties and constant practices of certain tasks

Thus, the research aims to tap into the experience and skills of these respondents in order to integrate the real time job on hand practices into the concept to make it viable

Inferring from **Table 5**, below, it's abundantly clear that participants with 20

Table 4. Level of participants' education.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Tertiary	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
	Others	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Below shows participants' years of experience.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6	1	9.1	11.1	11.1
	8	1	9.1	11.1	22.2
	12	1	9.1	11.1	33.3
	13	1	9.1	11.1	44.4
	18	1	9.1	11.1	55.6
	20	2	18.2	22.2	77.8
	30	2	18.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	81.8	100.0	
Missing	99	2	18.2		
	Total	11	100.0		

and 30 years working experiences scored the highest percent of the total 100% response which corroborates and validates the findings or outcome of the research project.

Table 6: contains of the brief job descriptions of the respondents. This is to give an insight into the scope of their job functions and the correlation to the subject matter-the study so as to illicit the essential contributions for the finest data analysis. It also enhances the research project as well as differentiated it from dealing with non-essential targeted audience which could have constrained the credibility of the research.

Table 7: indicates the positions the respondents occupied in their various organisations in accordance with the hierarchy of Organisational Structure.

Table 6 and **Table 7** below have demonstrated the seriousness and commitment of these respondents in such positions who decided unconditionally to bring their expertise, experience, and skills to bear on the research-facilitating the development of the Tema Port into a hub port in the implementation of AfCFTA.

Table 6. Brief job description of participants.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Planning and ISO Management	1	9.1	25.0	25.0
	Implement & Enforce STCW & MLC	1	9.1	25.0	50.0
	Freight and Logistics	1	9.1	25.0	75.0
	Operational Responsibilities	1	9.1	25.0	100.0
	Total	4	36.4	100.0	
Missing	99	7	63.6		
	Total	11	100.0		

Table 7. Illustration of ranks/positions of participants.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Junior	1	9.1	11.1	11.1
	Middle Management	2	18.2	22.2	33.3
	Management	6	54.5	66.7	100.0
	Total	9	81.8	100.0	
Missing	99	2	18.2		
	Total	11	100.0		

Following right below, are the three (3) figures **Figures 1-3** depicting or representing the importance/dos, disadvantages/don'ts and recommendations of AfCFTA's implementation respectively.

Figure 1 shows that Attracts FDI and Increase in Intra-Regional Trade attain the highest percentages of the respondents' responses followed by improves capacity of companies and revenue maximisation. Impliedly, the development of the Ghana's maritime sector, for example the Port of Tema is somewhat dependent on increase in attraction of FDI during the effective implementation of AfCFTA.

To achieve this particularly (*i.e.* the FDI) the Government of Ghana (GOG) must continue to maintain investment conducive environment in terms of political stability to encourage increase activities of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiatives in the Ghana's maritime industry through effective implementation of AfCFTA.

Figure 2: above indicates the graphical presentation of some of disadvantages facing the development of the Ghana's maritime industry during the implementation of AfCFTA in Ghana

According to **Figure 2:** implementation challenges and loss of revenue from scrapping of customs tariffs attract the highest percentages of the respondents' responses. It means that these challenges have dire negative impacts and capable of preventing the African maritime sector, especially the Ghana's maritime sector from harnessing the abundant opportunities and prospects accompanying the implementation of AfCFTA for its sustainable development. Relentless efforts require to address these issues quickly as much as possible.

Overall, **Figure 3** is said to comprise of the summary of some of the proposed framework of recommendations aim to address the disadvantages/don'ts that

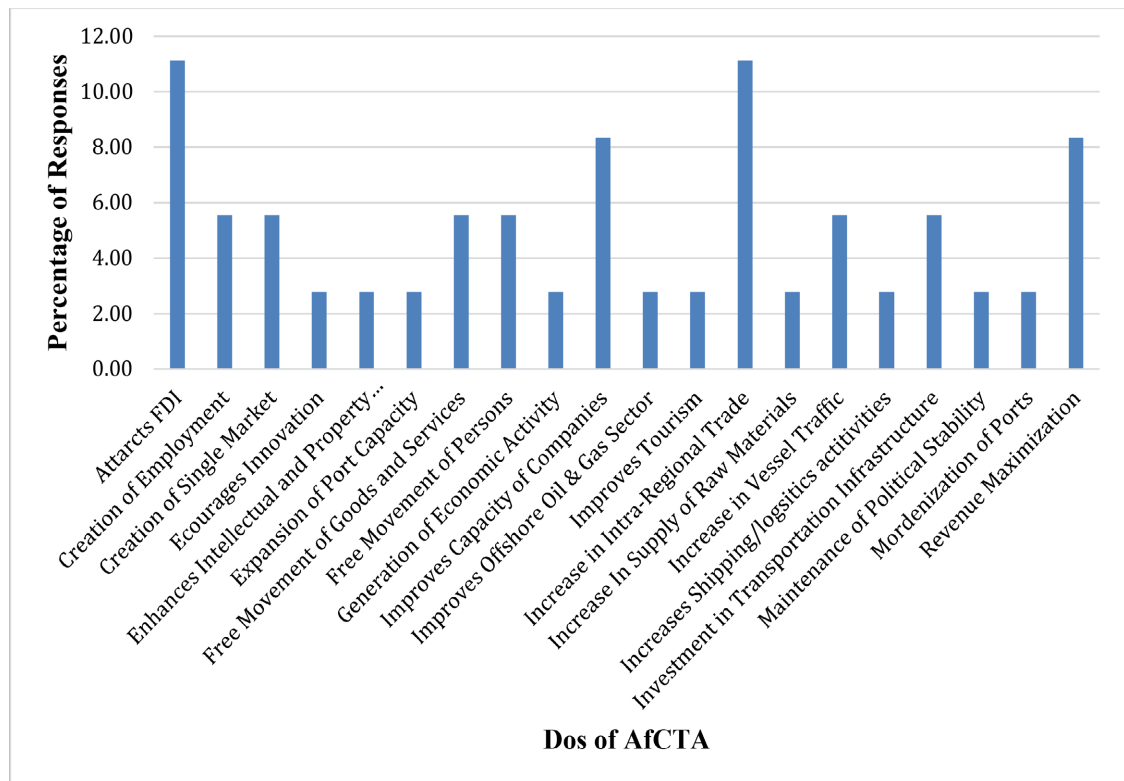


Figure 1. Importance/Dos of AfCFTA.

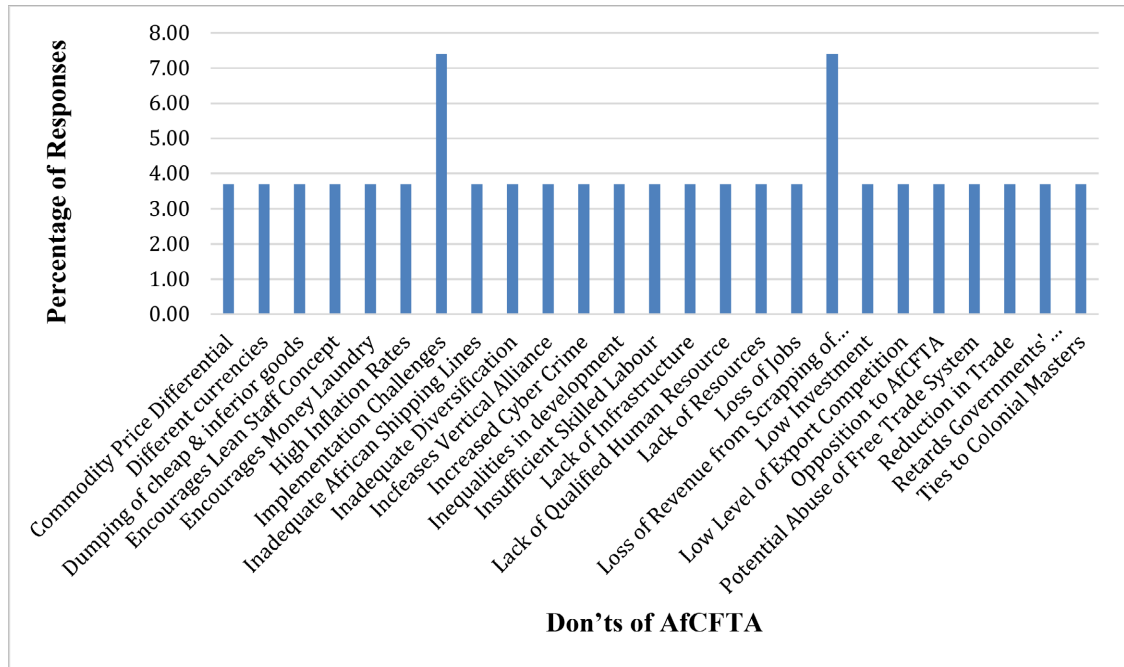


Figure 2. The Disadvantages/don'ts of AfCFTA.

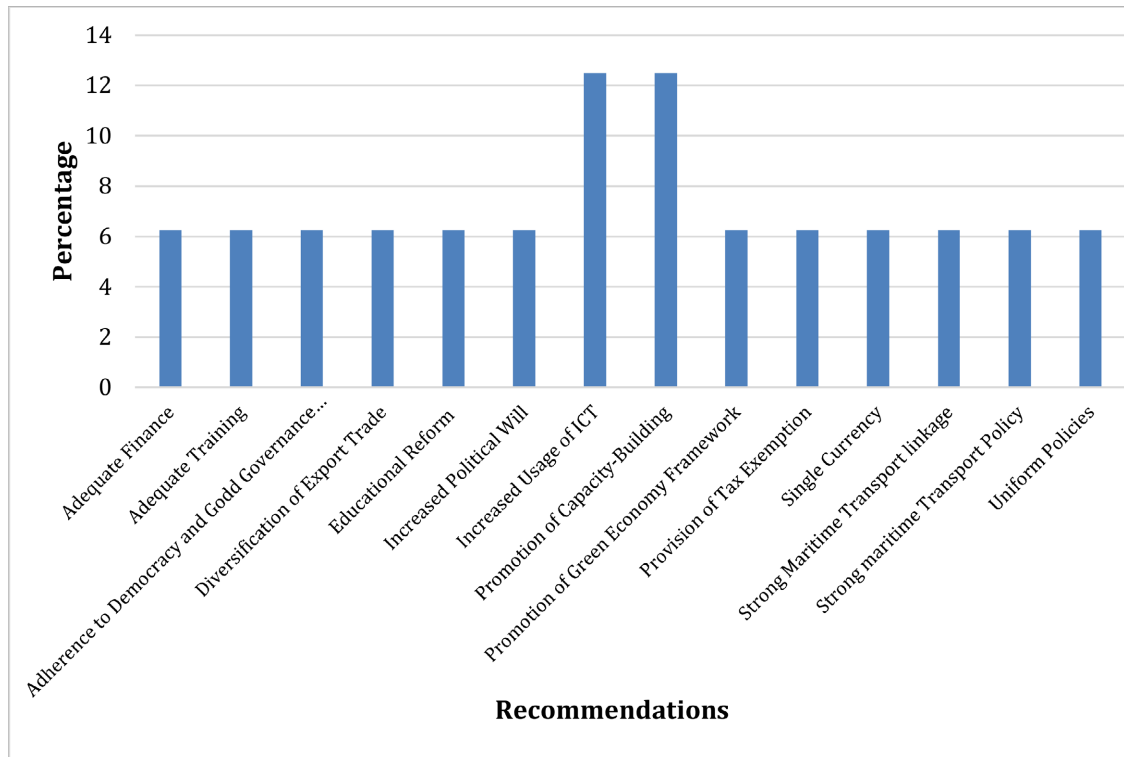


Figure 3. Proposed Framework Of Recommendations of AfCFTA.

bedevilled the turning of the Tema Port into a hub port in Africa during the effective implementation of AfCFTA.

From the figure above, an increased usage of Information Communication Technology and Promotion of Capacity Building carry the highest percentages

of respondents' responses of the study. That's, the GOG should adopt and integrate hardware and software Information Technology (IT) and human resource training programmes into the expansion drive of the Tema Port to a hub port status in AfCFTA's compliance.

Thus, surface me to say that the following preceding/subsequent sub-topics of this research have been discussed extensively under the main body-the discussion and results section

6. Discussion and Results

Flowing from the above analyses, the discussion and results section has elaborated the above essential variables on case by case principles to enhance the clarity of the reader's understanding of their economic implications on the Ghana's maritime industry development and the findings directly reflected in the already stated objectives in the study.

Provision of Maritime Infrastructure

First and foremost, the provision/supply of adequate maritime infrastructure in the form of a hub port is one of the critical determinants of a developed economy since it enhances the supply chain management, operations and customs administrative procedures to reduce the costs of doing business in the given country.

To achieve a hub port status through the implementation of free trade bloc is somehow also contingent on political stability too. Because a stabilised country is an enable conducive environment and much more attracted to various kinds of investments than a politically instability country. No serious or rational investor will ignore such high risks and invest in uncertainty/unpredictable environment. Ghana seems to have absolute and comparative political stability advantage of most of African countries. Ghana appears to have the most entrenched democratic governance system of all African countries which consistently striving to adhere to maintenance of peace and economic development. Luckily, Ghana has not yet experienced any coup, sectarian violence for the past two decades and continuously conducting a successful transition of power from one political party in government to a winning opposition party.

For instance, the 2000 and 2008s peaceful turnover in leadership from the incumbent to opposition party has attracted international recognition, thus compelling a US newly elected president at that time, to make these comments "Obama said he chose Ghana to 'highlight' its adherence to democratic principles and institutions, ensuring the kind of stability that brings prosperity" during his first visit to Africa, particularly Ghana

(<https://www.eisa.org/pdf/JAE10.2Ayelazuno.pdf>) [18].

Also, the behaviour of the international maritime trade is one of the factors that may determine the quantity of the maritime infrastructure needed to be put in place. The high growth rate of the international maritime trade probably demand high supply of ships and so do the increase of port infrastructure to ac-

commodate such vessels traffic and cargo. Although there are uncertainty and varied downside risks, UNCTAD expects international maritime trade to expand at an average annual growth rate of 3.5 per cent over the 2019-2024 period, driven in particular by growth in containerized, dry bulk and gas cargoes (UNCTAD/RMT/2019) [19].

This means that there will be more pressure on most ports in general, especially the least developed economies, including Ghana to undertake efficient and effective expansion projects to at least commensurate the growth of these segments: containerized, bulk and gas cargoes. Currently, it looks like there is a systematic move towards an improved and modernisation of African seaport infrastructure to attain their full utilisation on the continent.

Examples, the UNCTAD's report states that "*the New Suez Canal project is part of a major fiscal stimulus package meant to regain pre-2011 economic growth rates of around 7 percent per year... and intra-African air connectivity received a major boost in January 2018, when the Single African Air Transport Market (SAAM), a flagship project under Agenda 2063 for liberalising and unifying African skies, was launched during the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit in Addis Ababa* (Vera Songwe and Stephen Karingi, 2019, P. 22 and https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/rmt2015ch4_en.pdf [11] and [20].

The Agenda 2063 appears to fall short of articulating specifically about developing the Port of Tema to a hub port within a certain timeframe, except the SAAM as cited above. The outlook of African and Ghana's maritime industry is very positive. That's provided African succeeded in pooling resources towards investing in its vast untapped maritime industry to assert itself in the global value chain by establishing a hub port in a strategically located country like Ghana to unearth its potentials.

The result of the data analysis has also corroborated this point. A 5.56% representing ... of the total 11 respondents subscribed to investment in transportation infrastructure whilst 2.78 of this same total specifically supported ports expansion capacity respectively. Hub ports are like the heart of the nation which receives blood and pumps it out through the arteries and veins, so do the port playing the role of ships destination and departure for cargo operations.

Overall, Ghana seems to have already commenced the advancement or development of its maritime industry in accordance with its port strategic plan. It's seen to be pursuing public private partnership development agenda across almost all the sectors of the economy, particularly the port infrastructure development to be considered as a hub port in Africa. The continued expansion of Tema Port and successful installation of the state—of—the-art cargo handling equipment in the terminal three through the joint venture between the GPHA, MPS and Bollere Group serves as its notice of readiness to attain the hub port status quickly as much as possible.

"MPS is a joint venture between the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority

(GPHA) and Meridian Port Holdings, with Bolloré Transport & Logistics and APM Terminals as the two main shareholders

(<https://aecom.com/projects/tema-port-expansion/>) [21].

No Trade Barrier

It is widely acceptable that the used of free trade model does foster cooperation among Member State thereby placing them in right direction to the success of their developmental goals through the endorsement, ratification and implementation of these models

By fulfilling these essential elements of free trade, all tariffs and non-tariffs trade barriers are somewhat abolished to allow free movement of persons, capital, goods and services within member States to transact all kinds of various businesses. Given that non-existence of all kinds of barriers under the auspice of free trade bloc could aid in pooling of various resources together to enhance much more collective, balanced and evenly distribution of development-oriented expanded drive in critical areas.

For instance, the EU's budget "*focuses on areas in which pooling resources to tackle common challenges can deliver results that could not be achieved as effectively or efficiently by Member States acting alone. This is the case in areas as diverse as cross-border infrastructure, external border management, large-scale space projects and pan-European research (European commission, 2020, P. 9)*" [22].

The likelihood of paying a uniform cost effective tariffs or none tariffs and promotion of boundary-free crossings among these parties is expected to increase the following in the maritime industry: cargo carrying capacity, vessel traffic, turn-around time and dwell time at the port. So, investing in no trade barrier and other relevant businesses is an inseparable element which may have the high probability of accruing maximum revenue to finance the port expansion drive to be able to receive the biggest vessels in the long run.

Because it has been asserted that the implementation of tariffs and non-tariffs barriers, in the form of customs and administrative entry procedures, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures do contribute to highest trade costs (Abrego *et al.*, 2020 P. 8) [10]. What it implies is that, their removal bind on all sovereign member states to mandatorily comply with strictly on the basis that a member State can't just pull out unilaterally without proper exit negotiations and in turn impose protectionism by re-introducing tariffs and non-tariffs barriers. This action will automatically be considered as a direct breach to some of the rules and regulations governing the free trade pact and is liable to severe sanctions from all member states. A perfect pessimistic scenario that concords this point is the Brexit from the E.U

According to the agreement, *the UK may not participate in future steps that the EU takes towards deeper integration and the reduction of non-tariff barriers within the EU* (<https://personal.lse.ac.uk/sampson/TradeLivingStandards.pdf>) [23].

However, the benefits, opportunities and prospects of AfCFTA are irresistible and seem to have direct correlation with the economic development of the various African countries.

As the IMF also puts it: *“Even without the free trade agreement, the African continent has in recent times been recognized as a land of vast unexploited opportunities. The AfCFTA can support the realization of the continent’s economic promise (International Monetary Fund, 2019, P. 3)”* [24].

Thus, there is no doubt that the Tema port is a direct beneficiary to AfCFTA’s implementation. As already been cited in this study, the continued expansion drive and installation of ultra-modern cargo handling equipment in the port is a way of positioned it to perform global port functions, especially in the implementation of AfCFTA. This will enable it to accommodate the widely anticipated arrival and departure of a rising volumes of cargo and vessel traffic through the effective implementation of AfCFTA. One reason for the implementation of AfCFTA is to increase intra-regional trade resiliently and consistently among member States to advance development of their economies, especial the Ghana’s maritime sector.

A classic example is the projected contribution of shipping/port operations services to GDP in real terms is expected to increase by 50% as cited by agenda 2063 (THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, 2015,P.35 [25].

Figure 1 under the data analysis shows that intra-trade attracts the highest frequency mode of the respondents responses. Meaning that most African countries will prefer trading among themselves thereby preventing/reducing capital fly to abroad which could be used to develop their maritime industry, especially the Ghana’s maritime industry. Developing the Tema to port to a hub port status through effective implementation of AfCFTA is not a one way smooth sailing or one leg charter voyage. There are really existential challenges, termed as the don’ts facing the progress

The Don’ts:

This section contains the don’ts, prospects, conclusion and recommendations of the study. One of the don’ts is a possible increased in unemployment or loss of jobs during the implementation of free trade blocs

Generally, unemployment, facing the youth particularly, is predominant due to inadequate knowledge, working experience and skills.

Persistent growing rate of unemployment coupled with its social menace (*i.e.* armed robbery, prostitution, migration, internet crime, just to mention a few) around the world is alarming and needed concerted actions to solve it as much as possible. Whilst the developed and emergence economies have designed viable employment-generated policies to curtail unemployment with its consequences, Africa appears to be acting slowly. The vigorous implementation of free trade agreements by the U.S and E.U is deliberately aimed to create job opportunities to their teeming unemployed youth across all the economic sectors, especially linking it to their maritime industry is a viable effort worthy to pursue.

For instance, the participation of youth in employment is highest in Northern America, at 52.6% and development of the port of Rotterdam as EU's largest sea port, perhaps through the initiatives of the E.U's Single Market are in the right direction (International Labour Organization, 2020, P. 24 and Bosch *et al.*, 2011, P. ii) [26] and [27] to directly and indirectly create a sustainable development in their countries, all aimed to reduce the unemployment menace.

Here Again, Africa is not exception considering its fastest growing young population which could be used to increase productivity and economic growth in Africa vis-a-vis the implementation of AfCFTA which envisaged to turn the tide in relation to Ghana's maritime industry

According to population projections published by the United Nations in 2015, the population of sub-Saharan Africa is projected to increase from 1 billion in 2016 to 2 billion in 2046 and reach fractionally below 4 billion in 2100(OECD 2017, P. 12)" [28]. It has been estimated that 10 to 12 million enter the workforce each year, and only 3.1 million jobs are created, leaving vast numbers of youth unemployed in Africa (African Development Bank Group, 2016, P. 1) [29].

Similarly, the goal 1 of AfCFTA, under aspiration 1, (target 3) of the agenda 2063 aims to also reduce youth and women unemployment rate by 2% per annum to improve their standards of living (THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, 2015, P. 24) [25]. But faces some of the most stiffen challenges in the immediate to long run. Harnessing these benefits in order to fuel sustainable development within Africa and Ghana's maritime industry seems to remain a daunting task and elusive

The strict compliance of AfCFTA itself poses a nebulous situation because it may occasion the horizontal, vertical merger and acquisition alliance within the various Africans' industries and companies, depending on the prevailing circumstances. It has a high probability that some companies will be aiming to promote economies of scale in order to optimise operational costs for survival. That's, these various member countries' industries and companies may be subjected to an ever increasingly aggressive competition which is most often characterised by liberalised trade or integration, thereby justifying their strong option to adopting the lean and agile labour principles.

Deducing from **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**, AfCFTA is like a double edge sword. It presents, a tremendous unmeasurable benefits, opportunities and prospects to member States through the attraction of a high FDI to the sector, at the same time, it continuously riddled with highest percentages of challenges/disadvantages, such as implementation challenges and loss of revenue from scrapping of customs tariffs.

An effective implementation of AfCFTA has the tendency to cause multiplier effects on the entire economy hence more infrastructure will be built/required to facilitate free movement of people, capital, goods and services as already been cited by **Figure 2** in this study. It shows the FDI and Intra-trade have the highest frequency modes of the respondents' responses. Impliedly, these shortfalls could be used to improve the capacity and capability of the Tema port to achieve the

status of hub port for the accommodation of some of the world's biggest vessels, thereby leading to increase in employment within the country. For example, the Tema Port's expansion project has succeeded in creating an expanded capacity which is a crucial for West Africa freight hub and Ghana with four massive container vessel berths, 3558 meters of breakwater and 1400 m wharf that automatically provides unmeasurable substantial economic benefits and growth for the country (Tema Port, 2021) [30].

Insufficient Supply of Maritime Infrastructural: Seaports, Airports, Vessels, Road/Railway to Be Continued

It appears Africa and Ghana do not have the financial might and capability to cope with and sustain its maritime infrastructural development projects. It's no doubt, that the successful compliance/implementation of AfCFTA will boost a significant upward intra-trade activities aim to increase revenue to finance infrastructural development among the African member States just as the other international free trade blocs do around the world. But the disadvantages facing steadily progress of the Ghana's maritime sector appear to remain unsurmountable at the time the foreign investors in the sector are becoming a dominance force

These foreign controlled-let developmental projects in the African and Ghana's maritime industry come with stringent concessionaries in the form of their vertical and horizontal market integration nature. It most often created an opportunity for them to take about 85% ownership and long period operation time of the maritime related property after developing it so as to offset the expenses incurred in the project development life's span. These developments are mainly also focused on a particular place of interest with high returns of investment within a specific duration thereby creating a gap of pervasive imbalances between the infrastructural developments in perpetuation within the sector. What we are seeing in our today's African modern ports expansion initiatives may continuously be dwarfed with the most advanced ships, currently operating in some of the European/Asian developed ports.

One classic example is the MSC Gülsün, the world's largest container ship operating by the Mediterranean Shipping Company.

The Company issues a statement that: "*MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company today announced that MSC Gülsün, the world's largest container ship, has arrived in Europe after completing its landmark maiden voyage from the north of China (Mediterranean Shipping Company Home..., 2019)*" [31].

Arguably, the technological advancement in ships design, plan and construction will continue to soar/widen and deepening the gap in the already Africans' developed port capacity and capability. In that, is likely to result in creating a perpetual yawning gap between these advanced vessels and African port infrastructure which will continue to struggle to adjust to the pace of these fast changing sophisticated technological ships.

Having said that an effective function of a hub port must be depended on the

level of development in its rail and road network to facilitate smooth and safe movement of the vessel traffics and cargo from the port of origin to the destination port without a break. There seems to be an overwhelming insufficient availability of road, rail network and shallow inland waterways connectivity to the Africans' ports, particularly, Ghana's maritime sector. This may exacerbate on the Tema Port's drive to the hub port status during the implementation of AfCFTA, which is inversely affecting the concepts of intermodalism in the global value chain with its cascading forestall toll/effect on the Ghana's maritime industry, inducing congestion and high costs of doing business in the country.

The least developing economies, including Ghana's inland waterways are somehow quite shallow and lack the capacity to accommodate big vessels so as to improve intermodalisms or multi-modalisms concept which appears to be one of the proven-driven forces to container evolution in the global value chain. That's, they (inland waterways) are not suitable for the transportation of heavy and bulky low value goods as cited by United Nations Conference On Trade and Development (1991, P. 36 & 38) [32].

Besides, the success of trucking in the container transport in the industrialised countries is due to availability of quality road systems whereas the developing countries do not have quality roads, which is a major drawback for road haulage of containers (United Nations Conference On Trade And Development, 1991, P. 36 & 38) [32].

Ironically, a document of the World Bank states that "*Ghana's underappreciated success story is transport. The country has a well-developed transportation system consisting of two large deep-water ports, a 944 km railway system, a 60,000 km road network system, one international airport and eight regional airports and airstrips throughout the country. Inefficiencies in transport are a major threat to growth (World Bank, 2007, P. 22)*" [33].

Till-to-date, Africa continues to face insufficient road network and is totally lacking the railway infrastructure with the exception of North and Southern African countries (THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, 2015, P. 95 & 96) [25]. Impliedly, some of these challenges are impediment to Ghana's maritime developmental drive, particularly in the implementation of AfCFTA.

In a bid to revamp the Ghana's railway sector, the World Bank funded the construction of this railway after signing a concessionaire agreement with the then Government in power. As of now, the construction of this railway is still ongoing under the current Government with unsuccessful firm time limit of completion thereby likely to attract over-run cost with its probable negative consequences on the citizenry.

"In February 2017, the Ministry of Railways Development was established for ensuring the rapid development of the railway network, partly due to the needs of the mining industry, and has identified several railway lines as their priority projects, including the Accra-Kumasi Line (300 km) and Kumasi-Paga (Central Spine) Rail (595 km) (World Bank, 2019, P. 11) [34]."

But continues efforts in maintaining this standard and carrying out of further developmental expansion in these indispensable sectors-road and rail systems in Ghana during the implementation of AfCFTA has remained mirage in a way. Presently, it appears the ongoing construction of the railway to connect the Tema Port to the Northern Ghana to improve the concept of the dry port-achieving the Ghana's gateway agenda and exploration of the Northern Ghana's endowed natural resources to resuscitate the fast depletion of the Southern Ghana's natural resources in the country is not going to plan. Already, the Southern Ghana's natural resources (*i.e.*, Cocoa, Gold, Forest resources) are however, overexploited and continue to decline in both quantity and quality. Whereas, the Shieni unexploited iron ore deposit in the Northern region is the biggest deposit in Ghana (World Bank, 2007, P. 17 [33] and Aabulleh *et al.*, 2019, P. 199) [33] & [35]. So, without enough availability of a sound rail or road system linking these major nodes-Tema Port and Northern Ghana, the exploitation of this mineral, the iron ore for the country's sustainable economic development will be impossible. This potential high earned foreign exchange primary or value added iron ore must be carried out by rail or road from its production source to the Port of Tema for onward exportation to the countries that needed it most.

However, the construction campaigns/activities in this sector are not making significant progress as expected and is likely to drag on high cost of operations which will eventually be passed on to the already overburden Ghanaian taxpayers.

A glance at the country's already expansive constructed road networks has revealed a major issue in terms of standards. The conditions of some of these high costs constructed roads have already started deteriorating rapidly with a high probability of causing loss of lives and property through accidents. It could be due to a sordid work done by some of the ill-equipped road contractors in the country. One example of such road is the Eastern corridor road which connected Tema to Upper East Region.

As stated by M. T. Wadda-Senghore, *et al.* "*This corridor is about 200 km shorter than the Central Corridor but has a substantial portion unpaved with ageing bridges and experiences washouts and damages during the rainy season making travel difficult*

(<https://esa.afdb.org/sites/default/files/Ghana-Eastern%20Corridor%20road%20development%20project-ESIA%20summary%20and%20full%20report.pdf>)" [36].

Deductively, these factors may have some tremendous immediate and long-terms adversary effects on the implementation of AfCFTA'S member States, particularly Ghana's maritime industry. Because the availability of insufficient funds and capabilities to solve these infrastructural issues will probably persist for a long time and may be exacerbated with the possibility of deploying autonomous and unmanned ships in the future by the developed economies.

Opportunities/Future Prospects of AfCFTA's Implementation

This section is the continuation of the research which intends to analysis the

Single Independent Judiciary System with its possible opportunities and prospects embedded in the implementation of AfCFTA vis-a-vis their implications on the African with reference to Ghana's maritime industry.

Understandably, maritime disputes are inseparable from the maritime industry in that resources meant for maritime infrastructural development may be diverting into settling maritime disputes, mostly outside the contentious nations jurisdiction, preferably the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). Of late, maritime disputes are seemingly assuming predominant dimension that could delay sustainable development in the maritime industry and the earlier attention is paid to solving them in the decentralised regional jurisdiction the better.

At the moment, the developed, emergence and least developed countries are deeply entangled in these disputes and continuously investing all kinds of resources in them to find a lasting solutions to this canker in the maritime industry. For example, this link:

<http://iilss.net/category/maritime-claims/baseline-straight-baseline-and-base-points/> is said to contained a litany of numerous maritime boundary delimitation claims between various nations/States-France maritime claims with Jersey, United Kingdom,

[\(http://iilss.net/category/maritime-claims/baseline-straight-baseline-and-base-points/\)](http://iilss.net/category/maritime-claims/baseline-straight-baseline-and-base-points/) [37] testifies the magnitude of this issue and its potential consequences on the maritime industry development. It is an expensive venture considering the involvement of the expertise, procedures and other essential processes to successfully execute a case in the ITLOS. Perhaps, it has the potential to increase the fiscal deficit of the contentious litigation nations, as well as strain bilateral trade relationship, leading to retarding the development of their maritime industry if not properly addressed.

It is widely acceptable fundamental principle that the longer a court takes to pass a final judgment of a case, the higher the cost/expensive of that case to the disputed parties.

Two outstanding judgments of maritime disputes cases by ITLOS worth of mentioning here. The Guyana vs Suriname and Ghana vs Ivory Coast maritime disputes took the ITLOS a number of years to pronounce the final judgment at a high costs to the parties involved (*Award in the arbitration regarding the delimitation of the maritime boundary between Guyana and Surinam*, 2012 and (*Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary in the Atlantic Ocean (Ghana/Côte d'Ivoire)*, 2017) [38] & [39] Article 18, paragraphs 2, 4 and 5 of ITLOS categorically states the financial entitlements under the salaries and expenses of judges regarding maritime disputes within ITLOS ("International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea: Finances", 2022) [40], excluding the travelling, insurance, accommodation, etc costs of the disputed parties authorities to and from ITLOS to ensure proceedings continue until the successful end. So, if all these figures are summed up, it will automatically produce a colossal total cost at the expense of African maritime development, if only AfCFTA makes provision for the creation of an

independent judiciary system to handle such cases in.

Exploring an economical means/ways, by using one African independent judiciary system to solve these maritime disputes during the implementation of AfCFTA is a crucial factor before they escalate and move to ITLOS for external adjudication with its consequences.

Thus, the establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights with the core values on the right to life, freedom of expression, (https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/african_court_guide.pdf) [41] to facilitate sustainable development through the expeditious and impartial adjudication of all kinds of disputes and criminal cases is the right step in the right direction. Surface me to say that the existence of the African Independent Judiciary System does not necessarily nullify ITLOS, is rather seen as augmentary subsidiary statutory regional body responsible to primarily deal with African continental maritime disputes before recommending the unresolved ones to ITLOS for further adjudication. Impliedly, it will minimise high costs and other imminent/inevitable natural and man-made disasters associated with frequent travelling and huge gatherings in ITLOS.

However, the scope of its jurisdiction is somehow limited to e Human Rights Section of the future African Court of Justice and Human Rights (https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/african_court_guide.pdf) [41] but excluded the interpretation of maritime related issues rising from the implementation of AfCFTA. This could be attributed to the following circumstances:

- The Chief Justices, Judges and Lawyers may not be that knowledgeable grounded to or competent in the maritime industry to effectively and efficiently handled maritime boundary related disputes;
- Our educational curricular in the higher educational level are more also focused on generalisation than specialisation thereby producing unqualified personnel from the higher educational institutions.

Overall, it is a viable venture if the Chief Justice, Judges and Lawyers are provided with capacity-building training and carries out educational reforms, targeting specialisation and IT in both second cycle and tertiary education with much emphasis on maritime education so as to equip them with prerequisite knowledge.

Thus, it's no doubt, that a functional independent judiciary system is one of the indicators that could attract much more direct foreign investment to the Ghana's maritime industry since investors must have some level of trust in the impartiality, incorruptible and Government devoid of interference with the judiciary system before committing their resources into investment.

7. Conclusions

Almost all Ghana's economic sectors have had benefited tremendously from the implementation of various bilateral, multilateral and freer trade policies with developed, emergence and least developed economies around the world. Al-

though the country has made remarkable successes through the implementation of some of these policies in transforming the various sectors of the economy, it appears to be characterised by imbalance development. There remains somewhat a huge gap in bringing a large scale development to the Ghana's maritime industry and the effective implementation of AfCFTA could streamline the overall development of Ghana's economic structure

So, the timely implementation of AfCFTA is a turn in key that will unlock and speed up the long time struggle and processes of Africa becoming a developed economy in the long run, especially as Ghana is now poised in investing significantly in its maritime sector aim at making the Port of Tema a hub port in Africa in AfCFTA's implementation.

As already been stated, the journey in harnessing AfCFTA's immense benefits, abundant opportunities and prospects embedded in it to accelerate the Ghana's maritime industry development is not just one straight speedway only. There are some inevitable constraints that might impede the whole progress if concerted efforts are not made to address them holistically in an efficient manner to ease the maritime development in the country.

In connection with these, this research has already sought to deal with all these issues and make some recommendations in its analysis so as AfCFTA's implementation could catapult Ghana's maritime development in a competitiveness situation among the developed maritime nations around the world The development of Ghana's maritime industry is an indispensable initiative that depends largely on the outlook of the world's maritime industry. Particularly, it also indicates a sheer patriotic responsiveness impetus to the national's efforts toward the lifting off the country from the current fast growing economic crises to a seaworthy vessel in order to maintain and increase the stability in the moderate developments that the country has made over the past decades in its maritime sector.

Undoubtedly, the impacts of AfCFTA on the economic, social, environmental, political and particularly the Ghana's maritime industry seems to be unquantifiable in the history of free trade implementation. The IMF's positive projection of AfCFTA is a kind of corroborated evidence that the African's continent will soon experience sustainable development within its entire economy, including, Ghana's maritime industry so as to improve the living standards of all Africans and Ghanaians in particular.

However, one way of addressing some of these issues is to have an insight by engaging the finest expertise in Africa and Ghana's maritime industry to draw up realistic policies and plans to strengthen the implementation of AfCFTA, especially for the expansion of Ghana's seaport infrastructure in line with its industrialisation agenda. In these policies and plans, the AU must act as the president responsible for the formulation of these policies and plans for AfCFTA to affect their implementation processes coherently across the member States. The AU must have the legitimate power and authority to direct and control all affairs

of the African continent through AfCFTA' Secretariat with reference to the development of Ghana's maritime industry.

Additionally, all maritime disputes arising among member States could also be directed to the African Court for adjudication as well as embarking on serious and deep educational reforms coupled with capacity-building of the human capital be given topmost priority-curricular review, for example integrating IT (*i.e.* both hardware and software) into maritime education. These in a way, will facilitate a collective direction in Africa's economic development endeavours, automating many of their ports to increase productivity, prevent cybercrime and minimise the uncoordinated and fragmented policies and plans the various African countries are pursuing within their individual maritime industries and for that matter the Ghana's maritime sector.

It's also crucial and imperative that policymakers, planners, environmentalists, shipbuilders, engineers and researchers, etc pay serious attention to the creation of real time employment in the maritime industry to absorb the unprecedented fast growing/rising young population in Africa through the effective implementation of AfCFTA. The continuous growing unemployment rate among African's youth especially in the maritime industry is partially driven by inadequate qualification of IT. Most of the educated Africans seems to still lack the required IT qualification/skills and therefore become redundant in the already maritime technological advancement in the developed economies. Arguably, most developed economies have succeeded in automating many of their ports in apparent preparation to be able to accommodate unmanned vessels in the near future whereas Africa and Ghana's maritime industry are still grappling with minimum scale expansion projects.

Investing in the development of the maritime infrastructure in Africa and Ghana could automatically lead to achieving the benefits, opportunities and prospects abound in AfCFTA. But the Africans total dependency on loan and grant facilities from the international financial institutions, the World Bank, IMF and China Exim bank to fund their maritime infrastructural development projects is not all that productive and unsustainable. The consistent rising of financial deficit facing Africa and Ghana's maritime infrastructure could be attributed to mismanagement of these funds thereby resulting in debt-distress situations. Sometimes, some of these funds are diverted and invested in individual's businesses whilst leaving insufficient funds available to just fund for sub-standards project. Continual Intensification of agricultural production and entry into effective public private partnership agreement with investors to establish Tema Port as a hub port in Ghana during the implementation of AfCFTA will automatically generate an increased revenue and expansion of other large scale industries in the country. This may boost the intra-regional trade among AfCFTA's member States by elevating the Tema Port to a hub port status to provide seamlessly goods and services to a few of African countries in the near future.

8. Recommendations

Below are the recommendations elaborated under the following subsections:

African National Plan

It's high time, the World Bank and IMF should review their financial plan supports with Africa. One way of doing this is for these financial institutions to adhere strictly to some of the provisions/terms and conditions stated in the five Cs of credit is being cited by this link

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/five-c-credit.asp> before concluding a loan facility with any applicant African country. Most efforts should be made to increase the ceiling bars of the debt-to-income ratio and interest rate cap per the capacity and conditions of the five Cs, including removal of indemnity clauses of any Africans' regime which defaulted to stand trial in the ICC. All corrupted leaders must also be sent to the ICC to refund the loss resources just like some leaders who caused civil war in their countries. For, insecurity is akin to trade restriction. This will send a strong signal to all Africans' leaders that in governance, is about exhibiting some exceptional admirable qualities, such as responsibility, selflessness, transparency and accountability of all the resources the citizenry entrusted to them but not to always spend their energy and productive time devising sophisticated schemes/mechanisms of exploiting them (*i.e.*, the resources and citizenry) to become rich within their term of office. It will also enable Africans' leaders to think of other effective innovative ways of generating viable sources of income than always running to these financial institutions with a cup in hand for loans and grants to fund their developmental projects.

Therefore, it's about time African continent takes its own destiny in its hands by designing a single African National Plan to guide productive development activities across all the economic sectors, including the maritime industry with reference to Ghana's maritime enclave. This plan should be one of the longest plans, for instance, at least about two hundred (200) years span focussing on development of transportation, services sector, manufacturing, shipbuilding yard/modern/smart port expansion and other areas during the implementation of AfCFTA.

Port Infrastructure Development

Expanding the capacity of and automation of the Ghana's port in line with developed economies countries' port should be a major priority on the development agenda. Integrating the IT into port development to bridge the gap between the fast growing technological advancement in shipbuilding and port infrastructure is the way forward to be able to accommodate such vessels. Alternatively, the Gov't of Ghana could lease some portion of the Tema port to the investors to develop and operate freely by paying little percentage of or without paying corporate tax provided they offer 70% of their jobs to Ghanaian employees. However, these companies must use the ILO's salary structure to pay all the Ghanaian workers so that the Gov't can continue to generate revenue from the income tax of all these workers in such companies so long as they are operating

within the country. This may serve as a kind of tax incentive package targeting few multi-national/foreign companies which have exceptional capacity and capabilities to invest in the Ghana's industrialisation and maritime sector for sustainable development. It will in a way, strengthen/improve the human resource within the Ghana's industrialisation and maritime sector because the probability of transferring of knowledge and Information Technology to the citizenry working with these foreign companies is very high.

Concerted efforts should be made to revamp the Tema Shipyard by elevating it to a shipbuilding yard and oil & gas offshore decommissioning centre status to make the Tema Port a complete/total independent hub port/fully-fledged port, capable of performing multi-purpose functions to increase productivity and revenue with the aid of AfCFTA's compliance. It may also create an opportunity for Africans and Ghanaian businessmen and women to become potential ship owners and operators of African Shipping Line in the long run.

Single Judiciary System

The creation and operation of African Court is a must factor or essential element in addressing the continent's countless flawed judiciary systems. It looks like African continent is a continent with various judiciary systems, practices and interpretations which are elapsed and parallel in nature within individual's jurisdiction. In effect, there is no single acceptable judiciary procedure which must be applied uniformly to handle criminal cases and all maritime related cases in Africa, especially in Ghana's maritime industry. This has only succeeded in setting up precedence like a judiciary anarchy/chaos which is under the direct manipulation of the party in power for parochial interest. Sometimes, these laws, for example, pertaining to the Ghana's Judiciary system are being broken with impunity by some people in Government and applied selectively to others who are often perceived to be critical to the developmental policies of the party in power. That is, the system does not simply allow to work freely irrespective of one's socio-political affiliation

Thus, running one single Independent Judiciary System devoid of bipartisanship and partiality as hallmark will certainly foster genuine peace, unity and love among member States for smooth development of the Ghana's maritime industry in the AfCFTA's implementation

Besides, it could also have shorten the possible period of coming out with the verdict in the maritime boundary dispute between Ghana and Ivory Coast, thereby saving some resources to be ploughed back in the maritime infrastructure development

The Framework

As stated earlier, AfCFTA should have offices in the sub-regional, national, key regions and cities to help in the decentralisation of its implementation processes to influence a unified plan development within Ghana's maritime industry. These offices should be manned by enough qualified human resource with capacity-building to ensure efficient and effective delivery of all shipping services

in the implementation of AfCFTA within the Ghana's maritime industry. Proposedly, if Maritime programmes are introduced in the junior and high secondary school levels, it will serve as a direct source of supply of the human resources to the Regional Maritime University which is affiliated to the World Maritime University for successful completion of its human development programme in Ghana's maritime industry, through AfCFTA's implementation. Adoption of a multi-lingual language, namely English, French and Arabic/Swahili as official languages in the learning, training and communication programmes will certainly improve innovation among member States through common understanding of all developmental projects

In summing up, these recommendations are worthy to be adopted/integrated by policymakers, planners, researchers, academicians, professionals and other key stakeholders in the consideration of their decision making and planning processes to speed up sustainable development in Ghana's maritime industry during effective implementation of AfCFTA. Because this document might form one of the basis and fundamental sources of a recognised literature based on the well-planned research project conducted on the subject matter with the major key experts: AfCFTA's Secretariat, GPHA, Public maritime agencies, SIC and private maritime companies operating in Ghana—instead of being blighted on the development of the country's maritime industry.

Further Expected Research Work

There should be further study using quantitative data to evaluate the achievements of AfCFTA after its five/ten years in operation.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Abbreviations:

AfCFTA—African Continental Free Trade Agreement/Area;
E.U.—European Union;
USD—United States Dollars;
GDP—Gross Domestic Product;
UNCTAD—United Nations Conference on Development and Trade;
RMT—Review of Maritime Transport;
GPHA—Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority;
MPS—Meridian Ports Services;
MSC—Mediterranean Shipping Company;
ITLOS—International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea;
IMF—International Monetary Fund;
ICT—Information Communication Technology;
IT—Information Technology.