

Evaluation of bacterial effluents from abattoirs and slaughter slabs in Zuru Emirate, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Effluents from abattoirs discharged into the environment and water bodies have serious health implications. This study aimed to investigate the bacterial load from abattoir and slaughter slab effluents in Zuru emirate. A total of 50 effluent samples from each of the abattoir and slaughter slabs were collected and used. The bacteria were isolated using standard bacteriological culture and identification. The bacterial colony counts (MPN/100mL) from abattoir and slaughter slab effluents in Zuru emirates ranges from 2.9×10^5 to 3.5×10^6 in Zuru LGA, 2.67×10^4 to 7×10^6 from Fakai LGA, 1.92×10^4 to 2.2×10^7 from Sakaba LGA, and 2.75×10^4 to 2.8×10^6 from Wasagu/Danko LGA. The bacteria discharged from effluents at the abattoir and slaughter slab from Zuru emirate was above the recommended limit for effluents released into the environment. Bacterial species isolated and identified were *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella spp.*, *Salmonella spp.*, *Shigella spp.*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *S. epidermidis*. The findings of this study affirmed that abattoirs and slaughter slabs in Nigeria lacked basic effluent treatment facilities, thus, effluents discharged from the abattoirs have a high bacterial load.

Keywords: Abattoir, effluents, slaughter slab, Zuru.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian abattoir/slaughterhouse system is a key component of the Livestock value chain providing a non-stop domestic meat supply for the growing population and a unique source of employment prospects for the growing population (Okunmadewa, 1999). However, this aspect of the livestock value chain is not well developed and it is faced with a lot of challenges including unhealthy practices that do not promote the slaughter and supply of wholesome meat for human consumption (Nafarnda *et al.*, 2012; Idu *et al.*, 2023). Abattoir wastewater is a water used

to clean up slaughtered cattle, sheep, goat, and pig carcasses, the floor of the slaughter hall, personnel, and slaughter equipment (Coker *et al.*, 2001). One of the major impediments to the Nigerian abattoir system is the lack of basic facilities for the treatment of effluent waste (Istifanus and Bwala, 2017). The effluents from these abattoirs alongside a large host of microbial pathogens sips into the environment and the surrounding water bodies. Thus, poses a significant public health risk, especially to individuals and communities around the abattoirs who rely

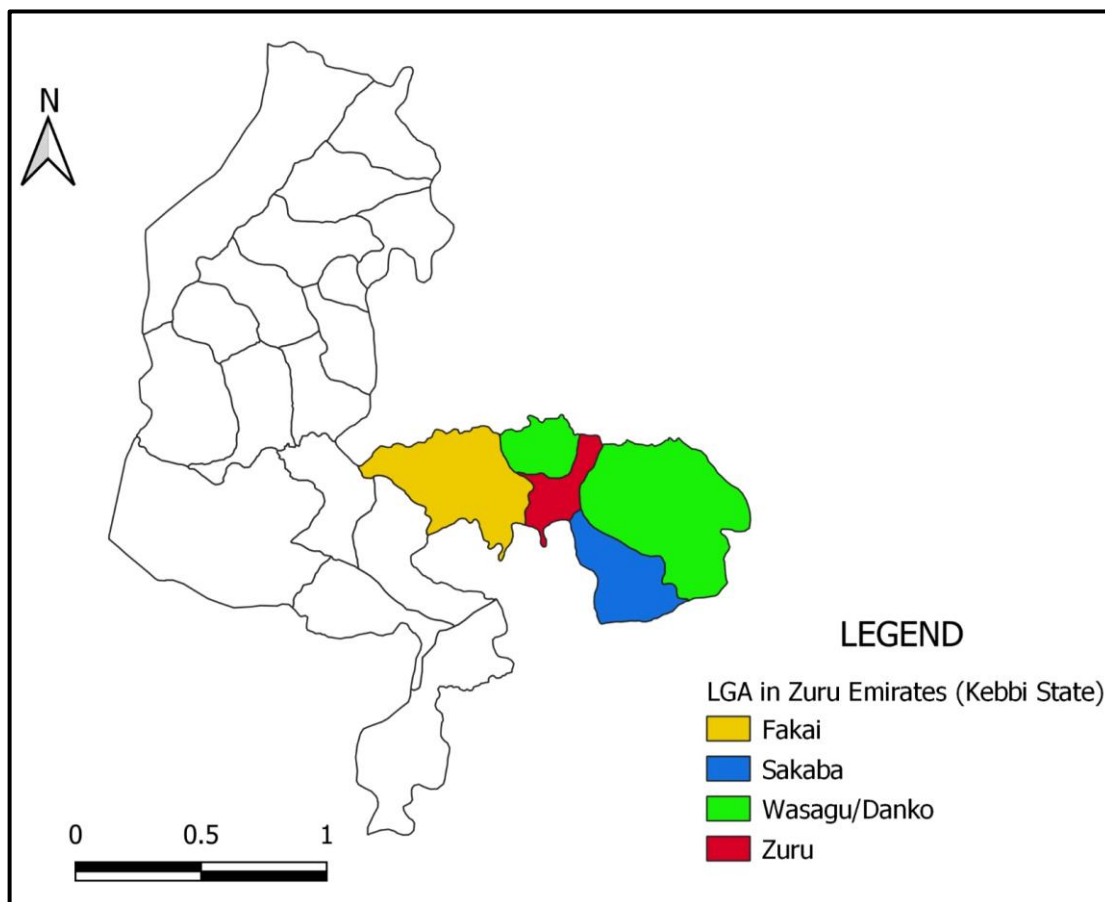


Figure 1. Map of Kebbi State, showing the four Local Government Areas under Zuru Emirate.

on rivers and other water bodies as their main sources of drinking water.

Additionally, abattoir and slaughter slab effluents could significantly intensify the amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and total solids in the receiving water body (Igbinosa and Uwidia, 2018). Wastewater from the abattoir is usually a concentrated source of oxygen-consuming waste (Mittal, 2006). With the growing incidences of waterborne diseases, antimicrobial-resistant pathogens, and increasing threat to human life, the decline in the quality of life, and the consequent reduction in working hours, it is necessary to examine the dangers associated with the consumption of abattoir-contaminated stream water (Foyle *et al.*, 2023). The health of a population is a major consideration for an active workforce, and these are constantly being threatened by emerging and re-emerging pathogens.

Previous reports have shown that abattoir effluent impacts negatively on soil, well water, and groundwater (Ogbonna and Ideriah, 2014). Also, zoonotic diseases are yet to be eliminated or fully controlled in more than 80% of the public abattoirs in Nigeria, and many pathogenic species of bacteria were reported to be isolated from abattoir effluents (Nafarnda *et al.*, 2012; Adebowale *et al.*,

2016; Joseph *et al.*, 2021). Thus, this study aimed to investigate the population health implication of abattoir effluents in Zuru Emirate, Kebbi state, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

This study was carried out in Zuru Emirate, Kebbi State, Nigeria. The Emirate is made of up four Local Government Areas including Zuru, Fakai, Sakaba and Wasagu/Danko (Figure 1). The Emirate is located at latitudes 11° and 12° N and longitudes 4° and 5° E of the equator. The climate is characterised by both wet and dry seasons of which the wet season dominates between April to October and the dry season between November and February. The average rainfall is between 1025 and 1050 mm per annum, and the mean temperature ranges between 31 and 38 °C. Animal husbandry is practiced side by side with crop production, on a limited scale. Hunting is an important economic activity after crop production and a supplement for meat production, hides and skin for shoes, warfare robes and local drums (Kamba *et al.*, 2021).

Table 1. Bacterial load from abattoir and slaughter slab effluents in Zuru Local Government Area.

Samples	Colony count in MSA media (CFU/mL)	Colony count in SS media (CFU/mL)	Colony count in MCA media (CFU/mL)
Zuru A1(10 ⁻²)	TNTC	1.2×10 ⁵	2.9×10 ⁵
Zuru A1(10 ⁻⁴)	1.2×10 ⁷	8.5×10 ⁷	1.4×10 ⁷
Zuru A2(10 ⁻²)	1.3×10 ⁵	6.4×10 ³	2.7×10 ⁵
Zuru A2(10 ⁻⁴)	5.3×10 ⁶	TNTC	1.1×10
Zuru B1(10 ⁻²)	TNTC	1.88×10 ⁵	2.1×10 ⁵
Zuru B1(10 ⁻⁴)	TNTC	9.3×10 ⁶	9.2×10 ⁶
Zuru B2(10 ⁻²)	2.16×10 ⁵	1.05×10 ⁵	1.8×10 ⁵
Zuru B2(10 ⁻⁴)	1.21×10 ⁷	3.5×10 ⁶	8.7×10 ⁶
Zuru C1(10 ⁻²)	1.42×10 ⁵	TNTC	1.2 ×10 ⁵
Zuru C1(10 ⁻⁴)	8.5×10 ⁶	1.8×10 ⁷	9.8×10 ⁶
Zuru C2(10 ⁻²)	1.67×10 ⁵	2.7×10 ⁵	1.7×10 ⁵
Zuru C2(10 ⁻⁴)	5.3×10 ⁶	9.3×10 ⁶	1.1×10 ⁷

Keys: TNTC = Too numinous to count, MSA = Mannitol Salt Agar, SS = Salmonella-Shigella agar, MCA = MacConkey Agar, TFTC= Too few to count, SKB = Sakaba, DWG = Wasagu/Danko.

Table 2. Bacterial load from abattoir and slaughter slab effluents in Fakai Local Government Area.

Samples	Colony count in MSA	Colony count in SSA	Colony count in MCA
Fakai A1(10 ⁻²)	2.1×10 ⁵	1.73×10 ⁴	2.67×10 ⁴
Fakai A1(10 ⁻⁴)	1.72×10 ⁶	9×10 ⁶	1.7×10 ⁵
Fakai A2(10 ⁻²)	TNTC	9.3×10 ³	1.27×10 ⁴
Fakai A2(10 ⁻⁴)	1.13×10 ⁶	TNTC	7×10 ⁶
Fakai B1(10 ⁻²)	1.3×10 ⁵	9.7×10 ³	1.13×10 ⁴
Fakai B1(10 ⁻⁴)	6.6×10 ⁶	4.5×10 ⁵	6×10 ⁶
Fakai B2(10 ⁻²)	TNTC	9.1×10 ³	1.3×10 ⁵
Fakai B2(10 ⁻⁴)	2.11×10 ⁶	4.0×10 ⁶	5.8×10 ⁵

Keys: TNTC= Too numinous to count, MSA= Mannitol salt agar, SS = Salmonella-Shigella agar, MCA= MacConkey Agar, TFTC= Too few to count.

Sample collection and analysis

Samples (abattoir effluent waste) were collected from a total of eight abattoirs and slaughter slabs in Zuru Emirate (Zuru, Fakai, Sakaba and Wasagu/Danko), Kebbi state, Nigeria. The sample collection and processing were done as previously reported by Nafarnda *et al.* (2012). Effluent samples from abattoirs and slaughter slabs were collected every 4 to 5 days, with a total of 50 samples obtained from each site in each local government area. Sampling was conducted in the mornings, during peak activity between 8:00 and 9:00 AM, using the grab sampling method. Sterilized 500 mL Pyrex screw-cap glass bottles were used, leaving a 2.5 cm space at the top. Effluents were taken from a well-mixed point near the discharge outlet. Samples were stored on ice during transport and processed within 5 hours. Before analysis, samples were diluted in 0.1% peptone water by adding 10 mL of sample to 90 mL of diluent, creating a 10⁻¹ dilution. Bacteria counts were determined using statistical most probable number (MPN) tables based on the number of positive findings.

The mean value concentrations of *Salmonella spp.*, *Shigella*, *Staphylococcus*, and *E. coli* (MPN/100 mL) for abattoir and slaughter slabs in Zuru were analysed. The isolates were identified using standard bacteriologic culture using colony morphology, Gram-staining for cellular morphology and biochemical tests including catalase, coagulase, oxidase, indole and urease, and motility test as previously described by Cheesbrough (2006) and Nafarnda *et al.* (2012).

RESULTS

The bacterial colony counts from abattoir and slaughter slab effluents in Zuru Emirate are summarized as follows: In Zuru and Fakai Local Government Areas (LGAs), the colony counts ranged from 2.9 × 10⁵ to 3.5 × 10⁶ CFU/mL, and 2.67 × 10⁴ to 7 × 10⁶ CFU/mL respectively (Tables 1 and 2). While in Sakaba and Wasagu/Danko LGAs, the range was 1.92 × 10⁴ to 2.2 × 10⁷ CFU/mL and 2.75 × 10⁴ to 2.8 × 10⁷ CFU/mL (Tables 3 and 4) respectively. Major

Table 3. Bacterial load from abattoir and slaughter slab effluents in Sakaba Local Government Area.

Samples	Colony count in MSA	Colony count in SSA	Colony count in MCA
Sakaba A1(10 ⁻²)	TNTC	1.92×10 ⁴	2.22×10 ⁴
Sakaba A1(10 ⁻⁴)	2.33×10 ⁶	7.6×10 ⁵	1.8×10 ⁷
Sakaba A2(10 ⁻²)	2.18×10 ⁴	1.1×10 ⁵	2.67×10 ⁴
Sakaba A2(10 ⁻⁴)	1.12×10 ⁶	6.0×10 ⁶	1.1×10 ⁷
Sakaba B1(10 ⁻²)	2.1×10 ⁵	TNTC	2.6×10 ⁵
Sakaba B1(10 ⁻⁴)	1.5×10 ⁷	2.2×10 ⁷	1.17×10 ⁶
Sakaba B2(10 ⁻²)	TNTC	1.96×10 ⁴	TNTC
Sakaba B2(10 ⁻⁴)	1.9×10 ⁷	8.6×10 ⁵	1.72×10 ⁶

Keys: TNTC = Too numinous to count, MSA = Mannitol Salt Agar, SS = Salmonella-Shigella agar, MCA = MacConkey Agar, TFTC = Too few to count.

Table 4. Bacterial load from abattoir and slaughter slab effluents in Wasagu/Danko Local Government Area.

Samples	Colony count in MSA	Colony count in SSA	Colony count in MCA
Wasagu/Danko A1(10 ⁻²)	1.4×10 ⁵	TNTC	TNTC
Wasagu/Danko A1(10 ⁻⁴)	6×10 ⁶	2.2×10 ⁷	2.8×10 ⁷
Wasagu/Danko A2(10 ⁻²)	1.7×10 ⁵	TNTC	TNTC
Wasagu/Danko A2(10 ⁻⁴)	5.5×10 ⁵	1.73×10 ⁷	2.3×10 ⁷
Wasagu/Danko B1(10 ⁻²)	2.0×10 ⁵	2.9×10 ⁵	TNTC
Wasagu/Danko B1(10 ⁻⁴)	1.24×10 ⁶	1.8×10 ⁷	1.9×10 ⁷
Wasagu/Danko B2(10 ⁻²)	2.8×10 ⁵	2.75×10 ⁴	TNTC
Wasagu/Danko B2(10 ⁻⁴)	1.3×10 ⁷	1.1×10 ⁷	1.7×10 ⁷

Keys: TNTC = Too numinous to count, MSA = Mannitol Salt Agar, SS = Salmonella-Shigella agar, MCA= MacConkey Agar, TFTC = Too few to count.

Bacterial pathogens isolated were *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella spp.*, *Salmonella spp.*, *Shigella spp.*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Staphylococcus epidermidis*.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlighted the potential health risks associated with contamination of meat, abattoir environment, water bodies, and all critical line stakeholders involved in meat processing at the abattoirs and slaughter slabs in the Zuru Emirate. The levels of bacterial contamination due to *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Klebsiella* species isolated from effluents within the abattoir and slaughter slab facilities in Zuru Emirate indicated a significant public health problem. These organisms, apart from being major sources of antimicrobial resistance genes, are known to cause severe to life-threatening infections in both humans and animals. Also, because there is weak regulation with respect to the use of antimicrobials, and other veterinary medicinal products in livestock production, the chances of slaughtering animals

under treatment are very high, and this may result in retention of these medicinal products in the tissues. The downside being the contamination of the environment, exposure of the microbial pathogens to sub-optimal doses of antibiotics, and dissemination of these pathogens to nearby streams and rivers, which are the sources of drinking water for some of these communities (Ndukwe *et al.*, 2023). The microbiological concentrations (MPN/100 mL) of abattoir/slaughter slab effluents were found to vary between 2.9×10⁵ to 3.5×10⁶ for Zuru Local Government, 2.67 ×10⁴ and 7 ×10⁶ for Fakai Local Government, 1.92 ×10⁴ and 2.2 ×10⁷ for Sakaba Local Government, and 2.75 ×10⁴ and 2.8 ×10⁷ for Wasagu/Danko Local Government.

The bacterial load from the effluents discharged from the abattoirs/slaughters slab into the surrounding environment was beyond the normal recommended acceptable limits for effluents (FEPA, 1991; Wenibowei, 2018). This is more worrisome, because of the impending health hazards associated with abattoir effluents. Also, because of urbanization and population growth in Nigeria, most abattoirs and slaughter slabs are located within residential buildings and the risk of infection is very high. It is therefore pertinent, that abattoirs be upgraded with modern facilities that is fitted with modern gadgets for effluents treatments before discharging into the environment to reduce the risk

of infection and public health hazards (Ogeleka *et al.*, 2021).

The digestive tracts of warm-blooded animals typically harbour bacteria that are often used as surrogate indicators for gastro-intestinal pathogens (Carrero-Colón *et al.*, 2010). Faecal coliform bacteria, such as *E. coli*, signal contamination by animal or human waste. *E. coli* is the most common faecal coliform, excreted in the faeces of animals that carry it (Fu *et al.*, 2020). Its presence in water is considered a specific indicator of enteric pathogens and faecal contamination, as well as a general marker for faecal pollution (Khan and Gupta, 2020). Elevated levels of *E. coli* and total coliforms in receiving water bodies and abattoir wastewater suggest contamination with faeces and potentially harmful pathogens from untreated abattoir discharges, aligning with earlier studies (Chukwu, 2008). Wastewater from abattoirs has been found to contain bacterial pathogens, including *Salmonella spp.*, *Staphylococci*, and *E. coli* (Barros *et al.*, 2007, Musa *et al.*, 2017), *Campylobacter*, and *Listeria monocytogenes* (Pepperell *et al.*, 2003). The study's observations of microbial load from the abattoir and slaughter slab effluents can be of great consequence of risking people and animals in these areas.

In Nigeria, there is often minimal oversight and regulation regarding the placement and operations of abattoirs and slaughter slabs, commonly known as slaughterhouses (Elemile *et al.*, 2019). Most of these facilities lack sufficient infrastructure and resources to manage wastewater and solid waste effectively (Lawan *et al.*, 2013; Gali *et al.*, 2020). Runoff from dairy farms, feedlots, grazed pastures, poultry waste, manure-treated grasslands, and abattoir effluents frequently contaminates water bodies, posing significant environmental and public health risks (Hooda *et al.*, 2000; Nafarnda *et al.*, 2012; Ekpunobi *et al.*, 2024). Typical activities in abattoirs include butchering, hide removal, intestinal handling, rendering, trimming, processing, and cleaning (Nastasijevic *et al.*, 2023; Ovuru *et al.*, 2024). According to Akange *et al.* (2016), abattoir waste often consists of blood, oil, organic and mineral solids, salts, and chemicals used during processing. Consequently, the proper management of abattoir and slaughter slab waste is essential to ensure the safety of both humans and animals. The limitation of this study was that only abattoirs and slaughter slabs in the Zuru emirate were included in the study. Also, the bacterial pathogens isolated were phenotypically identified. Furthermore, antimicrobial resistance profiles of the isolates were not determined, as this would have added significant clinical value to the outcome of the study.

Conclusion

This investigation concluded that the effluents from the abattoir and slaughter slabs in Zuru emirate exceeded the permissible limits set by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) of Nigeria for discharge into

water bodies. Additionally, the bacterial load in untreated abattoir wastewater from the Zuru emirate surpasses recommended thresholds for release into Nigerian waterways. It is recommended that the government upgrade abattoir facilities with modern technologies for effective wastewater treatment procedures for abattoirs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest with regards to the publication of this manuscript.

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