

National Legal Framework and Sea Piracy Nigerian Seaports in Rivers State

Chituru G. Ogonu

**Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt
and**

Ayesikika A. Iruayenama

**Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt**

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between national legal framework and sea piracy in Nigerian water ways, Rivers State. National legal framework was used as the independent variable, while sea piracy was utilized as dependent variable with kidnapping and armed robbery as its measures. The study adopted Routine Activity Theory to explain theoretical foundation linking the study variables. The study was designed as a cross-sectional survey while the study population was 65 managerial staff of the firms being examined. To establish the sample size of the study, census approach was used which allowed the researcher adopt the population as the sample size. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the postulated hypotheses of the relationship. The study however found that national legal framework negatively relates with all measures of sea piracy in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State. In view of this finding, the study concludes that through the introduction and enforcement of efficacious national legal framework in Nigerian maritime operations, the unlawful activities of sea pirates such as kidnapping and armed robbery related incidences will be greatly moderated. Therefore, the study recommends that national legal frameworks set up by the country should be properly stated and well enforced by the security agencies in the country to deter activities such as sea piracy (armed robbery and kidnapping).

Keywords: *National Legal Framework, Sea Piracy, Kidnapping, Armed Robbery, Nigerian Port Authority*

Introduction

The maritime sector is an import aspect of Nigeria's economy. This is why NDOKIM (2011) argues that the maritime industry occupies a very prominent position in the economies of nations all over the world. The industry in its strict sense includes off-shore economic activities such as fishing, salvage, towage, underwater resources exploitation/extraction and onshore economic activities in ports, shipping activities, ship construction, repair and maintenance. Maritime trade according to Anuonyeh (1998) is any legitimate undertaking embarked upon to earn a living and also to make profit. Effective maritime operations create a platform for safe and cost effective transportation of cargoes across national boundaries. Sadly, today, most nations of the world, especially Nigeria are not fully maximizing the potential and benefits associated with maritime mode of cargo transportation due to the activities of sea pirates. This is because sea piracy of today is a violent, bloody and ruthless practice and a major cause for concern (Abhyankar, 2007). Sea piracy exists in places like Indonesia, the South China Sea, Malacca straits, South America and West Africa and the trends in piracy are quite different (Baker, 2013). Modern sea piracy is usually carried out by a highly sophisticated criminal organization that is equipped with fast boats and communication equipment. These experienced criminal organizations attack and rob ships, kidnap crew and sometimes engage in 'phantom shipping' which involves taking the entire ship and its cargo, changing the color of the ship and obtaining fake registration documents for the vessel

which may be sold or used by the pirates for their shipping needs (Gagain, 2010). This is why it is seen as one of the most significant and direct threats to maritime security (Hassan & Hassan, 2016). A study also indicates that the statistics of the activities of sea pirates and armed robbery against ships around the globe are on the increase.

In Nigerian waterways today, the trend of this menace is no different. This is because almost on monthly basis, the media dishes out news of how a boat or ship conveying either humans or cargoes were intercepted by sea pirates cutting away with their goods and other valuables. The frequency of this menace however demands urgent maritime national legal framework that will deter pirates' activities and guarantee the operational safety of its operators. In Nigeria, there is no any anti-piracy law that criminalizes piracy or armed robbery at sea and also no national law which specifically incorporates the provisions of UNCLOS and the SUA Convention and Protocol. There is rather a vague provision in Part XII of the Merchant Shipping Act Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN, 2007) and (LFN, 2016) which deals with safety of life at sea. The Merchant Shipping Act only provided that the 1988 SUA (Suppression of Unlawful Acts) Convention and Protocol would apply to maritime safety; but it failed to provide for adequate punishment for offences under the Convention and the Protocol. Therefore, to tackle the problem of sea piracy in Nigerian territorial water, adopting positive strategies such as promulgation of maritime national legal frameworks to repel piracy and armed robbery at sea is paramount. This is because, for sea piracy to thrive, it requires not just weak law enforcement, but also careless law enforcement. Most often, the laxity of law enforcement develops as a result of corruption of law enforcement officials or governing authorities. When this is the case, piracy increases, especially in areas where there is insufficient security and abundant targets (Tepp, 2012). In a bid to provide solution to the problem of sea piracy in Nigeria, several scholarly contributions have been made by scholars but amid these efforts, there is still a research gap on the relationship between maritime law enforcement and sea pirates in the context of Nigeria's water ways. For instance, Oyewole (2016) examines the prospects and challenges in suppressing maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, while Tepp (2012) examines the benefits of adopting military and non-military ways of combatting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Consequently, this study empirically examines the relationship between national legal framework and sea piracy in Nigeria Port Authority, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Maritime industry is part of the global economy and the most important aspect of every nation's economy including Nigeria. The industry is global in nature and is acknowledged to be very basic in the socio-economic shape of any given maritime nation of which Nigeria is included. This maritime industry is supposed to function or operate in an enabling environment, hitherto over the years, there has been so many challenges such as piracy, armed robbery etc. on the Nigerian waterways which has dealt dangerously with our maritime operations and fraught its performance. Sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea nations like Nigeria has been in existence for a long time but it started developing rapidly in the 1990s. The problem of sea piracy thus manifest in the area of hijacking of vessel, forcing it to sail to an unknown destination where the cargo will be siphoned into the pirates' vessel and releasing the hijacked vessel after the transfer of cargo (Tepp, 2012); It is the kidnapping of the passengers and crew of ships for ransom (Hodgkinson, 2013) etc.

Conceptual Framework

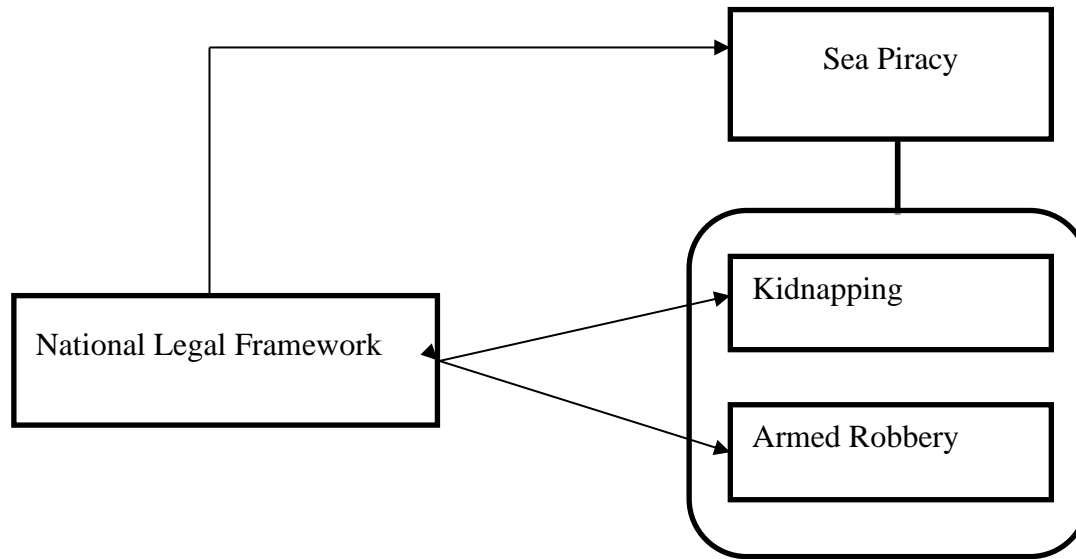


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework of National Legal Framework and Sea Piracy
Source: Desk Research, 2021

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship between national legal framework and sea piracy in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State. In line with the above, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To determine the relationship between national legal framework and kidnapping in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State.
- ii. To determine the relationship between national legal framework and armed robbery in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State.

Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the following research questions were put forward:

- i. How does national legal framework relate with armed robbery in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State?
- ii. How does national legal framework relate with kidnapping in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following tentative null hypotheses were formulated in this study to provide answers for the research questions posed:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between national legal framework and armed robbery in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between national legal framework and kidnapping in Nigerian waterways, Rivers State.

Theoretical foundations

This study draws its theoretical foundation from the Routine Activity Theory (RAT). The routine activity theory is an offshoot of social structural theory advanced by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson. It is however a new paradigm and a meta-theory in the 1970's crime discourse (Igbo, 2008). It explains crime as a product of the combined result of three essential elements. (i) Potential offenders or persons who are motivated to commit crimes. (ii) Suitable targets that is the presence of things that are of some economic value and which can be easily transported. (iii) Absence of capable guards or persons who can prevent a crime from taking place. This proposition of RAT embodies the factors that prompt the incessant occurrence of pirates' attacks in Nigerian waterways and its attendant threats on the Nigerian maritime industry waterways: principally, the availability of suitable targets, oil installations of multinational oil companies, fishing trawlers / fishermen, shipping / transport firms, salvage firm /offshore service firms etc. According to the routine activity theory, a motivator and sustained factor, the inadequacy or in most cases unavailability of competent security networks to safeguard the territorial waters and seas lead to greater attacks and losses. Based on this, the several attacks by pirates on maritime operations could be attributed to weak maritime security or poor government intervention which inflicts injury on maritime profitability, investment and operational cost i.e. insurance. Therefore, the routine activity theory concerned itself with explaining the individual motivational factors in crime causation which other traditional sociological theories of crime do not. Its main preoccupation is on how ordinary or normal lawful, conventional, routine activities of individuals increase the profitability of criminal activities (Igbo, 2008).

Concept of National Legal Framework

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), the Nigerian Navy, the Federal Ministry of Justice, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) are the agencies responsible for law enforcement against sea piracy and kidnapping at sea in Nigeria. NIMASA is the maritime administration agency established by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency Act (2007); and by virtue of the Act, one of the core functions of NIMASA is to implement domesticated international maritime conventions and protocols. With respect to piracy and kidnapping at sea, NIMASA's role is to carry out air and coastal surveillance, search and rescue operations and general supervision of maritime logistic support for patrols against piracy and kidnapping in Nigerian coastal waters (NIMASA, 2017).

The Nigerian Navy is the agency empowered by the Nigerian Constitution 1999 as amended to protect the territorial waters of the state and to secure the nation's maritime zones. This policing role is spelt out in section 4 of the Armed Forces Act (AFA) CAP A20 LFN 2004, which requires the Nigerian Navy to enforce, assist and coordinate the enforcement of national and international maritime laws ratified by Nigeria (AFA, 2004). Accordingly, the Nigerian Navy's role against piratical acts is to make arrests of pirate vessels, suspected pirates and armed robbers at sea (Nigerian Navy, 2014). The NPF also has a department of marine police which has formations in areas where there are navigable rivers and waterways in Nigeria. The marine police department generally conducts security combats and anti-crime operations in territorial waters but focuses more on securing platforms (NPF, 2017). The Federal Ministry of Justice and the EFCC carry out public prosecution. While the main function of the Federal Ministry of Justice is to prosecute all types of criminal cases (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2017), the EFCC's role is to prosecute economic and financial crimes (EFCC, 2017). In line with section 5(m) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act, the EFCC is responsible for "taking charge of, supervising, controlling, coordinating all the responsible functions and activities relating to the current investigation and prosecution of all offences connected with or relating to economic and financial crime." Although piracy and armed robbery at sea are not specifically listed as offences under the Act, in practice, the EFCC handles cases of piracy and armed robbery at sea.

Sea Piracy

Piracy is considered as ancient origins. Internationally, laws against piracy have ancient origins, too. The power to criminalize piracy originated in the United States Constitution, which was followed by the first federal law in 1790. Generally, sea pirates refer to rogue operators at sea who hijacked ships, stole their cargo, or committed violence against their crew. It also involves taking of ships or persons or property from ships. Piracy is punishable wherever the pirates are found. The Geneva Convention on the High Seas (1958) and the Convention on the Law of the Seas (1982) view it as any illegal act of violence or depredation that is committed for private ends on the high seas or outside the territorial control of any state. Some couple of years ago, Lloyd's Maritime Association (LMA), a body of UK ship owners threatened to raise charges on cargoes coming to Nigeria and other West African countries as second to Somalia in terms of piracy (Vanguard, 2013). Malaguais (2012) noted that piracy is the organized, sometimes highly sophisticated illicit taking of oil. They steal oil, make a couple of black-market circuses of the staff, and then deposit it back into the global supply". When taken hostage by GOG pirates, the period of captivity lasts an average of ten days as compared to six months for Somali hijacking. This was preceded by the report that while there were 58 pirates' attacks on ships within the nation's coast in 2012, there were 22 attacks already on ships trading in Nigeria and Benin Republic as at February 2013.

The IMB and LMA sea piracy monitoring and reporting group with headquarters in London had considered imposing higher freight roles on goods coming to Nigeria as a result of the increasing attacks on Nigeria bound ships. Piracy being a subject of renewed interest had left researchers struggling to separate reports of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea from that of Nigerian waters in particular. The Gulf Of Guinea located off the coast of West Africa and extending from Western coast of Cote d'Ivoire, through Nigeria to Gabon estuary is one of world's most dangerous maritime regions with regards to piracy. The report made particular mention of a sharp escalation in piracy related activity off the coast of Nigeria. The observation showed that majority of these attacks occurred around Lagos, Nigeria's main port and commercial center and in the oil rich Niger-Delta region. In the Niger-Delta, the problem of piracy has been compounded by growing insurgency where militants are fighting for an increased share of the region's wealth and have attacked shipping interests in pursuit of this cause (Raymond, 2007). Again, Uadiale (2012) stated that with the rise in the IBM hotspots list, piracy is by no means a new phenomenon in Nigeria, with piracy related activities plaguing Nigeria's coast and water ways since the early 1970s. With reference to the report, the boom in Nigeria's oil export and the accompanying boom in import of various goods such as

processed food, liquor, cigarettes, cars and electronics from 1970s saw a sharp rise in the numbers of foreign commercial vessels calling on Lagos, Apapa, Port Harcourt and other major Nigerian ports.

The ports however, lacked the capacity to handle the shift surge in maritime trade causing long delays around the harbor areas. The delay and ineffective security in ports and on-board ships created ample opportunity for local gangs to perpetrate theft and robbery against foreign vessels. These attacks according to Uadiale (2012) are opportunities rather than organized piracy. In this period, the motivation was occasioned by availability of goods without corresponding security. But in recent times, piracy has changed both in nature and trend; maybe as a result of change in the motivating factors. Even while there seem to be effective security around the harbour and in patrol, the pirates still attack, because they are prepared to fight even the coast guard (Freedom & Hassan, 2009). The change has resulted to pirates' activities such as bunkering for international sales, which according to Antoine (2012) is now organized on a much larger scale and usually goes together with forgery of bills of lading to understate the amount of oil actually and legally lifted for export. The author further opined that piracy in all its various forms is undoubtedly an affair of maritime specialists, sometimes with international connections.

Armed Robbery

Contemporary sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is a Nigeria-centric problem. Unlike the Somali piracy which occurs mostly in the high seas, much of the piracy in the Gulf of Guinea occurs in Nigerian territorial waters (Ashiru, 2016). According to Kamal-Deen (2015), Nigeria accounts for 80 percent of reported piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea and it stands out as the epicenter of Gulf of Guinea piracy. In Nigeria, there is a complex relationship between piracy and the legacy of oil; and one could say the two issues are interwoven because piracy in Nigeria occurs mainly in the resource rich Niger Delta region (Otto, 2014). Piracy in Nigeria started from small scale petty robbery of personal effects of crew and ship equipment onshore, but quickly became more organized and pirates began to operate in larger numbers and with faster crafts. Due to the oil production and trade in the Niger Delta region, oil theft, attacks on offshore installations as well as attacks on vessels carrying petroleum products became bigger targets (Otto, 2014).

With the establishment of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), piracy took a new turn in Nigerian waters and off its coast. The MEND according to experts, is an organized group which is a loose coalition of armed militias who are motivated by local grievances. They were involved in kidnapping of oil workers, theft of crude oil, raids on ships and constant attacks on oil/pipeline installations (Watts, 2008). Their activities increased instability in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and this in turn led to increased attacks on ships at sea, river crafts and oil platforms. Today piracy and armed robbery attacks at sea have moved from violent armed robbery attacks to theft of whole ships, kidnap and ransom and sometimes sabotage (Murphy, 2011). According to SSA: Singapore Shipping Association, sea robbery happens in territorial waters and is thus under the littoral states' jurisdiction. Furthermore, a clear distinction in different pirates' attack depends on sophistication of weapon, mode of operation and location of operation. Sea robbers mostly attack with arms within the internal waters, anchorage, port, harbours etc. with the crew, passengers, cargoes and other marine trade operators. IMO Code Resolution A. 922(22) paragraph 2.2, says armed robbery against ships means any unlawful act of "sea piracy" directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such ship within a state's jurisdiction over such offences.

Kidnapping

Leaning on the view of Hakeem (2016), kidnapping refers to a forceful abduction of a human being with the intention to hold them for ransom, or seize them away for the motive of harassment (physically or mentally or sexually), taking them hostage and various other motives. It is also linked as an act of seizing, taking away

and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud (Abraham, 2013). Furthermore, Davidson (2010) associates it with the act of taking somebody away illegally and keeping them as a prisoner, especially in order to get money or something else for returning them. However, within the context of maritime, it occurs when pirates with more sophisticated weapons overpower the crew and its attached security, seize their victims into unknown destination where they ransack them and completely take everything from them. In the case of kidnap, hostages are only released after payment of heavy ransom. This could be crew members on trip as passengers, offshore staffs of varying marine business firms. A good example of kidnap case in Nigeria is that reported by the punch, newspaper on 23 September, 2018, saying pirates abducts 12 ships crew members on Nigerian waters by Ramon (2018), these were seafarers travelling from Lagos to Port Harcourt. The number of seafarers taken hostage in the Gulf of Guinea- the region where the attack took place rose from 52 in 2016 and 75 last year said Jake Longworth, senior analyst at EOS risk group in a report published in July 2018. He said although the number of kidnaps is similar in two years, the trend suggests that there are more hostages in each attack; he also mentioned that 35 seafarers were kidnapped for ransom in the first half of 2018. Therefore, it is worthy of note that while robbery aims at stealing valuables, kidnap aims at forcefully abducting or taking away personnel i.e. crew, staff for ransom.

However, different factors that have been adjudged to be the root cause of kidnapping in Nigeria's waterways. For instance, the issue of unemployment; the high unemployment rate has forced some citizens to find other illegal means to make money especially when the youths become idle; they usually resort to all manner of nefarious activities. The study of Kilishi, Mobolaji, Usman, Yakubu and Yaru (2014) established that the rising trend of crime is usually blamed on the high rate of unemployment. Suleiman (2017) further argued that the problem of unemployment in Africa is one of the major syndromes that upturned youths to become atrocious actors. A cash-strapped unemployed person may believe that when he kidnaps someone who is rich, he may be able to become rich himself (Christie, 2017). Again, the problem of poverty; this is one of the major causes that usually push people to go into the act of kidnapping. Poverty is a state of lacking basic requirement to live a rational life. Basic requirements such as money, food, water and shelter, among others, are the scourge of poverty which demoralized the less privileged to be inflicted with the wrath of anomaly (Suleiman, 2016).

National Legal Framework and Sea Piracy

To combat piracy and armed robbery at sea, the UNCLOS and SUA Conventions rely heavily on corresponding domestic laws. Both the UNCLOS and SUA Conventions require States to take appropriate measures to combat the offence. This means that mere ratification of the conventions is not sufficient for a state party to effectively suppress the offence. The most important task for state parties to these conventions is to incorporate the rights and obligations provided by the conventions into their national legal and policy frameworks (Ali, 2015). Despite the relevance of the SUA Framework, especially in Nigeria where most of the attacks are on territorial waters and often against offshore platforms, the 2005 SUA Protocol is yet to be ratified by Nigeria. Therefore, for acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, the UNCLOS, the 1988 SUA Convention and the SUA Protocol are the international treaties Nigeria is bound to follow having ratified the UNCLOS in 1986 (United Nations, 2017), the SUA Convention in 2004 and the SUA Protocol in 2015 (IMO, 2017).

Until recently, in Nigeria, there was no anti- piracy law that criminalizes piracy or armed robbery at sea and also no national law that specifically incorporates the provisions of UNCLOS and the SUA Convention and Protocol. There was a rather vague provision in Part XII of the Merchant Shipping Act Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2007 (LFN, 2016) which deals with safety of life at sea. Article 215 (h) of the Merchant Shipping Act provides that "as from the commencement of this Act, the following Conventions, Protocol and their amendments relating to maritime safety shall apply. That is- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful

Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation 1988 and the Protocol thereto.” Article 216 (1) of the Act further provides that “The Minister may make such regulations as he deems expedient for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the part of this Act.”

The Merchant Shipping Act only provided that the 1988 SUA Convention and Protocol would apply to maritime safety, but it failed to provide for adequate punishment for offences under the Convention and the Protocol. It could be that the intention of the drafters of the Merchant Shipping Act was to give effect to the convention; however, mere mention of the instruments in the Act defeats the purpose for which the instruments were created. As earlier mentioned in this research, the SUA framework identifies different unlawful acts at sea which can be prosecuted by states but it places an obligation on state parties to provide appropriate sentences for the offences in their domestic laws. Mere mention of the SUA Convention and Protocol in the Merchant Shipping Act only means the offences are recognized but without punishment.

Although there were no specific laws criminalizing piracy and armed robbery in Nigeria, there are some laws such as the Criminal Code Act and the Penal Code (LFN, 2016) that criminalize the constituent components of piracy and armed robbery at sea; however, they apply only to offences carried out in Nigeria’s territory and territorial waters. Interestingly, in Nigeria the story is now different, there is now an anti- piracy law that criminalizes piracy or armed robbery at sea which serves as a new national law that gives effect to the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) 1982, the convention for the Suppression of unlawful acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) 1988 and its protocols known as the Suppression of Piracy and other Maritime Offences Act 2019 otherwise known as SPOMO ACT 2019 accented to by the President in June 2019.

Methodology

No good research work of this nature can be carried out without proper research plan and analysis of data collected. A good research design is a plan of investigation that specifies the sources and types of information relevant to research question. It is a strategy or blue print specifying which approach will be used for gathering and analyzing the data incorporating both time and budget cost. According to Kothari and Gaurav (2014), a research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. Therefore, in this study, the survey design method was used. This methodology emphasizes quantitative analysis which involved identifying the problem, formulating relevant hypothesis and data collection through questionnaires, interview and observation. The population of the study comprises of 65 senior staff of the organization studied. Also the study adopted the population as its sample size. In analyzing the primary hypotheses (bivariate) of the study, a total of six (6) null hypotheses will be tested using the Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient at a $P < 0.05$ for significant levels of association and a $P > 0.05$ for insignificant levels of association between the variables.

Data Analysis

Table 1 below shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for National Legal Framework and the measures of Sea Piracy. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value).

Table 1: Correlations Matrix between National Legal Framework and Sea Piracy

			National Legal Framework	Kidnapping	Armed Robbery
Spearman's rho	National Legal Framework	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.708**	-.561**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	60	60	60
	Kidnapping	Correlation Coefficient	-.708**	1.000	-.890**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	60	60	60
	Armed Robbery	Correlation Coefficient	-.561**	-.890**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	60	60	60

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 23.0 data Output, 2021

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between national legal framework and armed robbery in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State.

From the result in table 1, it is shown that there is a negative relationship between national legal framework and armed robbery in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State. The *rho* value -0.561 indicates the strength and magnitude of this relationship and it is significant at $p=0.000 < 0.01$. Therefore, based on empirical findings, the previous bivariate null hypothetical statement is hereby rejected and the alternate is accepted as the study finds that: There is a significant relationship between national legal framework and armed robbery in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between national legal framework and kidnapping in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State.

From the result in table 1, it is shown that there is a negative relationship between national legal framework and kidnapping in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State. The *rho* value -0.708 indicates the strength and magnitude of this relationship and it is significant at $p= 0.000 < 0.01$. Therefore, based on empirical findings, the previous bivariate null hypothetical statement is hereby rejected and the alternate is accepted as the study finds that: There is a significant relationship between national legal framework and kidnapping in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed a negative significant relationship between national legal framework and sea piracy in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State. This finding reinforces the findings of Le QuocTien and Nguyen (2019) who investigated the impact of piracy on maritime transport and technical solution for prevention in Vietnam. The study reveals that piracy, especially kidnapping and sea robbery which were their major focus has much effect on safety and security. Also, the study agrees with the findings of Stephen and Toakodi (2006) that carried a study on sea piracy and security challenges of maritime business in Bayelsa State and the outcome of the study revealed that sea pirates' activities significantly affect seafaring, sea poaching and fishing. More specifically, the following findings from the study emerge. Our finding agreed with the previous study by Ali, (2015) who opined that to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea, the UNCLOS and SUA Conventions rely heavily on corresponding domestic laws. Both the UNCLOS and SUA Conventions require States to take appropriate measures to combat the offence. This means that mere ratification of the conventions is not sufficient for a state party to effectively suppress the offence. The most important task for state parties to these conventions is to incorporate the rights and obligations provided by the conventions into their national legal and policy frameworks as it is now done in Nigeria with the passing of the SPOMO Act, 2019.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the data generated and analyzed, it was empirically discovered that there is a strong negative and significant relationship between national legal framework and sea piracy in Nigeria waterways, Rivers State. In view of this finding, the study concludes that through the introduction and enforcement of efficacious national legal framework in Nigerian maritime operations, the unlawful activities of sea pirates, such as kidnapping and armed robbery related incidences will be greatly moderated. Therefore, the study recommends that national legal frameworks set up by the country should be properly stated and well enforced by the security agencies in the country to deter activities such as sea piracy (armed robbery and kidnapping).

REFERENCES

- Abhyankar, J. (2007). *Maritime violence and other security issues at sea: The proceedings of the Symposium on Maritime Violence and other Security Issues at Sea, 26-30 August 2007, Malmö, Sweden.* (P. K. Mukherjee, G. M. Gauci, & J. M. Mejia, Eds.). Malmö, Sweden: WMU Publications.
- Abraham, W. (2013). *Shaking hands with the devil: The intersection of terrorism and theology.* USA: Highland Loch Press.
- Ali, K. (2015). The anatomy of Gulf of Guinea piracy. *Naval War College Review*, 68(1), 93-118. Retrieved June 13, 2021, from <https://login.proxy.wmu.se/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=a9h&AN=99608317&site=eds-live&scope=site>

- Ashiru, T. (2016). What is causing the increase in piracy along the Nigerian coast? *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 17, 2021, from <https://guardian.ng/business-services/security-watch/what-is-causing-the-increase-in-piracy-along-the-nigerian-coast/>
- Barker, S. (2013). International Maritime Piracy: An Old Profession That Is Capable of New Tricks, but Change Is Possible [article]. In (46). Retrieved August 3, 2017, from <https://login.proxy.wmu.se/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?>
- Davidson, G. (2010). *Crime and the human mind*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gagain, M. (2010). Neglected Waters: Territorial Maritime Piracy and Developing States: Somalia, Nigeria, and Indonesia. *New England Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 16, 169-196.
- Hakeem, J. (2016). Uran Legislators Lament over Kidnapped Indigene - A Year without Trace .
- International Maritime Organization (IMO) (2017). Maritime Security and Piracy Documents. Retrieved June 14, 2021, from <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/SecDocs/Pages/Maritime-Security.aspx>
- Kilishi, A.A., Mobolaji, H.L., Usman, A., Yakubu, A.T., & Yaru, M.A. (2014). The effect of unemployment on crime in Nigeria: A panel data analysis. *British Journal of Economic Management & Trade* 4(2), 880-895.
- Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) (2004). Retrieved July 25, 2017, from <http://www.lawnigeria.com/FederationlawsC.html>
- Murphy, M. N. (2011). The troubled waters of africa: Piracy in the African Littoral. *Journal of the Middle East & Africa*, 2(1), 65-83.
- Nigeria Navy. (2014). History of the Nigerian Navy. Retrieved July 25, 2017, from <http://www.navy.mil.ng/History#.WXWyp4iGPDe>
- Otto, L. (2014). Westward Ho! The evolution of maritime piracy in Nigeria. *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 13(3), 313-329.
- Oyewole, S. (2016). *Suppressing maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: The prospects and challenges of the regional players*. Retrieved July 20, 2021, from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/18366503.2016.1217377>
- Suleiman, A. (2017). Thematic Appraisal on the Impulsive Upsurge of Yahoo-Yahoo in The 21st Century in Nigeria: Qurānic Standpoint.
- Tepp, E. (2012). The Gulf of Guinea: Military and non-military ways of combatting piracy. *Baltic Security & Defence Review*, 14(1), 181-214.

United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (2017). Chronological lists of ratifications of. Retrieved June 21, 2021, from http://www.un.org/depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm